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Although one encounters many hardships within One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the ideas of family, unity, and love always seem to pull them through. The Buendia' family struggles with plagues, death, grief, incest, and the separation of family members, but through it all they remain constant and whole. In the novel, there are many characters who dedicate their lives to keeping the family and village together, such as the character of Ursula Iguaran. Because of their firm beliefs in closeness, all of the Buendia family's good situations seem to outweigh the bad. It is clear through the actions and beliefs of the characters and the events that occur within the novel, that Marquez utilized the overall theme of the importance of family staying together. This overlying theme of unity makes this novel an enjoyable one for all types of people to understand and relate to.

One of the strongest and most valuable characters throughout the entire book was Ursula Iguaran, wife of Jose Arcadio Buendia. Ursula, who as a mother of three, always tried to make the best decisions not only for herself, but concerning her immediate and extended family. Early on in the book, Ursula's husband, who is also the founder of the Macondo village, wants to move Macondo to a different location in order to discover more of civilization. Thinking of her children, Ursula is opposed to this decision. " 'We will not leave,' she said. 'We will stay here, because we have had a son here.' 'We have still not had a death,' he said. 'A person does not belong to a place until there is someone dead under the ground.' Ursula replied with a soft firmness: 'If I have to die for the rest of you to stay here, I will die'" (Marquez 13). Through Ursula's strong words, Marquez makes a reference to the family values. In the Buendia family, events are occurring and the town of Macondo is shifting towards change. One can come to an understanding that

Ursula will do anything to keep that family unity, including taking the situation to the extremity of death.

During the war, Colonel Aureliano Buendia, Ursula's first son, struggles with his inner character and the idea of betrayal. He becomes so depressed throughout the war that he attempts suicide with a bullet wound to his chest. After he survives this suicide attempt, his mother decides that there needs to be a change within the Buendia household. It needed to be repaired from all of the damage that the war had caused. " ' Now they're going to see who I am,' she said when she saw that her son was going to live. ' There won't be a better, more open house in all the world than this madhouse.' ' She had it washed and painted, changed the furniture, restored the garden and planted new flowers, and opened doors and windows so that the dazzling light of summer would penetrate even into the bedrooms'" (Marquez 180). The fact that Marquez incorporates this event is significant due to the fact that Aureliano was disillusioned with the state that the house had fallen into. This can be a parallel because it depicts the separation of family unity. The fact that Ursula is making the effort to amend the broken strings of family bonds, demonstrates not only the unity, but also the love and care she had for them. Later in the novel, Ursula witnesses many struggles occurring within the family. These include the fact that her son Colonel Aureliano Buendia has isolated and withdrawn himself from society, and that two of her great grandchildren are sleeping with the same woman. Ursula realizes that her household needed hope, and that God needed to be a part of her family's life. " ' It's a better way,' she approved. ' Let's hope that he becomes a priest so that God will finally come into this house'" (Marquez 185). Although Ursula was a determined woman, she also knew that she could not turn her family's situations around

on her own. She needed the help of a higher power, and longed for a male in her family to become a priest, so that they could receive that help. It takes even more strength to let others know that one cannot do it all on their own and that they need help. No one wants to admit their downfalls. What Ursula did was something that many people are not able to. She put the needs of her family and village before her own needs. In the end, she raised a beautiful family, and even though mistakes were made, lessons were learned and the family evolved. This woman's courage and determination provides an example, and can be encouraging to all women.

Two of the major problems that the Buendia family struggled with were death or grief, and staying true to their original culture. Because of the war, many deaths were happening, and each time a death would occur, the household would experience a grieving period which could last for years. After the Liberals eventually lost the war, Colonel Aureliano Buendia was captured and sentenced to execution. His dying wish was for his sentence to be carried out in his hometown of Macondo, where all of his family was located. " 'But when they condemned him to death and asked him to state his last wish, he did not have the least difficulty in identifying the premonition that inspired his answer': 'I asked that the sentence be carried out in Macondo,' he said"(Marquez 126). Aureliano Buendia had encountered a lot during his lifetime including war, betrayal, depression, and attempted suicide, but he was about to experience the worst of all situations ,death. Although he knew that it would cause his family much grief to see his execution, he felt some comfort in the fact the he would be at home. He felt that home was where he belonged, close to the ones who were most important to him. One can infer

that Marquez's purpose for creating the situation was to show how tight and strong the family's bond really was. They were together "...til death did them apart."

The entire village of Macondo struggled with the decision to keep the original traditions or encourage modern living and new technology, but the Buendias really debated this issue. Jose Arcadio Buendia was all about expanding and progressing, new ideas, and more knowledge, but many others within his village, including his wife, were opposed. As evident within this novel, it is human nature to stay where one feels comfortable and familiar. "He built another one, he gathered the men of the village in his little room, and he demonstrated to them, with theories that none of them could understand, the possibility of returning to where one had set out by consistently sailing east. The whole village was convinced that Jose Arcadio Buendia had lost his reason, when Melquiades returned to set things straight"(Marquez 5). Although Jose A. Buendia might have felt one way about the situation, he was a leader and he had to do what was in the best interest of his people. They were like his family, so he had to listen to their opinions. He may have wanted to progress with modern living and modern traditions, but if his people were more satisfied with the original traditions, then that is the route he had to take. In the end, Macondo kept much of its original culture while still accepting new ideas and inventions. Many times in a family, not everyone always agrees on a certain situation, and those good families will come together and compromise in order to satisfy everyone as much as possible. That is what the Buendia family and Macondo village tried their best to do. Another struggle with tradition/custom came through the character of Fernanda del Carpio, who was married to twin Aureliano Segundo. Fernanda had married into the Buendia family, and her customs which she obtained from her parents were

opposite those of the Buendia family. " Even Ursula's superstitions, with origins that came more from an inspiration of the moment than from tradition, came into conflict with those of Fernanda, who had inherited them from her parents and kept them defined and cataloged for every occasion"(Marquez 211). This situation is another example of two different opinions clashing, and people having to compromise. Two different families had two different styles of living, but now that those families were intertwined, they had to come together and do what was best for everyone. The novel talks about how Ursula's family had a tradition of eating in the kitchen, while Fernanda's family would all come together, and sit to the table. There had to be a compromise here. Through these sets of quotes, I think that Marquez is trying to convey the fact that all families will have disagreements, but the strong families are the ones that will be able to work through those disagreements. In so many ways, that statement is true.

The good character of the Buendia family is evident in the amount of kindness and care they not only showed not only to each other, but also to people outside of the family, in times of need. The Buendias were accepting people who invited strangers into their home, especially a young girl by the name of Rebeca, who was at first very different and rebellious, but eventually came around. This family worked with Rebeca and changed her entire attitude and behavior, which is not one's everyday situation. "She was more affectionate to Ursula than any of her own children had been, and she called Arcadio and Amaranta brother and sister, Aureliano uncle, and Jose Arcadio Buendia grandpa. So that she finally deserved, as much as the others, the name of Rebeca Buendia, the only one that she ever had and that she bore with dignity until her death"(Marquez 43). Rebeca came to the Buendia household as a neglected, lonely,

young girl who ate dirt and whitewash off the walls. What she needed was a family that would love and care for her, and help her to develop properly. That is exactly what Ursula and her family did for this young lady. Not many families would accept a stranger into their home, and the Buendias certainly did not have to do what they did, but the beautiful part is that they chose to. If they had not put the time and effort into changing Rebeca's life around, she might have suffered, or even worse, died. After spending time with this family, she became much more comfortable and started to open up. In reality, her life was saved by the Buendia family. When the bond is close enough within one's immediate family, it gives them the opportunity to extend a hand to others who may not be a part of the family.

This novel is representation of how each one of us should live our lives and that is why it is so effective. We have to look past the negative: deaths, incest, affairs, and war, and focus on the positives: births, marriage, and education. As one can see, the Buendias endured a great deal of difficulties, but they never focused on them for too long, and that is what eventually brought them through those hard times. Throughout most of the novel the Buendia family was a growing family in which many new ideas evolved. This is proof that they must have been doing something right. In the end, Marquez's purpose was clearly conveyed throughout the entire text, to keep what is most important close to you: family, love, and unity.