One Hundred Years of Solitude Study Guide

One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel García Márquez

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Contents

One Hundred Years of Solitude Study Guide....1

Contents....2

Introduction....4

Author Biography....5

Plot Summary....7

Chapter 1....10

Chapter 2....13

Chapter 3....15

Chapter 4....17

Chapter 5....19

Chapter 6....21

Chapter 7....23

Chapter 8....25

Chapter 9....26

Chapter 10....28

Chapter 11....30

Chapter 12....32

Chapter 13....34

Chapter 14....36

Chapter 15....37

Chapter 16....39

Chapter 17....40

Chapter 18....42

Chapter 19....44

Chapter 20....46

Characters....48
Objects/Places....56
Themes....59
Style....64
Historical Context....69
Critical Overview....71
Criticism....73
Critical Essay #1....74
Critical Essay #2....78
Critical Essay #3....82
Quotes....88
Adaptations....93
Topics for Further Study....94
Compare and Contrast....95
What Do I Read Next?....97
Further Study....99
Bibliography....101
Copyright Information....102

Introduction

In the mid-1960s, journalist and fiction writer Gabriel Jose Garcia Marquez was little known outside his native Colombia, having never sold more than seven hundred copies of a book. Everything changed, however, after he had a sudden insight while driving his family through Mexico. In an instant, he saw that the key to the imaginary village of Macondo he had been creating in short vignettes was the storytelling technique of his grandmother—absolute brick-faced description of extraordinary events. He turned the car around and drove straight home, where he proceeded directly to a back room. There he wrote while his wife, Mercedes Barcha, sold, mortgaged, and stretched credit to keep the family going. Gradually the entire neighborhood was involved in helping to bring forth what has since been recognized as a masterpiece. After eighteen months, a hefty tome of thirteen hundred pages was sent to the publishers. The result was *Cien anos de soledad,* later translated into English as *One Hundred Years of Solitude.* The first printings sold out before they could be shelved. Today, the novel has been translated into more than thirty languages and there are a number of pirated editions. The exceptional achievement of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* was highlighted in the citation awarding Garcia Marquez the 1982 Nobel Prize in Literature.

Often compared to William Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County in its scope and quality, Garcia Marquez's Macondo is revealed in several of the author's short stories and novels. The most central of these is *One Hundred Years of Solitude,* which relates the history of several generations of the Buendia family, the founders of this imaginary Colombian town. Interwoven with their personal struggles are events that recall the political, social, and economic turmoil of a hundred years of Latin American history. In addition to establishing the reputation of its author. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* was a key work in the "Boom" of Latin American literature of the 1960s. Trie worldwide acclaim bestowed upon the novel led to a discovery by readers and critics of other Latin American practitioners of "magical realism." This genre combines realistic portrayals of political and social conflicts with descriptions of mystical, even supernatural events. **Garcia** Marquez is known as one of its foremost practitioners, although he claims that everything in his fiction has a basis in reality. Nevertheless, it is his inventive portrayals of his homeland which have made him one of the most acclaimed writers in the modern world.

Author Biography

In 1928, the year when more than one hundred local strikers were massacred, Garcia Marquez was born in Aracataca, Colombia. His first years were spent with a large extended family in his grandfather's house in Aracataca. This environment contributed greatly to his future career as a writer. His grandfather. Colonel Nicolas Ricardo Marquee Mejia, took him to the circus, told him stories, and admonished him against listening to the tales of women. His grandmother, Tranquilina Iguaran de Marquez, told him fantastically superstitious stories with such a deadpan style that he was more often scared than not. It was this style that the author used to such great success in his masterpiece. *One Hundred Years of Solitude.* After his grandfather died, G arc fa Marquez went to live in Sucre, Colombia, with his parents, telegraph operator Gabriel Eligio Garcia (a Conservative frowned on by the family) and Luisa Santiaga Marquez de Garcia.

He won a scholarship to the Liceo Nacional de Zipaquira, a high school near Bogota. He then entered the National University in the capital city of Bogota to study law. After liberal political leader Jorge Gaitan was assassinated in 1948. civil war broke out and he had to transfer to the University of Cartagena. Disliking law and encouraged by the writing of Franz Kafka (especially *Metamorphosis),* he took up writing. He left school and began working for several newspapers, including *El Espectador* in Bogota*.

A 1955 serialization of a shipwrecked Colombian almost brought Garcia Marquez journalistic fame. The journalist's account of the sailor's story, however, scandalized the government. Fearing reprisal, the newspaper's editors sent him to Europe but military dictator General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla shut down the *El Espectador* for other reasons. Bereft of his steady source of income, Garcia Marquez worked as a freelance writer in Paris. Meanwhile, friends rescued his novella *La Hojarasca* (translated as *Leaf Storm* from a drawer. Published in 1955, it drew little attention. Although Rojas stepped down in 1957, it was still unsafe for the journalist to return home. He moved to Caracas, Venezuela, and, in 1958, he married the "the most interesting person" he had ever met: Mercedes Barcha, whom he first encountered in 1946, when she was thirteen. Their first child, Rodrigo, was born in 1959; their second, Gonzalo, in 1962.

In 1959, **Garcia** Marquez went to Cuba, where he befriended its socialist leader, Fidel Castro. He set up *Prensa* ***Latino,*** a Cuban press agency, in Bogota, and reported for them from Cuba and New York. (These Cuban connections later caused visa problems for Garcia Marquez with America as Cuban-American relations soured.) Garcia Marquez then settled in Mexico City in 1961, where he worked in film and advertising. Finally solving his Macondo puzzle in 1965, he sequestered himself for eighteen months and emerged with *One Hundred Years of Solitude* After its success, the family moved to Barcelona, Spain, where his study of Spanish dictator Francisco Franco contributed to the 1975 novel *El otono del patriarca* (translated as *The Autumn of the Patriarch).* After that novel, Garcia Marquez swore he would be silent until Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet, leader of a military coup against the elected government in 1973, stepped down. Fortunately, he recanted; subsequent novels, including *Cronica del muerte*

anunciada (1981, translated as *Chronicle of a Death Foretold), El amor en los tiempos del colera* (1985, translated as *Love in the Time of Cholera*), and *El general en su laberinto* (1989, translated as *The General in His Labyrinth*), were published to great acclaim.

In 1982 the exiled native son was awarded the Nobel Prize and was welcomed home to Colombia with honors. Currently, he divides his time between Mexico City and Bogota and continues to write fiction, nonfiction, and screenplays, as well as a weekly news column.

Plot Summary

The Founding of Macondo

One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez tells the story of the Buendia family and the fictional town of Macondo. The first part of the book's opening line, "Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendia was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice," serves to catapult the reader into the future, while the second phrase pushes the reader into the past. From this point onward, however, the book moves in fairly straight forward chronological order, with only occasional forays into the past or the future.

The first chapter introduces Jose Arcadio Buendia, the founder of Macondo; his wife, Ursula; and the gypsy Melquiades, who brings inventions to Macondo. Jose Arcadio and Ursula also have two sons introduced in the opening chapter. The older, Jos6 Arcadio, is large, strong, and physically precocious. The younger child, Aureliano, is quiet, solitary, and clairvoyant.

One of the more difficult features of the book is that the characters share the same names. That is, in each generation of Buendias, there are characters named Jose Arcadio and Aureliano, just as there are female characters called Remedios, Amaranta, and Ursula. The characters named alike share similar characteristics. For example, the Arcadios are physically strong and active, while the Aurelianos are intellectual, with some psychic ability.

The early chapters also introduce the village of Macondo and its founding. In the days before the founding of Macondo, Jose Arcadio and Ursula (who are cousins) marry. However, Ursula fears that the result of incest will be the birth of a child with a pig's tail. Consequently, she is opposed to consummating their marriage. When Prudencio Aguilar announces to the town that Jose Arcadio's masculinity is suspect, it results in two things: first, Jos6 Arcadio consummates the marriage in spite of Ursula's protests; and second, he Mils Prudencio Aguilar. The dead man continues to visit the Buendias until they decide to leave their town and start anew by founding the town of Macondo.

The Growth of Macondo

In the beginning, the town is young; it is a place where no one is over thirty years old and no one has died yet. Except for occasional visits from Melquiades and his troop of gypsies, the three hundred inhabitants of Macondo are completely isolated from the rest of the world. Although Jose Arcadio leads a band of townspeople on a mission to try to establish contact with the outside world, he is unsuccessful. Later, Ursula sets off to find her son Jose Arcadio, who has unexpectedly run away with the gypsies. Although Ursula does not find her son, she finds a route to another town, connecting Macondo to the world. As a result, people begin to arrive in Macondo, including a governmental

representative, Don Apolinar Moscote. Aureliano falls in love with Apolinar's beautiful child, Remedios.

Another new arrival to the town is the orphan Rebeca. The family adopts her and raises her as a sister to their daughter Amaranta and grandson Arcadio, the missing Jos6's illegitimate son by Pilar Ternera. Meanwhile, the village contracts a plague of insomnia and memory loss. The people of Macondo resort to placing signs everywhere to remind themselves of the names of things. Of course, they also forget how to read. Through the intervention of Melquiades (who died in the previous chapter, only to return because he was bored) the town is saved.

Not only does Melquiades return from the dead, the ghost of Prudencio Aguilar returns to keep Jose Arcadio company. Jose Arcadio is overcome with nostalgia and goes mad Ursula ties him to a tree in the courtyard, where he remains, speaking in a language that no one understands

After the insomnia plague, another outsider, Pietro Crespi, arrives. He comes to Macondo to give music lessons. Both Rebeca and Amaranta fall in love with him; the result of this love is tragedy as the two women engage in plots and revenge. Even after Rebeca rejects Pietro in favor of the returned Jose Arcadio, there is bad blood between the two women.

Another tragic love story is that of Aureliano and Remedios. Although no more than a child, Remedios is engaged to Aureliano. He waits patiently for her to mature enough so that they can marry. They do so, but the marriage is short-lived; little Remedios dies of blood poisoning during her first pregnancy.

After Remedios' death, Aureliano becomes Colonel Aureliano Buendia, a soldier for the Liberal Party and a leader in a civil war between the Liberals and the Conservatives. The Colonel loses all of his battles, but seems to live a charmed life otherwise. He survives numerous assassination attempts and one suicide attempt, fathers seventeen sons with seventeen different women, and becomes Commander-in-Chief of the revolutionary forces. In a return to the opening sentence of the novel, the colonel faces a firing squad, but is not killed.

The Buendias at War

The middle portion of the book includes accounts of the seemingly endless civil wars and of the activities of Aureliano Segundo and Jose Arcadio Segundo, the twin sons of the late Arcadio. When the wars are finally over, Colonel Aureliano Buendia retires to his home, where he leads a solitary life making little gold fishes. His solitude increases and he is overcome with nostalgia and memories. After recalling once again the day that his father took him to see ice, he dies.

Meanwhile, Americans arrive in the prospering town of Macondo to farm bananas. The farm workers eventually launch a strike against the American company, protesting their living conditions. Soldiers arrive and slaughter some three thousand workers. Jose

Arcadio Segundo is present at the slaughter and narrowly escapes with his life When he attempts to find out more about the massacre, however, he discovers that no one knows that it even happened. No one has any memory of the event except for himself, and no one will believe that it really occurred. Likewise, the official governmental account of the event is accepted: "There was no dead, the satisfied workers had gone back to their families, and the banana company was suspending all activity until the rams stopped."

The Decline of Macondo

The rains, however, do not stop. Instead, they continue for another four years, eleven months, and two days. Over this time, the rain washes away much of Macondo. When it clears, Ursula, the last of the original Buendias, dies. She takes with her the memories of the founding of the town and the relationships among people. This failure of memory leads to the union of Amaranta Ursula, great-great-granddaughter of the original Jose Arcadio Buendia, to Aureliano, great-great-great grandson of the same man. Aureliano, the bastard child of Amaranta Ursula's sister Meme, had been raised by the family since his birth. Nevertheless, only his grandparents, Fernanda and Aureliano Segundo, knew the secret of his parentage. His match with Amaranta Ursula recalls the original Ursula's fear of incest: the marriage of one of her aunts to one of her cousins led to the birth of a child with the tail of a pig. Likewise, Amaranta Ursula's relationship with her nephew Aureliano results in the birth of a child with the tail of pig, thus bringing the story of the Buendias full circle.

In the closing chapter, Amaranta Ursula dies giving birth, and her son is left in the street, to be devoured by ants, due to the carelessness of Aureliano. Aureliano's reaction is surprising:

And then he saw the child. It was a dry and bloated bag of skin that all the ants in the world were dragging towards their holes along the stone path in the garden. Aureliano could not move Not because he was paralyzed by horror but because at that prodigious Instant Melquiades' final keys were revealed to him and he saw the epigraph of the parchments perfection placed in the order of man's time and space. *The first of the line ts tied to a tree and the last is being eaten by the ants*

In the final pages of the novel, Aureliano finally is able to read the manuscripts left by Melquiades years earlier. As he does so, he realizes that what he is reading is the story of his family. As he finishes the text, a giant wind sweeps away the town of Macondo, erasing it from time, space, and memory.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

The Buendia family helps found the village of Macondo deep in the Colombian swamps. Over the next one hundred years the sleepy village becomes the seat of a national revolution, is connected to the country by railroad, and grows into a thriving banana plantation. Throughout this period the Buendia family extends through seven generations. Eventually the revolution ends, the banana plantation collapses, and the prosperity of Macondo vanishes as the fortunes of the Buendia family wane. Reduced to a single surviving member, the Buendia family and Macondo come to simultaneous ends as a huge windstorm blows the entire crumbling town away.

The town of Macondo is occasionally visited by a band of wandering gypsies who bring various wonders for the amusement and edification of the isolated town's citizens. One of the leading gypsies is named Melquiades and his objects of wonder include heavy magnets, a telescope and huge magnifying glass, Portuguese instruments of navigation, the laboratory of an alchemist, and - most wonderful of all - false teeth. Without fail the wonders brought by Melquiades are purchased by the ever-curious Jose Arcadio Buendia who experiments with them and attempts, usually unsuccessfully, to integrate them into a universal science. The two men become famous and good friends. Jose Arcadio Buendia's wife Ursula finds her husband's wild penchant for science ridiculous and unfortunately expensive. She becomes increasingly agitated when her husband converts several of her precious gold doubloons into scum while alchemically attempting to double the precious metal's volume.

Ursula is always engaged in productive work. Jose Arcadio Buendia goes through various phases where he will alternate between being the most-productive man in the village and the crackpot cartographer who believes he has discovered that the world must be spherical. Most of the inhabitants of Macondo view him with deferential reverence and his various ideas are commonly accepted without criticism. In any event, his influence on the town is felt in all aspects of society. Thus when he announces an expedition to find another town so that Macondo will no longer be entirely isolated, many men join him. They travel due north for ten days across an endless field of damp volcanic ash, failing to find anything except a spectral Spanish galleon mysteriously located in the middle of dry land. Jose Arcadio Buendia gives up the expedition and mysteriously concludes that Macondo is located on either an island or a peninsula.

Jose Arcadio Buendia and Ursula have two children—Jose Arcadio, who is fourteen, and Aureliano, who is five. Aureliano is the first child born in Macondo. Jose Arcadio Buendia and Ursula are cousins who ignored social convention in Riohacha, their home town, and married. The resultant scandal drove them to abandon the town in shame, wander for twenty-six months in search of the sea, and finally found Macondo. Ursula had always feared her children would be iguanas, due to inbreeding. Fortunately they are both physically normal men.

The chapter concludes when the gypsies return once again—this time they are a different troupe and Jose Arcadio Buendia is momentarily dismayed to learn that Melquiades has died from fever and been buried at sea. His grief is immediately forgotten when he is introduced to the gypsies' latest wonder—ice. He considers it the greatest invention of all time.

Chapter 1 Analysis

The novel begins with "Many years later" (p. 1) indicating a complex timeline; the unnamed and unreliable narrator is relating the story after the passage of many years' time. The narrator is quickly established as unreliable—for example, after stating that Jose Arcadio Buendia had very limited geographical knowledge, his rather extensive knowledge is revealed. In fact, throughout the novel almost all factual statements made in the narrative are refuted by other putatively factual statements made somewhere else. The introductory chapter is critical to an understanding of the novel; it establishes the tone of magical realism, the subtle and appealing blend of factual and incredible that makes the novel so entirely engaging. The chapter also introduces the town of Macondo and establishes its very brief but very peculiar history; the original 21 founders all fled Riohacha for various personal reasons—but all of the reasons will eventually be seen to involve some deep-seated sexual and cultural shame. The town is isolated from the world and, in fact, nobody in the town even knows how to get to another town. In other words, the town in its early years is entirely disconnected from larger society. Finally, the chapter introduces the Buendia family started by the double third cousins Jose Arcadio Buendia and Ursula Iguaran.

Names within the novel are subtle but critical—many of the characters share the same or similar names and are differentiated by using only a portion of their name. Thus, the son of Jose Arcadio Buendia is named Jose Arcadio, clearly of the surname Buendia—the father is referred to by his full name and the son is referred to as Jose Arcadio. The son Jose Arcadio has a son named Jose Arcadio, also a Buendia, who is referred to as Arcadio. Thus three characters share the same name and a direct lineal descent. Such naming is of course common among families but perhaps not so in fiction; additionally, the narrator will often manipulate the names in subtle ways to confuse exactly which character is performing an action. Biological relationships are similarly complex—Jose Arcadio Buendia and Ursula Iguaran are distant cousins—actually double third cousins, sharing the same great-great-grandparents. They have three children, Jose Arcadio, Aureliano, and Amaranta. However, Jose Arcadio leaves home before Amaranta is born and Aureliano's age difference means that Amaranta is raised as a separate generation. She is joined by Arcadio, Jose Arcadio's son, and they are raised as if siblings. Finally, the generation is completed with the addition of Rebeca, apparently not a biological relative at all but nevertheless raised as one. Interestingly, she is closer to Aureliano in age but her childlike demeanor results in her being usually placed with Amaranta and Arcadio. Further complicating matters is Pilar Ternera, not a relative at all but the mother of one child each by the brothers Jose Arcadio and Aureliano; finally, Pilar Ternera is roughly the age of Ursula. These complications are found within the parental generation and their offspring alone, and the novel spans several additional generations! Reference

to the pedigree chart preceding chapter one helps but does not entirely free the reader of the need for close attention to detail.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Originally Jose Arcadio Buendia and Ursula live in Riohacha; there, he is a renowned cock fighter and she is considered respectable—and they are distant cousins. When they marry the town is flabbergasted, predicting that their children will be iguanas or pigs due to inbreeding. One day Jose Arcadio Buendia is insulted about his marital relations and, fetching a weapon from home, he justifiably kills the man who impugned his honor. The man's ghost then haunts the couple until they flee the town, wander for twenty-six months across the mountains and through the swamps, and found Macondo. Their first son is born in the swamp, their second son is the first child born in the newly-founded town.

A few years pass and Jose Arcadio grows into a man. One day, Ursula sees him naked and is terrified by the size of his penis. Meanwhile she employs a foul-mouthed and provocative woman to help with chores. The woman, named Pilar Ternera, is about fifty years old and reads the future in cards and is shocked at Jose Arcadio's future while he finds her scent inextricably sexual. She invites him to her bed and one night he acquiesces, sneaking through her house full of people into her bedroom where she aggressively seduces him. He returns every night for many weeks. Finally he cannot keep the secret longer and confides the affair to Aureliano, his younger brother.

Meanwhile Amaranta, the third child of Jose Arcadio Buendia and Ursula, is born. She is light and watery and looks like a newt. Seven weeks later the gypsies return to town. At the gypsy carnival Pilar Ternera informs Jose Arcadio that he will shortly be a father. Jose Arcadio is stunned. A few nights later he returns to the carnival and finds a young waif gypsy girl. He pushes his erection against her back and she gasps—they quickly find a private place and strip. As customary the girl and some nearby gypsy women are amazed at the size of his penis. Jose Arcadio is unable to become aroused until an older woman enters the tent with a village man—once she strips naked he is able to take his young lover. A few days later Jose Arcadio slips out of town with the departing gypsies and is not seen again. Ursula becomes crazed with grief and wanders into the swamp in search of her son and is not seen for many days. She eventually returns without having found her son, but she brings with her a huge crowd of men and women who have come to see Macondo—they are civilized people from a major city located only two days away, their travel facilitated by an established route.

Chapter 2 Analysis

The chapter moves beyond the founding of the town and the details of the first generation and considers their children. As this is a multi-generation family novel, the trend becomes immediately clear that the parents influence and support the lives of their children but control moves gradually from parents to offspring. Ursula Iguaran's

fear that her children will be born as iguanas is a pun on her name. The shame of marrying his apparently too-close relative is compounded for Jose Arcadio Buendia when he is insulted by another man and subsequently kills him. The man's ghost haunts Jose Arcadio Buendia and drives him to abandon his home and wander across the mountains and through the swamps. The ghost will eventually pursue him to Macondo where their relationship will continue to develop.

The chapter begins with further information about Macondo - where it is, how it is founded, how it develops. The total isolation is unique and remarkable even if somewhat illusory—after all, if the mail comes and gypsies visit, how isolated can the town really be? The chapter moves on to the fortunes of Jose Arcadio, the oldest son born in the swamp during the founders' wandering. The size of his penis terrifies even his mother and the few women who see his manhood comment on it without fail. As a teenager of about sixteen he engages in a sexual relationship with Pilar Ternera who is at least fifty years old. Although he finds her aged body unappealing the scent of her body arouses him. Her forcible sexual enthusiasm satisfies him though they keep the relationship a secret. When he learns she has become pregnant he more or less panics, seeks out a very young circus gypsy, seduces her by demonstrating the size of his member, and then carries her into a circus tent to conquer her. He is unable to perform —her young thin body does not excite him. Fortunately an older couple seeks the relative privacy of the tent for their own sexual tryst and as he watches the older woman strip naked Jose Aurelio becomes aroused and takes his unnamed young lover. A few days later he leaves the town, literally running away with the gypsy circus. Pilar Ternera delivers a boy, Arcadio, and gives him into the begrudging care of Ursula who ultimately raises him as her own son.

The most amusing part of the chapter concerns Ursula's frenzied pursuit of the gypsies in a failed attempt to locate and retrieve her son. She dashes out into the swamp alone. Consider that her husband has often attempted to transverse the swamp and find civilization without any success—yet by simply wandering in an emotional frenzy Ursula not only crosses the swamp but finds civilization and convinces large numbers of the people in the distant city to accompany her on a two-day excursion back to the town. They arrive on an established route that—for unspecified reasons—remains invisible to Jose Arcadio Buendia. In a meta-fictional sense the destiny of the town mimics the destiny of technological development. Macondo ceases to be isolated and alone and begins to enter into a larger society and culture. The influx of people brings goods, styles, and cultures. It will also bring government which will make the people's lives difficult. This is symbolically brought about by Jose Arcadio; his flight leads his mother to find the future in an attempt to force the stasis of time upon her boy. As in life, so in the novel—these things cannot ever be unchanged: Jose Arcadio grows up regardless of his mother's desires; Macondo comes of age regardless of its founders' desires.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

Over the next few years Macondo changes—the influx of people brings commerce, money, and growth. Jose Arcadio Buendia eagerly engages himself in the progress and becomes something of an unofficial mayor, accepted nearly by all. Ursula hires an Indian woman named Visitacion to serve as nanny to the children. Meanwhile Aureliano, through self education, becomes a canny alchemist and a superb silversmith. One Sunday an eleven year old girl arrives at Ursula's house - she is Rebeca from distant Manaure. Her introductory letter explains that she is a distant relative and an orphan. Ursula and Jose Arcadio Buendia are sure she is not really related but the girl carries her parents' bones in a sack and is obviously destitute and needy and thus they accept her as their own child. As Macondo has no cemetery, the bag with her parents' bones remains in the house and is often found rattling about in some room. Rebeca will eat only chips of paint and handfuls of earth and wastes away into nearly nothing before Ursula finally achieves the correct cure - regular beatings accompanied by force feeding of rhubarb soaked in orange juice.

After only a few days Visitacion becomes alarmed when she realizes Rebeca is infected with a plague of insomnia. The disease quickly sweeps through the village and nobody can sleep. At first no one minds as they can accomplish so much during the newly - available night hours. But then they realize that without sleep their memories begin to slip away. To combat the terrible loss, the names of things are written directly on the things. Then, as the very use of things begins to fade, descriptions and instructions are added to the names. Jose Arcadio Buendia attempts unsuccessfully to invent a spinning dictionary that will bring knowledge constantly before one's eyes to combat the plague of insomnia's effects. Then one day, miraculously, Melquiades appears with a medicine that cures the plague of insomnia with a simple draught. Melquiades explains that he found he could not bear the solitude of death and had thus returned. He brings with him also a daguerreotype and Jose Arcadio Buendia spends the next several days attempting to capture a photograph of God; when he fails, he erroneously concludes that God does not exist. Meanwhile Ursula enlists the assistance of her girls and begins a remarkably successful home-based company which makes and sells animal-shaped candies. The business persists for some time and makes Ursula a fairly wealthy woman.

One day soon thereafter Aureliano visits a cantina and discovers that a hugely fat madam is prostituting her adolescent mulatto granddaughter for only twenty cents. The madam insists her granddaughter service seventy men every evening. Aureliano pays the twenty cents twice so that he may remain with her longer. He helps her wring her blanket of sweat and finds her thin body and irritated back interesting—but cannot perform regardless of her caresses. After his double-time expires he leaves in shame.

Ursula, realizing that her daughters are growing, decides to expand her house so that they might entertain. She completes the project with her own funding and desires the house to be painted white—but she receives notice that it must be painted blue. The growing town has attracted Don Apolinar Moscote, a magistrate from the distant government: he mandates that all houses must be blue. Incensed, Jose Arcadio Buendia first argues with Don Apolinar Moscote and then bodily flings him out of town. Soon enough the magistrate returns with some soldiers and his family. A principled man of honor, Jose Arcadio Buendia realizes he cannot accost the man in front of his family and they form a shaky alliance—the soldiers are sent away, the magistrate remains, but no official orders are issued. Ursula paints her house white. Aureliano, in his mid-twenties at this time, accompanies his father on the official visit where he sees Don Apolinar Moscote's beautiful young daughter named Remedios Moscote; he finds her irresistibly and sexually beautiful despite the fact that she is prepubescent and only nine years old. Thereafter the mental image of Remedios bothers him when he walks, as if he had a pebble in his shoe. Meanwhile Jose Arcadio Buendia considers Don Apolinar Moscote his official and public enemy, though the enmity is entirely theoretical due to the presence of wives and daughters.

Chapter 3 Analysis

Chapter 3 continues to develop the next generation; Rebeca arrives with a note claiming she is a distant relative of Ursula (and obviously therefore one of Jose Arcadio Buendia). Ursula is convinced that the girl is not related but regardless of that invites the destitute child into her house and raises her as her own. Rebeca eats earth; the symbolism is profound - Ursula refuses her the comfort and beats her until she stops. Meanwhile Rebeca's parents' bones wander the house, clopping as they go, until they are walled up during a remodel and forgotten. This strange and pitiful orphan Rebeca is entirely devoid of history, unlike the characters who surround her, who are burdened by a cumbersome history. This opposition is further called out by Rebeca's infection with the plague of insomnia. The real disaster of the plague is the gradual but constant loss of memory brought about by never sleeping. Rebeca has no history and with her she brings the destruction of the entire town's history. Fortunately the gypsy Melquiades - once dead but returned to life through boredom - has a miraculous cure. His cure unfortunately does not restore Rebeca to things she never knew.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Ursula provisions and decorates her newly-expanded house. One of the items she purchases is a pianola which arrives disassembled. An expert musician, Pietro Crespi, arrives to assemble the self-playing instrument. He spends several weeks during which time both Rebeca and Amaranta find him irresistible, even though he is entirely correct and proper. When Pietro leaves Jose Arcadio Buendia disassembles the pianola to see how it functions and cannot get it properly back together again. Meanwhile Amaranta sends unanswered love letters to Pietro, and in turn Pietro sends love letters to Rebeca - fortunately for Pietro the mails in Macondo are now as regular as twice every month.

Aureliano is driven to distraction by his unrequited desire for the infant Remedios and thus one day while drunk he visits Pilar Ternera and demands satisfaction which is freely offered. A few days later Aureliano publicly announces his desire for Remedios and the several parents argue out the details—Aureliano will have to wait for the girl's menarche. He accepts, declaring he has been accustomed to waiting. Melquiades, now a constant fixture in the Buendia household, continues to age and becomes increasingly senile, wandering the house and muttering. Finally one day he goes to the river to bathe and drowns; the shocked town thus establishes a cemetery and holds their first burial. Melquiades leaves behind a gigantic stack of manuscript pages written in a strange language and encrypted with an unknown cipher. For the next several generations various Buendia family men will struggle over his manuscript, trying to unlock its supposedly fabulous secrets. Rebeca then falls into a deep depression and visits Pilar Ternera who informs her, via the cards, that her parents demand burial. The house is searched until the old bag of bones is found and they are buried next to Melquiades.

Pietro Crespi then returns to town and sets up a music shop. Amaranta declares her love but Pietro properly declines her affections as he is desirous of Rebeca; the spurned Amaranta swears this will not be so. Pietro courts Rebeca by bringing her small gifts, often clockwork animals. Jose Arcadio Buendia becomes obsessed with the mechanical animals and takes them apart convinced they hold the secret to perpetual motion. Within months he has been driven mad by the mechanisms and one day goes on a rampage, smashing things in the house. With the assistance of twenty or so neighbors Aureliano restrains his father and ties him to a chestnut tree in the courtyard of the house. Jose Arcadio Buendia lives for many months in the courtyard, tied to the tree, muttering to himself. For his comfort, Ursula builds a screen over him using palm leaves. Several months after their amorous evening Pilar Ternera informs Aureliano that he has got her with child; she states "'...[Y]ou'd be good in war...Where you put your eye, you put your bullet'" (p. 76), which pleases him and he announces the child will bear his name.

Chapter 4 Analysis

Ursula's house is a microcosm of Macondo—as it grows, so does her house. Just as Jose Arcadio Buendia never quite grasps modern science, he does not quite grasp the developments within his home. This is symbolized by his inability to live in the mystical past as a successful alchemist as well as his inability to live in the scientific future as a successful inventor. He goes crazy and lives for many months, perhaps years, tied to a tree in the courtyard like a barking dog. Meanwhile Ursula gains modern conveniences in the home and operates a home business which is very successful: the times change. Her daughters begin to grow up and look at men. As his older brother before him, Aureliano grows into a man. Not possessing his brother's singularly impressive penis, Aureliano fears women will laugh at him and thus remains a virgin until fairly late in life. He is perversely aroused beyond measure by a nine year old girl, however, and thereafter seeks acceptable sexual comfort in the arms of his brother's ancient lover Pilar Ternera, now approaching sixty. He finds the sexual encounter fulfilling and also emotionally significant—he has conquered his well-endowed brother's conquest. He then formally courts the young Remedios and convinces all parents involved to approve of the marriage. They inform him that, of course, he must wait to marry her until she reaches puberty—he is well-acquainted with waiting and agrees. Clearly Macondo is without social convention. Founded by those fleeing their own shame, the town has been raised without a normal morality. Further complicating the matter is Aureliano's father's great public enmity with Remedio's father. For the benefit of their children, however, the two enemies set aside their differences and plan to unite their families.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Aureliano Buendia and Remedios Moscote are married; the groom drops the ring and chases it to the door as the bride stands unperturbed. Over the next several months Remedios surprises everyone by demonstrating a level of sophistication and grace far beyond her years. Rebeca Buendia's planned marriage to Pietro Crespi is delayed due to tampering by Amaranta. The town priest, Father Nicanor, is scandalized by the inbreeding and underage marriages so common in the town and determines to build an enormous church to attract the devoted; he slowly raises the required funds by drinking chocolate and levitating as proof of divine grace. Influenced by Amaranta's jealous meddling, Ursula declares that Rebeca's wedding will be the first in the new cathedral—thus her nuptials are postponed for many months. Then again, upon the eve of Rebeca's wedding, fate intervenes - Remedios, pregnant with twins, falls seriously ill and then dies; a prolonged mourning period extends month after month, preventing any wedding.

One day Jose Arcadio returns home. He is physically enormous - much larger than believable - and covered head-to-foot in tattoos. He explains he has circled the world many times as a sailor. His manners are crude and his family shuns him; he spends his days asleep and his evening at the local brothel where he charges the prostitutes to have sex. They gladly pay him and are fascinated with the intricate tattoos covering his enormous penis. His son, Arcadio, is never informed of their true relationship and finds his behavior disgusting. Amaranta finds it disgusting, too, as do nearly all of his family. His adopted sister Rebeca, however, finds him inconceivably attractive and begins eating dirt and paint in her unrequited yearning for him, her love for Pietro Crespi all but forgotten. One day she yields to her desire and has sex with him; they are married three days later. Ostracized by their family, they move to the far side of town where Jose Arcadio becomes a productive farmer under Rebeca's loving and guiding hand. Pietro Crespi, denied Rebeca, turns to the once-spurned Amaranta. They court and he proposes; she accepts but declines to set a marriage date. Their courtship continues for many, many months until Pietro Crespi is all but a member of the family.

Meanwhile Aureliano begins to be tangentially involved with politics because of his relationship with his father-in-law, Don Apolonar Moscote. As he watches the dirty tricks of the established Conservatives, he becomes convinced he prefers the revolutionary Liberals. A rather complicated plot develops in the town and results in eventual revolutionary fervor breaking out into military action. Aureliano leads a successful military action against the established Conservatives and thus becomes known as Colonel Aureliano Buendia. He is joined by long-time friend Gerineldo Marquez.

Chapter 5 Analysis

The youth of the second generation has been spent—Aureliano is an established man with excellent skills and political connections. He marries and then suffers a calamitous loss when his young wife dies. Eventually his political involvement leads him to participate in a military revolution which consumes the remainder of his life—as well as the focus of the novel through chapter nine. Jose Arcadio returns home a grown man, having sailed the world and experienced life. He marries his adopted sister and settles down to a productive life as a farmer. Humorously, the amoral Buendia family is flabbergasted by Jose Arcadio's and Rebeca's marriage and ostracizes them while the conservative priest simply states they are not blood relatives and performs the marriage. This attitude reversal is perfect irony and places Ursula in the unusual position of not being in control. She can accept her son as a crude lout who earns his living as a prostitute to prostitutes, but she cannot accept him when he marries his adopted sister and settles down to a productive life. Meanwhile, the saga of Pietro Crespi continues. One expects that things will not turn out well for the foppish Italian Pietro whereas his brother—Bruno—looks to fare much better in the rugged South American town of Macondo.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Colonel Aureliano Buendia leaves Macondo to join the revolution, leaving Arcadio in charge. At first Arcadio is rather benign but he slowly becomes a monstrous dictator, inflicting all of the worst governmental crimes upon the populace. Eventually his rule becomes so corrupt that Ursula curses him in public and all fear and detest him; Arcadio responds by rejecting his Buendia heritage and name. As Arcadio becomes increasingly cruel, Pietro Crespi continues his lengthy courtship of Amaranta. Then the cruel and bitter Amaranta exposes her real feelings and excludes Pietro Crespi entirely. Utterly rejected, he moons about for a few weeks and finally ends his life by suicide. While the mourning of Pietro Crespi envelops the town, Arcadio, never informed as to his biological birth, becomes increasingly attracted to Pilar Ternera. He attempts to use his power as town magistrate to compel her to bed him, but she refuses. Instead she arranges to meet him one night in the dark and sends Santa Sofia de la Piedad, a young girl, in her stead. Arcadio immediately recognizes the subterfuge, even in the darkness, but nevertheless yields to the girl and becomes her lover.

As the months roll by Arcadio becomes increasingly corrupt and begins to steal public funds for private use; he builds a grand house in the center of town. He also manipulates public records to illegally transfer land grants to Jose Arcadio. Then a messenger arrives for him from the Liberal revolutionary forces. Instead of doing as instructed, Arcadio locks the messenger in the prison. Arcadio and Santa Sofia de la Piedad have a daughter, and she is again pregnant when the town erupts in violence largely caused by Arcadio's reign of terror. After a brief scuffle Arcadio is captured, dragged away to a sham court-martial and then executed by firing squad.

Chapter 6 Analysis

The first death among Ursula's adult grandchildren occurs - Arcadio is executed. He is placed in charge by his uncle and then begins a prolonged period of being corrupted by power. Unaware that Pilar Ternera is his mother, Arcadio attempts to dominate her sexually - though she must be nearly an octogenarian at this point! Probably intelligently, she secures the services of a young local girl, paying her life savings out in equal parts to the girl and the girl's mother. Thus she arranges the unlikely marriage of her son Arcadio to Santa Sofia de la Piedad. They quickly give birth to the next generation. As he faces imminent death Arcadio instructs his supposed mother to name his children in a certain way (peculiarly, his eight month-old daughter has not yet been named); in another risible twist, Ursula determines that Arcadio meant something besides what he said and the children are not named in accordance with his final request. Ursula takes in the entire batch of youngsters and raises them as her own. Note the irony of Santa Sofia de la Piedad's lifeline, said to be cut off by talons - she outlives Arcadio.

Meanwhile Jose Arcadio and Rebeca continue their personal lives. Jose Arcadio, loutish as always, begins to break down fences and farm the land of his neighbors, claiming it as his own. Their complaints are ineffectual. The massive and tattooed Jose Arcadio, affixed in back of a plow, working the fields from dawn to dusk with his double-barreled poacher's shotgun, makes an interesting mental image.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

The revolution stalls and the government announces the end of hostilities. Colonel Aureliano Buendia is captured, court-martialed, and sentenced to death. His final request is to be shot in Macondo. He is thus transferred to the prison in Macondo where Ursula visits him and worries about his fate. Colonel Aureliano Buendia, usually able to divine the future, is perplexed that his imminent death does not elicit any visions or feelings. On the day of the execution the government soldiers take the prisoner to the cemetery where they intend to execute him. Fortunately, the cemetery is next to the house of Jose Arcadio and Rebeca and as the soldiers line up to execute Colonel Aureliano Buendia, Jose Arcadio takes his double-barreled shotgun, marches across the street, and commands them to desist. Gratefully, the soldiers and their officer denounce the Conservative government, swear allegiance to the Liberal revolutionary party, free Colonel Aureliano Buendia, and enlist in his militia band. The revolutionaries quickly leave Macondo and, over the next several months, vague news of them comes in from many distant lands and countries as they attempt to spread revolutionary fervor far and wide.

Five months after Arcadio's execution, Santa Sofia de la Piedad delivers twins. Ursula takes Santa Sofia de la Piedad, her oldest daughter named Remedios, and the twin boys, named Jose Arcadio Segundo and Aureliano Segundo, into her home and raises them as her own family. Meanwhile Jose Arcadio and Rebeca move into the grand house that Arcadio built using public funds. One sad day Jose Arcadio is mysteriously murdered. Although his massive body bears no visible wound it stinks of gunpowder and a ribbon of blood issues from his ear, runs throughout the town, climbs the stairs into Ursula's house, navigates through the rooms, being careful not to stain the carpets, and stops at Ursula's feet. His body is buried in the rapidly-growing cemetery.

The revolution wins some indecisive battles and makes headway. Colonel Aureliano Buendia becomes free to move about in certain parts of the country. He comes to realize that he has no valid cause to continue the fight, as the Liberal politicians begin to negotiate a compromise peace with the government. The grief-stricken Rebeca shuts herself into her house and is forgotten by the town. Meanwhile Gerineldo Marquez begins to unsuccessfully court Amaranta; Ursula, at least, receives him as a son. Jose Arcadio Buendia, all but forgotten, remains in the courtyard living like an animal. He begins to receive visits from the ghost of the man he killed in Riohacha; finally reconciled, they become uncertain friends. Finally the great founder dies and a funeral procession winds through the streets of Macondo while a shower of tiny yellow flowers falls from the heavens.

Chapter 7 Analysis

The Liberal revolution consumes the bulk of this chapter. Aureliano becomes a world-renowned military leader and leads a prolonged series of unsuccessful and often disastrous revolutionary engagements against the established Conservative government. In most respects, the Liberals espouse what is typical of the extreme Left whereas the Conservatives espouse the extreme Right and support an apparent monarchy. The Liberals are anti-Clerical and some of the revolutionaries are fighting to do away with social convention. The entire revolutionary process is portrayed as fairly ridiculous and trivial - after all, Macondo and the surrounding towns are isolated villages in a swamp. Nevertheless, the revolution goes on and on and on, suffering one calamitous failure after another but never being ultimately defeated. Finally as Aureliano decides he is fighting for nothing but pride the Liberal politicians form an alliance with the Conservative politicians, selling out their military brethren in the fields. The act of betrayal again energizes Aureliano who takes to the streets and then travels farther and farther away from home in search of a successful Liberal revolution; he presumably passes through Cuba.

Of more import to Macondo, two Buendia family members die and receive burial in the town's tiny but rapidly-growing cemetery. Jose Arcadio is struck down by an anonymous murderer - although his enormous body shows no injury the smell of gunpowder is indelibly left on his corpse. After a ridiculous but humorous series of attempts to snuff the smell - mostly treating his corpse as a food item - he is buried still reeking of powder. The passage relating how the murdered son's issue of blood runs through the town to the house of his mother is one of the most cited paragraphs in the entire text and is simultaneously a powerful symbol and a rich image. The mysterious gunshot is of course a mystical symbol within the novel: Jose Arcadio has given his life for his brother by accepting the shot meant not meant for him. Colonel Aureliano Buendia faces the firing squad but survives because of Jose Arcadio's intervention - within days Jose Arcadio dies of a gunshot, as evidenced by the indelible smell of powder, but no physical wound is discernible.

Some time later Jose Arcadio Buendia is found dead and he too is buried. Early in the novel Jose Arcadio Buendia casually mentions that the family could leave Macondo because there had been no deaths in the town and thus there could be no family roots. Ursula insisted upon remaining and now she buries a son and a husband - clearly, Macondo now has strong Buendia family roots. Throughout the remainder of the novel Jose Arcadio Buendia's ghost will often sit at the base of the chestnut tree in the courtyard of the family's house.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

Amaranta raises Aureliano Jose and retains him in her intimate sphere beyond the age of decency. He fixates upon her as a sexual object and she does not immediately object. Eventually, however, she realizes she must and she rejects him cruelly. He joins the revolutionary forces but returns to the governmentally-controlled town some years later amidst various rumors that the revolutionary cause is suffering various setbacks. He pursues Amaranta but she declines to engage him. Rejected, he turns to various prostitutes for comfort even as revolutionary elements once again disrupt the social life of Macondo. He begins to spend evenings at Pilar Ternera's house as she allows any lovers to freely utilize her bedroom. One evening he goes to the theater and is accosted by the local soldiers. He resists them, insults them, and flees - the officer grabs a reluctant soldier's rifle and shoots Aureliano Jose through the back. The soldiers are so horrified that they immediately execute their officer. Aureliano Jose bleeds to death within a few minutes.

Later Macondo is seized once again by the Liberal revolutionaries and Colonel Aureliano Buendia takes up a brief residence. He causes all of those associated with the conservative government to be executed, including his dear old friend General Jose Raquel Moncada. In past years the conservative Moncada had always been considerate and humane—indeed, he had ruled Macondo with tolerance and forbearance. Ursula intervenes in his behalf but Colonel Aureliano Buendia will have none of it—his heart turned to stone by years of war, he does not intervene and the execution is carried out. He then leaves the town.

Chapter 8 Analysis

The chapter is largely devoted to the demise of Aureliano Jose; he is brought up as a promising lad but is treated as an infant for far too long by Amaranta. She rather enjoys his caresses and attention and thus beyond all age of decency allows her access to her body and bed - though no actual incest is involved. By the time Amaranta breaks off this arrangement Aureliano Jose is more-or-less emotionally devastated. He joins the revolution for a few years but finds no appeal in it, returning to Macondo where he is shot down like a running dog in the street. His murderer is immediately executed and the scene discussing the unusual fate of the murderer's corpse is intriguing. When his father Colonel Aureliano Buendia returns to town he is remarkably untouched by the death of his son - instead he orders additional sweeping executions and appears to have largely lost his center and decency amidst the war of the revolution. The war weariness of Colonel Aureliano Buendia is strongly portrayed and is obviously symbolic of the evils of war.

Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

The war drags on. The revolutionary forces become disillusioned and cynical. Colonel Aureliano Buendia becomes vicious and distant - his assistants draw a 10' circle in chalk about him whenever he stops, and all are forbidden from approaching him. He burns the house of Moncada's widow because she forbids him entrance. He loses his sense of self, his vigor, and his warmth. Even his revolutionary friends begin to shun him. He engages in political intrigue within the revolutionary forces and causes a rival leader to be executed to gain total control. Ultimately he withdraws nearly completely from command, leaving all his decisions to happenstance - the revolution begins to lose support and falter. Colonel Aureliano Buendia returns to Macondo with three prostitutes and sleeps away the days.

A delegation from the liberal revolutionary party visits Macondo. They urge Colonel Aureliano Buendia to mitigate his revolutionary stance to allow for greater control. Although all of his intimates argue against it, he is beyond caring and signs the request. In this way, the liberal revolution loses all real meaning and becomes concerned only with the pursuit of raw political power. Colonel Aureliano Buendia's boyhood friend and staunch supporter Gerineldo Marquez criticizes the decision and is sentenced to death. The day before the execution Colonel Aureliano Buendia visits the jail and, in the last sympathetic act of his life, helps his friend to escape. They decide that the revolution - the war - must come to an end. For that purpose they spend the next two years orchestrating a complete military defeat of the revolutionary forces they lead. Ultimately peace is found in defeat; Colonel Aureliano Buendia returns to Macondo to await the armistice - he is spat at and jeered at for failure and betrayal. Meanwhile seventeen illegitimate sons of Colonel Aureliano Buendia are introduced to Ursula; it is apparently a common habit around Macondo for young women to offer themselves to successful military commanders to presumably strengthen their offspring.

On the day of the armistice Colonel Aureliano Buendia visits his doctor and has an iodine circle painted over the exact position of his heart. He then signs the armistice, refusing all ceremony and declining even to read the papers - the war thus ends. He then retires to his tent and shoots himself through the circle on his chest. Alas, he has been betrayed by his physician and the circle is carefully painted such that the bullet passes through his chest without any mortal effect. He is outraged but incapacitated. By the time he has recuperated his strength nearly all of his revolutionary associates have been executed or absorbed by the apparatus of conservative government. Ursula, at least, is happy to have him home even though his spirit has rotted away and he is completely without compunction.

Chapter 9 Analysis

The revolution, started with Aureliano's assistance in chapter four, concludes with Aureliano's assistance in chapter nine. The revolution has consumed his life and destroyed his soul; it has claimed the life of his eighteen sons and his nephew, caused him to execute many of his closest friends, and stripped him of his morals. The revolution has raged for many, many years and suffered setbacks and enjoyed successes but in general has achieved nothing except establishing a few liberal politicians within the conservative government. The ideals with which it began are discarded, and everyone except a few soldiers is happy to see the hostilities cease. Jose Arcadio Buendia, Jose Arcadio, Arcadio, and Aureliano Jose are all dead - Aureliano is himself old and embittered. Somehow Pilar Ternera and Ursula remain alive, living well beyond a reasonable expectation. Rebeca lives as an old spinster and hermit, Amaranta is aged, Santa Sofia de la Piedad is a grown woman. Ursula's house is filled with Remedios the Beauty, Aureliano Segundo, and Jose Arcadio Segundo - her three great-grandchildren. It is somewhat humorous that Remedios the Beauty is incredibly beautiful, apparently fond of being nude, and yet judged by all as being a mental deficient.

Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Aureliano Segundo and Jose Arcadio Segundo are identical twins, so alike in body, mind, and action that even their mother Santa Sofia de la Piedad is unable to distinguish them. They enjoy sitting opposite from each other at table and simultaneously using opposite hands for similar tasks, conveying an image of one boy looking into a mirror. They delight in the confusion and deliberately present themselves as each other until Ursula, now over one hundred years old, becomes convinced even they do not know the truth of their personal identity.

Thus, Aureliano Segundo grows to enormous size in his adulthood and becomes lazy and dissipated, playing the accordion, and studying the secrets of alchemy in the ancient laboratory of Melquiades. On the other hand, Jose Arcadio Segundo grows to be a bony, thin adult who never amounts to much. Early in life Jose Arcadio Segundo sees a military execution - in his confusion he believes that the executed man is buried alive and he thus conceives an intense dislike for all military activity. He instead helps the local priest at various tasks, is instructed by the bell ringer in the arts of having sex with donkeys, and becomes a fairly pedestrian fighter of cocks. Early in life both young men are courted by Petra Cotes, a widow who does not realize that they are identical twins; they share her sexual receptiveness - she is the only woman Jose Arcadio Segundo will ever know, but in the end she is entirely possessed by Aureliano Segundo.

Meanwhile, Remedios the Beauty attains twenty years of age without being able to take care of herself. Her beauty is sufficient to drive men insane and her legend spreads far and wide. One day a rich and powerful man arrives in town and courts Remedios the Beauty. It is not that she is uninterested - she is simply oblivious. For several months he courts her until his proper habits fall into disrepute and he becomes a filthy and dissipated man, corrupted by his disappointment. At the same time Colonel Aureliano Buendia becomes deliberately more isolated, shutting himself up in his shop and manufacturing tiny gold fish as he had done in his youth. He sells the fish for gold to make more fish, and dismisses political talk and rumor as uninteresting.

Petra Cotes' presence is an inexplicable tonic of fecundity to all domestic animals and thus Aureliano Segundo becomes a famously successful husbandman and gathers incredible wealth. He squanders wealth flagrantly, bathing in champagne and holding elaborate fetes. Ursula condemns his wastrel habits but he is so fortunate that even Ursula begins to benefit - she finds hundreds of pounds of gold in her house - apparently abandoned. Jose Arcadio Segundo hears one day of the decrepit Spanish Galleon in the swamp. He becomes convinced that the impassable river running through Macondo must become a great water trade route. Borrowing a fortune from Aureliano Segundo, he hires a crew and engineers and vanishes for a few years. When he returns he has deepened, straightened, and widened the river enough to make it barely navigable - he brings into town a log raft, the only vessel to ever enter Macondo

by water. On the raft are many Parisian women and a vast celebratory debauch ensues which consumes the town for several days. As the party continues the most beautiful woman of the swamp arrives to be crowned queen. She is placed on the stage next to Remedios the Beauty; before a selection can be made political violence erupts and the celebration comes to a rapid end. Aureliano Segundo is so taken by the fabulous beauty of the queen from afar that he pursues her and takes her in marriage - her name is Fernanda del Carpio and her beauty is formidable.

Chapter 10 Analysis

The identical twins form an interesting twist on the men of the Buendia family; Ursula notes that they are like a mixed deck of cards; Jose Arcadio Segundo has only some of the traits properly belonging to a proper Jose Arcadio, whereas Aureliano Segundo is not entirely an Aureliano. The generation gap continues to invade Macondo even as the town becomes rich and modernized.

Ursula's discovery of gold is ironic; after warning Aureliano Segundo that his wastrel ways will bring him to ruin she turns around to discover hundreds of pounds of gold in her own house - the origin of the gold is never ascertained. Thus her care with money appears to be nonsensical, for the faster Aureliano Segundo spends it the richer he becomes. A parallel theme is found in Colonel Aureliano Buendia's manufacturing of tiny gold fish - the fish are sold for gold which is rendered into more fish, and the cycle continues. Unfortunately, the fish bring in more gold than they consume and thus Colonel Aureliano Buendia becomes progressively busier in a Sisyphean attempt to convert all his income into gold fish.

Meanwhile Jose Arcadio Segundo's efforts are also ironic. He is unable to make money himself, but his brother is willing to lend him the vast sum required to attempt - only partially successfully - to convert the river into a navigable canal. Instead of bringing water commerce to Macondo, Jose Arcadio Segundo brings Parisian women and a vast carnival-type party which, in the end, gains for Aureliano Segundo a wife of incomparable beauty. Fernanda del Carpio lives with Aureliano Segundo and Petra Cotes with the full knowledge that her husband keeps the second woman as a concubine - although this arrangement horrifies Ursula, Fernanda del Carpio eventually comes to accept it, as is detailed in chapter 11.

Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

Aureliano Segundo juggles Fernanda del Carpio and Petra Cotes, attempting to placate both women. Fernanda del Carpio had been raised with the illusion that she would one day be royalty - she had always been told her family was eminently rich and powerful. The reality, however, is that her family is destitute and heavily mortgaged to finance her early education and upbringing. When Fernanda del Carpio finally learns of her father's deceit she is devastated and largely isolates herself from the outside world. Later, when she is presented in Macondo as the queen of festivities the exposure is enjoyable. When Aureliano Segundo pursues her she is flattered and, largely because of his wealth, she accepts his marriage proposal. However, she has a fairly complicated and highly restrictive calendar by which she accepts her new husband's sexual advances. Aureliano Segundo establishes Fernanda del Carpio as the matron in the Buendia home and then goes back to Petra Cotes. Amaranta finds Fernanda del Carpio standoffish and conceited and dislikes her - the two women cease speaking to each other. Fernanda del Carpio insists that the Buendia house begin to observe several customs which they find distasteful and officious.

The national government celebrates the end of the revolution with a declared holiday. Colonel Aureliano Buendia angrily refuses to participate. During the festivities, however, his seventeen sons - all fathered on different women - arrive and greet him. They go to church on Ash Wednesday and receive an ashen cross which, mysteriously, is indelible. After the festivities cease, some of them remain in Macondo and begin a successful business venture while most return to their various homes. One of those who remain borrows money from Aureliano Segundo and brings rail line into Macondo, linking the growing town to the outside world with railroad service. Another discovers that Rebeca, now an ancient woman, still lives the life of a hermit in her dilapidated home - the Buendia family had assumed her to be long dead.

Chapter 11 Analysis

The so-called seventeen Aurelianos, introduced in Chapter 9, now appear within the narrative for a brief period. They are seen by all as ample evidence that the Buendia family's future is secured; Colonel Aureliano Buendia, however, has foreseen their various futures and knows that they are all very short-lived. When they go to church the ashen mark they receive is curiously indelible and they live the remainder of their days with an ashen cross on their foreheads. The ice factory that one of them establishes is of course symbolic of the ice that so fascinated Jose Arcadio Buendia, their grandfather: he declared block ice a miracle, and now it is manufactured in Macondo in such vast quantities that the town cannot use it all and external markets are sought.

Meanwhile, the provincial and revolutionary Buendia family begins to become respectable with the marriage of Aureliano Segundo to Fernanda del Carpio. Although she is not royalty, she is very correct and proper and is perceived by most people to be well-bred and established. Coupled with Aureliano Segundo's wealth she begins to establish custom and a certain decor within the Buendia household - as her influence waxes strong, Ursula's maternal dominance of the family begins to wane. By this point in the novel, Aureliano Segundo has become the *de facto* 'man of the house' as the Buendia family remains chronically short of men.

Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

With the coming of the railroad Macondo undergoes a rapid transformation - technology such as movie theaters and phonographs become rather commonplace even as they confuse the town members who often mistake mechanical tricks for magical reality. The railroad also brings a huge influx of immigrants. One traveler, Mr. Herbert, prowls about Macondo and the surrounding swamp and investigates insects and bananas for a few days before leaving. Soon enough he returns with an army of foreign workers and supervisors who build entire compounds which are prohibited to the established town. Within a few months a gigantic banana plantation is established next to, but fairly separate from, Macondo. So that Jose Arcadio's corpse's stench of gunpowder will not infect the irrigation waters, the banana company erects a fortress of reinforced concrete over his tomb. Banana workers flood the whore houses, bars, and cafes of the town - most old residents refer to the boom as the "banana plague" (p. 229).

Remedios the Beauty remains entirely aloof of the burgeoning town and its exciting happenings. She takes hours to bathe and always prefers to be nude. Ursula goes to great lengths to protect the virginity of Remedios the Beauty. Many men come from vast distances to view her, and a few prosperous or important or crazy men attempt to court her. She is entirely nonplussed and without fail they all quickly die. One day Remedios the Beauty, Amaranta, and Fernanda del Carpio are hanging laundry when a light breeze envelops Remedios the Beauty in a splendor of white sheets. Fluttering like the wings of angels they lift her from the ground and she slowly ascends into heaven. During this period Aureliano Segundo and Fernanda del Carpio have two children of their own - Remedios Renata, known as Meme, and the confusingly-named Jose Arcadio.

As the months go by the town becomes increasingly regimented. The banana company imports private policemen who strut about above the law, perpetrating various outrages on the citizenry. An enraged Colonel Aureliano Buendia one day threatens to arm his boys and recommence the revolution. Unfortunately he is overheard and within days sixteen of his seventeen sons have been executed, most shot through the cross on their foreheads. The seventeenth son flees into the swamp and is not heard from again. Now truly enraged, Colonel Aureliano Buendia seriously attempts to begin the revolution but the aged man is met by his few surviving associates only with pity.

Chapter 12 Analysis

Just as real-world political events place the establishment of Macondo as c. 1810, the events described in Chapter 12 fix the advent of the 'banana plague' as c. 1895. The phonograph became available c. 1890, the automobile became available c. 1890, and the railroad—apparently known by several citizens—became available c. 1870.

Aureliano Arcaya is specifically noted as having been shot with a "Mauser" (p. 239). The first commercial Mauser was the model 1871; the first Mauser firearms sold in quantity in South America were the model 1891 7.65mm, and this model was adopted by Columbia. Thus, probably 85 years have transpired during Chapters 1 through 12. This makes Ursula, probably born c. 1790, approximately 105 years old (Chapter 13 states she is around 100); Colonel Aureliano Buendia, the first child born in Macondo, would be approaching 85 years of age - and he shows it, the text noting that his hair is finally beginning to turn white. The chapter notes he was 'old' at 50 when he returned from the revolutionary war effort, indicating the war ended c. 1860 and peace has been established for about 30 years - yet the seventeen children he fathered during the war are presented as perhaps in their twenties or early thirties. It is easily evident, therefore, that character age is somewhat subjective and fluid - it cannot be interpreted rigidly and must often be viewed as subjective and allegorical. This will be especially true in the case of Pilar Ternera who stops counting birthdays at the age of 145.

Chapter 12 is pivotal in the development of Macondo and the Buendia family - the advent of the railroad links the formerly sleepy town to the external world. Although made famous through revolutionary foment the town has heretofore been largely isolated. Now foreign workers are everywhere and foreign managers - distinctly American - control the town's politics and the regional police forces - Macondo has become something of a colonized town suffering under the burden of foreign interference.

Remedios the Beauty, described as perhaps in her mid-twenties, is so beautiful that men travel from great distances hoping to see her. One even clambers onto the rotting roof of the Buendia home to gaze down at her, nude and bathing - he falls to his death after getting his eyeful. Destined for no man, however, Remedios the Beauty is eventually lifted up into heaven, levitated by clean laundry just as the ancient priest had reportedly levitated by consuming chocolate.

Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

Jose Arcadio has grown into young adulthood and leaves home for Papal training in Rome - most of the family is supportive but Colonel Aureliano Buendia finds any religious training unpalatable. Ursula continues to grow older and becomes blind though nobody suspects it because her habits do not change. Ursula's old age is full of introspection and she reevaluates her life and understanding of things. Aureliano Segundo and Fernanda del Carpio's eldest daughter Meme takes up the clavichord and practices constantly as Amaranta begins to sew her own burial shroud. Meme then departs for boarding school. As Ursula's influence continues to wane Fernanda del Carpio's continues to increase and the Buendia house becomes increasingly formal and rigid.

Finding his wife's pretensions unbearable and her sexual activity insufficient, Aureliano Segundo gradually moves out until finally he spends virtually all of his time at the house of Petra Cotes, his lover. His wealth appears unbounded and he continues to throw extravagant parties and waste funds with abandon. He becomes fat and widely known as a gourmand. One day a woman appears to challenge him to a feast of extravagance. Over the course of days they consume enormous quantities until Aureliano Segundo falls into a stupor and is widely believed to be dying. His friends carry him home to die, but he recovers his health. Meanwhile Meme makes many friends at school and invites them home in large groups for somewhat disastrous weeks of extravagance.

Jose Arcadio Segundo returns home after a prolonged absence and consults with Colonel Aureliano Buendia who has lost all semblance of humanity. After weeks and months of secret discussions Colonel Aureliano Buendia goes one day to the courtyard to urinate. On the way he is distracted by a parade in the town and he watches it from the doorway before continuing to the courtyard. Several days later Santa Sofia de la Piedad discovers the corpse of Colonel Aureliano Buendia as it attracts vultures.

Chapter 13 Analysis

Chapter 13 chronicles the first stages of the disintegration of the Buendia family. The youngest generation travels away to school, leaving Macondo for the cosmopolitan world. In direct opposition to his family's Liberal and revolutionary heritage Jose Arcadio leaves for Rome, intending to enter the Papal seminary (though he never actually enters the school). Aureliano Segundo ultimately never chooses between his wife and his lover and, in latter chapters, will shuffle between them both. The soul of the Buendia family, symbolized by Ursula, begins to crumble as Ursula ages. Her influence is gradually replaced by Fernanda del Carpio - the influence of proper society and formality is a death knell to the Buendia and Macondo way of life, founded on sexual impropriety and social shame. Finally, the death of Colonel Aureliano Buendia - entirely unnoticed for

several days - marks the end of the revolutionary era, the end of political turmoil, and the end of a way of life. The first child born in Macondo is now buried in Macondo; an entire generation now has lived, worked, and died in the small town in the swamp.

Amaranta's death shroud is a powerful symbol that is explained over several chapters. She initially begins making it for Rebeca, constantly petitioning God to allow her only to live to see Rebeca dead. Amaranta eventually comes to realize that the shroud will in fact be her own; at that point she unmakes and remakes it to prolong her own life. In the end it is insufficient and Rebeca, entirely isolated, ancient, and alone, outlives the baleful Amaranta.

Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

Meme finishes her course of study and returns to Macondo where her clavichord performances are widely enjoyed. Although she does not value her skills she maintains them to please her mother. Meme in general finds life at home a strain and the enmity between Amaranta and Fernanda del Carpio is particularly bitter as it poisons every aspect of the family. Meme's clavichord skills allow her the distinct opportunity of engaging in intimate friendships with American girls who live within the banana company's fenced compounds. There she meets the young man Mauricio Babilonia and after a stormy beginning they develop an abortive relationship. Meme meets him surreptitiously for sexual adventures until Fernanda del Carpio discovers the illicit - and completely unacceptable - relationship. Fernanda del Carpio intervenes with the town authorities to have a soldier stationed on the perimeter of the house. Instructed to watch for chicken thieves, the soldier spies Mauricio Babilonia sneaking toward Meme's bathroom and shoots the young lover through the spine.

Meanwhile Amaranta has seen in a vision that she will die when she completes her funeral shroud. She therefore has spent several years spinning raw flax into thread and completing the most incredible shroud possible. But the inevitable cannot be forestalled and one day she finishes the shroud. She publicly announces her death and offers to accept letters for conveyance to the afterlife. As predicted and although in perfect health she dies at dusk and is buried in her immaculate and ornate shroud. She was the last living child of Ursula.

Chapter 14 Analysis

Meme is an interesting character - she has no great personal desires or aspirations and instead grows into young adulthood with the desire only to please her mother. Of course Fernanda del Carpio is too enshrouded in custom and propriety to notice her daughter's singular lack of will and assumes she is interested in her many activities. Meme's desire to satisfy is great, and leads her to practice the clavichord for hours every day even though she does not enjoy the instrument. Thus when she meets Mauricio Babilonia it is with great confusion that she discovers the appeal of the oily mechanic with bilious skin. She takes him as a lover until Fernanda del Carpio discovers their relationship and attempts to end it. Instead she simply marginalizes it until Meme changes her daily habits to bathe at night - in reality meeting Mauricio Babilonia within her own bathroom for their routine sexual trysts. When Fernanda del Carpio realizes her daughter's deceit, her cruel intervention ruins Meme's life, literally ends Mauricio Babilonia's life, and prevents her subsequent grandson Aureliano from ever having a normal existence. It is no wonder that despite her great beauty and cultivated upbringing her own husband Aureliano Segundo has little appetite for her presence.

Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

Several days after being shot, Mauricio Babilonia dies, denounced as a thief and Meme, pregnant and emotionally shattered, never speaks again. Within a few days Fernanda del Carpio takes the mute Meme to a distant convent and she vanishes from the Buendia family. Several months after forcing Meme's exile, Fernanda del Carpio receives a nun from the distant convent who bears Meme's bastard child, already christened Aureliano. Fernanda del Carpio keenly feels the social shame and stigma and locks Aureliano into the back rooms of the house, denying his very existence.

Life in the town continues to be dominated by the vast swarms of foreign workers and American bosses that manage the banana company's extensive plantations. Jose Arcadio Segundo works for the banana company and begins to agitate for improved labor conditions. Tensions mount as the discussions become more frenzied; the banana company uses various legal tricks and frauds to avoid making any reforms and then the army sends in several regiments. The workers call a general strike and the military conscripts take over the physical labor of the banana plantation. The workers strike back by subterfuge and sabotage until the situation reaches an explosive tension. One day the workers are instructed to gather together to receive an address from an important banana company official. About three thousand men, women, and children anticipate widespread concessions and crowd into a large square to hear the speech. Instead they quickly are surrounded by guards with machine guns and massacred in their thousands, Jose Arcadio Segundo falling among the massed corpses. Jose Arcadio Segundo regains consciousness several hours later to discover he has been wounded in the head but not killed, and has been loaded onto a long train stacked high with murdered workers, destined for dumping in the sea. He escapes from the train, soaked through with the blood of fallen comrades, and sneaks back to Macondo where news of the massacre is entirely suppressed. Within a few hours it begins to rain unceasingly.

Throughout several months of continuous rain a nightmare series of Gestapo - like raids occur in Macondo - anyone connected with the strike, and anyone speaking of the massacre is arrested at night and never seen again. Jose Arcadio Segundo escapes by hiding in the old locked laboratory of Jose Arcadio Buendia. When the soldiers come and search the room they see it as decrepit and ruinous, and mysteriously do not discover the frightened Jose Arcadio Segundo hiding within. Thus, Macondo comes to actually believe that the massacre never happened. Only Jose Arcadio Segundo and one other child survive and their recitations of the actual event are greeted with open disbelief.

Chapter 15 Analysis

The central event of chapter 15 is the massacre of over three thousand migrant workers as a strike-breaking maneuver perpetrated by the American-controlled soldiers of the banana company. Unfortunately, events such as this did occur throughout the period in history roughly analogous with the time covered by the narrative. Jose Arcadio Segundo is a labor union agitator - Fernanda del Carpio refers to him, probably correctly, as an anarchist - and a strike supporter. He joins with over three thousand other men, women, and children, ostensibly to hear a speech offering concessions to the striking workers. Instead they are surrounded by machine guns and mowed down. Their massed blood is washed away by the sudden rain which symbolizes nature's revulsion at the horrid act of greed and political buccaneering.

The thousands of corpses are loaded onto a death train which leaves Macondo without lights or whistles and progresses slowly to the distant shore where the mass of bodies is flung into the sea. The only survivors appear to be Jose Arcadio Segundo, shot in the head but not mortally, and a young boy who Jose Arcadio Segundo managed to save from the slaughter. Jose Arcadio Segundo is knocked unconscious by the shot, loaded onto the death train, and transported several hours out of Macondo. He regains consciousness surrounded by the dead, quickly leaves the train, and returns to town. The entire event is erased by the police - anyone suggesting anything about a massacre vanishes after a nighttime arrest. Jose Arcadio Segundo manages to avoid arrest by hiding in the magical laboratory of Jose Arcadio Buendia and Melquiades; in the room those of a military frame of mind see only ruin and the wreck of time whereas others see perfect preservation. Jose Arcadio Segundo will not leave the room for many, many years.

Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

The torrential rain continues unabated for nearly five years. Macondo is awash in a sea of rot and mud, moss and insects live everywhere, and the buildings of the town crumble into the morass of humidity and constant flooding. The banana company's buildings are devastated, collapsed, and washed away, and the banana trees are swept away by the flooding. The town once again is a tiny provincial town and only the oldest established families remain as the floods continue. Aureliano Segundo grows old and thin, spending several months with Fernanda del Carpio and then several months with Petra Cotes; his vast livestock herds drown and his wealth washes away with the rain. Little Aureliano is accidentally spotted by Aureliano Segundo and thus becomes a tangential part of the Buendia family. Colonel Gerineldo Marquez dies and his funeral winds through the muddy streets in the pouring rain. Fernanda del Carpio begins a prolonged monologue of grief that spans through the days of rain. In desperation, Aureliano Segundo smashes all breakables in the house while his two children, Aureliano and Amaranta Ursula, play tricks on Ursula. Finally the rain stops and does not come again for a period of ten years.

Chapter 16 Analysis

Much of chapter 16 consists of Fernanda del Carpio's prolonged monologues - they are humorous reading and recapitulate much of the narrative's previous events. In short, she feels herself to be the aggrieved and betrayed queen, living life in a tiny town unworthy of her magnificence with a husband who constantly wanders. Although bitter and angry, her plight is indeed unenviable and her character is presented in such a way that she is not entirely unlikable. As she bears a singular name, she is also a singular character and no other within the narrative possesses her distinctive traits. Meme's son, Aureliano, represents the sixth generation of the Buendia family portrayed in the novel. His eventual incestuously-conceived son, also named Aureliano, is the last generation considered.

Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

Through the years of rain Ursula drifts in and out of lucidity - after the rain stops she becomes more lucid but also more introspective. Her house of one hundred and more years is in ruins; the foundation cracked, the walls rotting and infested with termites, and the floors covered in thick mud and cobwebs. Jose Arcadio Segundo lives locked in the laboratory, trying to decipher Melquiades' ancient ciphers while Santa Sofia de la Piedad ghosts about the house providing for the bare essentials of a subsistence living. Ursula, blind and philosophical, comes to realize that time and events are a continuous circle that slowly revolves. Eventually Jose Arcadio Segundo succeeds in partially deciphering the ancient texts which have eluded so many Buendia ancestors.

Aureliano Segundo and Petra Cotes turn to raffling animals to eke out a meager living - most of their money is sent to Fernanda del Carpio whom they have come to view as a sort of surrogate daughter. Ursula physically shrinks away until she dies on Good Friday, a tiny woman of perhaps one hundred and thirty years' age. A few days later a monstrous being is captured which is part human, part animal. At the end of the year old Rebeca dies, a hermit for many decades, and is buried - she is the last of the second generation, except for Pilar Ternera. The old village priest, senile and ancient, also dies and is replaced with a young man with ardent passions. Macondo soon cures him and he is conquered by negligence. Aureliano Segundo develops a cancer of the throat and though he fights against it tirelessly it eventually claims his life. At the exact moment of his death his twin brother Jose Arcadio Segundo, though in perfect health, also dies. As Jose Arcadio Segundo has always feared being buried alive, his mother, Santa Sofia de la Piedad, complies with his hidden wish and deeply slashes his corpse's throat.

Meanwhile Fernanda del Carpio writes exhaustingly long letters to her two distant children. They are full of lies and imagined greatness. Jose Arcadio, in Rome, and Amaranta Ursula, at school in Brussels, respond with long catalogues of their own lies. Fernanda del Carpio never learns that it is Petra Cotes' funds that provided food for all the many years.

Chapter 17 Analysis

Chapter 17 continues to portray the inevitable march of time; Ursula dies, Rebeca dies, the old priest dies, and Aureliano and Jose Arcadio Segundo die. Of the Buendia family, the entire first, second, third, and fourth generations have died - only Pilar Ternera, Santa Sofia de la Piedad, and Fernanda del Carpio remain - none Buendia by blood, but all inextricably linked with the family. The wraith-like Santa Sofia de la Piedad serves the household, the strict and proper Fernanda del Carpio rules over it, and it is nearly devoid of children.

The presentation of the laboratory of Jose Arcadio Buendia, Melquiades, and other Buendia metaphysical researchers is symbolic of another interpretation of time. Those whose experiences have left them fully in the modern world of disillusionment, such as Colonel Aureliano Buendia, see it as wrecked by time and moldering in filth. But those who retain a magical interpretation of reality see it as new and clean. Thus, Jose Arcadio Segundo hides in the room in plain sight - his relatives see him sitting on the cot while the searching soldier does not see him at all. The narrative mentions that a fragment of time gone wrong has pinned the room down - giving a second interpretation of the passage of time.

Note the symbolism between the twin brothers Aureliano Segundo and Jose Arcadio Segundo in death. Like their namesakes from an earlier generation, they are linked together by magical bonds. Aureliano Segundo dies from cancer of the throat; he describes the pain as the snipping of steel crabs. And yet Jose Arcadio Segundo is the one who bears the physical mark of death as his mother slits his corpse's throat to obviate any chance of live burial.

Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

Aureliano works at decoding the ancient manuscripts left by Melquiades and makes some headway, discovering that they are written in encoded Sanskrit, and eventually translates a few pages that remain ciphered. He rarely leaves the room and relies upon Santa Sofia de la Piedad to sustain him with food. She continues to serve as the house cook and factotum until one day she decides the whole process is meaningless as the house is nearly empty. She simply walks out into the street and is never seen or heard from again. Upon the disappearance of Santa Sofia de la Piedad, Fernanda del Carpio, besides writing long letters to her children, begins to care for her own necessities - food is still provided through the financial means of Petra Cotes.

The house remains nearly vacant and continues to disintegrate. Finally Fernanda del Carpio dies and Aureliano remains alone - he does not disturb her corpse, dressed as a queen lying in repose. Months later Jose Arcadio arrives and takes possession of the house. He has, contrary to his many letters, never entered the priesthood and has spent the past many years as a relative pauper living a life of dissipation with some friends in Rome. He waits for his mother to die so that he can assume what she described as a vast family fortune. The reality of his situation is quickly understood and he spends his days taking baths and staring at the walls and reminiscing about his early childhood sexual escapades with Amaranta. One fortunate night, Jose Arcadio stumbles upon the vast sum of gold coins hidden for generations. He begins a program of flagrant expenditure and high living, even filling a swimming pool with champagne.

One day a stranger arrives at the door - he is Aureliano Amador, the only surviving son of Colonel Aureliano Buendia. When the executions of the Aurelianos began, Aureliano Amador fled into the swamp. Pursued by agents of the government all these many years and, finally, completely destitute and without hope, he has returned to his father's house to beg for clemency. He is rejected out of hand by the selfish Jose Arcadio who closes the door in his face - Aureliano Amador is subsequently shot down like a dog in the street by two soldiers. Several days later Jose Arcadio is surprised in his bath and murdered by several local youths whom he offended. After killing him they steal his vast treasure of gold.

Chapter 18 Analysis

The final members of the third and fourth generation, Santa Sofia de la Piedad and Aureliano Amador, and Fernanda del Carpio, respectively, pass from the narrative. The fifth generation is reduced only to the distant Amaranta Ursula who has, so far, appeared only briefly in the narrative. The remaining chapters will deal exclusively with the sole survivor of the fifth generation and Aureliano, the only member of the sixth generation of the Buendia family. Quite obviously, the once-vibrant and powerful family

is in a state of decline. This situation is allegorically mirrored by the town of Macondo which has fallen on hard times. The throngs of foreign workers and their transient wealth are long-since dissipated and Ursula's vast hoard of gold coins has been stolen.

After spurning Aureliano Amador who is shot dead by soldiers, Jose Arcadio is murdered by his one-time friends. This contrasts well with the previous generations where Jose Arcadio rescued Colonel Aureliano Buendia from a firing squad at the eventual cost of his own life. The intransigent and selfish younger Jose Arcadio should have emulated his namesake more closely. By this point in the narrative the symbolic repetition of family names has come full-circle: all of the Jose Arcadio characters have died early, all of the Aureliano characters have taken an unusual interest in the manuscripts of Melquiades - most of them have spent considerable portions of their lives studying the manuscripts without being able to decipher them. Aureliano, finally, is beginning to make some headway.

Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Summary

Amaranta Ursula eventually returns to the house, her Belgian husband Gaston in tow, literally with a chain and leash about his neck. Amaranta Ursula is vivacious, beautiful, provocative, and engaging. She has returned to Macondo and intends to live there. Gaston has accompanied her, sure that she will quickly tire of the provincial town and desire to return to cosmopolitan Europe. Gaston is apparently quite wealthy and he spends most of his time in various idle pursuits including entomological studies and biking. He eventually engages himself in an airmail scheme and spends much time writing letters in an attempt to acquire a suitable airplane. Amaranta Ursula spends her time fixing up the decrepit house until it is better than new and completely restored. Unfortunately, an infestation of red ants proves beyond her ability to control entirely. The ants, first arising during the years of rain, persistently continue to bore into the home.

Upon first sight Aureliano is smitten with desire and love for Amaranta Ursula, completely unaware that she is his aunt. He makes several vague overtures which Amaranta Ursula mistakes for innocence. For several months Aureliano attempts to divert his passion upon a local prostitute but it is to no avail - he is devoted to his aunt. Meanwhile Aureliano makes some contacts outside of the home in which he has been a hermit for so long. He meets a Catalonian bookseller and four local youths and they form a debating band and spend many hours together.

One of Aureliano's new friends introduces him to a bizarre brothel which features bestiality and other strange practices. The friends are particularly taken by the matronly procuress who introduces herself as Pilar Ternera - although she is a stranger to Aureliano she immediately realizes he is her great-great-grandson. Pilar Ternera is ancient - she stopped counting birthdays at 145, many years ago. Eventually she counsels the lovesick Aureliano to claim the sexual adventures he craves by simply taking Amaranta Ursula before asking. Aureliano returns home and finds Amaranta Ursula in a room next to the room in which Gaston sits reading—he possesses her bodily. Although she struggles initially she does not call out and within moments they engage in passionate intercourse.

Chapter 19 Analysis

Against all odds Pilar Ternera has survived - an outsider but integral component of the Buendia family, she provides comfort, advice, and an alternative home to many generations of Buendia men. Her astounding age is humorous and somewhat symbolic of the various portrayals of time within the narrative. Nearly fifty during the opening chapters of the novel, she is now well beyond her stated 145 years of age. Even so she remains vibrant, healthy, and in full control of her faculties. She has gradually changed with age, moving from a general domestic servant through fortunetelling to the matron

of a brothel featuring animals and other curious entertainments. She has outlived her two Buendia children, three grandchildren, two of her great-grandchildren, and introduces her great-great-grandson to the wonders of prostitutes. Too old now, finally, to personally satisfy the sexual cravings of the Buendia family, she watches over the girls who do. She finally encourages Aureliano to embrace, rather than resist, his incestuous Buendia heritage by simply taking Amaranta Ursula.

Aureliano ruins the Buendia family's last chance at normalcy by succumbing to his desires, ignoring his friends, and—more-or-less—sexually assaulting Amaranta Ursula. She resists tenaciously at first, her husband in the next room, but curiously does not make any noise or signal for assistance. After a few moments of resistance she gives in and once again two Buendias are having sexual relations with each other. Unlike the earlier improper dalliances of Amaranta and her underage great-grandnephews, the relationship between Amaranta Ursula and her nephew Aureliano is penetrative, symbolic of the continuing decline of the family.

Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary

Pilar Ternera finally dies and is buried in the courtyard of her brothel which is then closed down. Aureliano's friends and the Catalan bookseller eventually wander away in pursuit of greater understanding or a more varied adventure. Aureliano remains behind, engaged in a passionate but secret affair with his aunt Amaranta Ursula. Gaston finally realizes his wife will never tire of Macondo and leaves her, ostensibly to organize his airmail business in Europe. Freed from his presence, the lovers' affair becomes torrid and constant. When Gaston writes to announce his return, Amaranta Ursula responds by requesting he not return and announcing their separation.

Amaranta Ursula becomes pregnant, and then one day Aureliano has a telling conversation with the town priest. Aureliano has begun to suspect that he may be somehow related to Amaranta Ursula and goes in search of his parentage. The priest assures him he is simply named after the local street and is unlikely to be actually a Buendia. The priest goes on to say that the many stories about Colonel Aureliano Buendia are entirely fictional, which outrages Aureliano.

When Amaranta Ursula delivers her boy he is born with a pig's tail - the very deformity which so consumed the worry of Ursula. Amaranta Ursula continues to bleed after the delivery and within a few hours she has died. Aureliano, consumed with despair, wanders out of the house and through the town leaving the newborn baby boy - named Aureliano - in a basket in the house. In the town he fails to find relief and therefore returns home, still despondent. He sees the empty basket and some bloody rags and assumes the midwife has taken the baby boy home. He then sits in his chair as a huge storm begins to arise outside with a fierce wind. He is startled when he suddenly perceives that the baby boy has been devoured by the many red ants, and his deflated remains are being dragged across the floor toward the anthill.

In a moment of clarity he suddenly realizes how the manuscript of Melquiades is ciphered. He picks up the ancient parchments and begins to read only to discover they contain the details of the Buendia family as a history. He scans through the entire family history, realizes Amaranta Ursula is his aunt, and then skips ahead to discover his own fate - simultaneously the wind outside becomes a shrieking storm of Biblical proportion and the house shudders, yields, and is swept away with the entire town.

Chapter 20 Analysis

The death of Pilar Ternera the fortuneteller signals the sealing of the fate of the Buendia family. The escapades of Amaranta Ursula and Aureliano destroy Amaranta Ursula's marriage and, obviously, alienate her husband who leaves. The Catalonian bookseller also leaves. Aureliano's four friends leave on disparate quests. All of these characters'

absences symbolize the complete isolation of Macondo. Just as it was once fully isolated from the larger world, it is once again isolated. Just as it was once a tiny village of simple houses, nature reduces its greatness to ramshackle buildings which collapse upon themselves. The town, like the Buendia family, has come full circle.

In the novel's opening Jose Arcadio Buendia and Ursula Iguaran flee Riohacha to pursue their own sexual union as man and wife though very distant relatives. At the novel's close Aureliano and Amaranta Ursula remain in a dissolving Macondo to pursue their own sexual union as illegitimate and adulterous lovers - and also close relatives. Between these two points in time Macondo becomes influential and famous and then declines into poverty and insignificance. Its most-famous inhabitants are widely considered to have been legendary fold-heroes without a real existence. Clearly something has gone horribly, historically wrong.

The significance of the manuscripts of Melquiades is finally elucidated by Aureliano - many generations of Buendia men have spent decades in fruitless attempts to understand the bizarre texts; only Aureliano comprehends them. In a startling turn of events the manuscripts are finally discovered to be a complete history of the Buendia family, down to the smallest detail. As Aureliano reads them he sees his child - the only member of the seventh generation of the Buendia family - consumed by ants and dragged across the floor. He is curiously detached as he skips forward to read his own fate. Of course, like a mathematical limit, he will never be able to read the event before it occurs and thus as Aureliano flips to the last moments of Melquiades' narrative he is swept away, along with his house and the entire village of Macondo, in a giant whirling windstorm.

Characters

Mauricio Babilonia

Always accompanied by yellow butterflies, Mauricio gains access to Meme through the roof over the bathtub, where a man once fell to his death watching Remedios the Beauty. He is mistaken as a chicken thief one night by a guard set by Fernanda and shot. Paralyzed, he dies "of old age in solitude."

Amaranta Buendia

Daughter of Ursula and Jose Arcadio Buendia, Amaranta is a lively girl until she discovers that her foster sister Rebeca has won the heart of Pietro Crespi She becomes bitter and withdraws into solitude, doing all she can to prevent Rebeca's wedding. Even after Rebeca forsakes Pietro for Jose Arcadio, she continues holding grudges against both of them. She allows Pietro to woo her, only to drive him to suicide when she ultimately rejects him. She thrusts her hand into burning coals with remorse, and the black bandage she wears from that day serves as a symbol of her solitude. Instead of accepting the love of Pietro or Gerineldo Marquez, she indulges in furtive, incestuous gropings with her nephew, Aureliano Jose. She dies a virgin.

Amaranta Ursula Buendia

A fifth-generation Buendia and daughter of Fernanda and Aureliano Segundo, Amaranta Ursula finishes her education in Belgium. There she marries a rich aviator named Gaston She returns home to find only Aureliano left at the house. Unaware that he is her nephew, she begins a secret relationship with him. When Gaston leaves, the two give in to their passion and live as husband and wife until she dies in childbirth.

Colonel Aureliano Buendia

The second son of Ursula is Colonel Aureliano, who begins the story and remains in the limelight almost until the book's climax. He is a quiet boy who takes to the alchemical laboratory with enthusiasm and becomes a wealthy silversmith famed for his little golden fishes. Born into the world "with his eyes open," he has premonitions throughout his life. These later enable him to avoid several assassination attempts. He becomes a man of action after the execution of the Liberal agitator Dr. Noguera, when the soldiers become downright abusive of innocent citizens Seeing enough abuse, Colonel Aureliano gathers twenty-one men and declares war on the Conservatives. He starts and loses thirty-two wars. While on the warpath he has seventeen sons by seventeen different women, in addition to his son by Pilar Ternera. (His wife Remedios, with whom he fell in love when she was nine, dies during her first pregnancy.) At the height of his power, he stands with a chalk circle marked around him, where no one may enter. He

dies while urinating against the tree where his father was tied up. Colonel Aureliano is forever "stupefying himself with the deception of war and the little gold fishes."

Aureliano Jose Buendia

The son of Colonel Aureliano by Pilar Tern-era, the second Aureliano is adopted by Amaranta after she blames herself for the accidental death of little Remedios. He awakens to manhood while in the bath with her. When their caresses threaten Amaranta's virginity, he leaves with his father but returns years later "sturdy as a horse, as dark and long-haired as an Indian, and with a secret determination to marry Amaranta." His death comes when he ignores Pilar's pleas to stay indoors and goes to the theater. While attempting to flee from the soldiers searching for revolutionaries, he is shot in the back by Captain Aquiles Ricardo. In return, the Captain is filled with bullets discharged by a line of four hundred townsmen.

Aureliano Segundo Buendia

The third Aureliano is one of the twin sons of Arcadio and Santa Sofia de la Piedad. Aureliano Segundo is a glutton who holds wild parties and bathes in champagne. The passion he shares with his mistress Petra Cotes overflows to ensure he is rich in animals and money. He is mostly good humored and tells his livestock, "Cease, cows, life is short." In answer to family criticisms, he papers the entire house with monetary notes. He brings Fernanda del Carpio home as his lawful wife but he lives with Petra Cotes. He moves home during the rains, but after they cease he returns to Petra. The rains bring rum and poverty, during which he and Petra discover true love with each other. Unfortunately, Aureliano falls ill at this time, but he manages to collect enough money to send Amaranta Ursula to school in Belgium before he dies.

Aureliano Buendia (IV)

Son of Meme and Mauricio Babiloma, Aureliano is a sixth-generation Buendia and a bastard. Due to his scandalous birth, he grows up in deeper solitude than the rest of the family. He is kept in a single room for the first few years of life, and never leaves the house until he is grown. His occupation is learning all that is required to translate Melquiades's manuscript. He winds up being the sole occupant of the house when Amaranta Ursula and Gaston arrive from Belgium. Unaware that Amaranta Ursula is his aunt, he falls in love with her. He ignores the Cataloman bookseller's recommendation to leave the city and thus witnesses its demise. As a hurricane approaches to wipe out the city, Aureliano translates the manuscript.

Aurelw.no Buendia (V)

The child of Aureliano and Amaranta Ursula survives his mother's death. The last Buendia has realized Ursula's fear of the family's inbreeding-he has a pig's tail. Left on

the floor by his grieving father, the child is eaten by the ants that have taken over the house The vision stupefies Aureliano because it presents the key to understanding the parchments of Melquiades: "The first of the line is tied to a tree and the last is being eaten by the ants." With this key, he quickly takes up the parchments which, like the baby's skin, are slowly being obliterated.

Jose Arcadio Buendia

Jose Arcadio is the patriarch of the family and founder of the town of Macondo. After he marries his cousin Ursula, he becomes a subject of amusement in their hometown of Riohacha because people believe she is still a virgin. After a cockfight, he takes his spear and kills Prudencio Aguilar because of his insults. With this original sin on then-conscience, the first Buendia couple ventures into the wilderness with some followers to found a new city. This "New World" begins as a paradise where death is unknown. Melquiades the gypsy introduces "science" to the town, and later death when he inhabits the first grave. But by then, Jose Arcadio is too busy "searching for the mythical truth of the great inventions" with the toys he wastefully purchased from the visiting gypsies. Eventually, Jose Arcadio goes mad and speaks only Latin after the reappearance of Prudencio Aguilar's ghost; the family must tie him to the chestnut tree.

Jose Arcadio Buendia (II)

The first son of Ursula, Jose Arcadio "was so well-equipped for life that he seemed abnormal." His hormones drive him to the bed of Pilar Tern-era, who conceives Arcadio. Not wanting to face fatherhood, Jose Arcadio leaves with the gypsies. He travels the world and returns as a giant, illustrated from head to toe. His foster sister Rebeca finds him irresistible, and they marry shortly after his return. When the soldiers put his brother against the cemetery wall for execution, Jose Arcadio steps out with guns drawn. Captain Carnicero thanks him for intervening and then joins Colonel Aureliano's forces. Shortly thereafter, Jose Arcadio is shot to death in his own bedroom by an unknown person.

Arcadio Buendia

See Jose Arcadio Buendia (HI)

Jose Arcadio Buendia (HI)

The illegitimate son of Jose Arcadio (II) and Pilar Ternera is known simply as Arcadio. Arcadio suffers from not having a father who acknowledges him. Although raised by the Buendia family, he never believes he is one of them. He is taught reading and silversmithing by Colonel Aureliano, and receives some attention from Melquiades. But when Melquiades dies, he becomes a "solitary and frightened child." He is a bit of monster. Not knowing that Pilar Ternera is his mother, he demands to have sex with her.

She tricks him and tells him to leave his door unlocked. Then she pays half of her life savings to Santa Sofia de la Piedad to be his lover. Colonel Aureliano makes him civil and military leader of the town. He abuses his position until Ursula attacks him with a whip. He is executed by the Conservatives when they retake Macondo.

Jose Arcadio Segundo Buendia (IV)

The twin of Aureliano Segundo, Jose Arcadio Segundo becomes a foreman for the Banana Company. For this association, his sister-in-law Fernanda bars him from the house. The working conditions, however, lead him to side with the workers and he is part of their last fatal demonstration. The only survivor, he can convince no one that over three thousand men, women, and children were murdered. When the soldiers hunt him down he hides in the room of Melquiades's manuscript. There he remains for the rest of his life, pausing only to pass on what he knows to Aureliano (3Y), who then takes his place in the room.

Jose Arcadio Buendia (V)

Fernanda has decided that her son, Jose Arcadio, will become the Pope. Accordingly, he is sent away to school and then to Rome. From Rome he writes about theology but he is actually living in a garret and waiting for his inheritance. When Fernanda dies, he returns to a nearly empty house. He expects to find money, but instead finds a letter where Fernanda tells him the truths left out of her letters. He is murdered by four children whom he had used as bodyservants and then expelled from the house.

Meme Buendia

See Renata Remedios Buendia

Rebeca Buendia

She is the daughter of parents who are supposedly related, but are nevertheless unknown to the Buendia family. She carries their bones in a bag when she is dropped off at the house with a rocking chair. The family adopts her and she is raised as a sister to Amaranta. She sucks her fingers, eats dirt and whitewash, and is "rebellious and strong in spite of her frailness." Her engagement to Pietro Crespi starts a feud with Amaranta. When Jose Arcadio shows up in all his hugeness, however, she marries him instead and turns him into a laboring man. She is happy until he is killed and she returns to dirt and whitewash, forgotten by all except Amaranta. Amaranta prays for Rebeca to die first and spends her days sewing Rebeca's shroud, but Rebeca outlasts her and dies alone in her house.

Remedios Buendia

A fourth-generation Buendia, Remedios is the daughter of Arcadio and Santa Sofia de la Piedad. Remedios the Beauty serves as the femme fatale of the novel, as her beauty kills a number of suitors. People think she is either stupid or innocent, for she often shrugs off civilized behavior and walks around the house naked. One day, while hanging sheets up to dry, she ascends to heaven.

Remedios the Beauty

See Remedios Buendia

Renata Remedios Buendia

Meme is the daughter of Fernanda and Aureliano Segundo. Although she seems to accept her mother's plans for her life, she is a rebel who more closely resembles her father. Unlike the rest of the Buendias, "Meme still did not reveal the solitary fate of the family and she seemed entirely in conformity with the world." She loves a mechanic named Mauricio Babilonia, with whom she has the bastard Aureliano (IV). For her sin she is banished to a convent, where she lives out her days in silence and solitude.

Ursula Iguaran Buendia

Ursula is the Buendia matriarch who even in death "fought against the laws of creation to maintain the [family] line." She is obsessed with the idea that a son begotten with Jose Arcadio (a near cousin) will have a pig's tail. Nevertheless, she has three children without the feared tail. When her husband Jose Arcadio loses himself in his scientific experiments, Ursula starts a candy pastry business that makes the family rich and gives them a grand house. When her firstborn disappears, she searches for him but brings back immigrants instead. Through such luck, she succeeds in making the town prosper. Throughout her one hundred fifteen-plus years she rules the family—even disciplining her ruthless dictator sons. Her long life gives her insight that time is a wheel, for events keep repeating themselves. She becomes blind, but knows her house and her family so well that nobody notices—though her manner of walking around with her "archangelic arm" out is curious. Gradually she shrinks and becomes a plaything for her great-great-grandchildren.

Fernanda del Carpio de Buendia

Fernanda is the daughter of a fallen nobleman, who has been raised to believes she is a queen. As the "most beautiful of the five thousand most beautiful women in the land," Fernanda is brought Ma-condo to be "Queen of Madagascar" at the carnival. Aureliano Segundo makes her his wife, but he keeps a mistress and nobody else in the family

likes her. She tries to rule the house but succeeds only when Amaranta dies. She is a bitter woman with a mysterious illness, so she corresponds with "invisible doctors" who eventually attempt "telepathic surgery." Unable to direct their telepathy properly—because in her prudishness she was never able to properly describe the location of her problems (uterine)—they are unable to cure her and cease corresponding. She is forever praying, keeping up appearances, and keeping to her extraordinary family planning calendar. In the end, she dies wearing her queen costume. Her son finds her body four months later with no signs of putrefaction.

Petra Cotes

The lover of Aureliano Segundo, she makes money by raffling off animals. She causes Aureliano Segundo's animals to reproduce at an incredible rate. After he dies, she secretly helps Fernanda keep food on the table.

Bruno Crespi

Pietro invites his brother Bruno to help him with his business. Bruno manages the whole affair while Pietro pursues first Rebeca and then Ama-ranta. Eventually, Bruno inherits the works, marries Amparo Moscote, and opens a theater where all the national hits perform

Pietro Crespi

"The most handsome and well-mannered man who had ever been seen in Macondo," Pietro Crespi comes to the house to set up the pianola. He settles in Macondo and opens a shop of wonderful mechanical toys and instruments. He wants to marry Rebeca but the jealous Amaranta declares she will kill her first. When Rebeca marries her foster brother Jose Arcadio, Pietro turns to Amaranta, who encourages and then refuses him. On All Souls' Day his body is found amidst a racket of clocks and music boxes, a suicide.

Colonel GerineMo Marquez

Colonel Marquez is Colonel Aureliano's right hand man. When he is placed in charge of the city, he spends his afternoons wooing Amaranta. She refuses him too.

Melquiades

Melquiades is the death-defying, plague-exposed, all-knowing King of the Gypsies. He introduces science and death to Macondo, and gives the first Jose Arcadio an alchemical laboratory. When he eventually dies, he haunts a room in the Buendia household, where he helps successive members of the family with his manuscript. The

last adult Aureliano (IV) discovers that the manuscript is the history of the family—and his decoding of it is the novel.

General Jose Raquel Moncada

General Moncada is the leader of the Conservative forces who becomes great friends with his adversary Colonel Aureliano. After the war, he succeeds in making the city a municipality and himself the first mayor of Macondo. Despite overseeing "the best government we've ever had in Macondo," he is executed by Colonel Aureliano when the next war breaks out.

Don Apolinar Moscote

Apolinar Moscote is sent by the government to be magistrate in the town of Macondo He arrives quietly and begins to exert control. When he demands all houses be painted blue, Jose Arcadio— the founder of the city—ushers him out. When Apolinar returns with soldiers and his family, Jose Arcadio says he and his family are welcome but the soldiers must leave and the people can paint what color they chose. Apolinar complies but eventually introduces more government control and then becomes a figurehead for the army captain.

Remedios Moscote de Buendia

The first Remedios is the daughter of the first city magistrate Colonel Aureliano falls in love with her when she is only nine, and chooses her for his wife. She becomes a promising young woman who takes care of Jose Arcadio (I) and even speaks a little Latin with him. She is killed by the blood poisoning during her first pregnancy, and Amaranta feels responsible because she had hoped for something to postpone Rebeca's wedding. The daguerreotype of fourteen-year-old Remedios becomes a shrine for the family.

Father Nicanor

Father Nicanor uses a levitation tack to attract people's attention and purses to the building of a new church. He discovers Jose" Arcadio Buendia's mysterious language is Latin and tries to convert him until Jose Arcadio's "rationalist tricks" disturb his faith.

Nigromanta

Nigromanta is the last Aureliano's mistress. When Amaranta Crsula dies and he gets horribly drunk, she "rescued him from a pool of vomit and tears." She cleans him up, takes him home, and erases the number of "loves" he owes her.

Dr. Alirio Noguera

Quack doctor Alirio Noguera is a revolutionary recruiter. He hopes to place people throughout the nation who will rise up and kill all the conservatives. He tries to convert Colonel Aureliano. His execution disturbs Colonel Aureliano because it lacked due process.

Santa Sofia de la Piedad

When her lover Arcadio dies, Santa Sofia moves m with the family and helps Ursula with her candy pastry business. She is regarded as a servant by Fernanda and often sleeps on a mat in the kitchen She is the mother of Remedios the Beauty, Aureliano Segundo, and Jose Arcadio Segundo. She "dedicated a whole life of solitude and diligence to the rearing of children," whether they were hers or not. After Ursula dies, Santa Sofia loses her capacity for work and leaves the house, never to be heard from again.

Filar Ternera

Priestess of the city and second matriarch, she sits at the edge of town reading her tarot cards and letting prostitutes use her rooms. She waits for the man promised her in the cards. She bears the children of both Colonel Aureliano and Jose Arcadio (II), and helps arrange liaisons for several other Buendias. After a hundred years in Macondo, "there was no mystery in the heart of a Buendfa that was impenetrable for her."

Aureliano Triste

One of the seventeen Aurelianos born to the colonel outside Macondo, Aureliano Triste inherited his grandfather's inclination for progress but his grandmother's success. He builds a canal, brings the train to Macondo, and sets up an ice factory.

Visitacion

Visitaci6n is an Indian queen who renounced her throne to escape the insomnia plague. She finds refuge as a family servant. Unfortunately, the plague arrives with Rebeca and the town is gripped by insomnia until Melqufades arrives with the antidote.

Objects/Places

Macondo

Macondo is originally a village founded c. 1810 by 21 individuals. Over the next several decades the town grows into a considerable urban center with many inhabitants. During its early years it exists in nearly complete isolation but during the period discussed by the novel it begins to become integrated with the larger, national, society. The town is the principle setting for most of the novel.

The Gypsy Wonders

At several points in the novel various gypsy bands visit Macondo and bring alone various wonders from the outside world. Most of the wonders are recent scientific inventions which the gypsies present as foreign magic. For example, a block of ice is so novel and unanticipated that Jose Arcadio Buendia is literally stunned by the frozen water's presence.

Melquiades' Manuscript

Upon his final death, the gypsy Melquiades leaves a gigantic manuscript in the Buendia house. For the next several generations, one Buendia man or another attempts to decipher the manuscript—in fact, several of them become so obsessed with it that they spend their final decades sequestered and entirely devoted to discovering its secrets. When Aureliano Babilonia finally deciphers the manuscript, he finds it to be a history of the Buendia family. The manuscript is written in Sanskrit and then encrypted using two ancient ciphers. Finally, it is written in a non-chronological fashion which makes it even more difficult to understand.

Melquiades' Laboratory

The gypsy Melquiades establishes, with Jose Arcadio Buendia, an alchemical laboratory in the Buendia house. Many Buendia men spend countless hours in the laboratory pursuing scientific and alchemical research. The laboratory is said to contain an unusual fragment of time—to those who are scientifically-minded and disillusioned, the room and its contents age as would be expected; to those with imagination, the room is ageless and timeless, and remains in pristine condition even as the remainder of the house falls into disrepair.

The Old Spanish Galleon

Jose Arcadio Buendia leads an expedition out of Macondo in an unsuccessful attempt to locate another locus of civilization. Using various instruments of navigation he leads the expedition due north for ten days. He assumes that if they travel far enough in a straight line they must find something. Eventually they do find an ancient Spanish Galleon, high and dry, without any sea in sight. It is corroding and spectral. They explore the Galleon and find a few unusual artifacts. The expedition then returns to town.

The Buendia House

When Macondo is established Jose Arcadio Buendia and Ursula Iguaran build a modest house. Over the years extensive additions and renovations vastly extend the house. The house's general layout includes rooms and hallways surrounding a large central courtyard which features a chestnut tree. The house has a large porch which is usually surrounded by begonias. As the fortunes of the Buendia family rise and fall the repair of the house reflects their circumstances. The house proper is the principle setting for most of the action within the narrative.

The Liberal Revolution

During the early chapters of the novel a national political revolution begins. Colonel Aureliano Buendia, then simply Aureliano, joins the revolution and quickly becomes a colonel and renowned leader of men. Over the next many years he fights and loses a reported thirty-two wars before finally giving up his idealism and leading the liberal forces to a calculated and deliberate defeat allowing the country to return to peace. By the latter chapters of the novel most characters feel that the revolution never really happened or that, at best, the stories are romanticized stories of relatively insignificant military exploits.

The Banana Plantation Company

Once Macondo receives a railroad connection it quickly begins to grow from a sleepy village into a modernized town. Some American businessmen from Alabama find the area suitable for growing bananas and establish a large plantation. Their stereotypical gringo mentality leads them to isolate the plantation from the town, establish a brutal and tyrannical private police force, and generally antagonize and alienate the local populace. Faced with increasingly harsh conditions the workers finally organize and strike. Rather than compromising, the banana company plots with the government and perpetrates a massacre of thousands of workers. Shortly after the massacre a constant rain begins which persists for years. The floods wash away the banana company's buildings and plantation and it vanishes in insolvency.

The Red Ants

During the prolonged rains which followed the banana workers massacre the Buendia house is infested with red ants. They are apparently carpenter ants as they bore into the foundation and structural elements of the house. Various Buendia family members combat the ants with traditional techniques but without good success. Over the next several years the ants claim more and more of the house. Finally they consume the last Buendia infant, Aureliano, and carry his remains into their hive. The ants are symbolic of the victorious and destructive powers of nature.

The Weather

The weather is a potent force in the novel and a frequent agent of change. For example, the banana workers massacre is followed by years of constant rain that turns Macondo into a muddy swamp and destroys the banana plantation. The rain is followed by ten years of drought which dries up the town, withers away plant life, and causes suffering from intense heat. Finally, the novel ends when a giant wind blows Macondo away, eradicating the town from the earth, the map, and memory. The weather symbolizes external events which are beyond the power of the characters to control.

Themes

Solitude

The dominant theme of the novel, as evident from the title, is solitude. Each character has his or her particular form of solitude. Here solitude is not defined as loneliness, but rather a fated seclusion by space or some neurotic obsession. In fact, the danger of being marked by solitude is its effect on others. "If you have to go crazy, please go crazy all by yourself!" Ursula tells her husband. One form of solitude is that of madness - the first Jose Arcadio's solitude is being tied to a tree, speaking in a foreign tongue, and lost in thought. The ultimate expression of solitude, however, is Colonel Aureliano's achievement of absolute power, an "inner coldness which shattered his bones." Consequently, he orders a chalk circle to be marked around him at all times - nobody is allowed near him. Amaranta is another extreme example. Her coldness is the result of power achieved by denial - her virginity. Obstinately, she keeps her hand bandaged as a sign of her "solitude unto death." All the other characters have lesser forms of these two extremes: they become "accomplices in solitude," seek "consolation" for solitude, become "lost in solitude," achieve "an honorable pact with solitude," and gain "the privileges of solitude." The saddest expression of solitude is probably the last. The final Aureliano "from the beginning of the world and forever [was] branded by the pockmarks of solitude." He is literally alone because of the scandal his mother caused Fernanda. He is imprisoned in the house for most of his life until there is no one left to pretend to guard him. He has nothing to do but decipher the parchments of Melquiades. In the process "everything is known" to him - even the obliteration of the world of Macondo.

Love and Passion

Love involving persons afflicted by solitude is not a happy experience for those in the novel. The largest symbol of doomed love is Remedios the Beauty, for anyone who pursues her dies. Often the pursuit of the beloved takes the form of writing. Love poems and letters are rarely sent. Rather, they accumulate in the bottom of trunks and then eventually kindle fires. The chase can lead to animosity between siblings and the death of the innocent. Simple passion, on the other hand, often brings happiness to those involved. Aureliano Segundo's passion for his mistress Petra Cotes, in fact, creates fertility and wealth for the family. Nevertheless, consummation is tricky and often dangerous, as it can involve peering through holes in the roof, threatening the removal of chastity pants, or abiding by strange calendars. In its mildest forms, love is a "physical sensation ... like a pebble in his shoes." At its worst, love drives a man to suicide, "his wrists cut by a razor and his hands thrust in a basin of benzoin." In the end, the only Buendia baby "engendered with love" kills its mother, is eaten by ants, and brings an end to the world of the novel

Fate and Chance

The plot of the novel is very simple, Garcia Marquez told Rita Guibert. it is "the story of a family who for a hundred years did everything they could to prevent having a son with pig's tail, and just because of their very efforts to avoid having one they ended up by doing so "The plot is very much like the classic tragedy *Oedipus Rex* (one of Garcia Marquez's favorites), where the effort to prevent a prophecy ends up guaranteeing its fulfillment. In a link with another fundamental western text, the fate of the women in the novel is Eve's fate. They bear the pain of birth, knowing in advance their children will be dictators, bastards, and eventually possess a pig's tail. Ursula's attempt to avoid taking part in this fate is not only circumvented, but her efforts prompt her family's expulsion from home under the shadow of a murder. Thus the cycle of violence, incest, and procreation is begun. Plans by her descendants to alter this course fail. For example, Fernanda decides the fate of her children only to have them hate her for it. Men, for all their creation and destruction, are but steps toward ending what Ursula had begun. This is set forth in the greatest declaration of fate in the novel, the epigraph of Melquiades's manuscript: "The first of the line is tied to a tree and the last is being eaten by the ants."

Time

Playing a role in the development of fate is the nature of time. Throughout the novel, time moves in ways that are nonlinear. When Ursula sees Aureliano Triste planning for the railroad just as his grandfather Jose Arcadio planned Macondo's development, it "confirmed her impression that time was going a circle." She makes similar observations about her great-grandson Jose Arcadio Segundo, whose actions resemble those of her son Colonel Aureliano. As Ursula ages, time becomes mixed up for her, as she relives events from her childhood. Later, Jose Arcadio Segundo and the last Aureliano discover that the first Jose Arcadio was not crazy, but understood "that time also stumbled and had accidents and could therefore splinter and leave an eternalized fragment in a room." Pilar Ternera, who has witnessed all the years of the Buendia family's history, knows that the circular nature of time ensures that the family cannot avoid their fate: "A century of cards and experience had taught her that the history of the family was a machine with unavoidable repetitions, a turning wheel that would have gone on spilling into eternity were it not for the progressive and irremediable wearing of the axle." The family's time is limited, even as Aureliano sees how all of it "coexists in one instant" in the manuscript. As he finishes reading the pages, he knows that "everything written on them was unrepeatable since time immemorial and forever more, because races condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth."

Death

The first line of the novel foreshadows a large role for death in the novel. Death is described as a black mark on a map, and until Melquiades dies, Macondo has no such mark. Thus unknown to the spirits, it is left alone by the world - except for a few

accidental discoveries. After that first mark of blackness, death is as constant a theme as solitude and each character has their particular death. The greatest death is that of the patriarch Jose Arcadio; it is marked by flowers falling from the sky. After that, death becomes a haunting presence, made ever more physical as the degree of decay increases. Burial ceremonies become arduous treks through rain and mud or something one does alone. For example, Fernanda lays herself to rest. Amaranta is the person most familiar with the rites of death. She sees death personified as "a woman dressed in blue with long hair, with a sort of antiquated look, and with a certain resemblance to Pilar Ternera." She is told that she will die once she has finished her own shroud, so she works slowly. When she is finished, she tells the whole community to give her any messages they wish ferried to their dead Amaranta earlier reveals that she loved Colonel Aureliano the best by the way she prepares his body for burial. She does this in solitude.

Knowledge and Ignorance

In the beginning, Jose Arcadio was a beneficent and wise leader who disseminated the simple knowledge necessary for creation His community prospers by following his agricultural instructions and the trees he plants live forever. But then his mind is awakened to the world by the science brought by the Gypsies. His madness begins in the fact that there is so much to know and so many wonderful instruments to invent. In his fascination with mechanical objects he represents the hope of someday having machines do all the work. "Right there across the river there are all kinds of magical instruments while we keep on living like donkeys," he proclaims to his wife. Ursula keeps working like an ant while Jose Arcadio sits, depressed at their lack of instruments. When she stirs him, he goes so far as to teach his children the rudiments of reading and writing before he is lost again in "searching for the mythical truth of the great inventions." Knowledge can distinguish man from beast, but it is dangerous without the activity needed to keep human civilization going. The proper mix of knowledge and activity (represented by the vivacity of guests and the fight against the ants' encroachment) is never struck. As the book nears its end and knowledge is ascendant, the lack of activity speeds decay and hastens death.

Reality is Subjective

The novel presents a constant series of impossible and improbable events intertwined with pedestrian events that can occur in any ordinary life. Many impossible things, such as levitation by chocolate, four years of constant rain, and precognition are presented as everyday occurrences that do not excite much reaction from observers. Other events are not what they initially appear. For example, Melquiades dies several times during the narrative but his deaths are usually not permanent. Social conventions are observed, but they are not typical. For example, Ursula marries her own genetic relative but then refuses to acknowledge the marriage of Jose Arcadio and Rebeca because, though not related, they were raised together. Messages are delivered in symbolic ways alongside routine methods such as airmail. For example, Jose Arcadio notifies his

mother that he has been shot and killed with an allegorical bullet by sending a ribbon of blood which winds through town and her house—being careful not to stain her carpet—to carry the news. His corpse, though physically uninjured, bears the stench of gunpowder which cannot be eradicated, even by prolonged boiling.

Thus, the novel's unique narrative construction has often been labeled surreal or an example of 'magical realism' to indicate that the presentation of reality is subjective. Things are not as they are; they are as the characters collectively perceive them to be. For example, Ursula fears her children will be born with the tail of a pig because of their inbred ancestry—naturally the final Buendia child is born with the tail of a pig because reality conforms to Ursula's perceptions.

Time is Arbitrary

The dominant time progression within the novel is strictly chronological - that is, the chapters present events which happen after the events of previous chapters and before the events of subsequent chapters. This gives the illusion of a seemingly simplistic conception of time as linear. Note, however, that within the overt construction a subtle complexity is constantly introduced. Most characters' fates are heavily foreshadowed by notations as to their ultimate demise. For example, Colonel Aureliano Buendia is introduced in the narrative by noting that years after the 'current' events, he would face a firing squad.

The fluidity of time is also symbolized by Melquiades' laboratory. The room is established and then uninhabited for lengthy periods of time. During all this time, however, it is untouched by age, even the ink in the well remaining fresh. A few characters view the room and see it ravaged by time as would be expected, but most characters view the room and see it fresh as the day it was established. Once again, reality is subjective and, in this case, the reality of time is arbitrarily subjective.

Probably the most interesting artifact of the arbitrary nature of time concerns Melquiades' manuscript. Produced shortly after the founding of Macondo, the manuscript bears the history of the Buendia family. It is apparently correct in all particulars and presents an overwhelming amount of trivia - all approximately one hundred years before the described events transpire. The manuscript is not deciphered until the final pages of the novel by which time it is of course utterly useless as the events described have all come to pass.

Destiny is Certain

The destiny of individuals and families is fixed within the novel and cannot be escaped. This is of course starkly at odds with the other dominant themes of the novel - the fluidity of time and the subjectivity of reality—but it is nevertheless the case. In the opening chapters of the novel Melquiades creates a gigantic manuscript, written in Sanskrit and ciphered with two ancient codes. The manuscript contains the history of the Buendia family over the next one hundred or so years - history that has not yet

occurred. When Aureliano Babilonia reads the manuscript about a century later, he discovers it to be entirely correct down to the most minute and trivial details. Thus, through some means, Melquiades has foreseen everything and recorded it. Even though reality and time itself are presented as abstract and mutable, nevertheless Melquiades had written a true account, demonstrating that destiny is inescapable.

This theme is echoed by several other narrative elements. First, Pilar Ternera often plays at fortune telling by reading cards; her predictions are, without fail, exactly correct even though somewhat sporadic. Even her most unlikely or outlandish pronouncements occur exactly as stated. Unlike most 'real world' prophetic statements, Pilar Ternera's predictions are precise and unambiguous - thus, their accomplishment is definitive. Second, many characters have some form of limited prescience - for example, Colonel Aureliano Buendia knows that signal events will occur before they actually transpire. His premonitions are often vague, but they are always correct. By this way he knows that his seventeen sons will be massacred. His prescience is symbolized during his birth; he is born with his eyes open and looking about.

Style

Climax

The Hungarian composer Bela Bartok fascinates Garcia Marquez and so the author constructed his novel along this composer's line. For example, he configured his climax so it would land five-sevenths of the way through the book - when the strikers are massacred - just as Bartok would have done in a musical composition. From this point on it is denouement and decay until the waters come to wash the earth clean. Also, in similar ways to a musical composition, many characters have a motif or theme which accompanies their presence, such as Mauricio Babilonia's butterflies.

Foreshadowing

The novel opens with the suggestion that the Colonel Aureliano will, at some point, face the firing squad. This is a technique called foreshadowing and it is used throughout the hook to emphasize the simultaneity and inevitability of events. The example of Colonel Aureliano's firing squad is also used as a memory motif. Another example of foreshadowing occurs when Fernanda says of Mauricio Babilonia, "You can see in his face that he's going to die," even though she has not yet discovered he is the one romancing her daughter Meme. Fernanda asks the mayor to order a guard to stand watch in order to catch a suspected chicken thief. When Mauricio Babilonia tries to sneak in to Meme's bathroom, that night, the guard shoots and paralyzes him.

Narration

The detached, matter-of-face narrative voice in the novel was drawn from his grandmother, according to Garcia Marquez:

She did not change her expression at all when telling her stories and everyone was surprised. In previous attempts to write, I tried to tell the story without believing in it. I discovered that what I had to do was believe in them myself and write them with the same expression with which my grandmother told them: with a brick face"

Knowing this, the function of the narrator becomes even more difficult to interpret, as one might want to argue that the novel is Ursula's story. The narrator seems to be the omniscient and omnipresent Melquiades, whose manuscript foretells the Buendia family history and cannot be read for one hundred years. The last Aureliano is finally able to decipher the story after he sees his son eaten by ants. Thus the reader is deciphering a work translated into English from a decoded Spanish translated from the Sanskrit with "even lines in the private cipher of the Emperor Augustus and the odd ones in a Lacedemonian military code."

Burlarse de la Gente

Critic Gordon Brotherston, in his *The Emergence of the Latin American Novel,* wondered whether the novel's conclusion "could be just a sophisticated example of the ability to use literature to make fun of people *(burlarse de la gente)* which [the last] Aureliano had discovered on meeting [Gabriel] Marquez and other friends in The Golden Boy." The novel does make fun of people, especially politicians and writers. It satirizes the chaos of Latin American history, as well as the gullibility of people so easily taken in by circus freaks and politicians. Mostly, it makes fun of the reader, who in the act of reading realizes that he or she is a Buendia who is reading the parchments of Melquiades and ignoring the child being eaten on the floor.

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is a technique of exaggeration that is not intended for literal interpretation. The best example of hyperbole comes in the description of Jose" Arcadio, Ursula's eldest son. Rather than say he becomes a grown man, Jose Arcadio is given all the conceivable gargantuan attributes. "His square shoulders barely fitted through the doorways." He has a "bison neck," the "mane of a mule", and he has jaws of iron. He eats whole animals in one sitting. His presence "gave the quaking impression of a seismic tremor."

Magic Realism

A term first used by Alejo Carpentier, magic or magical realism is a uniquely Latin American style of writing which does not differentiate fact from illusion or myth from truth. With its ghosts, magical gypsies, raining flowers, voracious ants, and impossible feats, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is a seminal example of magic realism. Garcia Marquez has explained that this type of writing is a natural result of being from a people with a vibrant ancestry. In an interview for *Playboy,* he said:

Clearly, the Latin American environment is marvelous Particularly the Caribbean . To grow up in such an environment is to have fantastic resources for poetry. Also, in the Caribbean, we are capable of believing anything, because we have the influences of [Indian, pirate, African, and European] cultures, mixed in with Catholicism and our own local beliefs I think that gives us an open-mindedness to look beyond apparent reality "

Motif

Motifs are recurring images or themes and are used throughout the novel to close the gaps of the narrative. Seemingly unrelated episodes become connected through the use of these recurring motifs. In addition, motif reinforces the circularity of the novel. As the story is spun, each motif is seen again and again, but in different combinations. One example might be the unusual plagues of insects that appear throughout the novel, from

the scorpions in Meme's bathtub to the butterflies that follow Mauricio Babilonia to the ants which continually infest the house.

Men in black robes pass through like a march of death whenever they are needed to justify the actions of the government. Numbers recur—there are twenty-one original founders and twenty-one original revolutionary soldiers. The motif that accentuates the futility of human activity reaches a crescendo in the solitude of Colonel Aureliano, who makes fishes, sells them, and with the money he earns he makes more fishes. Locked in this circle. Colonel Aureliano seals himself in the workroom, coming out only to urinate. Bodily functions (e.g., drunkenness usually ends up in vomit and tears) are also a motif. Amaranta enters this cycle with sewing, for her theme song is that of the weaver, the spider. She sews and un-sews buttons. She, like the mythic Penelope, buys time by weaving and unweaving her shroud. Memories are an essential motif, recurring at their barest every time we hear about Colonel Aureliano facing the firing squad. Ursula embodies memories and as they fade, so does she. Jose Arcadio Buendia reads and rereads the parchments. All the while time is passing or not passing, it is always a Monday in March inside the room of Melquiades' manuscript. All of the motifs are games of solitude used by the characters to pass the one hundred years.

Point of View

The novel is presented in the third-person, omniscient, point of view. This point of view is mandated by the nature of the novel which spans over ten decades and seven generations of time. No character persists throughout the entire chronology and thus a first-person point of view would be difficult. The narrator's omniscience is complete but selectively exercised. Interior thoughts are seldom presented, but character motivation is considered often and at length. The stated motivation often makes their acts understandable and even sympathetic, but just as often it makes acts more atrocious than they would otherwise seem.

The narrator is unnamed and is sometimes unreliable. The nature of the narrator is entirely unclear, but narrative statements are sometimes at odds with each other. For example, the narrator states that Colonel Aureliano Buendia's seventeen sons "...were exterminated one after the other on a single night..." (p. 6) yet the description of the actual event states "During the course of that week, at different places along the coast, his seventeen sons were hunted down like rabbits..." (p. 238). In point of fact, after sixteen of them are exterminated the seventeenth, Aureliano Amador, escapes and lives for many, many years before being murdered. Thus narrative statements sometimes vary from stated facts.

Setting

Macondo is the town which is the novel's principle, and nearly only, setting. It is noted as being west of Riohacha, located in a swamp, and thought to be on a peninsula. It is settled by a small group of people who leave Riohacha in search of the sea; however,

the factual city of Riohacha is a port - located on the coast - and has no substantive land mass to the west. Thus, the location of Macondo is at best problematic. More likely, it is intended to be a quasi-mythical place that cannot be precisely located but is in the vicinity of the Guajiro district of present-day Columbia. It is founded by 21 refugee families c. 1810; they desire to escape the shame of Riohacha and spent two full years crossing the mountains which lie to the west of Riohacha. When the novel opens the town is at least six, but no more than fourteen, years old. They then descended into a swamp and, following a river, wander for several more months in an attempt to find the river's outlet to the sea. Finally giving up, they settle in the middle of the swamp. Over the course of several generations (and presumably hundreds of years) the tiny village grows into a substantive town.

The town has no cemetery because reportedly no one has ever died there. Although there is one corpse, it is placed in a bag and withers away into rattling bones that wander about town. The town is laid out along the river such that, at least at first, all the houses are equidistant from water. The town has an almond tree on nearly every corner. On a few occasions expeditions have set out from the town to discover other points of civilization - they are always frustrated and return after wandering in the swamp for many days, often making fabulous but mysterious discoveries. This all changes when, after hundreds of years of isolation, one townswoman finds a big city only two days away, connected to Macondo by a well-established roadway.

Macondo is bounded by a river on the north; the river probably flows from east-to-west. Macondo is bounded by a great swamp which leads to expansive water on the west and by swamp and, presumably, the sea to the south. It is bounded to the east by a strip of swamp and then a vast mountain range, over which lies Riohacha. Further north is what appears to be a vast plain of moist volcanic ash devoid of plant life - this plain extends for at least ten days' travel. Most citizens believe the town is located on a peninsula though this is at odds with its seeming location in the center of an expansive geographic region. For all of its reported total isolation over many early decades, the town always receives an irregular mail service, is frequented by various gypsy troupes (some sail from far away, and some travel overland), and is also frequented by a lone wandering minstrel who brings news. The town is also home to various Guajiro Indians though how they arrived is not fully discussed. In brief, Macondo, so far as can be ascertained, must be located in the Guajiro District of Columbia on a peninsula that juts into the Caribbean. Note however that although such a location is the most probable it is rendered completely impossible by various facts of geography. For example, the real-world peninsula is arid but Macondo lies in the middle of a vast swamp.

Language and Meaning

The novel presents a complex interplay of language and meaning. Within the novel several languages are mentioned—Spanish, of course, but also Sanskrit, English, and Guajira. Some of the characters learn Guajira before Spanish, the early gypsy's native tongue is stated to be Sanskrit, and some characters learn English by self-study. The narrative suggests that language defines meaning but this is a fairly subtle and minor

theme. This is somewhat complicated by the fact that the original text is written in Spanish; the text considered in this summary is the masterful English-language translation performed by Gregory Rabassa. Since the novel's original publication it has been translated into numerous additional languages.

Meaning within the novel simultaneously presents both an obstacle to, and an opportunity for, serious academic study. Most notable events in the novel are given a multiplicity of meanings which defy conventional analysis. For example, consider the actions of Jose Arcadio when he intervenes to prevent the execution by firing squad of Colonel Aureliano Buendia, his brother. Jose Arcadio walks into the street with a double shotgun and menaces a squad of soldiers armed with magazine rifles. They not only acquiesce to his demands to free their prisoner, but they subsequently join with Colonel Aureliano Buendia's revolutionary forces. Colonel Aureliano Buendia is thus spared to go on and start and lose another dozen or so wars. A few days later Jose Arcadio falls dead; in the next room his wife Rebeca hears a shot ring out. But Jose Arcadio's body has no injury. And yet a ribbon of blood issues from his ear. His body bears the stench of powder. Allegorically, he has been shot with a non-existent bullet intended for his brother; his act of interference was actually an act of self-sacrifice. To further complicate the situation, his corpse is treated as a sort of food item, being boiled and treated with herbs in a futile attempt to remove the stench of assassination. Years later the corpse is still so pungent that the groundwater of the town is contaminated.

Structure

The 417-page novel is divided into twenty unnamed and unnumbered chapters of approximately equal length. The twenty chapters cover a period of approximately one hundred years and provide a history of seven generations of the Buendia family. The distribution of events and generations is not equal, however the second, fourth, and sixth generations are allotted more detail than the odd-numbered generations; this is only a general trend, however. Some characters, such as Colonel Aureliano Buendia and Ursula, command an unusually high amount of attention while other characters - specifically Santa Sofia de la Piedad - are nearly non-existent within the novel.

In broad terms, the events of the narrative are presented in chronological order - thus, the events of a given chapter occur 'after' the events in a previous chapter and 'before' the events in a subsequent chapter. Within this structure occur a large number of flashback or flash-forward scenes. Such a simplistic approach to the novel is, however, problematic. Statements foreshadow characters' ultimate demise - the statements are often inexact or even erroneous in detail, but are always broadly true. For example, the novel opens with "Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendia was to remember that distant afternoon when..." (p. 1) and the narrative goes on to develop events in yet a third time period within a few paragraphs. In this regard the novel echoes the structure of Melquiades' manuscript in which the author "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" (p. 415).

Historical Context

Origins of the Colombian State

Knowing the history of the country of Colombia can provide considerable insight into the political battles that take place all throughout *One Hundred Years of Solitude.* The original inhabitants of present-day Colombia were conquered by the Spanish in the 1530s and incorporated into the colony of New Granada, which also encompassed the territories of modern-day Panama, Ecuador, and Venezuela. The area lay under Spanish rule for almost three hundred years, developing a culture and population that blended Spanish, Indian, and African influences. In 1810, Simon Bolivar led the Mestizo (mixed-race) population in a struggle for independence from Spain. It was achieved with his victory at Boyaca, Colombia, in 1819. The new republic of Gran Colombia fell apart, however, when Ecuador and Venezuela formed separate nations in 1830. The remaining territory assumed the name the Republic of Colombia in 1886. In 1903 the area that is now Panama seceded, helped by the United States, who wanted control of a canal along the isthmus between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

Political strife was rampant in nineteenth-century Colombia and parties formed under Liberal and Conservative banners. These parties corresponded to the followers of President Bolivar and his vice-president and later rival, Francisco San-tender, respectively. Their essential conflict was over the amount of power the central government should have (Conservatives advocated more. Liberals less). The two parties waged a number of wars, but the civil war from 1899 to 1902 was incredibly violent, leaving one hundred thousand people dead. In the novel, this history of constant political struggle is reflected in the career of Colonel Aureliano Buendia.

The United Fruit Company

The United States influenced Colombian history at the beginning of the century with their assistance in Panama's secession, and American interests continued their influence for many years thereafter. While petroleum, minerals, coffee, and cocoa are now considered Colombia's main exports, at the start of the twentieth century bananas were the country's chief export. The United Fruit Company (UFC) was the most notorious company invested in this trade. Based in the United States, the UFC gradually assumed control of the Banana Zone—the area of banana plantations in Colombia. The UFC would enter an area, build a company town, attract workers, and pay them in scrip redeemable only in company stores. UFC would then leave as soon as the workers unionized or the harvest began to show fatigue from over-cultivation.

The culminating event of this industry occurred in October of 1928, when thirty-two thousand workers went on strike, demanding things like proper sanitary facilities and cash salaries. One night, a huge crowd gathered in the central plaza of Cienaga to hold a demonstration. Troops, who were being paid by UFC in cigarettes and beer, opened

fire on the crowd. General Cortes Vargas, in charge of the troops that night, estimated forty dead. Another observer, however, estimated four hundred lying dead in the square and totaled fifteen hundred dead of wounds incurred there. He also noted an additional three thousand people with non-fatal injuries. Whichever the real numbers, the incident was officially denied by the government and was not included in the history textbooks. This denial is reflected in the novel when Jose" Arcadio Segundo cannot convince anyone that the massacre of strikers he witnessed actually occurred.

Twentieth-Century Political Conflicts

Social and political division m Colombia intensified throughout the 1930s and 1940s. The next period of Colombian history, "the Violence," began after the Liberal mayor of Bogota, Jorge Eliecer Gaitan, was assassinated. The Liberal government was overthrown, and General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla took control of the government. Both parties sent their paramilitary forces sweeping through the various sectors under their control. Many people were displaced during the fighting. Rojas began a period of absolute military rule, and Congress was subsequently dissolved. It was during Rojas's rule that Garcia Marquez was forced to leave the country because of an article he had written.

When Rojas fell to a military junta in 1957, the Liberal and Conservative parties agreed on a compromise government, the National Front. This arrangement granted the two parties equal representation within the cabinet and legislature, as well as alternating occupation of the Presidency. While this arrangement lessened the direct political rivalry between the two parties, there came a rise in guerilla insurgencies. This was the atmosphere of Garcia Marquez's home country during the time he was writing *One Hundred Years of Solitude.*

Since then, guerilla factions of the 1970s have given way in the 1980s and 1990s to a coordinated network of drug cartels, struggling farmers, and indigenous tribes. Violence has often marked the political process, as guerillas and drug lords attempt to influence elections and trials with violent threats. In 1990, after three other candidates were assassinated, Cesar Gaviria Trujillo was elected president. During his administration the people of Colombia approved a new constitution, aimed at further democratizing the political system. The drug trade has continued to pose problems for the government, however. When the Medellin drug cartel was broken up in 1993, the Call cartel grew to fill the vacuum. The government of Liberal Ernesto Samper Pizano, elected in 1994, has attempted to combat drug traffickers and thus improve relations with the United States. Popular support for these efforts has not always been forthcoming, particularly by small farmers who are economically dependent on the drug trade.

Critical Overview

Mexican novelist and critic Carlos Fuentes was amazed by the first three chapters of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* that Garcia Marquez sent him for review. Once published, the novel was snatched up by the public, selling out its first printing within a week. Critics were on their feet, fellow novelists took their caps off, and everyone wanted to talk to Garcia Marquez about the story. Printers could not keep up with the demand for what Chilean poet Pablo Neruda called, in a March 1970 issue of *Time,* "the greatest revelation in the Spanish language since the *Don Quixote* of Cervantes." American novelist William Kennedy similarly wrote in the *National Observer* that the book "is the first piece of literature since the Book of Genesis that should be required reading for the entire human race."

Early reviews of the novel were almost uniformly positive, with praise for the author's skill and style. Paul West, in the *Chicago Tribune Book World,* observed that the novel "feeds the mind's eye non-stop, so much so that you soon begin to feel that never has what we superficially call the surface of life had so many corrugations and configurations.... So I find it odd that the blurb points to 'the simplicity ...' [of the writing]." Paradoxical as it may seem, many commentators agreed. Garcia Marquez's delivery is so elegantly crafted that despite being bombarded by information, the reader simply wants more. For West, the novel is "a verbal Mardi Gras" that is "irresistible." Given this type of exuberance, the crusty review by D. J. Enright, in *The Listener,* is striking. He found the depiction of civil war and the thud of rifle butts upsetting. He noted that "these are no happy giants or jolly grotesques" and added that "the book is hardly comic." He concluded by calling the novel a "slightly bloated avatar of the austere [Argentinean writer] Jorge Luis Borges."

In contrast, *New York Times* critic John Leonard stated that the novel is not only delightful, it is relevant. "It is also a recapitulation of our evolutionary and intellectual experience," he observed. "Macondo is Latin America in microcosm." He then compared the author with other great writers, including Russian-American Vladimir Nabokov (author of *Lolita* and German Gunter Grass (author of *The Tin Drum).* Other reviewers have compared Garcia Marquez to a whole range of writers, the most prominent of which is American Nobel laureate William Faulkner. Faulkner's fictional Yoknapatawpha County is similar in scope and depth to Garcia Marquez's Macondo. In addition, the comparison of the Buendias to other famous families started with the Karamazovs of Dostoevsky and Faulkner's Sartoris clan, and moved to the family of black humorist Charles Addams.

In addition to receiving praise for its individual virtues, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* has been hailed for its role in alerting the world to the literature and culture of Latin America In reflecting on Latin American enthusiasm for the novel, *New York Review of Books* contributor Jack Richardson stated that it is "as if to suggest that the style and sensibility of their history had at last been represented by a writer who understands their particular secrets and rhythms."

While attention has been given to the novel's historical relevance, most criticism has focused on its technical aspects Writing in *Diacritics,* Ricardo Gullon explained how the novel demonstrates the author's technical mastery: Garcia Marquez's "need to tell a story is so strong that it transcends the devices he uses to satisfy that need. Technique is not a mere game; it is something to be made use of." Another aspect of the author's technique was noted by Gordon Brotherston in his *The Emergence of the Latin American Novel.* The novel often, and not always in flattering ways, refers to other novels. In doing so, the world of literature is made more real and the real world made literature.

The use of myth in the novel provides another opportunity for critical comment Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria, in *Modern Language Notes,* explained the ease of mythmaking in Latin America. He noted that the key to the success of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is the novel's awareness of the way the New World was "written into existence" through chronicles of the first European settlers. The Spanish crown gathered these eyewitness accounts into a huge archive begun by King Charles V. Echevarria points out the references Garcia Marquez makes to these chronicles, as well as the resultant self-reflexivity imposed on the reader that is only exaggerated by the last scene. His conclusion is that, "In terms of the novel's ability to pass on cultural values ... [though] it is impossible to create new myths, [we are brought] back once and again to that moment where our desire for meaning can only be satisfied by myth."

Academics have written on the novel precisely because Garcia Marquez is capable of doing what others have failed to do. Gene H. Bell-Villada writes, in *From Dante to Garcia Marquez,* that Garcia M&quez is able to do for the banana strike what Tolstoy did for Napoleon's invasion of Russia. For example, he avoided "a serious flaw of [Miguel Angel] Asturias' banana trilogy" by not including a Yankee protagonist. Instead, he presented silent Yankee caricatures. The closest he comes is a "rare utterance" from Mr. Brown "relayed to us secondhand, via an unreliable source." Bell-Villada then continues to examine the ways in which the facts of the banana strike are actually used in the novel— even if stretched a little.

When Bell-Villada interviewed Garcia Marquez for *Boston Review,* he told him that his novel is required reading for many political science courses in the United States. Garcia Marquez responded that he was not aware of this, but he was startled to see his book listed in a bibliography for an academic study of Latin America by the French economist Rene Dumont. When asked about the strike scene, Garcia M&rquez noted that people now allude to "the thousands who died in the 1928 strike." Wistfully, he added, "As my Patriarch says: it doesn't matter if something isn't true, because eventually it will be!"

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

Henningfeld is an associate professor at Adrian College, In the following essay, she explores the layers of meaning in the novel, noting the ways in which Garcia Marquez intertwines myth, history, and literary theory to create a work that is at once readable and complex.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez's masterpiece, *Cien anos de soledad* was published in Buenos Aires in 1967. The English translation, *One Hundred Years of Solitude,* prepared for Harper and Row by Gregory Rabassa, appeared in 1970. Several noted Latin American writers applauded the book even before its publication, and post-publication response was universally positive. The novel has been translated into twenty-six languages and continues to enjoy both popular and critical acclaim.

Garcia Marquez was born in Aracataca, Colombia, on March 6, 1928. For the first eight years of his life, he lived with his grandparents. He credits his grandmother for his ability to tell stories, and for giving him the narrative voice he needed to write *One Hundred Years of Solitude.*

One Hundred Years of Solitude is a novel that is at once easily accessible to the reader and, at the same time, very difficult to analyze. The book has an effective plot that propels the reader forward. Simultaneously, the book functions on no less than five or six different levels. Any reading concentrating on one level may not do justice to the others. Consequently, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is a book that demands careful and multiple readings.

Mario Vargas Llosa, the Peruvian writer, calls *One Hundred Years of Solitude* a " 'total' novel, in the tradition of those insanely ambitious creations which aspire to compete with reality on an equal basis, confronting it with an image and qualitatively matching it in vitality, vastness and complexity." Other critics have commented on the multi-layered nature of the book, noting that Garcia Marquez intertwines myth, history, ideology, social commentary, and literary theory to produce this "total" novel. Although the book needs to be considered as a whole creation, it may also be helpful to examine a few of these layers individually in order to deepen appreciation for the whole.

One of the most common ways of viewing the novel is through myth. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude,* Garcia Marquez weaves references to classical and Biblical myths. Myths are important stories that develop in a culture to help the culture understand itself and its relationship to the world. For example, nearly every culture has a myth concerning the origin of the world and of the culture. In addition, myths often contain elements of the supernatural to help explain the natural world. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* opens with the creation story of Macondo. Certainly, there are echoes of the Biblical Garden of Eden in the opening lines: "The world was so recent that many things lacked names, and in order to indicate them it was necessary to point." In addition, the years of rain that fall on Macondo and the washing away of the village recall myths of the great flood, when all civilization was swept away.

Scholars who study myth have identified characters who fulfill certain functions in myths across cultures. These character-types are often called "archetypes" because they seem to present a pattern. For example, the patriarch is a male character who often leads his family to a new home and who is responsible for the welfare of his people. Jose Arcadio Buendia is a representative of this type. Other archetypal characters in the novel include the matriarch, represented by Ursula, and the virgin, represented by Remedios the Beauty. Petra Cotes and Pilar Ternera, with their blatant sexuality and fertility as well as their connection to fortune telling, serve as archetypal witches.

Further, many myths have patterns that repeat themselves over and over. Likewise, the novel presents pattern after pattern, from the language Garcia Marquez uses to the repetitive nature of the battles fought by Colonel Aureliano Buendia, to the naming of the characters. Indeed, the repetitions form the structure of the book.

Finally, many myths take as their starting point violence and/or the breaking of an important taboo. Certainly, the novel does both. The town of Macondo is founded and the history of the Buendias launched as the result of violence and incest. When Jose Arcadio and Ursula Iguaran marry, she refuses to allow the marriage to be consummated because they are cousins. She fears that she will give birth to a child with the tail of a pig. Prudencio Aguilar makes jokes about Jose Arcadio's manhood and as a result, Jose Arcadio kills Prudencio, an act that finally forces Jose Arcadio and Ursula to leave their town and found Macondo.

Garcia M&rquez also incorporates personal, local, national, and continental history into his novel.

The village of Macondo is clearly modeled on the village of his childhood, Aracataca. Indeed, the name of the banana plantation just outside of Aracataca was Macondo. In addition, many of the episodes of the novel are based on events from Garcia Marquez's life with his grandparents For example, the opening episode of Jose Arcadio taking his sons to see ice is certainly modeled on a similar incident in young Garcia Marquez's life, when his grandfather took him to see ice for the first time.

Other critics have noted the ways in which the founding of Macondo mirrors Colombian settlement by Europeans. Just as the early residents of Macondo are cut off from the rest of the world, the early colonists were also extremely isolated. In addition, the institutions of civilization, such as the government and the church, moved slowly, but inexorably, into Colombia, just as they do into Macondo. Apolinar Moscote and Father Nicanor Reyna are recognizable representatives of these institutions; their appearance in Macondo signals a shift from the Edenic, Arcadian days of the founding.

The middle part of the novel traces the course of a long civil war, fought between the Liberals and Conservatives. Colonel Aureliano Buendia is one of the leaders of the Liberal cause. The civil war in the novel follows closely the long years of civil war in Colombia when the Liberals and Conservatives battled for control of the country. Many critics have pointed out the parallels between the fictional Aureliano Buendia and the historical General Rafael Uribe Uribe, the military leader of the Colombian Liberals.

Finally, Garcia Marquez incorporates into his novel the American intervention into Latin America. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the United Fruit Company, an American concern, began operating large scale banana plantations throughout Latin America. In 1928, a strike by workers over living conditions and contract violations led to a massive massacre. Newspapers differ in their accounts and it is difficult to arrive at a final figure for the number killed. Further, the governmental bureaucracy, intent on maintaining the flow of American dollars into Colombia, covered up the massacre. The fictional account of the slaying of the strikers in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* reads remarkably like the accounts of the historical 1928 Cienaga strike.

Finally, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is a novel written within a particular literary context. Three important literary terms are often used in discussion of the novel: magic (or magical) realism; intertextuality; and metafiction. Knowing something about each of these devices is important for an understanding of the literary task Garcia Marquez set for himself in *One Hundred Years of Solitude.*

Magic realism is a term first used to describe the surreal images of painters in the 1920s and 1930s. Defining the term in literature has caused some controversy among literary scholars. However, according to Regina James in her *One Hundred Years of Solitude: Modes of Reading,* "In current Anglo-American usage, magic realism is a narrative technique that blurs the distinction between fantasy and reality." Certainly, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* offers many examples of magic realism according to this definition, although not all critics would agree with the definition. Part of the effect of magic realism is created by the completely neutral tone of the narrator. He reports such things as gypsies on flying carpets, the insomnia plague, the ascension of Remedios the Beauty, and the levitation of Father Nicanor with no indication that these occurrences are the least bit out of the ordinary, just as the inhabitants of Macondo respond to the events. On the other hand, the residents of Macondo respond to items such as magnets and ice with great wonder, as if these were the stuff of fantasy. Garcia Marquez himself argues that the reality of South America is more fantastic than anything "magical" in his writing. Further, as he writes in his Nobel acceptance speech, "The Solitude of Latin America,"

Poets and beggars, musicians and prophets, warriors and scoundrels, all creatures of that unbridled reality, we have had to ask but little of imaginations, for our crucial problem has been a lack of conventional means to render our lives believable That is the crux of our solitude

Another important term for the study of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is intertextuality. Julia Kristeva, the French philosopher, created this term to describe the way that every text refers to and changes previous texts. Most obviously, a text can do this through allusion, by directly referring to a previous text through names of characters, incidents in the plot, or language, for example. As Regina Janes points out in her book, *One Hundred Years of Solitude: Modes of Reading,* the novel "adopts the narrative frame of the Bible and the plot devices of *Oedipus Tyrannos* and parodies both." That is, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* follows the structure of the Bible: it begins with an idyllic creation in a garden-like setting, where all the people are innocent. The movement of

the plot is away from the moment of creation and toward the moment of Apocalypse, when all of Macondo is swept away. Second, in *Oedipus the King,* the entire tragedy is foretold by the oracle at Delphi, which tells Oedipus's parents that their son will murder his father and marry his mother. While the characters in the play take actions to prevent this, each action they take merely ensures that it will happen. Likewise, the fate of the Buendia family is sealed with the incestuous marriage between Jose Arcadio and Ursula. What Ursula fears most occurs in the closing pages of the book: the last Buendia child is born with the tail of a pig, the result of the marriage of Aurehano Babiloma (who does not know his parentage) to his aunt, Amaranta Ursula.

Finally, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is an excellent example of metafiction, a work of fiction that takes as its subject the creation and reading of texts From the moment that Melquiades presents Jos6 Arcadio with the manuscript, members of the Buendia family attempt to decipher it. These attempts parallel the attempts of the reader to decipher the text of *One Hundred Years of Solitude.* Further, during the insomnia epidemic, Jose Arca-dio's labels illustrate the metafictional quality of the novel: "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." As readers, we participate in the creation of a fictional reality, in this sentence, Garcia Marquez reminds us that the "reality" of the Buendias is no more than "momentarily captured" words. The "reality" of the Buendias ends when the reader closes the book

Even more explicitly metafictional is the conclusion. In the last three pages, Aureliano finally deciphers the manuscript left by Melquiades, and suddenly understands that he is reading the history of his family. As he reads, he catches up to the present and then reads himself into the future at the moment Macondo is destroyed. At the same instant, readers of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* realize that Melquiades' manuscript is the novel they are reading themselves. The wind that wipes out the "city of mirrors (or mirages)" is the turning of the final page. At that moment, the reader participates in the destruction of Macondo.

As should be obvious, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is a book that changes with reading; a second or third reading will be very different from the first. The multiple paths a reader takes through the novel, reading it as myth, as history, as metafiction, provide a rich and complicated stew, one that can be savored again and again.

Source: Diane Andrews Henningfeld, in an essay for *Novels for Students,* Gale, 1999

Critical Essay #2

In the following excerpt, Stevens and Vela discuss how Marquez deals with the problem of "distinguishing between illusion and reality" by fusing the two instead of treating them as separate entities.

The technical difficulty of distinguishing between illusion and reality is one of the oldest and most important problems faced by the novelist in particular and by mankind in general. In art, philosophy, or politics, western man has traditionally made great conscious efforts to keep illusion separated from fact while admiring and longing (at least superficially) for a transcendental way of life. The irony of this longing resides in the fact that western man's scientific and technological achievements are in great part due to his ability to separate fact from fiction, myth from science, and illusion from reality It is a paradox of western culture that it draws its psychological strength from a spiritual-mythical well while its muscle is drawn largely from science and technology.

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude,* Gabriel Garcia Marquez deals with the paradox very successfully by not trying to solve it at all. That is to say, the perceptions of reality which appear in the novel are all *prima facie* perceptions and, as a consequence, become indistinguishable from reality. For example, when Meme falls in love with Mauricio Babilonia she finds herself attended ever after by a swarm of yellow butterflies. The question whether they are real or imaginary butterflies is the wrong question. Marquez makes it evident that he places little value on such questions and that there is, in a way, no inherent value in real butterflies as opposed to imaginary butterflies in the world which he describes and, by extension, perhaps in our world as well.

The butterflies are there, *prima facie,* and the distinction between symbol and actuality is broken down and declared void by the lyrical fiat of his style. The technical result of this method and the value of this view is that the conventional distinction between figurative and literal language is impossible to make and pointless beside. Conventional literary terms are inadequate to describe this fusion of both literal and metaphorical language.

We who are trained to compartmentalize our minds into fact and fancy, business and God, myth and science, are prone to wonder over the nature of these butterflies, their origin, and their significance. In reality, however, the question is presumptuous and has validity only in our narrow-minded world with its forty-hour work week and our constant, energy-consuming, watchful stand to keep fancy and reality separated in our minds.

When we are told that it rained for four years, eleven months, and two days, we need not ask ourselves whether this could be so; rather we soon come to accept it as a given quantity and eventually, through the art of Garcia Marquez, we come to accept all things in the novel as they are. This, we are soon convinced, is also a workable view of reality. Multiplying such details with profound ingenuity, Marquez gradually brings the reader's skeptical biases into harmony with the spiritual and intellectual life of his townsfolk. When Jose Arcadio is shot,

A trickle of blood came out under the door, crossed the living room, went out into the street, continued on in a straight line across the uneven terraces, went down steps and climbed over curbs, passed along the Street of the Turks, turned a corner to the right and another to the left, made a right angle at the Buendia house, went in under the closed door, crossed through the parlor hugging the walls so as not to stain the rugs . . and came out in the kitchen, where Ursula was getting ready to crack thirty-six eggs to make bread

There is no question as to how this episode is to be taken, only the simple declaration that it happened. This blood which defies the laws of physics is neither symbolical, miraculous, nor scientifically credible. It is simply a fiat of reality in Macondo. Are such events also possible in our own world? Perhaps they are more real in the Colombian *cienega grande,* yet, on the other hand, people who believe in the day of judgment and the resurrection of the dead, except for a certain narrowness of mind, should have little trouble with a stream of blood that does not coagulate in one minute and that travels uphill.

One of the elements constituting this poetic vision of things is the mythopoeic. The village of Macondo is a microcosm and the one hundred years recounted in the novel is a compression of the whole history of man. The village begins *ex nihilo,* rises to a golden age, and falls away into oblivion. Everything that can happen in our world happened there. A village was founded, children begotten, revolutions spawned, technology developed, lust, love, death, and beatitude were all enacted with the luxuriant and unending variety that suggests the inexhaustibility of the individual experience of human events. Marquez's myth has its own cosmology, "going back to before original sin." The world began the "day that Sir Francis Drake attacked Riohacha," and it is of no consequence that Drake set sail and lived a lifetime prior to this day. In the golden age of Macondo nobody died, and all men lived in a sacred and eternal present tense. As time passed knowledge accumulated, but wisdom was still the property of the few, and political power belonged, even as in our world, to the cheat and the liar. As the world aged, it was overtaken by a great insomniac sickness which resulted in a loss of memory. In fear that their loss would bring chaos, the people of Macondo put up signs to remind themselves of the identity of things; "table, chair, clock, door ...," and on main street they placed the largest of all the signs against their forgetfulness, *DIOS EXISTE.* In giving things names, they also gave them reality; in having Jose Arcadio Buendia to give things their names, Garcia Marquez gives him the function of Adam, the first man, and he simultaneously seems to tell us that anything which may be forgotten by man may lose its existence and, perhaps, its *reality.*

Marquez gives a sort of sacredness to all experience by breaking down the wall between the sacred and the profane, as he has broken down the wall between fact and fiction, and by refusing to intellectualize his characters. Remedios the Beauty, for instance, remains utterly chaste—not because she is pious, but because she is simple and does not know the thoughts of men. But what does it matter whether her innocence came by piety or ignorance? In either case, she ascends into heaven while hanging sheets in the backyard, and who is to gainsay her ascension? Marquez, whose point of view in the novel is somewhat like God's, has declared it so. In short, the writer has

created in Remedios a natural piety which may be thought of as pure without puritanism - simultaneously sacred and profane.

Time also has mythopoeic significance in the novel. Everything ages and moves toward its own end. Life, regardless of its particular reality, is a transient condition, at best. Marquez's point of view in the novel is the point of view of God: all time is simultaneous. The story of Macondo is at once complete from beginning to end, and, at the same time, it is the story of only one out of an infinite number of worlds each with its own story. More than that, it is the story of Jose Arcadio

Buendia, one out of an infinite number of men but one who is more the father of man than Adam himself, for if Adam's sin was to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge, Jose Arcadio's was to live too much and too long He lived from the beginning of time until the world became old. One has the feeling that if the world had not become old, Jose Arcadio would not have died—but he and his descendants would never have deciphered the parchments of the ancients, never have acquired knowledge. "What's happening," Ursula notes, "is that the world is slowly coming to an end...." When the great apocalypse does befall Macondo however, it falls not in fire or flood, but rather it creeps in as the rot and decay of antiquity. When Aureliano Babilonia deciphers the parchments of Melquiades which contain all the knowledge and all the secrets of the ancients, he finds that "Melquiades 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 co-existed in one instant." The simultaneity of all time cannot be achieved literally by the novelist, and therefore he must create the illusion of it This Marquez does by creating a microcosm of Macondo and giving it a micro-history while the individuals involved are as real as we.

In the last analysis, "time" is one of the major themes of the novel, as its title suggests. By setting all things in the context of their mortality, by dramatizing the apocalyptic nature of antiquity and decay (some say the world will end in flood, some say in fire, Marquez says it will die of old age), Marquez induces in us a rich reverence for all of his characters and events. There are great depths of bitterness in this novel—bitterness for the death of the old woman clubbed to death by the soldiers' rifle butts, for the treachery of the government and the North American fruit company, for the train-load of massacred townsfolk whose corpses "would be thrown into the sea like rejected bananas " Yet time and decay spread over these bitter incidents in such a way as to mellow and sanctify them. All of history occurred in Macondo, and it became holy through Melquiades's recitation of it in the sacred parchments; in like manner Marquez transforms the common experience of our world into something magical by his telling of it in the novel. Time bestows its blessing; all things are made holy because they have existed.

A second element of Marquez's view of life, beyond the mythopoeic, is the concept that man is naturally a scientist. The wisdom of the people who live in Macondo is a composite of folk wisdom, hearsay, legend, superstition, and religion—all indiscriminately mixed. And yet Marquez builds into the novel a clear sympathy for a certain quality of knowledge. We might think of this sympathy as an instinct for science.

Jos6 Arcadio Buendia has it, as do each of his descendants who, in successive generations, lock themselves away in Melquiades's room to search for knowledge and truth. This science itself is a mixture of alchemy and occultism, but in it there is a feature which separates it from the popular wisdom of the town- its profound belief that reality is infinitely more wondrous than the most inventive of illusions. It is true that Jose Arcadio the love of science exists in undisciplined comradeship with the folk wisdom....

Jose Arcadio was crude and ignorant in his methodology, but a true scientist in his heart. His fascination with magnets, ice, the sextant, and the geography of the world make it clear that in spite of his own inability always to separate superstition from science, the great yearning of his heart was to *know* things In many ways Garcia Marquez sees him as the archetype of all scientists, for do they not all share his dilemma? Which scientist could ever truly separate his own illusions from his empirical knowledge? Which scientist could ever know that his methodology is pure and perfected? How much of modern science is old illusion given a new name? The common characteristic shared by true scientists, however, is their great wonder at the profound mystery of reality. And if this be so, then to the brotherhood of Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton, old Jose—with his poor sextant and his undeterred will to find a system for identifying the exact stroke of noon—eternally belongs

It is this instinctive awe of reality that separates the first from the second generation of gypsies. Melquiades—a combination of Wandering Jew, picaro, Mephistopheles, and God—is a huckster, true enough, but beyond his slight-of-hand and his alchemy he is a man of great wisdom. It is easy from the vantage point of a highly developed technological culture, to think of Melquiades and Jose Arcadio as being naive, having too many gaps in their learning to be true scientists. There are loose ends in their knowledge which make them seem provincial. Should we judge them thus, however, we would betray only our own provincialism, for all science has loose ends. There must have been something of the gypsy too in Albert Einstein, for his paradox of the clock is really not different from Buendia's visualizing the air and hearing the buzzing of sunlight. Garcia Marquez perceives it all as a vital and organic whole, as though the jungle itself [were] a Gothic artifact, creating, nourishing, destroying, and regenerating in great, broad brush strokes and in infinitely delicate detail. Marquez's way of seeing things is compatible with both myth and science, but it is neither thing in itself. It has the analytical curiosity of science coupled with the synthetic method of myth. The result is a technique which puts him in the tradition of Unamuno, Gallego, and Lorca, and it may reveal him as one of the most inventive novelists of our day—not because others have failed to explore this artistic fusion of myth and science, symbol and surface, but because of Marquez's ingenuity and the profusion of his imaginative details.

The view of Gabriel Garcia Marquez is a view of life as it is—complex, changing, indefinite, and difficult to understand. It is a view of reality richer and more exciting than any cross-section of any of its parts could ever reveal.

Source: L. Robert Stevens and G. Roland Vela, "Jungle Gothic[1] Science, Myth, and Reality in *One Hundred Years of Solitude,"* in *Modern Fiction Studies,* No. 2, Vol 26, Summer, 1980, pp. 262-66.

Critical Essay #3

Ciplijauskaite describes the ways in which Garcia Marquez uses foreshadowing throughout One Hundred Years of Solitude *to tie different aspects of the novel together.*

The constant use of foreshadowing and premonition stands out as one of the basic structural elements of *One Hundred Years of Solitude.* All such elements, including cyclical reiteration, paradox and parallelism, are tightly interwoven with the main themes of the book; as a consequence, they can be studied as integral parts of the "story" as well as of the "discourse," where syntactic and semantic aspects are interrelated. A major portion of the book obeys the rule of ambiguity ... more generally referred to as "magic realism" when applied to the Latin American novel and short story.

The realm of the fantastic ... lies between the real-explicable and the supernatural, with a continuous fluctuation of boundaries and an uncertainty intensified by the total absence of the narrator's guiding point of view. Garcia Marquez suggests that this will also be a characteristic of his book: on the first page, stressing the importance of imagination in Jose Arcadio Buendia, the founder of Macondo, he writes, "his imagination always went beyond the genius of nature and even beyond miracles and magic." He causes the whole story to "float" by disrupting the natural temporal sequence and making even spatial relations uncertain. [Mario Vargas Llosa in *Histona de un deicidio,* 1971.] The constant intertwining of the real and material with the fantastic and spiritual fosters ambiguity and permits a myth to be born. (According to Garcia Marquez, [in "Garcia Marquez de Aracataca a Macando," M. Vargas Llosa, 1969] a similar blend was present in the atmosphere in which he grew up: "For lack of something better, Aracataca lived on myths, ghosts, solitude and nostalgia.") Technically, the use of ellipsis together with chronological leap, both forward and backward, produces a seldom-experienced density of statement which invites both literal and symbolical readings. [R. Barthes in "Introduction a l'analyse stracturale des recits," *Communications,* 1966.] (Garcia Marquez said once he would have liked to be the author of *Lapeste* whose economy of devices he admired. If one considers that the density achieved by Camus represents a chronicle of the human destiny of a city during a period of nine months, one may be even more surprised to find that Garcia Marquez compresses into a similar number of pages the hundred-year history of a whole tribe and, figuratively, a whole continent. The absurd arrived at has the same poignancy in both authors; the difference in the presentation derives from the rational and civilized character of the French and the overflowing vitality of the Latin Americans.) Repetitions with variations are extremely effective in producing this density: the variants convey essential developments and at the same time establish paradigmatic relations within and between the symbolic patterns of the text...

Ambiguity in the novel is further intensified by the transposition and confusion of senses and sensations (Melquiades speaks "lighting up with his deep organ voice the darkest reaches of the imagination"; Rebeca "spits hieroglyphics"; Jose Arcadio sees a "route that... could only lead to the past" and then perceives the sea colored with

disillusionment). Such devices as synesthesia, oxymoron and the like in most cases allow more than one interpretation....

Structurally, the fantastic element helps to create and maintain suspense; its semantic function... is its very presence in the work. And what could be more fantastic in the case of *One Hundred Years of Solitude,* asks Vargas Llosa, if not the fact that it is a story of a story told in reverse? An unusual aspect of it—with a distinctly twentieth-century flavor—is that it contains within itself not the account of its writing, but rather one of its reading and interpretation. Thus, all events in the novel gain added significance as clues for a final deciphering. A structuralist can easily discover a careful system of signs and codes in this never-totally-revealed universe full of premonitions.

Vargas Llosa took nearly seven hundred pages to outline a few essential characteristics of Garcia Marquez's work. It would seem vain to attempt here a complete analysis of even one aspect. The role of foreshadowing is of primary importance in the novel, and only a long essay could do it justice. These lines will barely serve as an introduction to what begins the book as technique and ends it as theme. It should be noted that throughout the greater part of the story a single character may embody both technique and theme. The very first image the reader encounters, one periodically reiterated, provides a glimpse of the future (which then is not fulfilled): Colonel Aureliano Buendia in front of a firing squad. Aureliano is the first and the greatest seer of the Buendia family, and one who attains mythical stature. His supernatural qualities are suggested when Ursula hears him cry in her womb, his first spoken words are a premonition: "the boiling pot is going to spill" ([la] olla de caldo hirviendo ... "se va a caer.") At this point, with the introduction of the husband's and the wife's characters the dichotomy in their reactions becomes clear, what frightens Ursula seems a "natural phenomenon" to Jose Arcadio. Much later, while awaiting his execution, Aureliano formulates what could be considered a theory of premonitions, which is related to a vital theme of the novel: the natural versus the artificial. Amazed at the fact that on this occasion he has no premonition of his pending execution, he concludes that only a natural death warrants a supernatural sign. As it happens no one dares carry out the orders leading to his "artificial" end; thus, the lack of a premonition of death in his mind becomes in the mind of the reader a foreshadowing of life

Another interesting use of the foreshadowing technique is found in the account of Amaranta's death. In this case, a premonition takes on human form and visits her personally, leaving exact instructions. This fantastic situation is even further exploited as it is raised to the level of superstition: knowing she is to die, Amaranta announces publicly her willingness to collect and deliver the "mail for the dead" on behalf of the whole village. An even greater degree of complexity is achieved by the narrator's comment that "it seemed a farce".... The paradox is taken further, however: it is Amaranta herself who, looking and feeling perfectly well, directs to the very end the preparations for her own funeral.

It might be noted that the manner of presentation of each premonition exemplifies the basic technique of the novel itself: in rhythmically repeated "fore-flashes" of the main characters' deaths is included a short synopsis of the strongest emotions and

impressions of their lives. The same interruptive technique is used throughout the novel to record cardinal stages in the life and death of the tribe and the whole village. The opening sentence of the novel renders Aureliano's first distinctly remembered impression as he awaits his last; as the book closes, the last Aureliano in the family line receives the final impression of his life as he reads about the first Life and literature become one, and both seem destined to sink into oblivion.

The importance of foreshadowing becomes evident when we analyze the first chapter more closely. In it can be found most of the major themes and devices of the novel. Like the entire book, the introductory chapter forms a perfectly circular structure, a circle that runs counter to the clock. There is also a complete integration of various temporal levels: what the colonel glimpses of the past in the first sentence (which is itself a fore-flash) closes the chapter as a living experience in the present tense. Fire and ice unite as opposites, forming a paradox, a device constantly used throughout the novel. The importance of the word—the Verb, the Creation—is stressed at both the opening and the close. Macondo is so new to the world that names have to be invented to designate objects, says the narrator in his first description of the town. At the end of the chapter we see Jose Arcadio groping for words when confronted with what for him is a new phenomenon—ice The novel itself closes with a character reading the last line, which for the first time releases the book's full meaning.

The circle—and the premonition—can also be found in the symbol of the child with a tail. What appears in the first chapter as superstitious fear (thereby opening the gates to the realm of the fantastic) is finally justified in the last. The whole novel in some way anticipates the fulfillment of this oracle. Another use of foreshadowing can be found in the first pages: i.e., the prediction by Melquiades that the whole tribe of Buendias will be extinguished. Melquiades's life comes full circle within the limits of this chapter: it starts with his first arrival in Macondo and ends with the news about his death, just as the book itself develops from the arrival of the Buendias in Macondo to the written news of their final extinction.

It may be worthwhile to note that the first character introduced in this book is Melquiades, a fantastic figure constantly fluctuating between the real and the supernatural: he "was a gloomy man, enveloped in a sad aura, with an Asiatic look that seemed to know what there was on the other side of things.... But in spite of his immense wisdom and his mysterious breadth, he had a human burden, an earthly condition that kept him involved in the small problems of daily life." The physical description of him, in turn, intensifies the temporal distortion: he wears "a velvet vest across which the patina of centuries had skated." And one of the first "wonders" he brings is called *"fierros,"* not "hierros magicos," an archaic form of the word which also suggests his agelessness. While indulging in magic, he is able to give the most lucid explanations about recent progress in the scientific world. (One of the most delightful examples in his conversation with Ursula about his being a demon, where he explains to her the odor of the devil from a chemical point of view. His blindness and the increased lucidity it brings about foreshadow Ursula's last years when the role of intuition is emphasized. It leads, moreover, to another principal theme in the novel: that

of insanity versus sanity, which is developed with regard to several members of the family.

Melquiades bears within himself the main theme of the novel: he returns from the kingdom of the dead, renouncing immortality, because he is unable to endure solitude. The book closes with the reading of his scriptures. Only at this point does the reader realize that Melquiades was not only a character but the narrator himself. In one of his first appearances in the novel, he even gives a definition of what the book turns out to be—"'fantastic stones"—suggesting, moreover, that there are always several interpretations to a phenomenon: on the same page we see him through four different pairs of eyes, interpreted four different ways. Thus, the figure of Melquiades points to everything in this novel being a language of signs and patterns, a "recit indiciel" with intricate metaphorical relationships. [Barthes, 1966.]

The first chapter makes full use of such structural elements as paradox, which is essential in the presentation of the theme of the absurd (Jose Arcadio sets out to look for the sea, gets lost in the jungle and founds Macondo; while seeking to communicate with the city, he discovers the sea; Ursula, seeking her son, discovers the road to civilization); parallelism (Jose Arcadio as a symbol of the village and Ursula, of the home); antithesis (Jose Arcadio embodying imagination, Ursula embodying common and practical sense; the two sons who become archetypes for the entire descendency divided between an emphasis on physical enjoyment of life and the anguish of imagination); repetition as the essence of the story, summarized by Pilar Ternera at the end: "the history of the family was a machine with unavoidable repetitions." The repetition may be associated with the symbol of mirrors perceived by Jose Arcadio in the dream which determines the founding of Macondo, transposed once we understand that the mirrors do not reproduce the image an infinite number of tunes but instead a mirage which is impossible to repeat....

Many secondary themes are also introduced in this chapter and later developed more fully: the first notion of religion is, significantly, mixed with superstition; the only reference to the civil government is especially important for it underscores its inefficiency. Jos6 Arcadio's desire to invent a "memory machine" is a precursor of the long episode of the "insomnia plague"; his interest in developing arms for "solar warfare" hints at the future revolution and the mythical exploits of Colonel Aureliano Buendia. The principles of self-government and equality are established by Jose Arcadio's distribution of land and sun, thus, introducing the important roles nature and climactic conditions are to play. Jose Arcadio's expedition wrestling with the fierce forces of the jungle provides one of the earliest glimpses of the jungle's power and makes convincing its final invasion of the Buendias' family house in the last chapter.

Nature also serves to introduce the eternal dichotomy between the natural state of man and civilized man, illustrated in the first chapter by the two tribes of gypsies. The first are simple and honest and want to share their knowledge. Those that follow, "purveyors of amusement," come to cheat and loot. The theme of solitude and isolation is opposed to that of friendship and is brought out by emphasizing the desire to communicate, which is as strong in individual characters as it is within the village community as a whole.

There is, finally, in these first pages of the novel an early intimation of one of the most exuberant of the later epistles: Aureliano Segundo's "papering" the walls of his house with money clearly echoes Jose Arcadio's announcement in the first chapter that "we'll have gold enough and more to pave the floors of the house." (The paradox attached to the theme of gold is that we see Jose Arcadio on the first page and Aureliano Segundo toward the end of the book desperately searching for it without success while at the peak of the fortune a saint's figure [to whom Ursula lights candles and prays] is discovered containing a treasure of gold. A further paradox can be seen in the fact that Ursula's hiding place is indicated in the first chapter and later repeated, but when the whole house and garden are dug up during the search, nobody looks under her bed.) A strong parallelism can be observed between the fall and rise of the family and of the village, which is symbolized at the end of the book by the return of the first tribe of gypsies we met in Chapter I: The development of the village has completed a full circle between the two comings, and the villagers have returned to a state where they can again be awed by innocent, primitive magic.

A powerful imagination is the prime characteristic defining Jose Arcadio It too comes full circle: in the first chapter we see him teaching his children "by forcing the limits of his imagination to extremes," interrupting his task only to greet the arrival of gypsies who bring even more imaginary inventions. At the end, the last descendants receive instruction from Aureliano Segundo who uses an English encyclopedia without being able to read it; he draws on his imagination to invent instructions.

There is a distinct gradation among the first "wonders" acquired by Jos6 Arcadio from the gypsies, a gradation further developed in later chapters. He begins by exploring the fields around Macondo with a magnet in search of gold for personal purposes (prosperity that will be achieved through Ursula's fabrication of candied animals and later through the proliferation of real animals during Aureliano Segundo's reign); then he passes on to convert a magnifying glass into a weapon of war (war will eventually involve the whole country through his son's revolutionary opposition to the government); with the compass and the sextant his imagination crosses seas and frontiers-—as his last descendants will do in actuality. Finally, alchemy transports him to a realm of irreality, which is later repeated as several members of the family end their lives "liberated" from the limits of time, space and social convention.

Only the all-important element of time remains to be examined in the first chapter. Again a technique is introduced which is used throughout the novel. The compression of time is evident: fourteen years of life are packed into fourteen pages. This is achieved mainly by fragmenting and juggling various temporal levels, a process which can be summarized as follows: future with the present, in which five different stages are marked by the successive arrivals of the gypsies, introducing the great theme of transformations; the past alone, which contains allusions to an even more remote past; and present, past and future together. On all these levels, further divisions as well as interrelations between real time and imaginary time could be established. One remark by Ursula deserves mention: almost ready to die, she complains that "time was slower before." In fact, Jose Arcadio and his men need four days to conquer twelve kilometers in the first chapter; in the last, Gaston is contemplating the establishment of airmail

service to Macondo. The speed of events becomes frantic at the end, when the sudden whirlwind of destruction prevents Aureliano Babilonia (note the change in name) from finishing the deciphering of the manuscript. Almost at the exact center of the novel Ursula utters, "it's as if time had turned around and we were back at the beginning." From this point on, one can add to the reading in progression another reading in regression. The tempo increases, but the quickened passing of time only brings omens of degeneration and destruction. All human efforts are revealed to be futile, all hopes absurd in the face of the ultimate predestination. But precisely at this point, where written time ends, the cycle is reinitiated in the reader's imagination.

Source: Birut Ciplijauskaite', "Foreshadowing as Technique and Theme in *One Hundred Years of Solitude,"* in Books Abroad, No. 3, Vol. 47, Summer, 1973, pp. 479-84

Quotes

"Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendia was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice. At that time Macondo was a village of twenty adobe houses, built on the bank of a river of clear water that ran along a bed of polished stones, which were white and enormous, like prehistoric eggs. The world was so recent that many things lacked names, and in order to indicate them it was necessary to point." (Chapter 1, p. 1).

"Suddenly she reached out her hand and touched him. 'Lordy!' she said, sincerely startled, and that was all she could say. Jose Arcadio felt his bones filling up with foam, a languid fear, and a terrible desire to weep. The woman made no insinuations. But Jose Arcadio kept looking at her all night long, for the smell of smoke that she had under her armpits and that had got caught under his skin. He wanted to be with her all the time, he wanted her to be his mother, for them never to leave the granary, and for her to say 'Lordy!' to him. One day he could not stand it anymore and he went looking for her at her house. He made a formal visit, sitting uncomprehendingly in the living room without saying a word. At that moment he had no desire for her. He found her different, entirely foreign to the image that her smell brought on, as if she were someone else. He drank his coffee and left the house in depression. That night, during the frightful time of lying awake, he desired her again with a brutal anxiety, but he did not want her that time as she had been in the granary but as she had been that afternoon." (Chapter 2, pp. 25-26).

"'You go in too,' she told him, 'It only costs twenty cents.'

"Aureliano threw a coin into the hopper that the matron had in her lap and went into the room without knowing why. The adolescent mulatto girl, with her small bitch's teats, was naked on the bed. Before Aureliano sixty-three men had passed through the room that night. From being used so much, kneaded with sweat and sighs, the air in the room had begun to turn to mud. The girl took off the soaked sheet and asked Aureliano to hold it by one side. It was as heavy as a piece of canvas. They squeezed it, twisting it at the ends until it regained its natural weight. They turned over the mat and the sweat came out of the other side. Aureliano was anxious for that operation never to end. He knew the theoretical mechanics of love, but he could not stay on his feet because of the weakness in his knees, and although he had goose pimples on his burning skin he could not resist the urgent need to expel the weight of his bowels. When the girl finished fixing up the bed and told him to get undressed, he gave her a confused explanation: 'They made me come in. They told me to throw twenty cents into the hopper and hurry up.' The girl understood his confusion. 'If you throw in twenty cents more when you go out, you can stay a little longer,' she said softly. Aureliano got undressed, tormented by shame, unable to get rid of the idea that his nakedness could not stand comparison with that of his brother. In spite of the girl's efforts he felt more and more indifferent and terribly alone. 'I'll throw in another twenty cents,' he said with a desolate voice. The girl thanked him in silence. Her back was raw. Her skin was stuck to her ribs and her breathing was forced because of an immeasurable exhaustion. Two years before, far

away from there, she had fallen asleep without putting out the candle and had awakened surrounded by flames. The house where she lived with the grandmother who had raised her was reduced to ashes. Since then her grandmother had carried her from town to town, putting her to bed for twenty cents in order to make up the value of the burned house. According to the girl's calculations, she still had ten years of seventy men per night, because she also had to pay the expenses of the trip and food for both of them as well as the pay of the Indians who carried the rocking chair. When the matron knocked on the door the second time, Aureliano left the room without having done anything, troubled by a desire to weep. That night he could not sleep, thinking about the girl, with a mixture of desire and pity. He felt an irresistible need to love her and protect her. At dawn, worn out by insomnia and fever, he made the calm decision to marry her in order to free her from the despotism of her grandmother and to enjoy all the nights of satisfaction that she would give the seventy men. But at ten o'clock in the morning, when he reached Catarino's store, the girl had left town." (Chapter 3, pp. 51-53).

"One afternoon, when everyone was having a siesta, she could no longer resist and went to his bedroom. She found him in his shorts, lying in his hammock that he had hung from the beams with a ship's hawser. She was so impressed by his enormous motley nakedness that she felt an impulse to retreat. 'Excuse me,' she said, 'I didn't know you were here.' But she lowered her voice so as not to wake anyone up. 'Come here,' he said. Rebeca obeyed. She stopped beside the hammock in an icy sweat, feeling knots forming in her intestines, while Jose Arcadio stroked her ankles with the tips of his fingers, then her calves, then her thighs, murmuring, 'Oh, little sister, little sister.' She had to make a supernatural effort not to die when a startlingly regulated cyclonic power lifted her up by the waist and despoiled her of her intimacy with three slashes of its claws and quartered her like a little bird. She managed to thank God for having been born before she lost herself in the inconceivable pleasure of that unbearable pain, splashing in the streaming marsh of the hammock which absorbed the explosion of blood like a blotter. "Three days later they were married during the five-o'clock mass." (Chapter 5, pp. 91-92).

"He stretched out his hand and found another hand with two rings on the same finger about to go astray in the darkness. He felt the structure of the veins, the pulse of its misfortune, and felt the damp palm with a lifeline cut off at the base of the thumb by the claws of death. Then he realized that this was not the woman he was waiting for, because she did not smell of smoke but of flower lotion, and she had inflated, blind breasts with nipples like a man's, a sex as stony and round as a nut, and the chaotic tenderness of excited inexperience. She was a virgin and she had the unlikely name of Santa Sofia de la Piedad. Pilar Ternera had paid her fifty pesos, half of her life savings, to do what she was doing. Arcadio had seen her many times working in her parents' small food store but he had never taken a good look at her because she had that rare virtue of never existing completely except at the opportune moment. But from that day on he huddled like a cat in the warmth of her armpit." (Chapter 6, pp. 112-113).

"As soon as Jose Arcadio closed the bedroom door the sound of a pistol shot echoed through the house. A trickle of blood came out under the door, crossed the living room, went out into the street, continued on in a straight line across the uneven terraces, went

down steps and climbed over curbs, passed along the Street of the Turks, turned a corner to the right and another to the left, made a right angle at the Buendia house, went in under the closed door, crossed through the parlor, hugging the walls so as not to stain the rugs, went on to the other living room, made a wide curve to avoid the dining-room table, went along the porch with the begonias, and passed without being seen under Amaranta's chair as she gave an arithmetic lesson to Aureliano Jose, and went through the pantry and came out in the kitchen, where Ursula was getting ready to crack thirty-six eggs to make bread.

"'Holy Mother of God!' Ursula shouted.

"She followed the thread of blood back along its course, and in search of its origin she went through the pantry, along the begonia porch where Aureliano Jose was chanting that three plus three is six and six plus three is nine, and she crossed the dining room and the living rooms and followed straight down the street, and she turned first to the right and then to the left to the Street of the Turks, forgetting that she was still wearing her baking apron and her house slippers, and she came out onto the square and went into the door of a house where she had never been, and she pushed open the bedroom door and was almost suffocated by the smell of burned gunpowder, and she found Jose Arcadio lying facedown on the ground on top of the leggings he had just taken off, and she saw the starting point of the thread of blood that had already stopped flowing out of his right ear. They found no wound on his body nor could they locate the weapon. Nor was it possible to remove the smell of powder from the corpse. First they washed him three times with soap and a scrubbing brush, then they rubbed him with salt and vinegar, then with ashes and lemon, and finally they put him in a barrel of lye and let him stay for six hours. They scrubbed him so much that the arabesques of his tattooing began to fade. When they thought of the desperate measure of seasoning him with pepper, cumin seeds, and laurel leaves and boiling him for a whole day over a slow fire, he had already begun to decompose and they had to bury him hastily. They sealed him hermetically in a special coffin seven and a half feet long and four feet wide, reinforced inside with iron plates and fastened together with steel bolts, and even then the smell could be perceived on the streets through which the funeral procession passed." (Chapter 7, pp. 131-133)

"Amaranta felt so uncomfortable with her defective diction and her habit of using euphemisms to designate everything that she would always speak gibberish in front of her.

"'Thifisif,' she would say, 'ifisif onefos ofosif thofosif whosufu cantantant statantand thefesef smufumellu ofosit therisir owfisown shifisifit.'

"One day, irritated by the mockery, Fernanda wanted to know what Amaranta was saying, and she did not use euphemisms in answering her.

"'I was saying,' she told her, 'that you're one of those people who mix up their ass and their ashes.'" (Chapter 11, pp. 210-211)

"'What does he say?' he asked.

"'He's very sad,' Ursula answered, 'because he thinks that you're gong to die.'

"'Tell him,' the colonel said, smiling, 'that a person doesn't die when he should but when he can.'" (Chapter 12, p. 241)

"'The years nowadays don't pass the way the old ones used to,' she would say, feeling that everyday reality was slipping through her hands. In the past, she thought, children took a long time to grow up. All one had to do was remember all the time needed for Jose Arcadio, the elder, to go away with the gypsies and all that happened before he came back painted like a snake and talking like an astronomer, and the things that happened in the house before Amaranta and Arcadio forgot the language of the Indians and learned Spanish." (Chapter 13, pp. 245-246)

"Aureliano Segundo was not aware of the singsong until the following day after breakfast when he felt himself being bothered by a buzzing that was by then more fluid and louder than the sound of the rain, and it was Fernanda, who was walking throughout the house complaining that they had raised her to be a queen only to have her end up as a servant in a madhouse, with a lazy, idolatrous, libertine husband who lay on his back waiting for bread to rain down from heaven while she was straining her kidneys trying to keep afloat a home held together with pins where there was so much to do, so much to bear up under and repair from the time God gave his morning sunlight until it was time to go to bed that when she got there her eyes were full of ground glass, and yet no one ever said to her, 'Good morning, Fernanda, did you sleep well?' Nor had they asked her, even out of courtesy, why she was so pale or why she awoke with purple rings under her eyes in spite of the fact that she expected it, of course, from a family that had always considered her a nuisance, an old rag, a booby painted on the wall, and who were always going around saying things against her behind her back, calling her churchmouse, calling her Pharisee, calling her crafty, and even Amaranta, may she rest in peace, had said aloud that she was one of those people who could not tell their rectums from their ashes, God have mercy, such words, and she had tolerated everything with resignation because of the Holy Father, but she had not been able to tolerate it anymore when that evil Jose Arcadio Segundo said that the damnation of the family had come when it opened its doors to a stuck-up highlander, just imagine, a bossy highlander, Lord save us, a highland daughter of evil spit of the same stripe as the highlanders the government sent to kill workers, you tell me, and he was referring to no one but her, the godchild of the Duke of Alba, a lady of such lineage that she made the liver of presidents' wives quiver, a noble dame of fine blood like her, who had the right to sign eleven peninsular names and who was the only mortal creature in that town full of bastards who did not feel all confused at the sight of sixteen pieces of silverware, so that her adulterous husband could die of laughter afterward and say that so many knives and forks and spoons were not meant for a human being but for a centipede..." (Chapter 16, pp. 323-324).

"Aureliano gave her fourteen little gold fishes because she was determined to leave with only what she had: one peso and twenty-five cents. From the window of the room he

saw her cross the courtyard with her bundle of clothing, dragging her feet and bent over by her years, and he saw her reach her hand through an opening in the main door and replace the bar after she had gone out. Nothing was ever heard of her again." (Chapter 18, p. 359).

"Aureliano had never been more lucid in any act of his life as when he forgot about his dead ones and the pain of his dead ones and nailed up the door and windows again with Fernanda's crossed boards so as not to be disturbed by any temptations of the world, for he knew then that his fate was written in Melquiades' parchments. He found them intact among the prehistoric plants and steaming puddles and luminous insects that had removed all trace of man's passage on earth from the room, and he did not have the calmness to bring them out into the light, but right there, standing, without the slightest difficulty, as if they had been written in Spanish and were being read under the dazzling splendor of high noon, he began to decipher them aloud. It was the history of the family, written by Melquiades, down to the most trivial details, one hundred years ahead of time. He had written in Sanskrit, which was his mother tongue, and he had encoded the even lines in the private cipher of the Emperor Augustus and the odd ones in a Lacedemonian military code. The final protection, which Aureliano had begun to glimpse when he let himself be confused by the love of Amaranta Ursula, was based on the fact that Melquiades 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." (Chapter 20, p. 415).

"Before reaching the final line, however, he had already understood that he would never leave that room, for it was foreseen that the city of mirrors (or mirages) would be wiped out by the wind and exiled from the memory of men at the precise moment when Aureliano Babilonia would finish deciphering the parchments, and that everything written on them was unrepeatable since time immemorial and forever more, because races condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth." (Chapter 20, pp. 416-417).

Adaptations

One Hundred Years of Solitude has been adapted for the stage as *Blood and Champagne. One Hundred Years of Solitude: A Study Guide,* by Brenda K. Marshall, is available on audio cassette. Read by F. Murray Abraham, it includes dramatic readings from the novel.

Topics for Further Study

Examine aspects of the Buendia House, considering one or more of the following: how it reflects a certain theme or character personality; how its literal construction relates to the construction of the novel as a whole. Or, with some research and based on your own experience, what conclusions can you draw about family life in nineteenth-century Latin America from the Buendia House[9]

Bartok's compositions heavily influenced the novel. Explore the life and works of this composer and write an essay relating his music to this work of literature.

Garcia Marquez told Rita Guibert, "What I most definitely am is an machista. Machismo is cowardly, a lack of manliness." Find out what the code of machismo is as developed by the conquistador and then relate it to Garcia Marquez's reactions as evidenced in the novel. Be sure to explain the significance of the found suits of armor in the novel.

Alchemy, or the "science" of transmuting one element into another, has led to several scientific and industrial discoveries. Investigate the history of Alchemy as practiced in the past, then relate it to the scientific pursuits as followed by characters in the novel.

Compare *One Hundred Years of Solitude* to *Almanac of the Dead* by Native American writer Leslie Marmon Silko. Her book revolves around the piecing together of an almanac that escaped the fires of the Inquisition's book burnings in Mexico. Investigate how the novels explore many of the same colonial and environmental themes.

A reference to the environment and its degradation at the hands of humans is a not so subtle theme of the book: macaws are traded for trinkets and songbirds are replaced with clocks; the site of the Banana Company's crop is a field of stumps. Gradually, of course, the voracious jungle takes everything back. Research the current state of the environment in Colombia and argue whether Garcia Marquez's vision of the final transformation of Macondo is positive or not.

Compare and Contrast

Colombia: The third most populous nation in Latin America, Colombia has a population of approximately 38 million, 95 percent of whom live in the mountainous western half. The per capita percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is around $5,400. Since the 1950s there has been such rapid urbanization that 73 percent live in cities. The population is 95 percent Catholic.

United States: The population of the U.S numbers near 270 million, with per capita percentage of GDP around $28,000. Most of the population lives in cities, with increasing migration to the suburbs and the southwest regions of the country. There is no dominant religion, although Judeo-Christian faiths are in the majority and the single largest denomination is Roman Catholic.

Colombia: Immigration to Colombia is negligible. The violent clashes of guerilla troops and the government's army, as well as drug violence, make it an unattractive destination Internal displacement from this violence is significant. In 1997,2 families were displaced every two hours.

United States: Despite the recent anti-immigrant fervor in the United States, millions of immigrants the world over hope that the U.S. is their final destination. Of those immigrants from Latin America, Colombians are the most numerous.

Colombia: In 1995, Colombia spent $2 billion on defense, or 2.8% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 1997, they bought $60 million worth of weapons from the US.

United States: The world's greatest arms dealer has spent slightly less on defense in the 1990s than in the 1980s. In 1997, defense spending was 3.4% of GDP, or approximately $267 billion dollars.

Colombia: In 1995, Colombia, Venezuela, and Mexico formed the Group of Three trading alliance. Each country alters its tariffs in favor of the other two members. This alliance took the place of the 1960s effort of LAFTA (Latin American Free Trade Agreement) and responds to the Southern Cone Common Market (formed by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay).

United States: In response to the trade block taking shape in Europe, the United States, Canada, and Mexico form the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Implemented in 1994, it is blamed by many labor activists for job losses in the United States. Meanwhile, environmentalists say that the effects on Mexico have been more pollution and downward wage pressure.

Colombia: When the international banana conglomerates wound down, Colombian farmers turned to traditional agriculture. Because of poor transportation facilities, however, some farmers face a several-day race against vegetable decay to bring crops

to the capital markets. Faced with such poor prospects, it is not surprising that many farmers enter the cocaine trade, in which traders pick up the produce.

United States: Some farmers in the United States grow marijuana for the black market as a way of subsidizing their income, which has diminished as consumers demand low-cost food and politicians cut farm subsidies. Still, the number of farm bankruptcies in the 1990s has far surpassed the records of the 1980s.

What Do I Read Next?

More information about Garcia Marquez can be found on an internet site run by "The Great Quail" at http://rpg.net/quail/libyrinth/gabo/.

Based on his studies of Francisco Franco, dictator of Spain, Garcia Marquez's 1975 work *El otro del patriarca* (translated in 1977 as *The Autumn of the Patriarch)* further develops the themes of power and solitude. The novel is technically dazzling and is often described as a prose poem.

Revealing an affection for Daniel Defoe's 1722 *A Journal of the Plague Year,* Garcia Marquez embellished on the facts of his parents' marriage in his 1985 novel *El amor en los tiempos del colera* (translated in 1988 as *Love in the Time of Cholera).*

The 1968 collection of Garcia Marquez stories called *No One Writes to the Colonel and Other Stories* contains themes or ideas later developed in *One Hundred Years of Solitude.*

Miguel Angel Asturias, a 1967 Nobel prize winner from Guatemala, wrote a trilogy on United Fruit Company. He focused on the exploitation of Indians on banana plantations. In English, the titles of the three novels are *The Cyclone* (1950), *The Green Pope* (1954), and the *Eyes of the Interred* (1960).

Terra Nostra, a 1975 novel by Carlos Fuentes—Mexican novelist, critic, and friend of Garcia Marquez—has been compared to One Hundred Years of Solitude. The comparison comes at several intersections: one is the use of the New World chronicles and the two novels' language concerning the Spanish Conquest; another point is the use of the archive or historian. Fuentes uses the greatest Spanish writer, *Don Quijote* author Miguel de Cervantes, instead of a gypsy.

No venture into Latin American literature can begin without the collection of poems *Canto General {General Song,* 1950), by Nobel laureate Pablo Neruda of Chile. Within that collection is the poem "La United Fruit Co."

The person of Melquiades is often interpreted as the Argentinean writer Jorge Luis Borges. Master storyteller of the magic realism genre and director of the Argentine national library, Borges, like Melquiades, was a purveyor of knowledge There are similarities between several of his stories and the character of Aureliano (IV). For example, as in the story "The Aleph" from *The Aleph and Other Stories* (1970), Aureliano's glimpse of history is instantaneous.

The term magic realism was applied to the new literature of Latin America by Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier in the late 1940s. His masterpiece is *The Lost Steps* (1953) where he defines Latin American reality as a blending of primeval myth, Indian story, and the imposition of Spanish civilization. It is this cultural blending that makes possible the fantastic yet believable elements of magic realism.

Another magic realist is the Chilean Isabel Allende, who is best known for her 1982 novel *The House of Spirits.* The niece of assassinated Chilean President Salvador Allende, the author is more up front with her examination of South American political realities as well as the role of women in that reality.

A Peruvian magic realist is Mario Vargas Llosa, who tells the story of a prophet who incites the people of Brazil to revolt in *The War of the End of the World* (1981). Led by the prophet, the people found the city of Canudos, where history and civilization is turned upside down—there is no money, tax, or property. It is pure revolution.

Set in Mexico, *Like Water for Chocolate* (1989) is Mexican writer Laura Esquivel's contribution to magic realism. The story concerns a daughter who is destined to stay at home to care for her mother. Her lover marries her sister so as to be near—and this leads to passionate tragedy.

Further Study

Claudette Kemper Columbus, "The Heir Must Die *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as a Gothic Novel," in *Modern Fiction Studies,* Vol. 32, No. 3, Autumn 1986, pp 397-416. Explores Garcia Marquez's novel for its gothic aspects and compares it to Bram Stoker's *Dracula,* Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein,* and Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights.*

William Faulkner, *The Portable Faulkner,* edited by Malcolm Cowley, Viking Press, 1977

This volume presents the entire legend of Yoknapatawpha. The creation of this fictional place is not unlike the creation of Macondo by Garcia Marquez and the two are often compared. It is said that Garcia Marquez read Hemingway as an antidote to Faulkner.

Jean Franco, "Gabriel Garcia Marquez," in his *An Introduction to Spanish American Literature,* Cambridge University Press, 1969, pp. 343-347.

Franco offers a brief but worthwhile overview of Garcia Marquez's major themes in *One Hundred Years of Solitude.*

Carlos Fuentes, *The Buried Mirror: Reflections on Spain*

and the New World, Houghton (Pap), 1993

Renowned Mexican novelist Carlos Fuentes gives a brief history of Hispanic history. The tone of the work is very reflective with a hint of apology for Spanish history. It is clearly a reaction to the Spain-bashing which accompanied the quincentenial

Gabriel Garcia Marquez, 'The Solitude of Latin America," in *Gabriel Garcia Marquez and the Powers of Fiction,* edited by Julio Ortega, University of Texas Press, 1988, pp 87-92.

Garcia Marquez's 1982 Nobel Prize acceptance speech is essential background reading for any student studying *One Hundred Years of Solitude.*

Regma Janes, "At Home in the Pope's Grotto: *One Hundred Years of Solitude,"* in her *Gabriel Garcia Marquez.*

Revolutions in Wonderland, University of Missouri Press, 1981, pp. 48-69.

Janes analyzes the structure of the novel and insists that its reliance on history and biblical framing holds it together.

Regina Janes, "Liberals, Conservatives, and Bananas. Colombian Politics in the Fictions of Gabriel Garcia Marquez," in *Gabriel Garcia Marquez,* edited by Harold Bloom, Chelsea House Publishers, 1989, pp. 125-146. Janes provides the student with a lucid explanation of how the intricacies of Colombian politics figure in the novel.

Regina Janes, *One Hundred Years of Solitude: Modes of Reading,* Twayne, 1991

In a book-length study of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* designed for the student, Janes offers literary and historical contexts, as well as well-developed biographical, mythic, and literary readings of the novel

Gerald Martin, "On 'Magical' and Social Realism m Garcia Marquez," in *Gabriel Garcia Marquez- New Readings,* edited by Bernard McGuirk and Richard Caldwell, Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp 95-116

In an important essay, Martin argues that critics should "revise the impression of a novel whose two levels, magical and realist, mythical and historical, are entirely inseparable, since after the death of Ursula they slowly but surely begin to come apart"

Stephen Minta, *Garcia Marquez: Writer of Colombia,* New York, 1987

This is the first biography of the writer.

Bradley A Shaw and Nora G Vera-Godwin, eds, *Critical Perspectives on Gabriel Garcia Marquez,* University of Nebraska Press, 1986

Shaw and Vera-Godwin present a variety of useful essays, most notably one on magical realism in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Morton P Levitt

Anna Mane Taylor, "Cien anos de soledad: History and the Novel," in *Latin American Perspectives,* Vol. IT, No. 3, Fall, 1975, pp. 96-111.

Explores the value of historical consciousness in the novel by Garcia Marquez and its political relevance.

Mario Vargas Llosa, "Garcia Marquez' From Aracataca to Macondo," in *Gabriel Garcia Marquez,* edited by Harold Bloom, Chelsea House Publishers, 1989, pp. 5-20 Vargas Llosa, a noted Latin American writer in his own right, is widely regarded as the foremost expert on Garcia Marquez This essay provides important background for the student of *One Hundred Years of Solitude.*

Raymond Williams, *"One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967)," in his *Gabriel Garcia Marquez,* Twayne, 1984. Noted scholar Raymond Williams provides a chapter-length introduction to the novel, providing not only an excellent overview of the book, but also succinct summaries of a variety of critical approaches The rest of this clearly-written and informative book offers useful information on Garcia Marquez's life and career.

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Gordon Brotherston, "An End to Secular Solitude. Gabriel Garcia Marquez," m his *The Emergence of the Latin American Novel,* Cambridge University Press, 1977, pp. 122-35

Claudia Dreifus, an interview with Gabnel Garcia Marquez in *Playboy,* February, 1983

D. J Enright, "Larger Than Death," in *The Listener,* Vol 84, No. 2160, August 20, 1970, p 252

Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria, *"Cien anos de soledad* The Novel as Myth and Archive," in *Modern Language Notes,* Vol 99, No. 2, 1984, pp 358-80

Rita Guibert, an interview with Garcia Marquez in *Seven-Latin American Writers Talk to Rita Guibert,* translated by Frances Partridge, Alfred A. Knopf, 1973, pp 305-37.

Ricardo Gullon, "Gabriel Garcia Marquez and the Lost Art of Storytelling," translated by Jos6 G. Sanchez, in *Diacritics,* Vol I, No. 1, Fall, 1971, pp 27-32.

William Kennedy, review of *One Hundred Years of Solitude,* in *National Observer,* April 20, 1970

John Leonard, "Myth is Alive in Latin America," in *New York Times,* March 3, 1970, p. 39.

Pablo Neruda, quoted in *Time,* March 16, 1970

Jack Richardson, "Master Builder," in *The New York Review of Books,* Vol XIV, No. 6, March 26, 1970, pp. 3-4.

Paul West, "A Green Thought in a Green Shade," in *Book World—Chicago Tribune,* February 22, 1970, pp 4-5

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Novels for Students (NfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, NfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Novels for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Novels for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Novels for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from NfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from NfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Novels for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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