

Intrinsic similitude

Business



Throughout the world's history multitudes of different cultures and societies emerged, each with its own set of customs and beliefs. In addition, many of these cultures clashed with each other and even fought wars over their differing beliefs.

However, in the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Gabriel Garcia Marquez speaks to the inherent sameness that every member of the human race shares with one other. Marquez demonstrates the intrinsic similitude of all peoples through the ambiguous setting of the novel and the comparable characters throughout the story. Throughout the novel, it is impossible to discern the story's setting. With names like Jose Arcadio Buendia, Ursula Iguaran, and Melquiades, it seems obvious that the setting must be in a Spanish-speaking region such as Central America, South America, or Spain. However, the presence of the gypsies suggests Central or Eastern Europe as the setting. The contradictions are endless.

With the magnets he bought, Jose Arcadio Buendia “unearth[ed] a suit of fifteenth century armor which had all of its pieces soldered together” (2). Suits of armor are for knights, and knights are associated with western and central Europe. “Jose Arcadio Buendia was completely ignorant of the geography of the region. He knew that to the east there lay an impenetrable mountain chain... To the south lay the swamps...The great swamp in the west mingled with a boundless extension of water” (10). There is no place on a map that fits this description. Marquez also mentions both crocodiles and macaws: crocodiles being most commonly found in Africa and Southeast Asia, macaws being found only in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.

There are even “Arabs... with their baggy pants and rings in their ears, swapping glass beads for macaws” (38) and “a Guajiro Indian woman who had arrived in town with a brother (37). So, does *One Hundred Years of Solitude* take place in Spain? Africa? South America? The Middle East? Central America? Europe? It is impossible to tell! In creating this ambiguous setting for his story, Marquez demonstrates that where it takes place does not really matter. Whether it is set in the western hemisphere or the eastern hemisphere, he is saying that all of humanity still struggles with the same challenges and has the same fatal flaws. Marquez also demonstrates that idea through his characters, and the many parallels between them. In his male characters, there are two basically two main types: the introspective and continuously questing men who thirst for knowledge but never find it; and the macho men who impulsively seek pleasure.

Jose Arcadio Buendia, the patriarch of the family, pursues countless scientific experiments, each one ending in failure. His final project is “building a pendulum machine that would help men to fly... [but he realized] that it was impossible because a pendulum could lift anything into the air but it could not lift itself” (78). His failures drive him insane. Colonel Aureliano Buendia follows the same model. After returning from the war, he becomes obsessed with crafting the little golden fishes, and eventually it consumes his life. “Colonel Aureliano Buendia was a shadow... He left the workshop only to urinate under the chestnut tree.

He did not receive any visits...and he kept on making little golden fishes with the same passion as before” (258). Just like Jose Arcadio Buendia, Colonel Aureliano Buendia became obsessed with one task and isolated himself from

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the rest of the world in order to work on it. Jose Arcadio Segundo and Aureliano follow suit. In contrast, Jose Arcadio is physically large and lives spontaneously, travelling the world before returning to marry and live happily in Macondo. Arcadio is similar in that he is strong and bold, and he ends up becoming a sort of ruler of Macondo during the war.

Aureliano Segundo also inherits the size and impulsiveness of Jose Arcadio. Having characters that repeat the traits and, more importantly, the faults, of their predecessors demonstrates the universal sameness of all people. Generation after generation, the Buendias do not learn from their history, and continue to repeat the same cycles. Marquez uses the repetitive nature of his characters to demonstrate that all people, no matter the generation or situation, are intrinsically similar in their struggles. Through his ambiguous setting and similar characters, Marquez creates a world where any one character could face similar challenges and have similar flaws and failures as another character.

Those same challenges and flaws can be applied to all of humanity in some way or another, no matter a person's culture, society, customs, or beliefs.