

Source Packet One: History as Myth (1) **Discovery and Settlement**

“The Necessity of the Literary Tradition”

Jupp, James C. “The Necessity of the Literary Tradition: Gabriel García Márquez’s *One-Hundred Years of Solitude*.” *The English Journal*, vol. 89, no. 3, 2000, pp. 113-115.

A standard reading of *One-Hundred Years of Solitude* from within the tradition shows it as an attempt to reconstruct Latin American history as myth (Fuentes 67). The “magic” in magical realism refers to the mythic narrative voice that tells of Creation, wandering gypsies, magicians, flying carpets, the plague of insomnia and forgetting, a great flood, and the apocalypse.

The “realism” refers to the novel’s panorama of Latin American history. José Arcadio Buendía’s accelerated assimilation of history, which moves from the Age of Exploration as represented by the founding of Macondo to the Age of Invention as shown by the protagonist’s fascination with foreign technology, indicates Latin America’s struggle to assimilate knowledge/technology, which Europe developed over centuries. Úrsula Buendía, José Arcadio’s wife, represents the matriarch-provider, who secretly is the one in charge behind the scenes. Colonel Aureliano Buendía represents “the liberator,” such as Simón Bolívar, Porfirio Díaz, and Pancho Villa, who fights numerous insurrections for supposed liberal causes, only to find himself in a simple unprincipled struggle for power. The banana massacre that Arcadio Segundo witnesses and then tries to relate to a forgetful Macondo represents the economic exploitation at the beginning of the twentieth century, which leads to revolt and revolution in Mexico, Colombia, and Cuba.

Each character contains important historical references that, when combined with the mythic elements achieved in the narrative voice, transform *One-Hundred Years of Solitude* into a mythic typology of Latin America. The purpose of reconstructing history as myth represents an act of self-definition, which attempts to shrug off false romanticized interpretations of Latin America.

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“*One Hundred Years of Solitude* in History, Politics, and Civilization Courses”

Halka, Chester S. “*One Hundred Years of Solitude* in History, Politics, and Civilization Courses.” *Approaches to Teaching García Márquez’s One-Hundred Years of Solitude*, edited by María Elena de Valdéz and Mario J. Valdéz, The Modern Language Association of America, 1990.

One approach to present the treatment of history, culture, and civilization in *One Hundred Years* is to have the students keep a list of who and what are introduced into Macondo in each of the first five chapters and a description of how García Márquez presents them to us. For example, discussing the acts and the significance of Melquíades in chapter 1 can provide a convenient framework for establishing Macondo as a community previously untouched by modern science, a town existing outside of Western history. The description of Macondo as “a truly happy village where no one was over thirty years of age and

where no one had died” (16; 18) can get students thinking about the narrator’s view of “progress” and of the desire to come into contact with the “great inventions” that transforms José Arcadio Buendía, the founder. Chapter 2 offers the exodus of José Arcadio, Úrsula, and their followers “toward the land that no one had promised them,” a phrase that reflects the often ironic use of biblical references in the novel (27; 31). A discussion of such references can introduce several related themes important throughout the novel, such as myth, sacred history, the relationship between history and literature, and sacred literature as a record of the history and the culture of a civilization. At a less abstract level, chapter 2 ends with the connection of Macondo to the surrounding world, which will bring commerce to Macondo. Ursula’s unsuccessful search for her son José Arcadio results in her discovery of a route to neighboring settlements and in the arrival of new people.

In chapter 3 Úrsula begins her own commercial enterprise in caramel animals and José Arcadio Buendía replaces the birds of Macondo with mechanical clocks. The formerly idyllic state of nature in Macondo begins to be replaced by commercialization, mechanization, and socialization. In chapter 3 politics and the first armed soldiers are also introduced to Macondo with the arrival of Apolinar Moscote and his ordinance that all houses must be painted blue, the color of the Conservative party. A more sophisticated discussion of history, culture, and civilization could compare the forgetfulness plague of chapter 3 with the treatment of pre-Columbian cultures in *One Hundred Years*. The apparent absence of indigenous cultures in the novel can be considered in the light of replacing a reality based on the immediate experience of nature with one based on the written word. The expression of indigenous experience in terms of European concepts, language, and ideas is essentially the negation of that experience. [...]

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Pietro Crespi, the Italian musician and dance master, introduces European culture to Macondo in chapter 4 when he inaugurates the renovated Buendía house with a concert of waltzes on the pianola. Imported merchandise from Vienna, Holland, Bohemia, and the Indies Company also arrive with the Italian, who opens a music store. In chapter 5 the church takes hold in Macondo with the arrival of Father Nicanor Reyna, who is brought by Apolinar Moscote, the civil authority. Echoes of the installation of the government in Macondo from chapter 3 are evident in the description of the priest’s response to the townspeople, who have been living “subject to natural law” and who feel no need for a spiritual intermediary, as, in their own words, “they had been many years without a priest, arranging the business of their souls directly with God” (77; 85). Students may be asked to compare how politics and the church reach Macondo and whether García Márquez’s presentation of these cultural establishments colors the reader’s view of them. Education, too, is brought to Macondo in this chapter; significantly, its inception is linked to politics, as it is Apolinar Moscote who succeeds in getting the government to build a school so that Arcadio Buendía can attend (81; 90). The chapter ends with the outbreak of civil war, which the heirs of the original families enter-- under the leadership of Colonel Aureliano Buendía-- out of personal, rather than political, considerations.

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“European Conquest”

Safford, Frank and Marco Palacios. *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society*. Oxford University Press, 2002.

The first Spanish contacts occurred along the Caribbean coast. An initial voyage of exploration and trade by Alonso de Ojeda to the Guajira (1499) was followed by a second of Juan de la Cosa (1501), which identified the salient features of Colombia's northern coast, notably the bays of Santa Marta and Cartagena and the mouth of the Magdalena River. These early voyages of exploration, involving transitory contacts in the Guajira, the Cartagena area, and the Gulf of Uraba, led to two projects for permanent settlement in 1508-- Diego de Nicuesa's province of Veragua, allotted by the Crown the territory from the Gulf of Urabá west, and a domain assigned to Ojeda called New Andalucia, originally stretching from the Gulf of Urabá east to Cabo de la Vela on the Guajira Peninsula. Ojeda and his associates, after fighting and enslaving Indians in the region of presentday Cartagena, moved down the coast to the Gulf of Urabá, where they were driven off by indigenes using poisoned arrows, the weapon most feared by the conquistadores. In 1510, the Ojeda group settled west of the Gulf of Urabá, among more easily subdued peoples in the Darien region. The Darien settlement became the foundation of the Spanish colony of Castilla del Oro on the Isthmus of Panama.

The colony in Panama provided a base from which the Spanish were able to establish more permanent control of the Gulf of Urabá and to explore the Chocó region in Colombia's northwest corner in the 1520s and 1530s. More notably, Panama was the jumping-off point for the Pizarro expedition, which, after subjugating much of Peru, sent a force back to the north under Sebastian de Belalcázar. Belalcázar's men entered southwestern Colombia (the Pasto highlands, the Pacific watershed, and the Cauca Valley) in 1535. In 1538 they established a Spanish presence in the Upper Magdalena Valley, and in 1539 they reached Antioquia.

While successive expeditions carried Spaniards in circular fashion from Panama to Peru and from Peru up through western Colombia, at the same

time Colombian terrain was being explored from three different beachheads on the Caribbean. The first, dating from the middle of the 1520s, was the province of Santa Marta, whose limits came to be Cabo de la Vela to the east and the Magdalena River to the west. Soon thereafter, in 1529, a competing base of conquest was established to the east of Santa Marta, at Coro on the coast of Venezuela. This operation in western Venezuela was captained by Germans whose conquests were authorized by Charles V as a means of repaying debts to his bankers, the Welsers. In 1533 a third competitor on the Caribbean coast was established in Cartagena, under Pedro de Heredia.

Heredia's authorized area of conquest covered the territory between the Gulf of Urabá and the Magdalena River.

Whatever the zone of conquest, initial European activity almost invariably amounted to little more than rapine. The conquistadores expected the indigenes to feed them as well as to enrich them with gold. If the indigenes had food and/ or gold and were docile enough to provide them, relations between European and Amerind might be relatively peaceful for a time. But feeding the Europeans either maize or bullion only increased their appetites. As a result, whether they were peaceable or bellicose at first, many indigenous peoples ended up rebelling against or fleeing the Europeans' exactions.

The rapacity of the conquistadores must be understood not merely as a reflection of a general European cupidity but also as a function of the economic conditions of the conquest. Each of the beachheads of conquest was in a dependency relationship with the already settled areas that served as supply centers (Santo Domingo, Cuba, and Jamaica for the Caribbean coast; Panama for the conquest of Peru). Each of the conquest zones depended upon one or more supply centers to provide it with horses,

munitions, clothing, and food, if the latter were not available in sufficient supply from local indigenes. Because of the scarcity of these goods, as well as because of price inflation encouraged by local bonanzas, prices in the conquest zones were extraordinarily high-- sometimes eight or more times the levels in the more settled Caribbean islands. These expensive imports had to be paid for with a substantial exportable surplus: gold, pearls, Indian slaves-- whatever might be available.

The economic organization of the conquest contributed to the general rapacity. Many conquistadores of the rank and file probably contracted debts to outfit themselves, and still larger liabilities often were assumed in the supply centers by the organizers of the expeditions to obtain the ships and other equipment needed by these enterprises. Because of the burden of these debts, as well as because of a generalized acquisitiveness, the leaders of the expeditions of conquest attempted to recoup by engrossing as much as possible of any treasure encountered and by selling goods to the rank and file at monopoly prices. The consequence was a general indebtedness and a general dissatisfaction among the soldiery, expressed in complaints against the leaders but also in demands for further expeditions of conquest so that they too might find their reward, repay their obligations, and, if possible, return to

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Spain wealthy men. The burden of debt, as well as unsatisfied ambition, thus contributed to the dynamism of the conquest. [...]

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A dramatic change in the fortunes of conquest, although not in those of Santa Marta itself, occurred in 1535, when the Crown placed the province in the hands of Pedro de Lugo, the Adelantado of the Canary Islands, in return for a commitment from Lugo to make a major infusion of men and horses into the dying colony. With the increased resources invested by Lugo, Santa Marta mounted a major expedition up the Magdalena River. In April 1536, about six hundred men started south on land under the leadership of Lugo's chief judicial officer, Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada, a Salamanca law graduate, with support from six or seven small ships that were to sail to a rendezvous with them in the lower Magdalena River. From the outset the expedition suffered heavy losses. In a storm two ships sank at the mouth of the Magdalena, while others were carried westward to Cartagena. Meanwhile, the main force trooping overland suffered from food scarcities; the indigenes' poisoned arrows; the hot, damp climate of the Magdalena; and mosquitos, ticks, and worms. Eventually, the land force hacked its way more than three hundred miles upriver to La Tara (now Barrancabermeja). When an exploratory party found the river above La Tara too swift to be easily navigable and the forest banks virtually uninhabited by indigenes, whose provisions were needed, some of Jimenez's men wanted to turn back, particularly as many were dying at the unhealthy site of La Tora. Hopes were roused in the leaders, however, by the fact that at La Tora they had found salt cakes apparently made by a different process than the sea salt they had encountered up to that point. This raised the possibility that some advanced and wealthy indigenous culture might lie farther on. In further reconnaissance up a tributary river, the Opón, a party came upon first an Amerind canoe, and then storehouses, both containing salt cakes and painted cotton mantles being used in trade. Their hopes thus apparently confirmed, Jiménez's men followed the Opón and the indigenous trade route and then cut their way through dense forests up the flanks of the Eastern Cordillera. Finally, early in March 1537, eleven months after leaving Santa Marta, some 170 men and 30 horses emerged on the mountain plains inhabited by the Muiscas.

After the trek up the hot Magdalena Valley, the highland domain of the Muiscas seemed practically a paradise to the Spaniards. The cool mountain valleys offered surcease from the discomfort and disease of

the Magdalena. On the extensive green highland plains lived ample populations of sedentary cultivators, whose abundant food was left to the Spaniards as the Muis-

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cas fled their homes. Even when the Muisca ultimately did fight, it was with wooden swords and spear throwers, and not with the fearsome poisoned arrows of the Caribbean and the Magdalena Valley. [...]

Despite the large numbers of the Muisca population, the conquest of the eastern highlands proved relatively easy. In addition to the advantages of a comfortable climate, abundant food, and an antagonist that did not use poisoned arrows, the mountain plains permitted the Spaniards to make effective use of cavalry charges against a population terrified by horses. The conquest of the highlands was also facilitated by political divisions among the Muisca. In addition to the rivalries between two, and possibly among four or five, major chieftaincies, there were also internal divisions within these groups because of disputes over succession. These conflicts, particularly in the zone first encountered by the Spanish, that of the Zipa of Bogota, enabled the conquistadores to gain Indian allies who helped them to subdue much of the rest of the Muisca area. Thus some 170 Europeans could conquer an area inhabited by probably more than one million indigenes.

Early in 1539, a year after Jiménez de Quesada effectively had conquered most of the Muisca territory, he got word of two other European expeditions approaching the New Kingdom of Granada. One had as its chief Sebastián de Belalcázar, whom Francisco Pizarro had sent north from Peru. Having founded Quito in October 1534, Belalcázar sent various lieutenants farther north into the territory of what is now southeastern Colombia (Pasta and the Cauca). Following them, Belalcázar in 1536 founded first Cali and then

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Popayán. These ventures north of Quito began to get Belalcázar into difficulties with Pizarro, who was concerned that Belalcázar was seeking to create an independent domain in Quito and the Cauca Valley. In January 1538 Pizarro sent a new lieutenant to Quito to arrest Belalcázar. Both fleeing arrest and hoping to discover the land of "el Dorado," Belalcázar in March 1538 gathered together some two hundred Spaniards and a much greater crew of indigenous bearers from the Quito region and set forth for Popayán, from which he struck east across the Central Cordillera. After four months of struggle across the high, snowy mountains, unable to obtain much food from hostile indigenes and losing many horses and native bearers, his men finally emerged into the upper valley of the Magdalena River, where with considerable relief they found easily dominated peoples, food, and even some gold. Traveling north down the valley of the Magdalena, the Belalcázar expedition encountered a search party sent out by Jiménez de Quesada, who had heard that a European expedition was in the region.

Shortly after being told of the Spanish party going down the Magdalena Valley, Jiménez learned that still another European force was nearby, in the mountains south of Bogota. This proved to be the expedition of the German Nicolás Federmann, who had left Coro, on the coast of Venezuela, in December 1536-- by his own account with a force of 300 Europeans and 130 horses. After more than two years of great hardship, traveling south through the eastern plains, in which seventy Europeans, forty horses, and innumerable indigenous bearers died, Federmann finally had scaled the Eastern Cordillera.

The nearly simultaneous arrival of Belalcázar and Federmann was remarkable considering their diverse points and times of departure. The encounter of the three expeditions must also have been quite picturesque. Belalcázar's force corresponded to the conventional image of the conquistadores, as despite

the wear of more than eight months' sojourn, they were fully equipped with European clothing and weapons, as well as being accompanied by Indian servants (*yanaconas*) from Quito and a goodly complement of pigs. The other two groups, however, appeared much less imposing. In the nearly three years since Jiménez de Quesada's men had left Santa Marta, their European clothing had almost completely rotted or worn away, and they were dressed in Muisca mantles and sandals. Federmann's men also had lost their European apparel in their more than two years on the eastern plains, and they were clothed in animal skins.

Elements of the picturesque aside, the occasion held a potential for violent conflict, given the ambitions of the conquistadores for wealth and of their leaders for lands to govern. In the end the three agreed to an arrangement by which thirty of Belalcázar's men and all of Federmann's might remain in the New Kingdom as beneficiaries of the conquest, while the question of the title to the newly conquered domain would be left to authorities in Spain to decide. Ultimately, the Crown confirmed Santa Marta's claim to the Muisca kingdom because of Jiménez's priority of conquest.

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The accident that an expedition from Santa Marta reached the Muisca highlands before those from the Pacific coast or Venezuela gave political confirmation to the tendency, already established by topographical features, for Colombia to be divided east and west along two north-south axes. The high range of the Central Cordillera already had determined, in the pre-Columbian era, that Colombia would be divided into two distinct eastern and western zones. Jiménez de Quesada's priority in arriving on the Sabana de Bogota reinforced that geographical division by making it a political reality. The fact that western Colombia was discovered and subjugated primarily by conquistadores coming from Peru, and secondarily from Cartagena and Panama, had a similar effect in confirming politically the physical separateness of the area to the west of the Central Cordillera from that to the east.

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“Spanish Settlement”

Safford, Frank and Marco Palacios. *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society*. Oxford University Press, 2002.

In the first decades after their founding the Spanish cities were at first quite primitive. At Santafé de Bogota, Spaniards for a time inhabited *bohios*, the Indian huts made of *bahareque* (reeds or branches sealed with dried mud). In time most Spanish houses in Santafé, Tunja, Popayan, and other significant towns in the interior were constructed in a mode brought from Spain-- walls of *tapia pisada* (pressed earth), with tile roofs. As early as 1542 municipal authorities in Santafé ordered Spanish

residents to build their homes with brick or stone, but walls of pressed earth remained the dominant mode for

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city homes for most of the colonial period, at least in the interior. Most urban homes in the colonial period were of one story. But by the early seventeenth century, the houses of the more affluent and

well-placed tended to be of two stories; these larger homes were built around one or two patios, used in part for stabling mules and horses. In addition, such homes were likely to have adjacent plots, on which some Indian servants lived in their traditional huts.

On the Caribbean coast, there was a parallel transition from flimsy to more solid construction. In 1552 virtually the whole city of Cartagena burned down because all of the houses had wooden walls and straw roofs. This happened again when Francis Drake attacked the port in 1586. However, after this point Cartagena moved to the use of brick. The more substantial homes had brick walls also in the Magdalena River port of Mompox, in this case because the river periodically flooded the town and walls of pressed earth would not have held up. In these commercial port towns large storage rooms for goods in trade tended to take the place of the large patios of the cities in the interior.

Churches also evolved toward solidity, after a time. Santafé's first cathedral, constructed of wood in 1566, immediately fell down. Rebuilt in stone in 1572-1592, its roof collapsed again in 1601. During the seventeenth century, however, a number of monasteries and convents were built solidly of brick, often atop stone footings. But churches were much simpler, with walls of pressed earth, in the country towns that developed in the seventeenth century, inhabited first by Indians and then, by the eighteenth century, by many mestizos.

Although in the first decade after the conquest, the cities of the conquistadores in some ways retained an Indian look, in other ways they were developing European textures. In the early 1540s Spanish women were arriving in Santafé, many of them single women brought by Spanish authorities as potential mates for triumphant conquistadores. The basic elements of European material culture also began to be introduced at the same time. In the early 1540s, wheat, barley, chickpeas, green beans, and other garden plants reached Santafé de Bogotá. Not long thereafter wheat was being milled and baked into bread. By 1542 Santafé had its first tannery, and the next year it was producing brick and tiles.

A parallel development of European agriculture was occurring in parts of the West. By the 1540s wheat brought from Quito was being cultivated in Pasta, and during the 1560s and 1570s it spread to Popayan, Both Pasta and Popayan supplied some other parts of the West with European grains. During the last third of the century sugar cane cultivation was established around Cali and Buga.

“Indians and Spaniards”

Bushnell, David. *The Making of Modern Colombia: A Nation in Spite of Itself*. University of California Press, 1993.

The use of the frontier mission as a colonizing device was one of the ways in which the Roman Catholic church made itself felt in the life of the colony. It also played an important mediating role between the Hispanic state and society and the settled Indian communities of the Andean highlands, which had been mostly Christianized, at least superficially, soon after the conquest. It took less interest in the population of African slaves, although the Catalan missionary Pedro Claver was ultimately canonized for his work among the newly arrived cargoes of Africans in Cartagena. Among the Spanish and mestizo inhabitants, finally, the church not only ministered to

religious needs but provided most of the social services (including education) available during the period. In order to fulfill its functions, it maintained a clergy that by the end of the colonial regime numbered about 1,850, including both male and female, regular and secular. For a population of 1,400,000, this meant a ratio of roughly one to every 750 inhabitants-- a much denser clergy-population ratio than the Roman Catholic church can show anywhere in Latin America today. There was, however, a relative overconcentration of clergy of all kinds in Bogotá, Popayan, and a few other urban centers.

The clergy was not only numerous, by present-day standards; it was relatively wealthy, receiving income from parish fees and from the payment of tithes (required by civil and not just ecclesiastical law) and enjoying the income of extensive property holdings that it had accumulated through gifts and investments. The precise extent of its wealth is impossible to estimate with precision; certainly, it was less than nineteenth-century anticlericals would later claim in justification of their attacks on church property. The church may well have owned close to a quarter of the urban property in Bogotá, but for the colony as a whole something like 5 percent of urban and rural real estate (always excluding the vast expanse of unclaimed public domain) would be a better guess. Even so, the church had no serious rival as

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the principal owner of both urban and rural property. In addition, much of the land not directly under church control was heavily mortgaged to the church by way of liens that had been accepted either in return for loans (for church institutions were also the chief money-lenders) or in voluntary support of pious works and endowments.

From its missionary role to its share of property ownership, the church in New Granada conformed to a pattern evident throughout Spanish America, although the church's position was stronger in New Granada than it was in some of the other colonies. Because of its gold and its large population of settled Indians to be converted and exploited, New Granada attracted the close attention of ecclesiastical as well as civil authorities from early in the colonial period. In New Granada the church managed to build the solid institutional base that it never really had in colonies such as Venezuela or Cuba, which became truly important only in the late colonial era, when religious zeal was beginning to flag. To be sure, the church was not as strong in the coastal area as in the Andean interior, a contrast that faithfully reflected its greater interest in creoles and Indians than in the African-Americans who formed a larger proportion of the inhabitants of the tropical lowlands. Even in the highlands the church's hold on the minds of at least the upper social strata began to weaken in the late eighteenth century. But this slight relative shift did not greatly affect the picture of a Roman Catholic church whose position rivaled and in some respects even exceeded that of the state.

Though not exactly a cultural and intellectual backwater, colonial New Granada made far fewer noteworthy contributions to the world of arts and letters than did the two main centers of Spanish power in America, Mexico and Peru. One of the more idiosyncratic, but still valuable, chronicles of the Spanish Conquest itself is the *Elegias de varones ilustres de Indias*, in which the Tunja cleric Juan de Castellanos set out in verse form the great deeds of the first conquerors and explorers. The *Carnero de Bogotá* of Juan Rodriguez Freile is a lively assortment of early colonial gossip, which can be read even today for pleasure and not simply as a historical document. In literature there is not much else to mention. The colony did not even have a printing press until one finally began to function in Bogota in 1738. In the field of art, aside from much utilitarian and religious folk art, New Granada produced the

painter Gregorio Vázquez Arce de Ceballos, whose canvases on religious themes were highly competent even if they

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lacked the spark of genius. He did not succeed in creating a Bogotá “school” comparable to the Cuzco and Quito “schools,” and neither did church architecture attain the same heights of splendor as in those (and a good many other) colonial centers. By far the most notable architectural achievement, in fact, was in military construction: the great fort of San Felipe and associated defense works that guarded Cartagena, completed in the early eighteenth century and never taken by storm.

Facilities for formal education were wholly lacking in rural areas, and everywhere the working class had little access to them. Women, even of the upper social strata, were essentially limited to what instruction they could receive at home. On the other hand, higher education was rather well developed, for sons of the colonial elite. Bogotá had two universities, controlled respectively by the Jesuits and the Dominicans and featuring the basic tracks of law and theology. Moreover, in the last half of the eighteenth century, the capital of New Granada became briefly one of the leading centers of intellectual activity in Spanish America, especially in the field of scientific investigation. An interest in the natural sciences formed part of the intellectual ferment that stirred the entire Western world during the Enlightenment, and not even remote New Granada, it appears, could escape the trends of the time.

The immediate spark for achievements in science was the arrival, in 1760, of José Celestino Mutis, a learned Spanish naturalist who came to Bogotá as personal physician to one of the late colonial viceroys, Pedro Messía de la Cerda. Messía eventually left, after he had expelled the Jesuits; but Mutis stayed on and became increasingly fascinated by the colony’s enormous wealth of botanical species, a natural consequence of its topographical diversity. (Colombia is exceeded today only by Brazil among nations of the world in the number of distinct species of flora to which it plays host.) Mutis gained some early notoriety by his frank affirmation of the Copernican thesis that the earth revolves around the sun and not vice versa, which was still a little daring in those Andean fastnesses and got him into trouble with the Inquisition. But, having the sympathy of top civil officials, he was never in serious danger of going off to the Inquisition’s dungeons at Cartagena. Instead, he went on to found the Expedición Botánica, an ambitious research project designed to record all the botanical species found in South America north of the equator. That aim was

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beyond the capacity of anyone to achieve, but with a team of fellow investigators and research assistants, including skilled painters to make drawings of the plants, Mutis did enough to be awarded an honorary membership in the Swedish Academy of Science.

Although Mutis was from the mother country, he drew his collaborators mainly from the creole intelligentsia, and some of them would become leaders of the independence movement early in the next century. That movement would also bring a sudden end to the scientific enlightenment in New Granada, both by dispersing its leading figures (Mutis himself was by then dead) and by opening up a range of new careers for ambitious and intelligent creoles that came to take precedence over scientific pursuits.

Despite its fleeting prominence in science-- and its gold-- New Granada was not one of the most cherished jewels in Spain's imperial crown. Spanish functionaries were sometimes even unsure where or what it was: the officers of the Cádiz Consulado made reference to the "island" of Santa Marta, as though that oldest of Spanish foundations on the Colombian coast was just another dot somewhere in the middle of the Caribbean." New Granada was not remotely comparable to New Spain (i.e., Mexico) as a producer of wealth, and it conspicuously lacked the dynamism of such colonies as the Río de la Plata or Venezuela, which in the late colonial period were experiencing rapid economic growth. The picture that emerges from the records is one of a somnolent and largely subsistence economy, presided over by a small upper class descended from either the conquistadores or later Iberian immigrants and distinguished from the mass of the population less by the comforts of their lifestyle (though they did enjoy more amenities) than by their sense of self-importance.

For the rural and urban working classes, among whom mestizos by the eve of independence were already most numerous, the colony's relative stagnation was not an unmixed evil. Even if the obligation to pay tribute forced New Granada's Indians to hire themselves out to creole landowners at least long enough to earn their yearly quota, they faced nothing like the rigors of the Potosí *mita*, the forced labor draft whereby Peruvian and Bolivian villagers were herded to work in the recesses of the great "silver mountain" at Potosi. Fortunately for them, New Granada had no Potosí, and exploitation of any kind of labor was kept within limits, both because the potential returns to the exploiter were modest and because there was still no lack of readily ac-

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cessible unoccupied land. The gold mines were tended by black slaves, who at least were better off panning gold in New Granada than they would have been cutting cane in Cuba or Brazil. And Bogotá, most isolated of viceregal capitals, was far less of a magnet city-- overshadowing lesser cities and draining away their wealth and talents-- than, say, Lima or Buenos Aires. Colombia's modern profile as a country of multiple urban centers, each with a vigorous life of its own, goes back to the colonial era. Within those colonial cities and towns, there was already forming a cadre of future leaders-- clerks and lawyers, businessmen, absentee landowners, or all those things combined-- who would soon set out to form a new nation.

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"An Approach Using Ideology and History"

Mora, Gabriela. "An Approach Using Ideology and History." *Approaches to Teaching García Márquez's One-Hundred Years of Solitude*. Edited by María Elena de Valdéz and Mario J. Valdéz, The Modern Language Association of America, 1990.

García Márquez chose, however, to concentrate on the internal causes of Macondo's destruction, and here it is important to understand what the Buendías represent. To begin with, they constitute a lineage, an ideologically rich term that the narrator frequently uses when referring to the family. *Linaje*, besides its biological meaning, has the ideological nuance of power. Students are helped by a brief discussion of the

significance of class divisions in Spain before and after the conquest of America and the specific connotations of words such as *linaje* and *casta*. Teachers should be aware that the meaning is lost in the English translation of *linaje* as “line” or, even worse, “race.” The same happens with *casta* and *descastado*, because the sense of a privileged or special group is missing in the translation (139; 161).

The Buendías’ ancestry confirms their membership in the upper class. Úrsula is a descendant of Spaniards, and her husband comes from a family of tobacco planters. The European origin, a sign of an illustrious lineage in Latin America, and the fortune from the Iguarán-Buendía business partnership undoubtedly place the family in the upper echelon. Ursula and José Arcadio left their hometown already formed by cultural traits (ideologies), most of which derive from their social status. The money Ursula inherited and the fact that she and her husband are literate give them prominence among the first settlers.

Úrsula, seen by most readers as the backbone of the family, shows characteristics that resonate with class ideology. When she invites only the descendants of the town’s founders to celebrate the opening of the Buendía home, the narrator comments that it was “truly a high-class list,” excluding even the newly arrived Moscotes (59; 65). As was the custom among the upper classes, Ursula furnished her house, the best in Macondo, with European luxuries. Although the Buendías are prominent Liberals, noted for their anticlericalism, Úrsula dreams of having her great-grandchild become pope. Her emphasis on religion contributes to the miseducation of the two last male Buendías.

Class ideology is also present in the Buendías’ founding of Macondo after their crime of honor, an offense usually associated in Spanish literature and culture with aristocracies. When critics write about the paradisiacal quality of the town’s first years, they do not mention Macondo’s origin in murder. It is not difficult to find more clouds in this “paradise,” such as José Arcadio’s neglect of his family and community while he pursues illusory projects. Moraima Semprún Donahue deals with other problems of the paradise when she studies gold and yellow as symbols in the novel. Like Fariás, she sees a dialectic of progress and decadence in the Buendías’ actions that eventually lead them to destruction. Clearly, Macondo was not born without a history or outside historical time, as some critics claim (Jara and Mejía Duque).

In the second generation of the Buendías, Aureliano, the colonel, best represents the contradictions and the frustrated possibilities that the family

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embodies. According to the narrator, the war gives Aureliano a chance to peep into “the abyss of greatness” (145; 158). This paradoxical uniting of low and high epitomizes the complicated manner in which vices and virtues compound Aureliano’s profile. He possesses courage, a sense of justice, and qualities of leadership, But he has a barren heart, more prone to rage than to love, with pride fueling most of his actions.

Of the various opportunities Aureliano has to change the course of events, such as when he commutes the death sentence of his friend Gerineldo, his capitulation and signing of the Neerlandia Treaty (a real Colombian agreement) is crucial. Aureliano put down with great cruelty a rebellion of the officers who resisted “the selling of their victory” (the English translation omits this important phrase [149; 164]). When money for the revolution appears just at the moment he is about to sign what amounts to a betrayal of his principles, Aureliano misses the last opportunity to win the war. Later, Aureliano realizes what he did and bitterly ponders whether he could have changed his destiny at that moment (206; 224).

Along with an inability to love, Aureliano shows another revealing trait: he is the only member of the family unable to see Melquíades’s magical room as spotlessly untouched by time. Since he is described as a lucid man with the faculty of prediction, his blindness to magic can be read as the ability to perceive better than others the truth about his family and his environment. If this is so, the fact that he cannot see his

father's ghost and urinates on him and the ancestral tree may be interpreted as contempt for himself and his family. Even if this reading is contested, the irreverence toward family founders and their lineage is clear.

The Buendia family helped create the *latifundio*¹, an institution closely linked with the upper classes. Teachers interested in reading *One Hundred Years* as a document illustrating Latin American historical reality can discuss how the *latifundio*-- which, together with the church and the government, forms the classical trinity blamed for Latin American ills-- is the offspring of violence and theft. In the novel, José Arcadio, the founders' older son, terrorizes the peasants with his dogs and his shotgun, despoiling them of their best plots of land. His son, Arcadio, becomes "the cruelest ruler that Macondo had ever known" (95; 105), using his position in the Liberal government to legalize the ownership of the stolen lands and to embezzle Macondo's taxes to build a house in the heart of the town. Later, the land seizures are recognized as legal by the Conservatives, showing the complicity between the two parties, a historical fact in Colombia (Mercado Cardona).

Instrumental in consolidating the power of the church, the Buendías invite the first priest to Macondo to celebrate the union of Aureliano, the future colonel, with Remedios Moscote. This marriage formalizes the integration of class and government and marks the penetration of force into Macondo, for Moscote comes as a magistrate and brings armed guards with him. The resulting society is one in which schools "accepted only the legitimate off-

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spring of Catholic marriages" (289; 314), a rule that even denies an education to the last Buendía, born out of wedlock.

Aureliano Segundo's choice to marry Fernanda del Carpio increases the power of social and religious prejudice. As a representative of the most retrograde form of aristocracy and as a factor in the fall of the Buendía family, Fernanda offers ample possibilities for ideological analysis. Students can search for discursive signs suggesting that she is portrayed more as a carrier of death than as a giver of life (for example, the funeral wreaths she makes and her plan to kill her grandchild). The heavy, satirical strokes with which this character is depicted call to mind the portraits of those Spanish *hidalgos* from classic literature who had the same blind pride and the same empty coffers. Besides this intertextual connection, the government's involvement in Fernanda's plot to get rid of Babilonia, whose only crime was his plebeian origin, must be stressed. Social prejudices ruin the future of Fernanda's daughter and cripple her grandchild's development.

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¹ The land tenure structure of Latin America is called as the '*Latifundio–minifundio*' land tenure structure. This dualistic tenure system is characterized by relatively few large commercial estates known as *latifundios*, which are over 500 hectares and numerous small properties known as *minifundios*, which are under 5 hectares. *Minifundios* are mainly subsistence-oriented smallholdings and are generally farmed by indigenous and peasant households.