

A society with relapsing time

Business



Albert Einstein once said " Time is an illusion." Time is a valuable thing.

It marks someone's existence on earth, measures a day, a month, a year, a life; it progresses society. It never stops moving and represents the only thing eternal, but no one can really define time. The dictionary definition is: the indefinite continued progress of existence and events in the past, present, and future regarded as a whole. Gabriel Garcia Marquez creates a society with no past, present, or future; only time mixing those three elements. Members of the Buendia family lose their memory and time abandons them, forcing them into solitude. Ursula lives the longest out of anyone in the family because she is the only one who notices time repeating.

One of the most important themes in *100 Years of Solitude* is time and its effect on the characters. In the town of Macondo, and also the lives of the Buendia's, the past, present, and future are intertwined. The three elements are mixed and the Buendia family just moves forward in time. Repetitive events, personalities, and names are the first indication of the circular time. Every generation has a boy with either the name Jose Arcadio or Aureliano. This repetition could be considered a cultural tradition, or more accurately an indication of time repeating itself from generation to generation.

The recurrent events and personalities of the characters also show the scrambled issue of time. For example, incest, or attempts at incest reoccurs throughout the book. Aureliano Jose fell in love with his aunt, Amaranta, but she rejected him. Arcadio tried to sleep with his mother and the last generation succeeded in their attempts at incest, between Aureliano and

Amaranta Ursula. Suicide presents itself throughout when Jose Arcadio, Pietro Crespi, and Colonel Aureliano Buendia attempted it. Brothers sharing women happened; Colonel Aureliano Buendia and Jose Arcadio share Pilar Ternera, and Aureliano Segundo and Jose Arcadio Segundo shared Petra Cotes.

There are also reoccurring objects such as the rocking chair, which helped Aureliano differentiate between the past, present, and future. “ He sank into the rocking chair, the same one in which Rebeca had sat during the early days of the house to give embroidery lessons... and in which Amaranta Ursula had sewn the tiny clothing for the child, and in that flash of lucidity he became aware that he was unable to bear in his soul the crushing weight of so much past” (414). These repetitive events that happen in different generations show that history repeats itself and although the family moves forward, time moves in circles. Time for the Buendia family is shaped like a circular clock but instead of the numbers on the clock representing hours, they represent years or decades. Once the clock strikes twelve again, history repeats itself. “ And once again she shuddered with the evidence that time was not passing, as she had just admitted, but that it was turning in a circle” (335).

Ursula was the only one in the family who figured out time was not progressing with the family, but instead revolving and relapsing. All the reoccurring events represent the evidence of history repeating itself. The infinite and unfixed time affects characters in different ways. Some cannot see the future or look back into the past. Others see the future and the past

as one. For example, all the characters that resorted to solitude could not see their future and forgot or blocked out their past.

“ And wherever they might be they always remember that the past was a lie, that memory has no return, that every spring gone by could never be recovered” (403). Time abandons Colonel Aureliano Buendia after he returns from the civil wars, attempting to kill himself, and then turns to a life of solitude. Even though the family is not progressing, they are not getting any younger either. Once they forget the past and lose their memory, they are headed towards a solitary demise. “ Lost in the solitude of his immense power, he began to lose direction” (166).

Time and the reoccurring events of the generations move in a circle but the people themselves live a normal straight line starting with a birth and ending with a death. Out of all the characters, Ursula was the only one who realized that time was moving in continuous circles and repeating itself. She lived to be one hundred and twenty years old; she outlived all her children, her husband and most of the other generations. She lived so long because she did not let time abandon her or allow her to lose her memory. “‘ Just like Aureliano,’ Ursula explained.

‘ It’s as if the world were repeating itself’” (298). Since she was the only one to understand the concept of time in Macondo, she tried to save her family from being taken over by the effects of the repetitiveness. As the novel goes on, the characters think they are progressing, but in reality they are stagnant and time moves in circles around them. History repeats itself down through the generations and the past, present, and future all mix to become

one. The founding of Macondo represents the number twelve on a clock, or the start.

The demise of the town also represents the twelve, or the end. Between those two events, the hands on the clock made more than one rotation because history repeated itself over and over again. A reoccurring theme of the book is that time moves in circles, but as time presses on the circle does not increase in size, but instead collapses in on itself. When, Aureliano, the final member of the family dies, the Buendia family is gone for eternity meaning the circle collapsed. The family is forgotten and the town starts over as if the Buendia's never existed there.

Just like the Banana Massacre, there never was a Buendia family.