

# 100 years of lessons

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100 Years of Lessons As 100 Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez ends, the reader realizes that everything in the book was leading to the ultimate demise of the Buendian civilization Macondo.

The prophesized demise leaves the reader pondering not the events of the civilization's story, but the characters' mistakes and lessons to be learned. The civilization and its people are doomed to be forgotten by history because of the characters' mistakes, and the events can be seen as a lesson for human civilization. Macondo seems to represent, at first, a utopia. The many generations of the Buendia family remain almost completely isolated from outside civilization, and hardly progress. In the beginning, the village is described as "so recent that many things lacked names, and in order to indicate them it was necessary to point" (1). This suggests that even though there were other civilizations in the world, Macondo did not have contact with them.

Instead, it was almost as if it were the beginning of the Earth for the people of Macondo. Macondo's isolation is an important flaw, because it eventually leads to its demise and failure to be remembered. In that Macondo forgotten even by the birds, where the dust and the heat had become so strong that it was difficult to breathe, secluded by solitude and love and by the solitude of love in a house where it was almost impossible to sleep because of the noise of the red ants, Aureliano, and Amaranta Ursula were the only happy beings, and the most happy on the face of the earth. (404) This quotation shows how Macondo was completely forgotten, and how the characters did not mind their solitude. Their only concern was their own happiness. A life example of this is the Meiji Restoration of Japan in the 19th century.

Japan expanded to outside countries to gain social and economic growth, and advance. As Macondo did not expand, it did not advance. Another example of the civilization's failure to expand is the constriction of the population to only a few main families. The Buendia family's in-breeding caused the family to remain solitary. Because fewer new attributes were added to the gene pool, the family could not evolve, and neither could the village.

At the end, the third child of the family to be named Aureliano is born with a pig tail, due to excessive in-breeding. This child's death ends the Buendia timeline, and symbolically ends the civilization itself. Because the family did not expand over generations, many of the characters made the same mistakes as the generations before them. The history of the town was largely recorded or remembered only by Ursula. When she died, many of the lessons from the town's history died with her.

Over each generation, many either end up dying in solitude from loss of sanity after trying to decipher Melquiades' prophecy, or by being killed. Arguably, each generation seems to end the same way. An interesting addition to this point is the repetition of names. Many characters have similar names, and make similar mistakes. " Throughout the long history of the family the insistent repetition of names had made her draw some conclusions that seemed to be certain" (197).

Also, the story is not told in chronological order, which emphasizes the idea that the story can be understood even when it is scrambled. This is because the characters are similar, and act similarly. The prophecy of Macondo was

also written without order. “ Melquiades had not put events in the order of a man’s conventional time, but had concentrated a century of daily episodes in such a way that they coexisted in one instant” (446). The similarity of characters illustrates the civilization’s failure to progress. In the beginning, Jose Arcadio Buendia establishes Macondo after dreaming about a city of glass.

Throughout the book there are references to glass and ice, such as the ice factory established at the heart of the town. A city of glass and mirrors can be interpreted many ways. A mirror reflects what is in front of it exactly as it perceives it. Many of the generations seem to be reflections of their ancestors, and of each other. “ The body of the twins were placed in identical coffins, and then it could be seen once more in death they had become as identical as they had been until adolescence ... In the tumult of the last moment, the sad drunkards who carried them out of the house got the coffins mixed up and buried them in the wrong graves” (151).

This quotation shows how Aureliano Segundo and Jose Arcadio Segundo were similar not only before adolescence, but also after death. The characters were so similar that their coffins are confused. One way to consider a city of mirrors is to imagine a funhouse at a fair. It’s hard to tell which way is forward or backwards, or where you are when you are surrounded by mirrors. The Buendia family seems to move forward, backwards, and sometimes not at all. The family stays the same, which contributes to the end of the civilization.

Analyzing Macondo, one can take away lessons of how the civilization ended and how to prevent the mistakes. Over the course of time, the village is isolated from most outside influences, lacks progression, shows repetition, and seems to mirror itself. This is why the civilization ends. The confinement of the village and family showed the inevitable end. To prosper, a civilization needs to expand and learn from the mistakes of history.