

FROM ANTITERRA TO MACONDO

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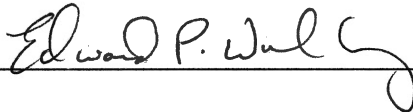
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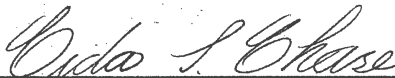
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by

Mary Kathryn Bradley Miller

December, 1989

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## CHAPTER I

### DIFFERENT WORLDS

Vladimir Nabokov and Gabriel García Márquez could hardly be more opposite in origin, upbringing, lifestyle, social philosophy, and attitude toward writing. Yet, each author found writing as a way to return to his homeland, the only way to return to a world that could not wait for him. The two novels featured in this study also employ protagonists who are involved in writing as a means of securing their homelands. Nabokov's Ada features the remains of a family which moves away from Ardis, the center of the family's being. The Veens flee Ardis and travel headlong as if a centrifugal force is pushing them farther and farther from their gravitational core. Their writing of the family chronicles, which turns out to be the novel Ada, mitigates their homelessness and affords them a respite from disintegration.

Los Buendía of García Márquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude stay in Macondo as if bound there by centripetal force. Each generation of the family reenters Úrsula's doors which open into the family home. Even though Macondo and the family drift closer and closer to oblivion, the seekers within the family move in tighter and tighter circles, burrowing into the energy emanating from Melquíades' room.

The Veens and the Buendías leave very different testimonies to their families' time and space. Eugene Tonnies' terms Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft may help to clarify the two novels' positions.<sup>1</sup> The term Gesellschaft applies to an advanced society whose technology produces a

mobile, secular, heterogeneous, and city-oriented populace. Science and logic supersede instinct. According to Malcolm Bradbury, Gesellschaft is ". . . a community only nominally; people appear and disappear in it."<sup>2</sup> Gemeinschaft is quite the opposite. A rural, homogeneous society exists where the family reigns supreme. There is still time for and confidence in the spoken word. Craftsmanship carries prestige, and one is expected to listen to the instinct. If one looks at Nabokov's and García Márquez's ties to the earth, one can see how Nabokov fits many of the gesellschaftlich patterns that he establishes for Van and Ada Veen, while García Márquez goes back to a gemeinschaftlich time and scene. Even though their biographical and fictional worlds are very different, Nabokov and García Márquez both employ family chronicles which focus upon the erosion of a family and the loss of its particular ancestral space.

Ada's Van Veen, the ultimate gesellschaftlich man, has no earthly, geographic moorings. For much of his life he is not in harmony with the earth or with himself. He has no meaningful family or moral support. Even Ardis, and certainly Ardis Hall, do not connote prelapsarian beauty and conjugality; rather, the reader perceives them as sites of erosion, places succumbing to artificiality and intrigue. Alienation manifests itself among the Veens and their peers through their references to "Anti-terra," "iz ada," ("out of hell"), and "the specious present." Ardis and Ardis Hall yield to the slippage rather than thwart it.

Writing is a means of purgation and rehabilitation for Vaniada, the final two members of the Veen family line. Their language tears through the gauze of everyday reality and creates a new and variant veil of colors and forms. Van writes to find a way home and to create a psychic center of being, since his gesellschaftlich world lacks one.

Ada's structure, its language, and its narrators are all agents of investigation. M. M. Bakhtin looks to one of Nabokov's predecessors as an indicator of such a world. Speaking of Pushkin's Eugene Onegin, Bakhtin says:

[A]lmost the entire novel breaks down into images of languages that are connected to one another and with the author via their own characteristic dialogical relationships. . . . All these languages, with all the direct expressive means at their disposal themselves become the object of representation, are presented as images of whole languages . . . highly limited and sometimes almost comical. But at the same time these represented languages themselves do the work of representing to a significant degree. The author participates in the novel (he is omnipresent in it) with almost no direct language of his own [Bakhtin's italics]. The language of the novel is a system of languages that mutually and ideologically interanimate each other. It is impossible to describe and analyze it as a single unitary language<sup>3</sup>.

Similarly, Ada allows Nabokov a creative space for interfacing language systems. The languages of art, drama, and cinema in Ada complement the novel's plasticity. The languages of botany and zoology juxtapose with metaphysical inquiry and dream recall. The linguistic forms as well as the content of family confessions, diaries, and letters lead ultimately to a translation of the Veens by means of the chronicles, the memoirs. Behind all these systems lies an irony begotten by what Bakhtin calls "intonational quotation marks" (44).

Nabokov described the gesellschaftlich Veens in Medieval romance tones. Ada and Van fight to break free of the family code which equates appearance with honor. A modern anti-Gawain, someone driven from the castle, Van seeks a clearer view of his family and its past. He has to write himself beyond romantic posturing. He has to confront his past before he can achieve a healthy notion of the present, what he calls "the Deliberate Present."

Readers, as much as Van, must submit to Ada (purgatory) in order to arrive at Ada (replenishment). Van stops building his own "Terra" (more like "terror") for escaping everyday reality (Antiterra) when he recognizes his family's self-destructive ties to the world of romance. Neither Aqua, Marina, Demon, or Lucette can peel from their wilting souls the veneer of social cliches and fictional assumptions in order to grapple with the darkness beyond.

Nabokov's Ada destroys the last vestiges of fictional romance and dares readers to look into the jaws of love. Van Veen is damnably unlovable. Better he had been standing in the doorway of Buendía house and not Meme's Aureliano when the last José Arcadio looked the last functioning Aureliano in the eye and said, "So you're the bastard." But in spite of his arrogance, Van Veen is a seeker. His agitation within the chronicles produces a healthy agon. The novel, like Ada's larvarium, is a breeding ground where destruction and nourishment, survival and change take place within two lovers, within their writing, and within reader expectations.

The yearnings for gemeinschaftlich ties to a particular geographic space or for the comforting reassurances of romance fiction ultimately yield to uncertainty which resides in the novelistic art of seeking. In Ada, protagonist and reader have to die to many old beliefs and old territories and be willing to travel unfamiliar ground.

The Veens utilize a "cola de pluma" ("tail of a feather" or a "scribe's pen"), which is not unlike the Macondo parchments and their bearing a "cola de cerdo" ("tail of a pig"), as well as the spirit of the chestnut tree. According to Bakhtin, novels foster such tensions:

The novel took shape precisely at the point when epic distance was disintegrating, when both the world and man were assuming a degree of comic familiarity, when the object of artistic representation was

being degraded to the level of a contemporary reality that was inconclusive and fluid. . . . The novel, after all, has no canon of its own. . . . It is plasticity itself. It is a genre that is ever questing, ever examining itself and subjecting its established forms to review (39).

Ada holds open the novelistic territory while chronicling Vaniada's search for breathing space. Ada accords life to Vaniada, to readers, and to novelistic structures as a whole. Part of that life grows out of death. Before readers enter the world of Ada, they learn from the editing Orangers that "persons mentioned by name in this book are dead." One cannot even begin the journey through this hard, black book without confronting the Orangers and their realities. The narrator-protagonist-lovers are not creatures cast in fictionalized marble. Readers, protagonists, and editors alike are limited and must face their limitations or their "colas de cerdo." One survives such a reality by acknowledging it and by integrating other worlds within it--worlds like those of lepidoptera and language which encourage inquiry and demonstrate change.

If the reader had romantic notions that Vaniada, through their love story, could live unquestionably forever, the implied author does not seem equally bent upon such an illusion. The marginalia, textual revisions, intrusive narration, editorial comments, layers of language, intonational quotation marks, and the Orangerian brackets at the novel's beginning and end force readers to question everything, including themselves and their prospective sojourn.

### Centrifugal Thrust

Ardis has its compensations but it is never home for Van. It is the spot on the implied author's globe for which Van holds some fond memories. Ardis is also a point of departure for two people who do not return--two people who cannot establish further mooring there. These two

people leave Ardis as if their paths were an imitation of the place's name ("point of an arrow"). Indeed, Van and Ada move like objects propelled from a bow string. The readers, likewise, find themselves relentlessly moving from place to place throughout the novel while Ardis lies in state, a part of the family memorial and the family background. One can almost hear Nabokov's bald little prompter mumbling over the places and the persons of his globe: Bras D'Or; Severn Tories; Estoty; Raduga; Kaluga, New Cheshire, U.S.A.; Ladoga, Mayne; Ardis at Ladore; Brig, Switzerland; Aardvark, Mass; Ex en Valais. It is also easy to imagine the accompanying stage directions for some of these places:

--Have Van grab a hackney coach at Ladore on his first major visit to Ardis.

--Send Van to Kalugano to settle accounts with Herr Rack.

--Transport Van to England for consultation and later a university position.

--Put Ada in Arizona.

--Allow reunion in Mont Roux, Switzerland. Remember the hotel Les Trois Cygnes for a later scene.

--Have Van acquire the real estate near Sorciere.

--Suggest Switzerland as the geographical backdrop for the latter-day Veens.

The geography in Ada, however, does more than serve as a locator map which embellishes Ardis as if to say to Van and Ada, "You were there." The geography of the novel is one more language system, one more set of intonational quotation marks playing with the human penchant for idealizing factual places until they become fictional schemes.

The beleaguered reader of Ada will suffer permanent vertigo if she or he tries to organize, regulate, distinguish, and priortize all the places

that whiz into and out of view. Nevertheless, Ada is Nabokov's territory of the word, and Van writes his way to the peaks in his life. The abysses, the valleys, and the slopes also appear, but central features to the landscape of Ada are Ada, Ardis, the treatise on time, Van's and Ada's old age, and the overlying chronicles. Dreams, nightmares, scientific inquiry, and recall coalesce into the chronicles. They verify Ada and the years that she and Van probe, wince, and stumble their way out of discord and into gradual grace.

### Centripetal Force

In Nabokov's gesellschaftlich world, Ardis is a memory that Van guides successfully to harbor in the chronicles, but García Márquez's Macondo remains the physical as well as the emotional base for the family. A centrifugal force sends the final pair of Veens splintering away from Ardis, but a centripetal force holds the Buendías to Macondo. "Aquí nos quedamos" ("Here we stay"), as Úrsula once said. Ada is the Veen's last link to the earth and Ada is Van's confrontation of the family's disconnectedness. But at least one Buendía through each generation, usually more than one, remains connected to Macondo. Los Buendía ultimately yield to overriding natural forces within Macondo, to excesses peculiar to generations of repression, and to the gesellschaftlich forces from the outside. Although family and place eventually go down together, Macondo holds the Buendías in an extra-reality that will not release them from its spell. Even the geography of the area is a geography of strangeness and entrapment:

. . . [T]o the east lay the impenetrable mountain chain . . . José Arcadio Buendía and his men, with wives and children, animals and all kinds of domestic implements, had crossed the mountains in search of an outlet to the sea, and after twenty-six months they gave up the expedition and founded Macondo, so

they would not have to go back. . . . To the south lay the swamps, covered with an eternal vegetable scum, and the whole vast universe of the great swamp, which, according to what the gypsies said, had no limits. The great swamp in the west mingled with a boundless extension of water. . . . According to José Arcadio Buendía's calculations, the only possibility of contact with civilization lay along the northern route. . . .

. . . for a week, almost without speaking, they [José Arcadio Buendía and his followers] went ahead like sleepwalkers through a universe of grief. . . . "It's all right," José Arcadio Buendía would say. "The main thing is not to lose our bearings."

. . . His dreams ended as he faced that ashen, foamy, dirty sea, which had not merited the risks and sacrifices of the adventure.<sup>4</sup>

The rains, the heat, the encroaching swamp and jungle remain always a threat to the town. Úrsula is the only family member with the energy to match the opposing creatures and plants. Yet, despite her longevity, Úrsula is only one Buendía, while the swamp, the jungle, and the heat seem perpetual.

Úrsula's husband, José Arcadio Buendía, merges with Macondo rather than fighting it. In spite of his desire to seek "incredible things" elsewhere, José Arcadio Buendía belongs to the place. The settlement begins there because of his dream. And he dies there--once again integrating his dreams with the place. In the interval between his founding Macondo and his death there, he seems to learn from the chestnut tree, from time, and from the weather. He arrived in "esta tierra que nadie le había prometido" ("this land that nobody had promised him") because he wanted to be free of the weight of a dead man. But the dead Prudencio and the live José Arcadio Buendía become interdependent and close friends in Macondo. The spirit of the chestnut tree and Buendía's long days and nights there change him. He stops fighting time and provides an air of reconciliation and acceptance. After his death, Úrsula, the unstinting

practitioner of everyday reality, seeks his ghost underneath the chestnut tree.

The gypsies and the Arab merchants alleviate Macondo's isolation and give it a resilience and stoicism against catastrophes. Melquíades, in particular, has the most influence on the swampy village. He links Macondo to several contraries. He frees the village from a living death (insomnia and forgetfulness), but he also is the first to die there--thus putting Macondo on the map of the dead. He enables Prudencio to find Macondo, and he wins Úrsula's trust. He elects to leave the dead and favors returning to Macondo for a final and supreme endeavor: writing the parchments. He protects the seekers who come to his room even as he forewrites their deaths.

Melquíades is a human counterpart to the swamp and the chestnut tree. Even though he has foreseen and forewritten the family history to include its end, he has joined his creative force with the family. Melquíades seems content and ready to leave Macondo when he realizes that the family has an heir to his (Melquíades') plasticity.

Meme's Aureliano oversees the beginning and the end of the Buendías and their Macondo. He connects Buendía instincts to the pursuit of more formal knowledge. He overcomes family fears and ignorance by reaching out to Amaranta Úrsula and by turning to the men of letters in town. He seeks the wisdom of sages, and by way of the parchments he travels into the soul of his place and time. He breaks the weight of a dead man by converting desolation (cola de cerdo) into resolution (language). He gives gemeinschaftlich Macondo to the best of a gesellschaftlich world. The word--written, pondered, translated--is sent and received.

García Márquez's success with Cien años doubled interests in the novelists of the "New World." García Márquez's attention to natural and

supernatural forces, his exploring the intricacies of the human family, and his ability to give the written word a magical, aural sheen made him an interesting successor to Nabokov, who had moved the written word as far as his intellect could carry it.

One can say goodbye to the best of an old world and hello to the best of a new world by reading Ada and Cien años. The sojourn through both novels reminds one of Thoreau's exhortation:

Start now on that farthest western way which does not pause at the Mississippi or the Pacific . . . but leads on . . . summer and winter, day and night, sun down, moon down, and at last earth down, too.<sup>5</sup>

The Veens who flee Ardis and the Buendías who move in cycles in Macondo find a glimmer of the extra reality that they are seeking. It encompasses both the stained glass and the chestnut tree. It has the fluidity of dreams and the determination of "nos quedamos aquí." These two families, who record so differently the loss of ancestral turf, make an interesting bridge between Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft while inviting the reader to look into the authors' ties to worlds of an equally opposing space and time.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Ferdinand Tonnies, Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft (Leipzig, 1887), trans. by Charles P. Loomis as Community and Association (London, 1955).

<sup>2</sup>Malcolm Bradbury, The Social Context of Modern English Literature (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 9.

<sup>3</sup>M. M. Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, University of Texas Press, Slavic Series, No. 1, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 47.

<sup>4</sup>Gabriel García Márquez, One Hundred Years of Solitude, trans. by Gregory Rabassa (New York: Avon/Bard Books, 1971), 19-21.

<sup>5</sup>H. D. Thoreau, Walden, in The Works of H. D. Thoreau, ed. Henry Seidel Canby (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1946), 458.

## CHAPTER II

### ANTITERRA: THE DASH FOR WORDS AND WINGS

Recalling his youth on Antiterra, Van writes first in his memoirs about Ardis, the place that he would most like to reconstruct from his past. As Van delves into his project, the reader has to wonder if the reconstruction of such a place through language could then effect a special state--a more immediate reality than Terra or even than Antiterra. Robert Alter says that Ada "is an attempt to return to paradise, to establish the luminous vision of youth and love's first fulfilment as the most intensely, perdurably real experience we know."<sup>1</sup> Certainly a very real part of young Van's life is Ardis and Ardis Hall (the country house of the actress Marina, who is conveniently married to Demon's quieter cousin Dan). Van visits there for a full summer during his fourteenth year (1884) and falls in love with Ada, who is younger than he by a year and a half. They share the same parentage (Marina - Demon) rather than their putative parentage (Aqua and Demon for Van; Marina and Dan for Ada). The landscape and the house at Ardis figure eminently in the central event of Van's life: his falling in love with Ada.<sup>2</sup>

#### Arbors, Ardors, and Ada

Trees dominate the landscape of Ardis Hall and complement his and Ada's youth, but the two children approach these environs differently even when they conspire to use the rich foliage of the estate for joint

pursuits. Old Van, the chronicler, remembers the trees when in his old age he talks about the aura that Ardis first held for him, a boy of 14:

[T]he romantic mansion appeared on the gentle eminence of old novels. It was a splendid country house, three stories high, built of pale brick and purplish stone, whose tints and substance seemed to interchange their effects in certain lights. Notwithstanding the variety, amplitude and animation of great trees that had long replaced two regular rows of stylized saplings (thrown in by the mind of the architect rather than observed by the eye of a painter), Van immediately recognized Ardis Hall as depicted in the two-hundred-year-old aquarelle that hung in his father's dressing room: the mansion sat on a rise overlooking an abstract meadow.<sup>3</sup>

Certainly young Van brings to Ardis Hall a sensibility which old Van parodies: the feudal heritage and boys' school upbringing germane to romance novels. Thanks to his father's collection of art, Van thinks that he already knows Ardis from his exposure to the aquarelle which depicts "two tiny people in cocked hats conversing not far from a stylized cow" (35). The butler sends Van out to tour the garden, and his sense of having stepped into a painting continues:

As he followed a winding path, soundlessly stepping on its soft pink sand in the cloth gumshoes that were part of the school uniform, he came upon a person whom he recognized with disgust as being his former French governess (The place swarmed with ghosts!). She was sitting on a green bench under the Persian lilacs, a parasol in one hand and in the other a book (36).

Since Van's father and uncle, Demon and Daniel Veen, collect art, Van may be very much of the world of canvas himself, but the arbors of Ardis soon reveal that a governess "was reading aloud to a small girl who was picking her nose and examining with dreamy satisfaction her finger before wiping it on the edge of the bench" (36). This child is "Lucette, the younger one, a neutral child of eight, with a fringe of shiny reddish-blond hair and a freckled button for a nose . . ." (36). The governess leads Van and Lucette toward the Hall:

Lucy gratingly dragging a garden hoe she has found, and young Van in his trim gray suit and flowing tie, with his hands be-

hind his back, looking down at his neatly stepping mute feet--trying to place them in line, for no special reason (37).

At this moment, Van sees Ada getting out of a victoria which had pulled up to the porch: "a dark-haired girl of eleven or twelve, preceded by a fluid dackel [the family dog]. . . . Ada carried an untidy bunch of wild flowers" (37). Lucette and Ada appear as different as light and dark (with the clanking hoe foreshadowing the cacophony of Lucette's life); Ada's untidy flowers signal her natural approach to the terrain juxtaposed with Van's urbanity.

Throughout his wonderings on Antiterre, Van recalls Ada's ardor, although her enthusiasm does not always agree with his. The first day that the governess sends them out to play together, their differences arise. He nervously throws a fir cone at a marble statue in a fountain only to frighten a hawfinch. She meticulously explains her favorite sun and shadow game under the outstretched arms of the linden and the oak. Van squelches her "goldgouts" of sun and shadow spots with his emphatic denunciations rather than taking the stick and digging comparable enclosures. In another effort to divert the lad who is called her cousin, Ada agrees to show him "the real marvel of Ardis Manor; my larvarium" (54). Van thinks of the place as a "glorified rabbitry," but it is actually Ada's breeding ground for lepidoptera. "Je raffole de tout ce que rampe," she tells Van ("I'm crazy about everything that crawls") (54).

Van perceives Ada's "otherness" (a part of her ardor) from the start, and he has occasion to witness its growth:

What Van experienced in those first strange days . . . combined elements of ravishment and exasperation. Ravishment--because of her pale, voluptuous, impermissible skin, her hair, her legs, her angular movements, her gazelle-grass odor, the sudden black stare of her wideset eyes, the rustic nudity under her dress; exasperation--because between him an awkward schoolboy of genius, and that precocious, affected, impenetrable child

there extended a void of light and a veil of shade that no force could overcome and pierce (59).

"Sun and Shade" could easily have been the title for the chronicles; the phrase certainly vivifies the dichotomy of Van and Ada. Throughout the memoirs, the reader finds record of Ada relishing and consuming natural, sensory, and scientific detail while Van overruns individuals, epitomizes the confusion of his parentage, and later turns to writing for solace--that writing often centering upon himself or upon the insane. A key chapter in the family chronicles (I, 12) talks about Ada's "web of wisdom" wherein she classifies things:

. . . "real things" which were unfrequent and priceless, simply "things" which formed the routine stuff of life; and "ghost things," also called "fogs," such as fever, toothache, dreadful disappointments, and death. Three or more things occurring at the same time forced a "tower," or if they came in immediate succession, they made a "bridge." "Real towers" and "real bridges" were the joys of life, and when towers came in a series, one experienced supreme rapture. It almost never happened, though. In some circumstances, in a certain light, a neutral "thing" might look or even actually become "real" or else, conversely, it might coagulate into a fetid "fog" (74).

Eighty-seven-year-old Van recalls Ada's ardor for eating honey at Ardis when they were children:

The classical beauty of clover honey, smooth, pale, translucent, freely flowing from the spoon and soaking my love's bread and butter in liquid brass. The crumb steeped in nectar.  
. . .

"Real thing?" he asked.

"Tower," she answered.

And the wasp.

The wasp was investigating her plate. Its body was throbbing.

"We shall try to eat one later," she observed, "but it must be gorged to taste good. Of course, it can't sting your tongue. . . ."

"All right. And the third Real Thing?"

She considered him. A fiery droplet in the wick of her mouth considered him. A three-colored velvet violet, of which she had done an aquarelle on the eve, considered him from its fluted crystal.

She said nothing. She licked her spread fingers, still looking at him.

Van, getting no answer, left the balcony. Softly her tower crumbled in the sweet silent sun (75).

Van does seem like a wasp, throbbing for Ada and gorging upon sex throughout his life. Ada has her encounters also, but she remains his lifelong preoccupation and sustenance--even during her absences. His writing is his other mainstay. Several times, via his writing, old Van conjures up the child Ada and her exuberance for the immediate.

For instance, a young Van and Ada are returning to Ardis Hall after a day of making love in the woods: "[T]his forest, this moss, your hand, the ladybird on my leg, this cannot be taken away, can it? (it will, it was)" (153). The young couple eat a half dozen "Russian-type 'hamburgers' called bitochki . . . [before] they retrieve their bikes from under the jasmins to pedal on. . . . They make a last pause before reaching the darkness of Ardis Park" (154). Joining Marina and Lucette's governess for tea,

Van drank a glass of milk and . . . thought he'd go straight to bed . . . [but not] Ada, reaching voraciously for the keks (English fruit cake). "Hammock?" she inquired; but tottering Van shook his head. . . . "Tant pis," ['too bad'] repeated Ada, and with invincible appetite started to smear butter all over the yolk-tinted rough surface and rich incrustations--raisins, angelica, candied cherry, cedrat--of a thick slice of cake. Mlle Lariviere, who was following Ada's movements with awe and disgust, said:

"Je reve. Il n'est pas possible qu'on mette du beurre par-dessus toute cette pate britannique, masse indigeste et immonde." ["I must be dreaming. It cannot be that anyone can spread butter on top of all that indigestible and vile British dough."]

"Et ce n'est que la premier tranche," said Ada. ['And it is only the first slice.']

"Do you want a sprinkle of cinnamon on your curds and whey?" asked Marina. "You know, Belle" (turning to Mlle Lari-viere), "she used to call it 'sanded snow' when she was a baby."

"She was never a baby," said Belle emphatically.

"She could break the back of her pony before she could walk."

"I wonder," asked Marina, "how many miles you rode to have our athlete drained so thoroughly."

"Only seven," replied Ada with a munch smile (153-155).

This tea scene at Ardis hall indicates the house's role in complicated goings-on. Marina's summer home, which Dan occasionally visits, only appears to be a haven for anyone except for Marina. The house and the constant movement within it suggest the restlessness of the prevailing occupants from the presiding adults to the exploring children and the ambulatory servants, neighbors, lepidoptera, pets, and guests.

The meaning for the name of the mansion comes up during a prophetic, one-sided scrabble game at the mansion in 1888: "[I]t was pitiful to see Lucette cling to her last five letters (with none left in the box), forming beautiful ARDIS which her governess told her meant 'the point of an arrow,' but only in Greek, alas" (225). Lucette inherits the aura of its name, for she can never shed certain arrows that plague her into adulthood: losing to Ada in a prolonged rivalry for Van's attention; feeling like and being a dupe and an intruder in the affairs of Van and Ada; and finally being unable to extricate herself from decadence, isolation, ennui, and an emotional dependence upon Van as well as upon Ada.

Trying to calm the angry 12-year-old after the scrabble loss,

. . . Van stroked the silky top of her head and kissed her behind the ear; and, bursting into a hideous storm of sobs, Lucette rushed out of the room. Ada locked the door after her.

"She's an utterly mad and depraved gipsy nymphet, of course," said Ada, "yet we must be more careful than ever . . . oh terribly, terribly, terribly . . . oh, careful, my darling" (229).

At this moment Ada is a worried 16-year-old who has more than a jealous sister at hand. As long as she was a little girl at home in the arbors of Ardis collecting flowers, playing sun and shade games, doing botanical sketches, and mating insects in her larvarium, her life seemed relatively edenic. Her relationship to Dr. Krolik is never totally clear, however, and Van's description of Ada's larvarium during his visit there the summer of 1884 (when Ada was 12) reveals layers of life that Van and Ada are also beginning to experience:

The porcelain-white, eye-spotted Cowl (or "Shark") larva, a highly prized gem, had safely achieved its next metamorphosis, but Ada's unique Lorelie Underwing had died, paralyzed by some ichneumon that had not been deceived by those clever prominences and fungoid smudges. The multicolored toothbrush had comfortably pupated within a shaggy cocoon, promising a Persian Vaporiser later in the autumn. The two Puss Moth larvae had assumed a still uglier but at least more vermian and in a sense venerable aspect: their pitchforks now limply trailing behind them, and a purplish flush dulling the cubistry of their extravagant colors, they kept "ramping" rapidly all over the floor of their cage in a surge of prepupal locomotion. Aqua had walked through a wood and into a gulch to do it last year. A freshly emerged Nymphalis carmen was fanning its lemon and amber-brown wings on a sunlit patch of grating, only to be choked with one nip by the nimble fingers of enraptured and heartless Ada; the Odettian Sphinx had turned, bless him, into an elephantoid mummy with a comically encased trunk of the germantoid type; and Dr. Krolik was swiftly running on short legs after a very special orange-tip above timberline, in another hemisphere, Antiocharis ada Krolik (1884)--as it was known until changed to A. prittwitsi Stumper (1883) by the inexorable law of taxonomic priority.

"But, afterwards, when all these beasties have hatched," asked Van, "what do you do with them?"

"Oh," she said, "I take them to Dr. Krolik's assistant who sets them and labels them and pins them in glassed trays in a clean oak cabinet, which will be mine when I marry. I shall then have a big collection, and continue to breed all kinds of leps--my dream is to have a special Institute of Fritillary larvae and violets--all the special violets they breed on. . . . Of course, when the things emerge, they are quite easy to mate by hand--you hold them--for quite a while, sometimes--like this, in folded-wing profile . . . with the tips of their abdomens touching, but they must be quite fresh and soaked in their favorite violet's reek" (56-57).

Exotic prey hatches beyond the larvarium. One thinks of Ada's plans for the gorged wasp earlier. Throughout the novel, gesellschaftlich society goes through stages of chase, copulation, incubation, turmoil, and attrition. Certainly all these activities apply to the Veens with Ardis Hall being a larger version of Ada's larvarium.

When Van first visits Ardis Hall, for instance, he feels the pang and confusion of his emotions disagreeing with the evidence about who his mother is. Aqua, who committed suicide in 1883, has Van's sympathy and allegiance while Marina has his genes. By snooping through memorabilia in the attic--especially by leafing through a "small green album with neatly glued flowers that Marina had . . . obtained . . . [in Switzerland] . . . before her marriage" (7), Van and Ada deduce that unwed Marina secretly foisted her newborn son upon her willing and addled twin sister Aqua who was married to the child's father (Demon). Aqua, like most people who are pronounced insane, did not trespass often on the grounds of empirical reality. A possible miscarriage of Aqua's helped her to ratify Van within the terms of her personal reality by confusing Van with her own lost fetus.

Van's relationship to Marina at Ardis Hall is one of aloofness and veiled perplexity. Aqua, though dead, remains his mother as far as Van is concerned, but Marina occasionally challenges that position. Van recalls an episode when he was four:

Some ten years ago . . . toward the end of his mother's long stay in a sanatorium, "Aunt" Marina had swooped upon him in a public park where there were pheasants in a big cage. She advised his nurse to mind her own business and took him to a booth near the band shell where she bought him an emerald stick of peppermint candy and told him that if his father wished, she would replace his mother and that you could not feed the birds without Lady Amherst's permission, or so he understood (37).

At age 14, Van is having tea with Marina that first day at Ardis. A portrait of Marina taken from a hunting scene in her acting career hangs above her head and reminds Van of Marina's swooping upon him 10 years ago; "and Van, as he recalled the cage in the park and his mother [Aqua] somewhere in a cage of her own, experienced an odd sense of mystery as if the commentators of his destiny had gone into a huddle" (38).

Conversely, Ardis Hall displays the siblings in such a fashion that Marina feels disconcerted by her deceit (Dan thinks he is Ada's father or at least he accepts the ruse; Aqua accepted the role of Van's mother; only the children refuse to be deceived):

Presently, as Marina had promised, the two children went upstairs. "Why do stairs creek so desperately, when two children go upstairs," she thought, looking up at the balustrade along which two left hands progressed with strikingly similar flips and glides like siblings taking their first dancing lesson. "After all, we were twin sisters; everybody knows that." The same slow heave, she in front, he behind, took them over the last two steps, and the staircase was silent again. "Old-fashioned qualms," said Marina (40).

Van's chronicles, during part one, show children saying goodbye to a gesellschaftlich eden while they are cared for by people already in hell.

In their old age, Van reminisces with Ada about his and her youth:

I was perched on the chair's swelling arm and you were building a house of cards, and your every movement was magnified, of course, as in a trance, dream-slow but also tremendously vigilant, and I positively reveled in the girl odor of your bare arm and in that of your hair which now is murdered by some popular perfume. . . .

Tactile magic. Infinite patience. Fingertips stalking gravity. Badly bitten nails, my sweet. Forgive these notes, I cannot really express the discomfort of bulky, sticky desire. You see I was hoping that when your castle toppled you would make a Russian splash gesture of surrender and sit down on my hand (113).

One night, the adults rush like goblins out of Ardis Hall and into the darkness to enjoy more than to squelch the flames leaping pictorially from a barn on the estate. Thinking the house is empty except for a

sleeping governess, Van and Ada gravitate to the picture window in the library. The red velvet curtains, their two candles, and the fiery glow on the horizon frame their adolescent conflagration:

"[W]hy do you get so fat and hard there when you--"

"Get where? When I what?"

In order to explain, tactfully, tactually, she belly-danced against him, still more or less kneeling, her long hair getting in the way, one eye staring into his ear (their reciprocal positions had become rather muddled by then).

. . . .

"You will show me at once," said Ada firmly.

. . . .

"Touch it quick," he implored.

"Van, poor Van," she went on in the narrow voice the sweet girl used when speaking to cats, caterpillars, pupating puppies . . . "would it help if I'd touch, are you sure?"

. . . .

"Oh, I like this texture, Van, I like it! Really I do!"

"Squeeze, you goose, can't you see I'm dying?" (119).

The knowledge that the children gain from the adults, especially information gained from Uncle Dan's hidden volume of oriental Erotica prints found another time in the library, seems more distorted than the knowledge they gain from each other. Van writes,

Uncle Dan, having patiently disentangled all those limbs and belly folds directly or indirectly connected with the absolutely calm lady (still retaining somehow parts of her robes), had penciled a note that gave the price of the picture and identified it as "Geisha with 13 lovers." Van located, however, a fifteenth navel thrown in by the generous artist but impossible to account for anatomically (137).

Ada never approximates a geisha with 13 lovers at a setting, but her life at Ardis Hall, portrayed by Part One of the chronicles, progresses from one of an athlete and enthusiastic botanist to that of a distracted,

sexually aware young woman. Dack [the family dog] goes running through the house once during a visit from Uncle Dan. Ada, Marina, and two maids are trying to retrieve from his mouth "a sizable wad of blood-soaked cottonwool, snatched somewhere upstairs" (68). The chase veers by Uncle Dan who stops perusing a paper long enough to reflect that "somebody must have chopped off a thumb!" (38). Dack loses his prey after leading "his pursuers into the garden. There, on the third lawn, Ada overtook him with the flying plunge used in American football" (69).

The dog shares Ada's ardor and innocence at eden, but in her love of botany she stands alone. Van is often tormented with the desire to caress Ada when she takes paintbrush into the sunny music room, opens her favorite botanical atlas, and begins to copy in color on paper. As if to dispatch Van's misery, one afternoon she intercepts his noiseless invasion. He recalls that she

pressed her lips to his in a fresh-rose kiss that entranced and baffled Van. "Now run along," she said, "quick, quick, I'm busy," and as he lagged like an idiot, she anointed his flushed forehead with her paintbrush in the sign of an ancient Estotian "sign of the cross" (101).

This early Ada of eden metamorphoses into the worried 16-year-old during the summer of 1888 at Ardis. Lucette is getting more and more aggressively intrusive into the hidden activities of the brother and sister; Van suspects that Ada entertains other lovers; Ada begins to ponder obstacles to her and Van's happiness: their unspoken kinship, social strictures regarding their marriage, the hazards (known/imagined) of incest. One day rains set in at Ardis:

Ada has quietly disappeared for the day in order to see a gynecologist, and Van is called in for a rare talk with Marina. Lost, as usual, in her faded acting career, Marina has retired to her bed and is nursing her melancholia with hot tea and mare's milk. Belle, the governess, has

warned Marina to censor the robust activities of the cousins, so unacknowledged mother faces unrelenting son [Van]:

"She once saw me carrying Ada across the brook and misconstrued our stumbling huddle."

"I do not mean Ada, silly. . . . Ada is a big girl, and big girls, alas, have their own worries. . . ."

The dog came in, turned up a brimming brown eye Vanward, toddled up to the window, looked at the rain like a little person, and returned to his filthy cushion in the next room.

"I could never stand that breed," remarked Van. "'Dackelophobia."

"You are not a pederast, like your poor uncle, are you? We have had some dreadful perverts in our ancestry but--Why do you laugh? . . . I'm too sad today. I would have liked so much to know everything, everything, about you, but now it's too late."

Ada came back just before dinnertime. Worries? . . . Worries? She smelled of tobacco. . . .

"Will you stop sniffing me over, dear Van? In fact the blessed thing started on the way home. Let me pass, please" (232-235).

The knowledge that the children have gained at Ardis during the summers of 1884 and 1888, plus the family inheritance of deception, has nudged the children out of their early stages of ardor and into the "ada" ("hell") beyond eden. Fittingly, one of the final scenes from Part One of the chronicles features Ardis Hall receiving a rare visit from the children's father, Demon Veen.

With only sparing intrusions from Demon, Marina has managed to keep an aura of irreality about Ardis. Her chief companion is Mlle. Lariviere (Belle), and the two collaborate for hours over Belle's newfound success as a writer or over Marina's vigilant acting career. Belle and Marina view men, including Van and the servants, as adjuncts to drama at Ardis. Rack tutors Lucette in music and gives Ada more attention than Van can abide. Greg Erminin, a neighbor, rides over for an occasional visit;

Percy de Prey, on the other hand, develops into an abominable presence for Van--as evidenced by the fight at the picnic honoring Ada's 16th birthday. Uncle Dan's ineffectual presence remains a peripheral and comic counterpart to Demon's hovering absence. One day Greg takes note of Uncle Dan in the background as the young man bids leave of the family having high tea in the garden: "I must be going. Goodbye, everybody. Goodbye, Ada. I guess that's your father under that oak, isn't it?" "No, it's an elm," said Ada (92). Marina does not possess or value such acumen.

A director or a new leading man may come and go at the estate, but such people do not threaten Marina's flossed world. A varnish of food and fiction overlays the teeming activity of the place. Marina finds Ardis a comfortable setting for talking about her acting exploits while ignoring actual deeds. Marina treats Demon's visit rather like a staged audition that summer of 1888, and Van tries to sort out what is happening at Ardis Hall the night that Marina, Ada, and he joined his father for food:

It was--to continue the novelistic structure--a long, joyful, delicious dinner . . . suspended in one's memory as a strangely significant, not wholly pleasant, experience. . . . A faint element of farce and falsity flawed it, preventing an angel--if angels could visit Ardis--from being completely at ease (250).

Moths "sailed or shot" into the candlelight. Demon looks at a camouflaged Marina and he contrasts "the dubious reality of the present to the unquestionable one of remembrance" (251). Van writes that Marina does not recognize her past, that, in fact, Marina's past has been "safely transformed by her screen-corrupted mind into a stale melodrama" (253). According to Van,

tears, treachery, terror, an insane sister's threats, helpless, no doubt, but leaving their tiger-marks on the drapery of dreams. . . . All this was mere scenery, easily packed,

labeled 'Hell' and freighted away; and only very infrequently some reminder would come--say, in the trickwork closeup of two left hands belonging to different sexes--doing what? (253).

Demon, nevertheless, intrudes. He intrudes upon Marina's past and upon Van and Ada's present. And later, when he "pulled on his gloves and sped away with a great growl of damp gravel" (263), his influence was still there.

Having seen Demon off, Van and Ada "stopped for a moment under the shelter of an indulgent tree" (263). They discuss the impact of their father: [Ada speaking]

"I think he's quite crazy, and with no place or occupation in life, and far from happy, and philosophically irresponsible --and there is absolutely nobody like him. . . ."

[Van] "I wonder if some inner nose in him smelled you in me and me in you. He tried to ask me . . . oh it was not a nice family reunion. What exactly went wrong at dinner?"

"My love, my love, as if you don't know! We'll manage, perhaps, to wear our masks always till dee do us part, but we shall never be able to marry--while they're both alive. We simply can't swing it, because he's more conventional in his own way than even the law and the social lice. One can't bribe one's parents, and waiting forty, fifty years for them to die is too horrible to imagine--I mean the mere thought of anybody waiting for such a thing is not in our nature, is mean and monstrous!" (263-264).

Van and Ada feel stuck in the quagmire of the family history while buckling also under the burdens of their own ruses and disguise. Blanche, a servant girl who operates within her own complicated and mysterious milieu, draws the family chronicles, Part One, full circle. Van encounters her on his first day at Ardis Hall wherein she tells him that she has only her own brains for protection from predators like him. She impels Van out of eden at summer's end, 1888, by informing him of Ada's activities with Herr Rack, the musician. Van roars off the premises bent upon repeating his father's worldly prodigality, but he takes with him a mental conjuration of

the girl in yellow slacks and black jacket, standing with her hands behind her back, slightly rocking her shoulders, leaning her back now closer now less closely against the tree trunk, and tossing her hair--a definite picture that he knew he had never seen in reality--[but one that] remained within him more real than any actual memory (298).

Van's mental configuration of Ada is a forerunner of his written conjuration of their passing through Ardis and later of their traversing adulthood. The rest of the chronicles demonstrates Van's efforts to harness his demonic energy through the use of his imagination. Throughout the process, Ada appears variously in his life, his dreams, and his chronicles.

#### After Ardis

Van and Ada leave their Ardis existence feeling tainted as if by some poison placed on the point of an implement. In her third letter "iz ada" ("out of hell") written to Van in 1890, Ada says, "Nothing exists any more than the ecstasy of friction, the abiding effect of your sting, of your delicious poison" (334). Ada admits that she is on the verge "of a revolting amorous adventure," and she appeals to Van for a saving reconciliation. As noted before, Ada views a wasp with almost as much enthusiasm as she does honey. She had proposed that they eat a wasp gorged with honey under the assurance that "Of course, it can't sting your tongue" (75). This willingness to cross the borders of usual conduct threatens and validates brother and sister. Precocious, promiscuous, and persistent as children in the rites of curiosity, they evolve into adults, ultimately, who long for their particular rites of sustenance. However, in the face of parental ruses and societal strictures, they continue the familial indulgence in public deception. Marina and Demon pretend the pair are cousins; society pretends to legislate sexual mores;

and Van and Ada are caught up in these tendencious pretensions. Stings have definitely accrued with the taste for honey.

A central dream of Van's corroborates Ada's and his sense of desolation and links the pair to the unglossed condition of men and women in exodus from personal Ardises. Van's dreamed double Eric Veen has fostered palatial brothels (called "Villas Venus") around the globe:

. . . A very distant church clock, never audible except at night, clanged twice and added a quarter. . . . The child in his arms stirred and he pulled his opera cloak over her. In the grease-reeking darkness a faint pattern of moonlight established itself on the stone floor, near his forever discarded half-mask lying there and his pump-shod foot. It was not Ardis, it was not the library, it was not even a human room. . . . The ruinous Villa no longer bore any resemblance to Eric's 'organized dream,' but the soft little creature in Van's desperate grasp was Ada (356-358).

The opulent fantasies acted out on Antiterra have spawned a hell. Not only are the women lost in this dream but so is Van: his anguish being the by-product of his victimizing. Outside the dream, two women who fall completely as prey--one to Demon and one to Van--are Aqua and Lucette, the less resourceful sisters of Demon's and Van's chosen, earthly accomplices (Marina and Ada). Neither the aunt Aqua or her niece Lucette is able to survive without the emotional support of the man loved. Becoming pawns in the lives of their sisters and their sisters' lovers, Aqua and Lucette quit the competition. Too many stings await the gathering of too little honey on Antiterra. Lucette's suicide by drowning occurs in Part Three and has by then formed part of the pattern developed in the names and in the lives of the contending Durmanov sisters. The encroaching sea of the dream foreshadows Lucette's suicide and dredges up Van's elaborate pursuit of libertine spoilage.

Ada, as complex a character as Van in the overall work, first appears as a young and totally helpless victim in the dream. Van's

overwrought ego and sense of guilt lead him to such a perception of her, but Ada is much more Van's equal than she is his victim. The chronicler ends his description of the dream by referring to "Van's desperate grasp," thus implying a mutually intensive disposition between the pair. Old Van's chronicles--10 years in the making and born in his old age--attest to Ada's stature, complicity and ambiguity of character. This dream and her letters "iz ada" directly address her internship in hell.

Ada, in a letter to Van, once refers to Demon as "our father in hell" (385), and once she refers to herself as "adochka, adova dochka" ("Hell's daughter") (403).--The reader senses a hellishness that only Ada fully acknowledges. The matter brings Part Two to a close with Van advising Ada that they should acquiesce to demonia, dementia, or to Demon's insistence upon familial appearances.

Part Two phases out on a note of fantasy, and one never regains a sense of actually having one's feet firmly on Antiterra for the remainder of the chronicles. Speaking of Van, the chronicler says that he was "standing before the closet mirror," and

he put the automatic to his head, at the point of the pterion, and pressed the comfortably concaved trigger. Nothing happened--or perhaps everything happened, and his destiny simply forked at that instant, as it probably does sometimes at night, especially in a strange bed, at stages of great happiness or great desolation, when we happen to die in our sleep, but continue our normal existence, with no perceptible break in the faked serialization, on the following, neatly prepared morning, with a spurious past discreetly but firmly attached behind. Anyway, what he held in his right hand was no longer a pistol but a pocket comb which he passed through his hair at the temples. It was to gray by the time that Ada, then in her thirties, said, when they spoke of their voluntary separation:

"I would have killed myself too, had I found Rose wailing over your corpse."

. . . .

There are other possible forkings and continuations that occur to the dream-mind, but these will do (445-446).

Part One of Van's chronicles provides what Part Two takes away: a secure sense of place, of belonging even while exploring. Ardis yields to a nowhere of Antiterra filled with howls "iz ada." Dreams and random sex locate the violence while organized research and writing compensate Van. Ada turns to acting and ultimately to marriage as a means of anchoring herself while pondering the conflicts posed by a banished Van and a suicidal Lucette.

### This Pellet of Muck

Lucette, the sister who generally felt out of place at Ladore during Van's and Ada's youthful excursions into narcissism, inherits Ardis upon Marina's death in 1900. Hoping that Ardis will enhance the bargain, Lucette proposes to Van and suggests that Ada, by then long-married, will still be glad to touch up the scenario. Van, however, senses that Ada will not participate, and he, through his own developing consciousness, rejects the offer: "You know perfectly well why," he says. "I love her, not you, and I simply refuse to complicate matters by entering into yet another incestuous relationship" (467).

Lucette rankles at Van's logic and accuses him and Ada of repeated manipulation and maltreatment of her. Van's memoirs reveal that he would have the capacity for manipulating Lucette. His random forays into brothels and his casual sex with people like Cordula de Prey make him highly suspect. The other and more compelling side of the memoirs, however, is the way that they reveal Van's lifelong, fervent attachment to Ada. The reader also sees Van's dogged, perplexed, concerned, and growing detachment for Lucette, who is bent upon taking her sister's lover.

On the steamliner Tabokoff, Van by telephone tells a supplicating Lucette that she cannot come to his cabin. "I am not alone," he says,

although he is very much alone and anguished with the need for Ada. This telephoned rejection, coupled with Ada's intrusion by way of the film being shown in the ship's lounge that evening, help propel Lucette overboard to her suicide. Van struggles with dictation to his secretary years later when trying to recreate the scene:

The sky was also heartless and dark, and her body, her head, and particularly those damned thirsty trousers, felt clogged with Oceanus Nox, n, o, x. At every slap and splash of cold wild salt, she heaved with anise-flavored nausea and there was an increasing number, okay, or numbness, in her neck and arms. As she began losing track of herself, she thought it proper to inform a series of receding Lucettes--telling them to pass it on and on in a trick-crystal regression--that what death amounted to was only a more complete assortment of the infinite fractions of solitude. . . . Then the night was filled with the rattle of an old but still strong helicopter. Its diligent beam could spot only the dark head of Van, who, having been propelled out of the boat when it shied from its own shadow, kept bobbing and bawling the drowned girl's name in the black, foam-veined, complicated waters (494-495).

Van's memoirs, written long after Lucette's death, recount Lucette's death, along with Van's involvement in "a series of sixty-year-old actions which now I can grind into extinction only by working on a succession of words until the rhythm is right" (490).

When Van fled the company of Lucette the night that a cinema aboard-ship showed 11 fragmented minutes of a gipsy role played by Ada, he made his way to his cabin and his mind returned him involuntarily to Ardis and the child with the paintbrush in the music room:

[H]ow significant that the picture projected upon the screen of his paroxysm . . . was not the recent and pertinent image of Lucette, but the indelible vision of a bent bare neck and a divided flow of black hair and a purple-tipped paint brush (490).

After Lucette's death, Van writes Ada without referring directly to her intervening film Don Juan's Last Fling:

The romantic attachment she had formed, the infatuation she cultivated, could not be severed by logic. On top of that, somebody she could not compete with entered the picture . . .

and since no amount of carnal tenderness can pass for true love . . . I am bound to arrive, dear Ada and dear Andrey, at the conclusion that whatever the miserable man could have thought up, she would have pokonchila soboy ('put an end to herself') all the same. In other more deeply moral worlds than this pellet of muck, there might exist restraints, principles, transcendental consolations, and even a certain pride in making happy someone one does not really love; but on this planet Lucettes are doomed (498).

Thus Lucette inherits the sea, not Ardis, as a place of non-being or of being in a different state. Still on Antiterre himself, Van writes,

Attempts to rescue her were made on a reasonable scale, but, finally, the awful decision to resume the voyage, after an hour of confusion and hope, had to be taken by the captain. Had I found him bribable, we would still be circling today the fatal spot (497).

Ironically, Lucette's accusation of exploitation could be aimed more understandably at the basically sensitive Ada rather than at the usually predatory Van. Ada hoped to quell Lucette's curiosity and jealousy-based intrusions at Ardis by encouraging Van to give her more attention. Also, Ada's sexual liberality did not limit itself to heterosexuality. If Lucette's accounts are correct, she and Ada shared sexual exchanges continuing from girlhood into their majority and into Ada's marriage.

The chronicles show repetition at work everywhere. The details gleaned from life point to doubling, coupling, and rivalling in families, in the larvarium, in sun and shade.

Part Three of the memoirs ties Van and Ada back to earthly patterns of irrevocable connection. Marina dies and returns to the earth by fire (cremation); Lucette puts her life back into the sea; and Demon falls almost anonymously from the sky. Mentioned out of context, these deaths sound farcical, but they actually function in the written work to tie the gesellschaftlich family back to gemeinschaftlich elements of the earth. By the time of Demon's death in 1905, Ada and Van have been living for 13 years in separate, professional orbits of emotional exile. Van retires

from a successful professorship in psychology and buys a villa in Switzerland where he hopes to take the visiting Ada away from her husband, Andrey Vineland. Andrey's timely illness takes him back to Arizona where Ada chooses to return and to nurture him the final 16 years of his life.

At this point, Ada and Van are far from Ardis, the point of their first emotional and physical impact; they have had to make critical decisions concerning the welfare of others, and they seem slowly to be moving out of the paralysis that Lucette could not transcend: a state of mind where life seems like a quagmire, a pellet of muck.

### The Stained Glass Intersection

"I wonder," said Ada, "I wonder if the attempt to discover those things is worth the stained glass. We can know the time, we can know a time. We can never know Time. Our senses are simply not meant to perceive it" (563).

Van and Ada are free at this point in their lives to launch their old age together. They have come to this intersection of time and space by very divergent paths. Van, immersed in metaphysical inquiry, finished a draft of a treatise called The Texture of Time while driving toward a destination in Switzerland.

Van argues that a person can focus sharply upon the current moment and can feel the very texture of time--what he calls the "Deliberate Present." The "Deliberate Present" is a conscious construction and its precedence over the "Specious Present" (that motion-based measurement of space experienced in a continuum of past-present-future)

gives us three or four seconds of what can be felt as nowness. This nowness is the only reality we know; it follows the colored nothingness of the no-longer and precedes the absolute nothingness of the future. Thus, in a quite literal sense, we may say that conscious human life lasts always only one moment, for at any moment of deliberate attention to our flow of

consciousness we cannot know if that moment will be followed by another (549-550).

Van attempts to distil a concept of time from the encroachments of space and motion. He wants to extract time, to caress it. Indeed, Van's prose inquiry into the essence of time involves layers of texture which appeal palpably to the senses as well as to the intellect.

One can be a lover of Space and its possibilities: take, for example, speed, the smoothness and sword-swish of speed; the aquiline glory of ruling velocity; the joy cry of the curve; and one can be an amateur of Time, an epicure of duration. I delight sensually in Time, in its stuff and spread, in the fall of its folds, in the very impalpability of its grayish gauze, in the coolness of its continuum. I wish to do something about it; to indulge in a simulacrum of possession. I am aware that all who have tried to reach the charmed castle have got lost in obscurity or have bogged down in Space. I am also aware that Time is a fluid medium for the culture of metaphors (537).

While claiming to divorce the experience of time from the dimensions of movement and space, Van's essay takes the reader through the countryside of Switzerland, to the villa he bought in 1905 and on to the inn of The Three Swans at Mont Roux--a point of separation for Van and Ada 16 years earlier.

Ada's telephone voice precedes her to their actual reunion at Mont Roux. Notes Van,

That telephone voice, by resurrecting the past and linking it up with the present, with the darkening slate-blue mountains beyond the lake, with the spangles of the sun wake dancing through the poplar, formed the centerpiece in his deepest perception of tangible time, the glittering "now" that was the only reality of Time's texture. After the glory of the summit there came the difficult descent (556).

The "glittering now" suddenly seems merciless as Van looks at Ada:

She wore a corset which stressed the unfamiliar stateliness of her body enveloped in a black-velvet gown of a flowing cut both eccentric and monastic, as their mother used to favor. She had had her hair bobbed page-boy fashion and dyed a brilliant bronze. Her neck and hands were as delicately pale as ever but showed unfamiliar fibers and raised veins. She made lavish use of cosmetics to camouflage the lines at the outer corner of her fat carmined lips and dark-shadowed eyes whose opaque iris now

seemed less mysterious than myopic. . . . Nothing remained of her gangling grace, and the new mellowness, and the velvet stuff, had an irritatingly dignified air of obstacle and defense. He loved her much too tenderly, much too irrevocably, to be unduly depressed by sexual misgivings; but his senses certainly remained stirless. . . . At their earlier reunions, their constraint . . . used to be drowned in sexual desire, leaving life to pick up by and by. Now they were on their own (556-557).

In effect, both persons have indulged in stained glass attempts either to capture or to modify time. Van's writing is moving more and more toward metaphor, toward Ada. Ada has lost her earlier, physical naturalness. But Van and she, in their old age, make connection once again, not only to each other, but Ada to the earth and Van to the chronicles.

#### The Last Hand Stand

Van and Ada's final phase of life comprises the last 50 years they have on earth--together (1922-1967). The chronicles tell us that

At least twice a year our happy couple indulged in fairly long travels. Ada did not breed or collect butterflies any more, but throughout her healthy and active old age loved to film them in their natural surroundings, at the bottom of her garden or at the end of the world, flapping and flitting, settling on flowers or filth, gliding over grass or granite, fighting or mating. Van accompanied her . . . but secretly preferred a long drink under a tent to a long wait under a tree for some rarity to come down to the bait and be taken in color (567-568).

The core of the chronicles remains Van's unabashed ardor for Ada. His very deftly written representation shows a gesellschaftlich woman who has found ways to connect to the earth.

Van's writing is as important to him as is his love of Ada, and the chronicles show his evolution as a writer. Much of his earlier writing is designed to further his reputation and his career in psychology. More important, perhaps, is Van's attempt to forge a style that will allow him

simultaneously to parody and to explore the options of an inquiring writer.

"Don't laugh, my Ada, at our philosophic prose," remonstrated her lover. "All that matters just now is that I have given new life to Time by cutting off Siamese Space and the false future. My aim was to compose a kind of novella in the form of a treatise on the Texture of Time, an investigation of its veily substance, with illustrative metaphors gradually increasing, very gradually building up a logical love story, going from past to present, blossoming as a concrete story, and just as gradually reversing analogies and disintegrating again into bland abstraction" (562-563).

These words adroitly summarized Nabokov's accomplishments in his novel Ada. Through Van's chronicles, perhaps Ardis and Ada can escape the decay that accompanies ordinary time and its "Siamese Space." Van leaves an amber love story preserved in a waspish work.

### Conclusions

With the publication of Ada in 1969, Nabokov was traveling toward the outer boundaries of his own literary explorations. Co-creators Van and Ada cut loose from Antiterra with Ada's issuance, and Nabokov's authorial audience booked complicated flight while observing the Veens. Nevertheless, the author's writing protagonists (male, except for Ada) were almost done. A very human implied author behind these writing protagonists successfully opens up his art in order to expand writer-reader perception. Nabokov's protagonists, fabrications of art as well as perpetrators of it, reach their apex in the pillaging seeker Van. Van's flights, forever farther and farther from Ardis, underscore his efforts to write a love story that etches its own rendition of space and time.

The Veen chronicles reveal two individuals' struggling in a gesellschaftlich world. The novel eliminates nostalgia, sentiment, cliché, commonplace, chronology, causality, and ordinary geography. The homeland

lies in the mind--a raft of language always aloft, often aloof, moving, moving, moving on.

When Nabokov had finished with the reader, he or she would be ready for a new age of reading as is evidenced by the popularity of contemporary Latin American fiction. For the purposes of this study, we shall concentrate on Gabriel García Márquez's Cien años or One Hundred Years of Solitude to see how the Buendía story of Gemeinschaft going down compares and contrasts to the record of the gesellschaftlich Veens.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Robert Alter, "Ada, or The Perils of Paradise," in Vladimir Nabokov: A Tribute, ed. Peter Quennell (New York: Marrow, 1980), 108.

<sup>2</sup>I take an overall positive view of Van's and Ada's relationship, and I do not view Van's rendition of Antiterro as the revelation of a sick mind. Charles Nicol claims that Ada is a successful author's rendition of yet another failure ("Ada or Disorder" in Nabokov's Fifth Arc [Austin: Texas UP, 1982], 230-241) and Bobbie Ann Mason argues that as a consequence of their incest, Ada and Van bring about their own ruination. (Nabokov's Garden: a Guide to Ada [Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1974]); Michael Long thinks that Nabokov loses control of the fantasy-irony perspectives and that the lovers become unbelievable and boring. Nabokov: Arcadia and Childhood [Oxford University Press, 1984]); I think that Van's parodic treatment of his younger self cloaks a love story worthy of his Real World Beyond.

<sup>3</sup>Vladimir Nabokov, Ada or Ardor: A Family Chronicle (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), 35. Subsequent citations from this source fall parenthetically in the text.

<sup>4</sup>J. E. Rivers and William Walker, "Notes to Vivian Darkbloom's Notes to Ada" in Nabokov's Fifth Arc, 260-295. They provide translations of the French in this tea scene.

### CHAPTER III

MACONDO: "Nos Quedamos Aqui."

("We're Staying Here.")

Reading Ada and then turning to Cien años de soledad is like trying out for Olympic ice skating and coming home to a blazing hearth, a hearth that eventually will burn the house down. Macondo is protierra instead of the Antiterra created in Ada, and extrasensory activity is as important to the place as the fancies of old José Arcadio Buendía, the sensuality and the lost ideals of his sons, the practicality of his wife, and the austerity of his daughter. The world of the Buendías is far different from that of Antiterra, Ardis Hall, and Ada's larvarium.

Antiterra is a retroactive product of Van's mind with emphasis on the dreams, memories, and aspirations of the writer. Van's writing weaves dementia, anxiety, guilt, and anger into a personal inquiry which flows from vaniada throughout the novel. Van's attempt to regain Ardis through Ada is a coincidental striving for the brass ring on a carousel Terra, but his and Ada's chronicles etch their own valued, compensatory space.

Van, a self-centered writer, attempts hi/s/tory. In sharing that attempt, the reader comes to understand the importance of Ardis, a place and a time outside the boundaries of "never was" and "always is." The placenta of the novel--the deliberate now--both born of and bearing the woman called Ada, leads umbilically backward to Ardis and forward to Van's notion of a "Real World Beyond" Antiterra.

Experiencing a place through the narrative voice of a novel takes the reader well beyond the five senses, the daily calendar, and the social conditioning that people ordinarily experience in their sojourns through time and space. Nevertheless, the reader will have to return anew to the earth and to its call for sensuousness while experiencing Macondo. The narrator who adumbrates Macondo is definitely not a Van Veen. This earthy, anonymous voice calls upon the reader to join Rebeca in tasting the soil; Úrsula, in smelling her inheritance afire; José Arcadio, in following the smoky scent of Pilar; the villagers, in exulting at the sound of gypsy drums; José Arcadio Buendía, in pondering the feel of a block of ice; and family members, in seeing Úrsula sob to the ghost of her husband beneath the chestnut tree. The narrative voice of Cien años suggests that the reader must once again affix herself or himself upon the earth. García Márquez has created the voice of an earth teller who is a member of a storied tribe. Melquíades--both companion to and product of that voice--wanders the earth, rolls in death, and carries earth and death alive with him. The reader must also pass deliberately through the novel's alternations of earth-life and death-life.

Ada and its narrator represent modern western man very well. Such rootlessness can translate into intellectual achievement--perhaps Van's deliberate present. Ada can bring the reader away from the specious present and closer to Van's plane of consciousness. From such a plane, readers can re-enter the earth's sphere and grapple with a hundred years of solitude.

### Oppositions

A new world grows old in those years. Cien años is the story of a new-world Gemeinschaft going down. Tyrannies of nature and of human

nature contribute to the downfall of Macondo, but even the rains, the ants, and the closing windstorm cannot erase the best efforts of los Buendía.

Oddly enough, Macondo--this earthy place that never existed--may live forever. Its peculiar tensions buoy it uncertainly, delicately amidst its own timestream. Carried backward by the narrator (raconteur) and forward by Melquíades (prophet), the reader experiences translation and decipherment first hand, along with the family translator Aureliano. This final functioning Buendía, Meme's Aureliano, pulls together the family fears and accomplishments. He gives witness simultaneously to the word and to the void. He perpetrates the merging of history and prophecy, of fulfillment and annihilation, of much and nothing, of the beginning and the end. The family circle is circumscribed by cola de pluma more than by cola de cerdo.<sup>1</sup>

#### Melquiades, the Mediator

Although José Arcadio Buendía is important as the founder of Macondo and of los Buendía de Macondo, Melquíades is central to the people and to their place. Melquíades belongs to the universe, and he has access to a mobility and a knowledge that José Arcadio Buendía can only crave. Yet Melquíades chooses to return regularly to Macondo with an increasingly complex array of offerings.

Magnets are his significant first infusion and the narrator tells us that Macondo yields dusty and creaking treasures to their energy. Melquíades sees magnets as a means of discovering that "things have a life of their own" (11). Seldom content to pursue ordinary human activity, Melquíades is interested in waking the soul of matter. When José Arcadio

Buendía wants to uncover gold with the magnets, Melquíades warns him: <<Para eso no sirve>><sup>2</sup> ("It won't work for that") (11).

Considering that los Buendía may leave but that they always return to Macondo, Melquíades' early offering of magnets seems as prophetic as his parchments. Certainly Melquíades helps Macondinos and their environment to have a life of their own. And the narrator, master of his master magician, forms the simple details of Macondo into magnetic pulsations of fire and ice:

Aquellas alucinantes sesiones quedaron de tal modo impresas en la memoria de los niños, que muchos años más tarde, un segundo antes de que el oficial de los ejércitos regulares diera la orden de fuego al pelotón de fusilamiento, el coronel Aureliano Buendía volvió a vivir la tibia tarde de marzo en que su padre interrumpió la lección de física, y se quedó fascinado, con la mano en el aire y los ojos inmóviles, oyendo a la distancia los pífanos y tambores y sonajas de los gitanos que una vez más llegaban a la aldea, pregonando el último y asombroso descubrimiento de los sabios de Memphis (73).

(Those hallucinating sessions remained printed on the memories of the boys in such a way that many years later, a second before the regular army officer gave the firing squad the command to fire, Colonel Aureliano Buendía saw once more that warm March afternoon on which his father had interrupted the lesson in physics and stood fascinated, with his hand in the air and his eyes motionless, listening to the distant pipes, drums, and jingles of the gypsies, who were coming to the village once more, announcing the latest and most startling discovery of the sages of Memphis) (24).

The tools and information that Melquíades brings to Macondo create awe and excitement, but they also bring unrest. Úrsula wishes that the family and the village can be spared the agitation that Melquíades' influence triggers in her husband. She dislikes gypsies in general and only later learns to accept Melquíades, who appeals to José Arcadio Buendía precisely because he operates beyond the mortally prescribed, logically-drawn circles. Because of Úrsula's convictions,

[t]he gypsies were not allowed to camp in town or set foot in it in the future, for they were considered the bearers of concupiscence and perversion (45). José Arcadio Buendía, sin

embargo, fue explícito en el sentido de que la antigua tribu de Melquíades, que tanto contribuyó al engrandecimiento de la aldea con su milenaria sabiduría y sus fabulosos inventos, encontraría siempre las puertas abiertas (94).

(José Arcadio Buendía, however, was explicit in maintaining that the old tribe of Melquíades, who had contributed so much to the growth of the village with his age-old wisdom and his fabulous inventions, would always find the gates open) (45).

In his early association with Macondo, Melquíades' macrocosmic curiosity and subsequent knowledge foster not only Úrsula's distrust but the disapproval of the other gypsies. When word persists that Melquíades is dead and his absence corroborated the suspicion, the returning gypsies said that "Melquíades' tribe . . . had been wiped off the face of the earth because they had gone beyond the limits of human knowledge" (45). Melquíades, however, submits to death with an outcome that seems much more fruitful than punishment for hubris would allow. During the gadgetry and instrument phase of his lives, he admits feeling as if death were "husmeando a los pantalones sin darle el zarpazo final" (63) ("sniffing at the cuffs of his pants, but never deciding to give him the final clutch of its claws") (15). "El zarpazo final" continues as a threat to the place, the prophet, and the people, but Melquíades, along with his narrator and his translator, offers the place "a life of its own"--a life which accrues to perpetrators and participants of Macondo.

#### La Tierra Que Nadie Les Había Prometido

(The Land That Nobody Had Promised Them)

Situated in the unnamed village of their ancestors, the cousins José Arcadio Buendía and Úrsula Iguarán marry, which causes Úrsula to worry about incest in general and a family taboo in particular. Once before, the family had seen cousins marry, resulting in a son with a cola de cerdo (tail of a pig). Her timidity toward a normal sex life subjects

them to mockery within the village. Prudencio Aguilar's reference to the matter causes him to lose his life after having just lost a cockfight to José Arcadio Buendía, the sensitive bridegroom. Haunted by Prudencio's ghost, the couple gather followers and depart. Macondo's prospective founder bids a courtly farewell to his friend and ghostly adversary: "-- Está bien, Prudencio-- . . . Nos iremos de este pueblo, lo más lejos que podamos, y no regresaremos jamás. Ahora vete tranquilo" (79). ("It's all right, Prudencio . . . we're going to leave this town, just as far as we can go, and we'll never come back. Go in peace now") (30). The narrator describes the ensuing departure:

Fue así como emprendieron la travesía de la sierra. Varios amigos de José Arcadio Buendía, jóvenes como él, embullados con la aventura dismantelaron sus casas y cargaron con sus mujeres y sus hijos hacia la tierra que nadie les había prometido. Antes de partir, José Arcadio Buendía enterró la lanza en el patio y degolló uno tras otro sus magníficos gallos de pelea, confiando en que en esa forma le daba un poco de paz a Prudencio Aguilar. . . . No se trazaron un itinerario definido. Solamente procuraban viajar en sentido contrario al camino de Riohacha para no dejar ningún rastro ni encontrar gente conocida. Fue un viaje absurdo (79-80).

(That was how they undertook the crossing of the mountains. Several friends of José Arcadio Buendía, young men like him, excited by the adventure, dismantled their houses and packed up, along with their wives and children, to head toward the land that no one had promised them. Before he left, José Arcadio Buendía buried the spear in the courtyard and, one after another, he cut the throats of his magnificent fighting cocks, trusting that in that way he could give some measure of peace to Prudencio Aguilar. . . . They did not lay out any definite itinerary. They simply tried to go in a direction opposite to the road to Riohacha so that they would not leave any trace or meet any people they knew. It was an absurd journey) (30-31).

Their future home, the land of nobody's promise, arrests the wanderers when they stumble upon "the banks of a stony river whose waters were like a torrent of frozen glass. . . . Jose Arcadio Buendia dreamed that night that right there a noisy city with houses having mirror walls rose up" (31-32). He learns that such a place has "a name that he had

never heard, that had no meaning at all, but that had a supernatural echo in his dream: Macondo" (32). The next day the people begin to clear the trees and "there they founded the village" (32). From this soil, six generations of los Buendía shuffle their lives: cards in solitaire. The narrator deals them alternating hands of darkness and light, fire and ice, but the boundaries remain the same. Only the surviving narration wins by carrying its subjects--a family and a place--beyond "el zarpazo final."

Úrsula finds herself playing for high stakes when Macondo is threatened by her husband's restlessness. He wants to abandon the village in order to seek "incredible things . . . right there across the river" (17). Her reply: "No nos iremos. . . . Aquí nos quedamos, porque aquí hemos tenido un hijo" (71). ("We will not leave. . . . We will stay here, because we have had a son here") (22). Children do not seem to José Arcadio Buendía quite a strong enough reason to remain within Macondo's boundaries:

"We still have not had a death," he said. "A person does not belong to a place until there is someone dead under the ground."

Úrsula replied with soft firmness:

<<si es necesario que yo me muera para que se queden aquí, me muero>> (71). ("If I have to die for the rest of you to stay here, I will die") (22). . . . Something occurred inside of him then, something mysterious and definitive that uprooted him from his own time and carried him adrift through an unexplored region of his memory. While Úrsula continued sweeping the house which was safe from being abandoned now for the rest of her life, he stood there with an absorbed look, contemplating the children until his eyes became moist and he dried them with the back of his hand, exhaling a deep sigh of resignation) (22-23).

This scene marks more than a man's loss of freedom; it anticipates the banditry of disillusionment that awaits the family as it travels from dream to broom, from chestnut tree to ant den, from ice block to firing

squad, from laboratory to apocalypse. The scene imprints the family birthmark upon the page. Macondo is the territory wherein each generation of los Buendía remake their treaties with loneliness and fear while confronting "el zarpazo final."

Vicenzo Bollettino suggested rightly that José Arcadio Buendía is feeling the weight of a dead man and is pondering the impact of death upon his successors.<sup>3</sup> Certainly the narrator makes great use of the family appointments with death as he integrates death with life in a fashion peculiar to Macondo and its history.

Melquíades, first, and Macondo, last, do disappear from the face of the earth but both reappear--the latter does so in the "tripas" of anyone who experiences the prophecy of the former by reading the novel. Macondo is a voice rising out of the heat, dirt, mud, wind, and rain. Macondo is a family unfolding itself in the earth. If Ardis materializes chiefly as Van's progeny of words in Ada, a progeny that testifies to Van's Real World Beyond, Macondo survives as the workshop of a Merlin. It is the birth place, burial ground, and birth place of a family crafted by a magician.

#### Portals to Life and Death

Macondo provides a laboratory for the amalgamation of life and death. Melquíades, an amalgam himself of both conditions, returns from the dead and brings the Macondinos away from their own deadly plague of forgetfulness. José Arcadio Buendía does not recognize the "hombre decrepito" who is sitting in his living room, but he drinks the prescribed potion

y la luz se hizo en su memoria. Los ojos se le humedecieron de llanto, antes de verse a sí mismo en una sala absurda donde los objetos estaban marcados . . . y aun antes de reconocer al

recién llegado en un deslumbrante resplandor de alegría. Era Melquíades (104).

(and the light went on in his memory. His eyes became moist from weeping even before he noticed himself in an absurd living room where objects were labeled . . . and even before he recognized the newcomer with a dazzling glow of joy. It was Melquíades) (55).

After returning to his senses, José Arcadio Buendía gains a new appreciation of life, but Melquíades seems in need of rejuvenation:

El gitano iba dispuesto a quedarse en el pueblo. Había estado en la muerte, en efecto, pero había regresado porque no pudo soportar la soledad. Repudiado por su tribu, desprovisto de toda facultad sobrenatural como castigo por su fidelidad a la vida, decidió refugiarse en aquel rincón del mundo todavía no descubierto por la muerte. . . . (104).

(The gypsy was inclined to stay in town. He really had been through death, but he had returned because he could not bear the solitude. Repudiated by his tribe, having lost all of his supernatural faculties because of his faithfulness to life, he decided to take refuge in that corner of the world which had still not been discovered by death . . .) (55).

Melquíades' return to Macondo from the dead brought an interesting change in outlook, also, to Úrsula: "[F]ue también ella quien olvidó sus antiguos resquemores y decidió que Melquíades se quedara viviendo en la casa. . ." (105). ("It was she who forgot her ancient bitterness and decided that Melquíades would stay on in the house . . .") (55).

#### Puertas Abiertas

Although José Arcadio Buendía is the first to allude to "puertas abiertas" (quoted earlier and translated there as "open gates"), Úrsula opens the house to people. The opening of doors in the Buendía family does not happen totally, instantly, or everlastingly. Nor does the act always bring comfort. It brings evolution, variety, and destruction. It brings Macondo into the partnership of life and death.

Tired of gypsies but hoping to regain the son lost among them, Úrsula leaves Macondo and brings back people of her own kind. She doesn't find José Arcadio or the gypsies, but she does add new people to the original 21 families in Macondo--

hombres y mujeres como ellos, de cabellos lacios y piel parda, que hablaban su misma lengua y se lamentaban de los mismos dolores (92).

(men and women like them, with straight hair and dark skin, who spoke the same language and complained of the same pains) (43).

Úrsula is not as excited, however, about a more personal addition to the town and to the family: José Arcadio's illegitimate son, hence her grandson:

El hijo de Pilar Ternera fue llevado a casa de sus abuelos a las dos semanas de nacido. Úrsula lo admitió de mala gana, vencida una vez más por la terquedad de su marido que no pudo tolerar la idea de que un retoño de su sangre quedara navegando a la deriva. . . . (93).

(Pilar Ternera's son was brought to his grandparents' house two weeks after he was born. Úrsula admitted him grudgingly, conquered once more by the obstinacy of her husband, who could not tolerate the idea that an offshoot of his blood should be adrift. . . .) (44).

This child, whose identity is withheld from him, is the only branch of the family tree that maintains life beyond one generation. Without Arcadio, the family and Macondo would not have known Remedios the Beauty, the twins, Meme, Meme's Aureliano (the translator), or Amaranta Úrsula. Arcadio is the first family member to experience the mysteries of the parchments and the agonies of a firing squad:

Años después, frente al pelotón de fusilamiento, Arcadio había de acordarse del temblor con que Melquíades le hizo escuchar varias páginas de su escritura impenetrable, que por supuesto no entendió, pero que al ser leídas en voz alta parecían encíclicas cantadas (126).

(Years later, facing the firing squad, Arcadio would remember the trembling with which Melquíades made him listen to several pages of his impenetrable writing, which of course he did not

understand, but which when read aloud were like encyclicals being chanted) (75).

Arcadio nurtured and plundered Macondo. During his youth, he bathed and cared for the ancient Melquiades--only later to bully the town during the war years. Even though Úrsula stopped this malfeasance, she could not prevent his collusion with José Arcadio in their fraudulent land deals.

Curiously, the narrator nurtures and plunders Arcadio--perhaps in imitation of Arcadio's treatment of Macondo and of the Buendías' treatment of him. The firing squad scenes are the central images of the novel. Even though one first associates the colonel with the firing squad, Arcadio is at least as important. In the nine references to firing squads before the end of Section Six of the novel, Arcadio, not the colonel, figures in three of them. And Arcadio is the family member who dies before a firing squad, not the colonel. Although the narrator carefully distinguishes the deaths of each Buendía, the treatment of Arcadio in this sixth section particularly reveals the family and the nature of Macondo, a place where Buendías now definitely belong:

Al amanecer, después de un consejo de guerra sumario, Arcadio fue fusilado contra el muro del cementerio. En las dos últimas horas de su vida no logró entender por que había desaparecido el miedo que lo atormentó desde la infancia. Impasible, sin preocuparse siquiera por demostrar su reciente valor, escuchó los interminables cargos de la acusación. Pensaba en Úrsula, que a esa hora debía estar bajo el castaño tomando el café con José Arcadio Buendía. Pensaba en su hija de ocho meses, que aun no tenía nombre, y en el que iba a nacer en agosto. Pensaba en Santa Sofía de la Piedad, a quien la noche anterior dejó salando un venado para el almuerzo del sábado, y añoró su cabello chorreado sobre los hombros y sus pestañas que parecían artificiales. Pensaba en su gente sin sentimentalismos, en un severo ajuste de cuentas con la vida, empezando a comprender cuanto quería en realidad a las personas que más había odiado (169).

(At dawn, after a summary court-martial, Arcadio was shot against the wall of the cemetery. In the last two hours of his life he did not manage to understand why the fear that had tormented him since childhood had disappeared. Impassive, without even worrying about making a show of his recent

bravery, he listened to the interminable charges of the accusation. He thought about Ursula, who at that hour must have been under the chestnut tree having coffee with Jose Arcadio Buendía. He thought about his eight-month-old daughter, who still had no name, and about the child who was going to be born in August. He thought about Santa Sofia de la Piedad, whom he had left the night before salting down a deer for the next day's lunch, and he missed her hair pouring over her shoulders and her eyelashes, which looked as if they were artificial. He thought about his people without sentimentality, with a strict closing of his accounts with life, beginning to understand how much he really loved the people he hated the most) (117-118).

Thus, the first Buendía male (outsider to and progenitor of the family) meets "el zarpazo final." In the second half of the novel, the narrator alludes two or three times to a firing squad that Arcadio Segundo asked to witness when he was still a child. Yet this child (one of the two born in the August after their father's execution) is the first Buendía to dedicate much of his adult life to studying the parchments. Of the four family members who ponder the script (Arcadio, his twin sons--the "Segundos"--and the fatherless Aureliano), Arcadio Segundo receives special protection and light.

#### Melquíades' Room

In his youth the twin brother Aureliano Segundo spends many hours in Melquíades' room. The room has been empty since Melquíades' drowning during Arcadio's youth. Melquíades' drowning brings death to Macondo, but his spirit stays on in the room for those who enter that space with a will to make some sense of Melquíades' work.

Nadie había vuelto a entrar al cuarto desde que sacaron el cadáver de Melquíades y pusieron en la puerta el candado cuyas piezas se soldaron con la herrumbre. Pero cuando Aureliano Segundo abrió las ventanas entro una luz familiar que parecía acostumbrada a iluminar el cuarto todos los días . . . y la tinta no se había secado en el tintero. . . . En los anaqueles estaban los libros empastados en una materia acartonada y pálida como la piel humana curtida, y estaban los manuscritos intactos. A pesar del encierro de muchos años, el aire parecía más puro que en el resto de la casa. . . (230).

(No one had gone into the room again since they had taken Melquíades' body out and had put on the door a padlock whose parts had become fused together with rust. But when Aureliano Segundo opened the windows a familiar sight entered that seemed accustomed to lighting the room every day . . . and the ink had not dried up in the inkwell. . . . On the shelves were the books bound in a cardboard-like material, pale like tanned human skin, and the manuscripts were intact. In spite of the room's having been shut up for many years, the air seemed fresher than in the rest of the house . . .) (175-176).

Melquíades' room crowns the evolution of "puertas abiertas" in the family house. Úrsula built the room for Melquíades during her first renovation. The place is usually locked after his drowning, but it remains a refuge for those who share a kinship with Melquíades:

Aureliano Segundo se dio a la tarea de descifrar los manuscritos. Fue imposible. Las letras parecían ropa puesta a secar en un alambre, y se asemejaban más a la escritura musical que a la literaria. Un mediodía ardiente, mientras escrutaba los manuscritos, sintió que no estaba solo en el cuarto. Contra la reverberación de la ventana, sentado con las manos en las rodillas, estaba Melquíades. No tenía más de cuarenta años. Llevaba el mismo chaleco anacrónico y el sombrero de alas de cuervo, y por sus sienes pálidas chorreaba la grasa del cabello derretida por el calor, como lo vieron Aureliano y José Arcadio cuando eran niños. Aureliano Segundo lo reconoció de inmediato, porque aquel recuerdo hereditario se había transmitido de generación en generación, y había llegado a él desde la memoria de su abuelo. . . .

Melquíades le hablaba del mundo, trataba de infundirle su vieja sabiduría, pero se negó a traducir los manuscritos. <<Nadie debe conocer su sentido mientras no hayan cumplido cien años>>, explicó (230-231).

(Aureliano Segundo set about deciphering the manuscripts. It was impossible. The letters looked like clothes hung out to dry on a line and they looked more like musical notation than writing. One hot noontime, while he was poring over the manuscripts, he sensed that he was not alone in the room. Against the light from the window, sitting with his hands on his knees was Melquíades. He was under forty years of age. He was wearing the same old-fashioned vest and the hat that looked like a raven's wings, and across his pale temples there flowed the grease from his hair that had been melted by the heat, just as Aureliano and José Arcadio had seen him when they were children. Aureliano Segundo recognized him at once, because that hereditary memory had been transmitted from generation to generation and had come to him through the memory of his grandfather. . . .

Melquíades talked to him about the world, tried to infuse him with his old wisdom, but he refused to translate the manuscripts. "No one must know their meaning until he has reached [sic] one hundred years of age"4 (177).

His youth, his latent penchant for debauchery, Petra's allurements and her lottery business, and the frenzy of Macondo during the banana boom divert Aureliano Segundo from working longer in Melquíades' room. But the importance of the room and Melquíades' influence there re-emerge when José Arcadio Segundo enters it after experiencing his own sojourn among the dead. Thus, the twin sons of Arcadio expend the opposite halves of their lives trying to decipher the writing in Melquíades' room.

From the standpoint of Macondo's history being feigned by a novelist, being voiced by a narrator, being prophesied by a biographer, and being lived by a family--the two most important additions that Úrsula and José Arcadio Buendía effected through the policy of "puertas abiertas" were Melquíades and Arcadio.

The more that Úrsula is able to affirm life in the house, the less eminence accrues to the parchments in Melquíades' room; but when Fernanda begins to close the house down and the family begins to decline, the words and the room, and the light and its seekers dominate the remnants of Gemeinschaft gone.

In those earlier days of Úrsula's open door activity, two people besides Melquiades and Arcadio also enter the Buendía domain: Rebeca and Pietro Crespi. Pietro brings music and dancing to the house, and he precipitates a lifelong enmity between Amaranta and Rebeca. Pietro and Rebeca's romance is no match for Amaranta's cold determination to thwart it. Ultimately, José Arcadio re-enters the house and takes Rebeca with his machismo. Then, Amaranta carefully sets up the Italian, so she can refuse him. Caught between fire and ice, Pietro commits suicide.

Úrsula's case excepted, "las puertas abiertas" do not swing freely for Buendía women. Úrsula's personality, her dominance, and her candy business allow her to enter into the family and into the world and also to separate herself from them. Because of cultural conditioning, family traits, and personal inclination--many Buendía women find themselves barricaded inside the house.

Rebeca was adopted by the family when she appeared with a note, a small rocking chair, and a bag full of her parents' bones, but Úrsula later evicted her and José Arcadio upon their marriage to each other:

El padre Nicanor reveló en el sermón del domingo que José Arcadio y Rebeca no eran hermanos. Úrsula no perdonó nunca lo que consideró como una inconcebible falta de respeto, y cuando regresaron de la iglesia prohibió a los recién casados que volvieran a pisar la casa. Para ella era como si hubieran muerto (146).

(Father Nicanor revealed in his Sunday sermon that José Arcadio and Rebeca were not brother and sister. Úrsula never forgave what she considered an inconceivable lack of respect and when they came back from church she forbade the newlyweds to set foot in the house again. For her it was as if they were dead) (95).

Rebeca survives Amaranta's rancor, Pietro's suicide, Úrsula's rejection, and her husband's inexplicable death. In her youth she provides the lovesick Aureliano an audience for his poetry and his anguish. As José Arcadio's wife, she maintains a bridge between him and his brother Aureliano. José Arcadio's son (Arcadio) is free to associate with his father under her roof. Her patient vigilance allows José Arcadio to intervene for his brother when the colonel faces a firing squad. Her refusal of twilight charity from the family complements her character and indicates an instance of failed Buendía hospitality. Aureliano Triste (one of the colonel's 17 illegitimate sons) brings up the subject years later. Looking for a house to rent, "se interesó por el caserón decrepito que parecía abandonado en una esquina de la plaza" (261). (He

became interested in the run-down big house that looked abandoned on a corner of the square") (206). He describes to the family his having seen

la escuálida mujer vestida todavía con ropas del siglo anterior, con . . . unos ojos grandes, aún hermosos, en los cuales se habían apagado las últimas estrellas de la esperanza, y el pellejo del rostro agrietado por la aridez de la soledad (262).

(the squalid woman, still dressed in clothing of the past century, with two large eyes, still beautiful, in which the last stars of hope had gone out, and the skin of her face was wrinkled by the aridity of solitude) (206-207).

Úrsula, ancient by the time that Rebeca is brought to her attention, "lloró de consternación" (263) ("wept with consternation") (207). When she begins to assess the family strengths and failures, Úrsula decides that "Rebeca, la del corazón impaciente, la del vientre desaforado, era la única que tuvo la valentía sin frenos que Úrsula había deseado para su estirpe" (291). ("Rebeca, the one with an impatient heart, the one with a fierce womb, was the only one who had the unbridled courage that Úrsula wanted for her line") (234). When Úrsula banishes Rebeca and José Arcadio, she cuts off a source of energy for the family in an effort to forestall corruption, to preserve honor, and to evade cola de cerdo.

At one point of despair between her two renovations of the house, Úrsula locks the place up. José Arcadio has damaged the family name by marrying his stepsister and by cheating the villagers. She has had to dethrone Arcadio from his reign of terror as mayor. Arcadio is executed and José Arcadio, his father, dies without apparent cause or warning. The colonel is lost in a corrupt and senseless war--so lost that he executes the town's best mayor (General Moncada) because he isn't a liberal. And José Arcadio Buendía has died:

Úrsula pasó la tranca en la puerta decidida a no quitarla en el resto de su vida. <<Nos pudriremos aquí dentro --pensó--. Nos volveremos ceniza en esta casa sin hombres, pero no le daremos a este pueblo miserable el gusto de vernos llorar>> (223).

(Úrsula put the bar on the door, having decided not to take it down for the rest of her life. "We'll rot in here," she thought. "We'll turn to ashes in this house without men, but we won't give this miserable town the pleasure of seeing us weep") (169).

Úrsula is inadvertently describing the forgotten Rebeca more than she is depicting herself.

Life persists, in spite of Úrsula's complaints, even at low periods of activity between the place's renovations. General Gerineldo Márquez courts a recalcitrant Amaranta. Arcadio's widow, Santa Sofía de la Piedad, comes to live at the house with her three children. The colonel returns from signing the treaty of Neerlandia, where he failed at a suicide attempt. The old urges toward life well again in Úrsula and the second renovation begins:

Con una vitalidad que parecía imposible a sus años, Úrsula había vuelto a rejuvenecer la casa. <<Ahora van a ver quien soy yo --dijo cuando supo que su hijo viviría--. No habrá una casa mejor, ni más abierta a todo el mundo, que esta casa de locos.>> La hizo lavar y pintar, cambió los muebles, restauró el jardín y sembró flores nuevas, y abrió puertas y ventanas para que entrara hasta los dormitorios la deslumbrante claridad del verano. Decretó el término de los numerosos lutos superpuestos, y ella misma cambió los viejos trajes rigurosos por ropas juveniles. La musica de pianola volvió a alegrar la casa (227).

(With a vitality that seemed impossible at her age, Úrsula had rejuvenated the house again. 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. She decreed an end to the numerous superimposed periods of mourning and she herself exchanged her rigorous old gowns for youthful clothing. The music of the pianola again made the house merry) (175).

Úrsula's outlook prevails over Amaranta's perpetual gloom, and Remedios the Beauty glides through the house like a fresh piece of chalk upon a clean slate. One of the guards assigned to the house during the worst of the war does not leave after armistice but "se quedó viviendo en

la casa, y estuvo a su servicio por muchos años" (227). ("continued living in the house and was in her service for many years") (173). Each time that the reader, however, sees through an open window of the house, the narrator closes it. Immediately after reading the information above, we learn that on "[el día de Año Nuevo, enloquecido por los desaires de Remedios, la bella, el joven comandante de la guardia amaneció muerto de amor junto a su ventana" (227). ("on New Year's Day, driven mad by rebuffs from Remedios the Beauty, the young commander of the guard was found dead under her window") (173).

So marks the beginning of the end of las "puertas abiertas," Úrsula's reign. The house would echo the tread of strangers during the banana boom and then Fernanda would attach to the place her funereal splendor. Buendía house has been a battleground between the will to live and "el zarpazo final." In the progress of the novel, life loses--except for the life in Melquíades' room.

#### Dreams as Portage From One World to Another

Buendía house, however, has not been the only battleground between life and death. Nor has it been the only site for assimilating these forces (as in the case of Melquíades within his room). José Arcadio Buendía, through his dreams, also participates in the amalgamation of life and death.

José Arcadio Buendía was running from death (Prudencio's) when Macondo was born like Athena out of Zeus's head. Sleeping beside "the stony river whose waters were like a torrent of frozen glass" (31), José Arcadio Buendía dreams that "a noisy city with houses having mirror walls rose up" (32). When he later discovers ice in the custody of the gypsies, José Arcadio Buendía reimagines the mirrored walls as walls of ice

built from the magical properties of water: "Macondo dejaría de ser un lugar ardiente, cuyas bisagras y aldabas se torcían de calor, para convertirse en una ciudad invernal" (81). ("Macondo would no longer be a burning place, where the hinges and door knockers twisted with the heat, but would be changed into a wintry city") (32).

Melquíades' early studies regarding Macondo serve both to corroborate and to confound José Arcadio Buendía's willful imagination. Melquíades foresees houses made of glass but uninhabited by Buendías:

Melquíades profundizó en las interpretaciones de Nostradamus. Estaba hasta muy tarde asfixiándose dentro de su descolorido chaleco de terciopelo, garrapateando papeles con sus minúsculas manos de gorrión, cuyas sortijas habían perdido la lumbre de otra época. Una noche creyó encontrar una predicción sobre el futuro de Macondo. Sería una ciudad luminosa, con grandes casas de vidrio, donde no quedaba ningún rastro de la estirpe de los Buendía (108).

(Melquíades got deeper into his interpretations of Nostradamus. He would stay up until very late, suffocating in his faded velvet vest, scribbling with his tiny sparrow hands, whose rings had lost the glow of former times. One night he thought he had found a prediction of the future of Macondo. It was to be a luminous city with great glass houses where there was no trace remaining of the race of the Buendías (59).

All of the information projects temporality, whether one considers mirrored walls, glass houses, or ice. Yet, José Arcadio Buendía lashes out at Melquíades' first hint of the family's uprooting: <<Es una equivocación --tronó José Arcadio Buendía--. No serán casas de vidrio sino de hielo, como yo lo sôñé, y siempre habrá un Buendía por los siglos de siglos>> (108-109). ("It's a mistake," José Arcadio Buendía thundered. "They won't be houses of glass but of ice, as I dreamed, and there will always be a Buendía, per omnia secula seculorum") (59). Shiny, promising houses are as important to the dream life of José Arcadio Buendía as the family house is to the daily life of Úrsula. Ironically, the houses he foresees are not ones of ice that he imagines; they more closely

approximate the ones that the gringos build with walls mirroring the superficiality of the banana boom.

Dream rooms, rather than houses, lead José Arcadio Buendía toward another reality, just as Melquíades' room leads the parchment seekers into a world where "the air seemed fresher than in the rest of the house" (176). Even as a young man, José Arcadio Buendía believed in motion born from carefully directed stillness within one's private space:

Cuando se hizo experto en el uso y manejo de sus instrumentos, tuvo una noción del espacio que le permitió navegar por mares incógnitos, visitar territorios deshabitados y trabar relación con seres espléndidos, sin necesidad de abandonar su gabinete (62).

(When he became an expert in the use and manipulation of his instruments, he conceived a notion of space that allowed him to navigate across unknown seas, to visit uninhabited territories, and to establish relations with splendid beings without having to leave his study) (13-14).

The years of inquiry in his laboratory and in his study do endow José Arcadio Buendía with this kind of movement. Also, his final years of apparent insanity spent under the grace of the chestnut tree may have heightened his concentration and extrasensory activity. Furthermore, Prudencio Aguilar, aided by Melquíades' visits to the dead, is able to locate José Arcadio Buendía, to mitigate old tensions, and to resume their friendship within an other-world ambience.

Taken from the chestnut tree and tied to his death bed, José Arcadio Buendía dreams about infinity:

Cuando estaba solo, Jose Arcadio Buendía se consolaba con el sueño de los cuartos infinitos. Soñaba que se levantaba de la cama, abría la puerta y pasaba a otro cuarto igual, con la misma cama de cabecera de hierro forjado, el mismo sillón de mimbre y el mismo cuadro de la Virgen de Remedios en la pared del fondo. De ese cuarto pasaba a otro exactamente igual, y luego a otro exactamente igual, hasta el infinito. Le gustaba irse de cuarto en cuarto, como en un galería de espejos paralelos, hasta que Prudencio Aguilar le tocaba el hombro. Entonces regresaba de cuarto en cuarto, despertando hacia

atrás, recorriendo el camino inverso, y encontraba a Prudencio Aguilar en el cuarto de la realidad (189).

(When he was alone, José Arcadio Buendía consoled himself with the dream of the infinite rooms. He dreamed that he was getting out of bed, opening the door and going into an identical room with the same bed with a wrought-iron head, the same wicker chair, and the same small picture of the Virgin of Help on the back wall. From that room he would go into another that was just the same, the door of which would open into another that was just the same, the door of which would open into another one just the same, and then into another exactly alike, and so on into infinity. He liked to go from room to room. As in a gallery of parallel mirrors, until Prudencio Aguilar would touch him on the shoulder. Then he would go back from room to room, walking in reverse, going back over his trail, and he would find Prudencio Aguilar in the room of reality) (136-137).

Death comes as if by mistake one night because "Prudencio Aguilar touched José Arcadio Buendía's shoulder in an intermediate room and he stayed there forever, thinking that it was the real room" (137). The mirrored walls featured in the dream at Macondo's birth repeat themselves in the death of Macondo's founder, and reality becomes more and more a grain of sand behind glass refracting different lights beyond doors opening from an endless sequence of indistinguishable rooms.

Readers find the Buendías reflected through several prisms. One prism (Buendía house) becomes a prison after "puertas abiertas" close. Nevertheless, the function of the prism returns, not only through José Arcadio's Buendía's dreams, but also through the parchments in Melquíades' room.

During the first epoch of Macondo, Buendía house welcomes the youth into the parlor, and music triumphs there despite José Arcadio Buendía's debilitating experiment with the pianola or the growing rivalry between the girls for Pietro Crespi. José Arcadio Buendía's energies are safely dispersed in his study or in the laboratory, away from the noise of the family, while the kitchen sends candied animals for sale around town.

Aureliano's marriage to Remedios Moscote, the innocent and loving child, complements and closes the period.

Afterwards, however, energy starts flowing away from the house. Úrsula takes Amaranta for an extended trip, so Rebeca and Pietro can continue their courtship. José Arcadio Buendía decides that time is playing tricks by standing still. His rampage nearly destroys the house, and Aureliano has his father tied outside beneath the chestnut tree. Even Úrsula's return cannot deter disappointment, corruption, and death. Melquíades' drowning precipitates the first funeral in Macondo. José Arcadio returns from years with the gypsies and brings worldliness with him. Pietro and Remedios die, leaving no replacements for their innocence and vigor. Amaranta and Aureliano turn to war as a means of mitigating the pain. He leaves home to kill Conservatives; she burrows into the house under siege from pride and furtiveness.

#### Las Puertas Cerradas (Closed Doors)

The public war subsides, even if the familial wars do not. Oppositions of fire and ice continue within the territory, the family, and the novel. As "puertas abiertas" start to close, however, the family moves relentlessly toward its own extinction. Focus in the novel shifts from the former vibrancy of the house to a frozen stillness of the place. Simultaneous to the pall in the house, which reflects a similar death in the village, Buendía life seeks opposing outlets: debauchery and the activity within Melquíades' room.

Arcadio's twin sons, born after his execution, lead the way through their adult behavior toward the family's final merger with life and death. Aureliano Segundo abandons his study of the parchments and grounds himself ultimately to opposing magnetic fields: the fire of

Petra Cotes and the ice of Fernanda del Carpio. Petra Cotes, like Pilar Ternera, is the woman outside the family. The women outside the family have Úrsula's will to live without Úrsula's fear of cola de cerdo. But there is no room for them within the prescribed family circle. "Puertas abiertas" do not extend to

la guerra, los gallos de pelea, las mujeres de mala vida y las empresas delirantes, cuatro calamidades que, según pensaba Úrsula, habían determinado la decadencia de su estirpe (235).

(war, fighting cocks, bad women, or wild undertakings, four calamities that, according to what Úrsula thought, had determined the downfall of their line) (181).

Ironically, the beautiful and respectable Fernanda del Carpio enters the household as Aureliano Segundo's highlander bride and presides over the family's decline. The narrator marks the changing of the Buendía guard:

Mientras Úrsula disfrutó del dominio pleno de sus facultades, subsistieron algunos de los antiguos hábitos y la vida de la familia conservó una cierta influencia de sus corazonadas, pero cuando perdió la vista y el peso de los años la relegó a un rincón, el círculo de rigidez iniciado por Fernanda desde el momento en que llegó, terminó por cerrarse completamente, y nadie más que ella determinó el destino de la familia. . . . Las puertas de la casa, abiertas de par en par desde el amanecer hasta la hora de acostarse, fueron cerradas durante la siesta, con el pretexto de que el sol recalentaba los dormitorios, y finalmente se cerraron para siempre (256).

(As long as Úrsula had full use of her faculties some of the old customs survived and the life of the family kept some quality of her impulsiveness, but when she lost her sight and the weight of her years relegated her to a corner, the circle of rigidity begun by Fernanda from the moment she arrived finally closed completely and no one but she determined the destiny of the family. . . . The doors of the house, wide open from dawn until bedtime, were closed during siesta time under the pretext that the sun heated up the bedrooms and in the end they were closed for good) (200).

During the affirmative years of Los Buendía, Úrsula's discretionary hospitality did much to mitigate her inhibitions and fears, but Fernanda's reign offers no compensation. For Fernanda, openness, integration, merger, or dialogue is impossible. Meme, her daughter, tries to break

out of the iron circle only to find herself locked into a different configuration: pregnancy without marriage, the ruination of her lover, disinheritance, and her removal to a convent. The son of Meme and the mechanic Aureliano Babilonia arrives at casa Buendia in the arms of a nun, his familial heritage undisclosed. Fernanda never acknowledges him as a member of the family, as the grandson of hers that he truly is. But this Aureliano remains in the shuttered house with its regal mistress when all other Buendías have either died or gone:

Aureliano hubiera podido escapar y hasta volver a casa sin ser visto. Pero el prolongado cautiverio, la incertidumbre del mundo, el hábito de obedecer, habían resecado en su corazón las semillas de la rebeldía. De modo que volvió a su clausura, pasando y repasando los pergaminos, y oyendo hasta muy avanzada la noche los sollozos de Fernanda en el dormitorio (398).

(Aureliano could have escaped and even returned to the house without being seen. But the prolonged captivity, the uncertainty of the world, the habit of obedience had dried up the seeds of rebellion in his heart. So that he went back to his enclosure, reading and rereading the parchments and listening until very late at night to Fernanda sobbing in her bedroom) (336).

The dominion of Fernanda and her policy of "puertas cerradas" possibly effect and surely reflect the end of the house and of the family.

After Fernanda dies, her other two children each take a turn at applying themselves to the house and to its sole occupant, Meme's Aureliano. The last José Arcadio has little to offer the village or the household. No dreams, no drive, no memories, no experiences with fire or ice. Nada. He has little curiosity for the parchments, but he acquires some respect for Aureliano and "la rara sabiduría y el inexplicable conocimiento del mundo que tenía aquel pariente desolado (407). ("the rare wisdom and the inexplicable knowledge of the world that his desolate kinsman had") (344). This last José Arcadio expends money rather than

imaginative energy, and the house receives a coat of glitter before its master drowns one day in the swimming pool.

The Buendía doors admit one last family member. Amaranta Úrsula comes home and completes the family sojourn in Macondo. For all the family, "fue un viaje absurdo" (80). ("It was an absurd journey") (31). All of the secrets, secretions, seethings, and denials, all of the complicity and all of the innocence--all of the oppositions feared by Úrsula, buried in Amaranta, and sterilized by Fernanda burst to the surface in Amaranta Úrsula. She joins Aureliano, her unrecognized nephew, in a delirious dance of death. Their dance produces the last Aureliano, "el único en un siglo que había sido engendrado con amor" (443). Thus, "the only one in a century who had been engendered with love" (378) never has his moment in Macondo or in Buendía house. This cola de cerdo is the end of the line for the Macondino side of los Buendía. Amaranta Úrsula dies after giving birth to him, and he is carried off as carrion by the ants. But in those months before the last Aureliano is born, the narrator tells us that Buendía house does more than define the boundaries wherein "[e]l primero de la estirpe está amarrado en un árbol y al último se lo están comiendo las hormigas" (446). ("The first of the line is tied to a tree and the last is being eaten by the ants") (381). The last two Buendías who lived in the house finally grew quiet in each other's arms and listened to opposing activity around them:

([T]hey were not frightened by the sublunary explosions of the ants or the noise of the moths or the constant and clean whistle of the growth of the weeds in the neighboring rooms. Many times they were awakened by the traffic of the dead. They could hear Úrsula fighting against the laws of creation to maintain the line, and José Arcadio Buendía searching for the mythical truth of the great inventions, and Fernanda praying, and Colonel Aureliano Buendía stupefying himself with the deception of war and the little gold fishes, and Aureliano Segundo dying of solitude in the turmoil of his debauches, and then they learned that dominant obsessions can prevail against

death and they were happy again with the certainty that they would go on loving each other in their shape as apparitions long after other species of future animals would steal from the insects the paradise of misery that the insects were finally stealing from man) (378).

Cola de cerdo marks the end of the family's earthly connections to Macondo, the "paradise of misery that the insects were finally stealing from man" (378). The domain that Úrsula had fought so hard to preserve crumbles. No longer is there a need for edicts like "No nos iremos" (71). ("We will not leave") (22). House and family undergo "el zarpazo final."

The dream side of the family and the place, however, has not disappeared. It only changes shapes. Cola de cerdo was Úrsula's preoccupation, not José Arcadio Buendía's. He was a man of "las empresas delirantes" (235). ("wild undertakings") (181). He differed from Úrsula in his employment of space and time: at her insistence he would remain in Macondo, but we recall that "tuvo una noción del espacio que le permitió navegar por mares incógnitos, visitar territorios deshabitados y trabar relación con seres espléndidos, sin necesidad de abandonar su gabinete" (62). ("He conceived a notion of space that allowed him to navigate across unknown seas, to visit uninhabited territories, and to establish relations with splendid beings without having to leave his study") (14). Even when the doors are slamming shut in Casa Buendía, even when house and family are succumbing to "el zarpazo final," even when Amaranta Úrsula is dead and the ants seem to reign supreme, los Buendía live as much as they die. They are beneficiaries from the activity within Melquíades' room.

#### The Dream Seekers in Melquíades' Room

The Buendías who turn to the parchments in Melquíades' room are

spiritual as well as corporeal descendents of José Arcadio Buendía. Their days and years of puzzlement, their work with the parchments, and their ties to Melquíades fuse the family to both life and death. Their work and the spirit behind it escape much of the family. For Úrsula, such matters are "empresas delirantes" (mad undertakings). This activity in Melquíades' room carries the family closer to José Arcadio Buendía's dream realities. The policy of "puertas abiertas" allows Melquíades to participate fully with the dream seekers among the Buendías. Neither "puertas cerradas" nor "el zarpazo final" can demolish the death-life emanating from Melquíades' room.

Arcadio Segundo seeks the room after a nightmarish train ride among the dead. Like Meme, he had reached outside the family attempting to merge with the community and had been razed by the experience. The strike of the banana workers ends with few people agreeing that it ever happened. When José Arcadio Segundo insists that the workers and their families were shot and dumped off freight cars and into the sea, he gets only puzzled looks from his auditors--as if he is a product of some dream that must go away. But instead of going away, José Arcadio Segundo finds shelter in Melquíades' room.

During these troubled times come the rain and the soldiers. But the soldiers are seekers of a different reality and when they enter Melquíades' room, they see chamber pots left over from the days of Meme's slumber party. They do not see the Buendía that they are seeking: José Arcadio Segundo, the former perpetrator of social unrest and the present protégé of Melquíades. The narrator describes José Arcadio Segundo's relief and resolution:

[P]rotegido por la luz sobrenatural, por el ruido de la lluvia, por la sensación de ser invisible, encontró el reposo que no tuvo un solo instante de su vida anterior (349).

([P]rotected by the supernatural light, by the sound of the rain, by the feeling of being invisible, he found the repose that he had not had for one single instant during his previous life) (290).

Free from all fear,

Arcadio Segundo dedicated himself then to peruse the manuscripts of Melquiades many times (tanto más a gusto cuanto menos los entendía (350) and with so much more pleasure when he could not understand them) (290).

Acostumbrado al ruido de la lluvia, que a los dos meses se convirtió en una forma nueva del silencio, lo único que perturbaba su soledad eran las entradas y salidas de Santa Sofía de la Piedad (350).

(He became accustomed to the sound of the rain, which after two months had become another form of silence, and the only thing that disturbed his solitude was the coming and going of Santa Sofía de la Piedad) (290).

He asked her, therefore, to leave the meals on the windowsill and padlock the door. The rest of the family forgot about him, including Fernanda. . . . After six months of enclosure, since the soldiers had left Macondo, Aureliano Segundo removed the padlock, looking for someone he could talk to until the rain stopped. . . . (290).

José Arcadio Segundo, devorado por la pelambre, indiferente al aire enrarecido por los vapores nauseabundos, seguía leyendo y releendo los pergaminos ininteligibles. Estaba iluminado por un resplandor seráfico. Apenas levantó la vista cuando sintió abrirse la puerta, pero a su hermano le bastó aquella mirada para ver repetido en ella el destino irreparable del bisabuelo (350).

(José Arcadio Segundo, devoured by baldness, indifferent to the air that had been sharpened by the nauseating vapors, was still reading and rereading the unintelligible parchments. He was illuminated by a seraphic glow. He scarcely raised his eyes when he heard the door open, but in that look was enough for his brother to see repeated in it the irreparable fate of his great-grandfather) (350).

"There were more than three thousand of them," was all that José Arcadio Segundo said. "I'm sure now that they were everybody who had been at the station" (290).

After the rains end, Úrsula shakes off decrepitude in order to marshal a cleanup operation. She finds José Arcadio Segundo in the neglected room:

Only then did Úrsula realize that he was in a world of shadows more impenetrable than hers, as unreachable and solitary as

that of his great-grandfather. She left him in the room, but she succeeded in getting them to take the padlock off, clean it every day, throw the chamberpots away except for one, and to keep José Arcadio Segundo as clean and presentable as his great-grandfather had been during his long captivity under the chestnut tree (310).

Úrsula, fittingly, opens a final door: the door to Melquíades' room. José Arcadio Segundo remains within that room until his death. He does not succeed in deciphering the parchments, but his engrossed study attracts Meme's Aureliano:

En el cuartito apartado adonde nunca llegó el viento árido, ni el polvo ni el calor, ambos recordaban la visión atávica de un anciano con sombrero de alas de cuervo que hablaba del mundo a espaldas de la ventana, muchos años antes de que ellos nacieran. Ambos descubrieron al mismo tiempo que allí siempre era marzo y siempre era lunes, y entonces comprendieron que José Arcadio Buendía no estaba tan loco como contaba la familia, sino que era el único que había dispuesto de bastante lucidez para vislumbrar la verdad de que también el tiempo sufría tropiezos y accidentes, y podía por tanto astillarse y dejar en un cuarto una fracción eternizada (384).

(In the small isolated room where the arid air never penetrated, nor the dust, nor the heat, both had the atavistic vision of an old man, his back to the window, wearing a hat with a brim like the wings of a crow who spoke about the world many years before they had been born. Both described at the same time how it was always March there and always Monday, and then they understood that José Arcadio Buendía was not as crazy as the family said, but that he was the only one who had enough lucidity to sense the truth of the fact that time also stumbled and had accidents and could therefore splinter and leave an eternalized fragment in a room) (322).

José Arcadio Segundo, therefore, links the last inquiring Buendía with the first one in Macondo.

The dreamed birth of Macondo; the splinters of light in ice, in glass, in fire; José Arcadio Buendía's dream-death; the apparitions of Prudencio Aguilar and José Arcadio Buendía; the watchful presence of Melquíades' spirit in the room--all of these events carry the reader into a Melquíadesiac Macondo where time, space, and community collapse into an

"eternalized fragment." Through one small "puerta abierta" los Buendía escape into a life of their own.

Death, nevertheless, comes to Melquíades' room. José Arcadio Segundo dies at work there. Melquíades reveals his own willing rendezvous with "ultimate death" because Meme's Aureliano "would have time to learn Sanskrit during the years remaining until the parchments became one hundred years old, when they could be deciphered" (329). When Melquíades disappears, "the room then became vulnerable to dust, heat, termites, red ants, and moths" (329). Santa Sofía de la Piedad gives up after Úrsula dies and Melquíades abandons the room to the ravages of time. "--Merindo --le dijo a Aureliano--. Ésta es mucha casa para mis pobres huesos" (394). ("I give up," she said to Aureliano. "This is too much house for my poor bones") (332).

Santa Sofía de la Piedad walks away from the house, but Aureliano does not. He presides over the destruction of the premises. Many of the oppositions experienced by the family (some of which were also born by Amaranta Úrsula) come to a close with him: the fire of loving without heeding fear or responsibility, the heat of intense concentration and discovery, the ice of isolation and illegitimacy, the feel of "el zarpazo final" when the forces of nature start "sniffing" at one's heels; the creativity of inquiry and dreams, the dread of time's end, and the possibility of a life outside of time "por mares incógnitos" ("across unknown seas").

### Conclusion

Macondo benefits from very special resources: a voice, a family, a prophet, the parchments, a translator, and readers. The voice, the family, and the prophet offer means for a Gemeinschaft to withstand time and

erosion. The parchments, the translator, and the readers are products of Gesellschaft which offer a bridge between opposing worlds.

García Márquez, like Melquíades, successfully endows Macondo with a life of its own. A definite part of that endowment is the continuing succession of translators, beings who are both imprisoned and freed by the activity in Melquíades' room.

Readers of Nabokov's Ada experience Van Veen's struggle to find Ardis as well as Van's Real World Beyond. Ada struggles to maintain her equilibrium in the gesellschaftlich environment. Van's real achievement is his bringing Ada into the space and the time allowed to seekers. That space and time cannot be defined, contained, or marketed, but José Arcadio Buendía learned about it. Melquíades certainly understood the territory--a territory embraced by but not confined to Ardis, or to Van's dream, or to Macondo or to the chestnut tree, or to Melquíades' room. It goes beyond Úrsula's open doors and Ada's lepidoptera. It endures past the life of the paper which enables its parturition. It is a space and an energy quite opposed to "el zarpazo final."

The Veens and Los Buendía, however, were not the only ones who sought to preserve and to recreate the family territory through language. So did their creators, Nabokov and García Marquez.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Úrsula fears the birth of a child with a "tail of a pig." I maintain that the fervor of writing ("cola de pluma") supercedes Úrsula's fear of "cola de cerdo."

<sup>2</sup>Gabriel García Márquez, Cien años de soledad, cuarta ed. (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S. A. 1983) 60. This edition is cited subsequently and is often followed by the translation cited in Chapter I. I sometimes juxtapose the two languages within one dialogue or situation. I do not always cite the original Spanish but, by my careful study of the text in the original language and in its translation, I have learned much about the art of writing and of translating. I hope my readers also gain from the dual perspective.

<sup>3</sup>Vicenzo Bollettino, De La Hojarasca a Cien Anos de Soledad: Preparacion y Reiteracion de Una Novelística, diss., Rutgers University, 1972 (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1972), 72-27530. According to Mr. Bollettino, "Las lágrimas del Buendía no brotan por no poder abandonar Macondo, sino por sentirse culpable de la vida que les queda en un mundo agobiado por 'el sofocante olor de sangre'" (117). (Buendía's tears fall, not from his inability to leave Macondo, but from his feeling guilty for leaving them [the children] in a tarnished world that smells of blood.)

<sup>4</sup>The translation is amiss here. It should read, "No one must know their meaning until they have reached one hundred years of age." They refers to the parchments, not to the translator. See the eighteenth section of the novel for corroboration: "Melquíades . . . would go in peace . . . because Aureliano would have time to learn Sanskrit during the years remaining until the parchments became one hundred years old" (329). (Melquíades . . . se iba tranquilo . . . porque Aureliano tenía tiempo de aprender el sanscrito en los años que faltaban para que los pergaminos cumplieran un siglo") (391).

## CHAPTER IV

### RELINQUISHED MOORINGS

Vladimir Nabokov assiduously inspected the inhabitants of the places that he encountered throughout his varied life. Because he was as keen a lepidopterist as he was a writer, he was able to see and to record the world around him with an unexpected arrangement of normally overlooked details. This scientific bent further taught him to look for repetition and purpose in what might first appear to be caprice. His autobiography acts like a memory-powered microscope in aiding the reader to comprehend family movements, particularly in pre-bolshevik Russia. Speak, Memory transplants seemingly random clusters of detail into the perceiver's consciousness until miniature portraits of the family entourage appear. Movement dominates the work and sculpts wind-smooth, water-clean surfaces primarily devoid of linear form.

#### Home

Valdimir Dmitrievich Nabokov was a major contributor to young Nabokov's concept of home. The father moved the family in seasonally prescribed circles from the townhouse in St. Petersburg to Vyra, the country estate 50 miles south. The family took vacations in places like Biarritz. Military and political figures conferred with the elder Nabokov and respected his work in legal reform. He was a prominent member of the First Duma (1905-06). According to family reports, peasants found him generous; his servants occasionally swindled him; his mother deplored his

liberality; and his children progressed through English, Russian, and French under a heterogeneous succession of governesses and tutors. His wife, Elena Ivanovna, was the heiress of some of the Rukavishnikoff family wealth, but she shared her son's delight in small treasures: digging mushrooms from the mist-laden family grounds, perceiving color while pronouncing certain sounds, unlocking the family jewels in order to dramatize a bedtime story, or quietly listening to an adolescent's first poem. Her instinct for detail and her liveliness helped to ground the daily surges of political lightning enveloping country, family, husband, and home.

Nabokov describes his father as a member of the "classless intelligentsia" and Speak, Memory provides glimpses of Vladimir Dmitrievich struggling to help build a viable government amidst the ashes and coals of tsar against bolshevik in early twentieth-century Russia. Buried in the book also are two references, one an unfinished sentence and one a pair of sentences, which deal with Nabokov Sr.'s assassination in emigre Berlin in 1922. The writer-son prefers to give the reader less sensational bits of information about himself, about his family, and about his liberal, reformist parent tossed on the political crests of a volcanic homeland:

The old and the new, the liberal touch and the patriarchal one, fatal poverty and fatalistic wealth got fantastically interwoven in that strange first decade of our century. Several times during a summer it might happen that in the middle of luncheon, in the bright, many-windowed, walnut-paneled dining room on the first floor of our Vyra manor, Aleksey, the butler, with an unhappy expression on his face, would bend over and inform my father in a low voice (especially low if we had company) that a group of villagers wanted to see the barin outside. Briskly my father would remove his napkin from his lap and ask my mother to excuse him. One of the windows at the west end of the dining room gave upon a portion of the drive near the main entrance. One could see the top of the honeysuckle bushes opposite the porch. From that direction the courteous buzz of a peasant welcome would reach us as the

invisible group greeted my invisible father. The ensuing parley, conducted in ordinary tones, would not be heard, as the windows underneath which it took place were closed to keep out the heat. It presumably had to do with a plea for his mediation. . . . If, as usually happened, the request was at once granted, there would be again that buzz, and then, in token of gratitude, the good barin would be put through the national ordeal of being rocked and tossed up and securely caught by a score or so of strong arms.

In the dining room, my brother and I would be told to go on with our food. . . . From my place at table I would suddenly see through one of the west windows a marvelous case of levitation. There, for an instant, the figure of my father in his wind-rippled white summer suit would be displayed, gloriously sprawling in midair, his limbs in a curiously casual attitude, his handsome, imperturbable features turned to the sky. Thrice, to the mighty heave-ho of his invisible tossers, he would fly up in this fashion, and the second time he would go higher than the first and then there he would be on his last and loftiest flight, reclining, as if for good, against the cobalt blue of the summer noon, like one of those paradisiac personages who comfortably soar, with such a wealth of folds in their garments, on the vaulted ceiling of a church while below, one by one, the wax tapers in mortal hands light up to make a swarm of minute flames in the mist of incense, and the priest chants of eternal repose, and the funeral lilies conceal the face of whoever lies there, among the swimming lights, in the open coffin.<sup>1</sup>

Speak, Memory is a masterful recounting of familial events, and the reader falls heir to many fine glimpses of pre-bolshevik Russia and of Vladimir Dmitrievich, who was one of the primary figures caught between the cobalt blue and the funeral tapers of Nabokov's formative years in Russia (1899 to 1919).

A decade after Vladimir Nabokov fled Russia, the oldest of 16 children was born to a telegraph operator situated in Colombia's banana zone. Gabriel García Márquez's birth year (1928) is famous in Colombia as the year of the banana strike. By 1928, Nabokov had had 10 years of working without a home, first at Cambridge University and then in emigre Berlin where he wrote essays, poetry, and short fiction for Dar and other emigre publications. His livelihood came from tutoring young Germans in English and tennis. Russia existed but only for him in some twilight zone

between memory and mirage. García Márquez, on the other hand, inherited a place called Aracataca, Colombia, by virtue of his mother's coming home to deliver her first child. The village, his maternal grandparents (Colonel Iguarán and his wife Tranquilina) and their household created such magic for the child that he spent years trying to recapture the spell in his fiction.

Stories abounded in this town, this seat of a not-quite-survivorship in Colombia's banana zone. His grandmother talked easily to and about ghosts who lived in the family household. She accepted the family ghosts as naturally as she did the colonel's bastard children. The pueblo buzzed with stories of Colonel Iguarán's past: his fighting and working victoriously by the side of the liberal General Rafael Uribe Uribe in the Thousand Days War (1899-1902). Tranquilina continued to anticipate the colonel's pension for his service to his country long after her husband's death. The old warrior did survive the banana boom, however, during the first two decades of the twentieth century. His personal esteem grew in the village because of his vaunted military past; so grew as well his disdain for new arrivals in Aracataca, those bearers of banana fever. He assisted in removing a young telegraph operator who had fallen in love with his daughter. But young Gabriel Eligio García's relocation did not remove the threat to the colonel's familial barricade. The town thrived on the stories about the young couple's successful intrigues. Ultimately, the colonel faced defeat: Gabriel Eligio García married Luisa Santiago Márquez Iguarán.

But Aracataca had more than rebellious lovers to tell stories about. Before long, the banana workers struck (demanding that "employers recognize that they had employees"<sup>2</sup>). Stories circulated that machine guns were the final arbitrators at Ciénaga, a fateful place nearby. Seven

died. No. Seven hundred. None, said the government. These shadowy verbal emanations left their mark on the colonel's best listener--Gabriel, Luisa's firstborn, the grandchild whom she left with her parents in a gesture of peace and reconciliation.

The cloudy recording of the banana strike complemented Colombia's troubled history and foreshadowed the times to come. Some historians have estimated that over 200,000 politically-oriented deaths occurred in Colombia between the time of liberal leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán's assassination in 1948 and a recession of killings in 1962.<sup>3</sup> Violence, however, did not begin or end then but merely resumed in 1948. García Márquez's sensitivity to political violence stems from hearing the town talk about the banana strike and about those earlier years of strife, years of activity for his grandfather (the time of the Thousand Days War and the Treaty of Neerlandia).

#### The Importance of a Base

García Márquez progressed from a child who listened in a very oral society within a compelling environment to a man perhaps even more articulate. Fernández-Braso has collected interviews where both men spent hours of paseos, conversation, wine, and general Latin conviviality. Nabokov, on the contrary, took questions well in advance of dreaded interviews, so that he could write his answers before the appointed meeting. The fastidious Nabokov would hope thus to avoid the hyperbole that accompanies the Fernández-Braso interview:

Nunca habló de literatura porque no sé lo que es, y además, estoy convencido de que el mundo sería igual sin ella. En cambio, estoy convencido de que sería completamente distinto si no existiera la policía. Pienso, por tanto, que habría sido más útil a la humanidad si en vez de escritor fuera terrorista.<sup>4</sup>

(I never speak of literature because I don't know what it is, and furthermore, I am convinced that the world would be the same without it. On the other hand, I am convinced that the world would be completely different if police did not exist. I think, therefore, that I would have been more useful to humanity if I had been a terrorist instead of a writer.)

Fernández-Braso converts this Latin American's wild wryness into heroics:

Terrorista con dinamita de ternura, con impertérrita mirada de salteador de estúpidas costumbres, con destello de luchador sin particular motivo es Gabriel García Márquez. Terrorista sin mapa de acción muy concreto, pero con unas ideas claras que iluminan tibiezas y desarman aguerridos orgullos. Terrorista que deja caer--con naturalidad y sin premeditación--palabras que al principio apenas encuentran órbita de sonoridad y que luego estallan sorda y hondamente en la última cavidad interior (41).

(Terrorist with tenderness for dynamite, with the dauntless look of one who demolishes stupid customs, with the aura of a fighter looking for a cause--such is Gabriel García Márquez. Terrorist without a specific plan of action, but with clear ideas that overcome wrongheadedness and disarm militance. Terrorist who lets fall--with naturalness and without premeditation--words that scarcely begin their orbits in sonority before they burst silently and deeply in the innermost recesses of being.)

The further that one reads into the Fernández-Braso texts, the more one realizes García Márquez's irrevocable ties to Gemeinschaft with its emphasis upon storytelling and village people.

Creo que el escritor, todo escritor, tiene su formación ideológica y si ella es firme y si es escritor sincero en el momento de contar su historia . . . esta posición ideológica se verá en su historia, es decir, . . . a partir de este momento que esa historia puede tener esa fuerza subversiva de que hablo. No creo que sea deliberada, pero si que es inevitable (La soledad 92).

(I believe that the writer, every writer, has an ideological base and if the base is firm and if the writer is sincere at the moment of telling his story, the ideological base will be seen in the story. I mean from the moment of its origin, the story has a subversive side of which I speak. I don't believe that it is deliberate, but that it is inevitable.)

García Márquez laments the proliferation of a thesis-ridden political fiction, however, that has come out of "la violencia," a term for the cycles of political strife in his homeland:

Fíjate que después de tantos años de esa literatura empedrada de buenas intenciones, no hemos logrado tumbar con ella a ningún gobierno y, en cambio, hemos invadido las librerías de novelas ilegibles y hemos caído en algo que ningún escritor ni ningún político se pueden perdonar: hemos perdido nuestro público. Ahora, con una noción menos arrogante del oficio empezamos a recuperarlo (La soledad 115; also in Una conversación 91-92).

(Be assured that after so many years of literature paved with good intentions, we have not succeeded in overthrowing one government. Yet on the other hand we have inundated bookstores with unreadable novels and we have fallen into something for which neither writer nor politician can be forgiven: We have lost our public. Now, no matter how difficult the job at hand, we turn toward recouping the people.)

Fernández-Braso reveals the writer and the man as García Márquez thinks about his priorities. At one point we see a copy of the letter that García Márquez asked a journalist friend to publish at home (in Bogotá through El Espectador). He explains his rejection of the Colombian consulate's post in Barcelona early in 1970. The last paragraph of that letter written to the late Guillermo Cano in Bogotá follows:

No seré, pues, otro escritor de corbata.<sup>5</sup> Ya no la uso ni en la vida real. Puedo servir a mi país sin servir a su gobierno y sin servirme de él, y en la única forma desinteresada en que me es posible hacerlo: Escribiendo.

Un abrazo.  
(La soledad 91)

Gabriel García Márquez

(I will not be, well, another writer on a political pension. I have no use for this on any level. I can serve my country without serving its government and without serving myself from it and in the only fair way possible: by writing.)

The prospect of living in the consulate's quarters in Barcelona did not prompt García Márquez to write anything but a letter of rejection, but his birthplace would not release him from the compunction to write it into perpetuity. Since the publication of Cien años, (One Hundred Years), Aracataca has escaped "el zarpazo final." Many years before that accomplishment, however, Aracataca had come to haunt García Márquez. He discusses the matter with Mario Vargas Llosa:

Bueno, ocurrió un episodio del que, solamente en este momento, me doy cuenta que probablemente es un episodio decisivo en mi vida de escritor. Nosotros, es decir mi familia y todos, salimos de Aracataca, donde yo vivía, cuando tenía ocho o diez años. Nos fuimos a vivir a otra parte, y cuando yo tenía quince años encontré a mi madre que iba a Aracataca a vender la casa esa de que hemos hablado, que estaba llena de muertos. Entonces yo, en una forma muy natural, le dije "yo te acompaño." Y llegamos a Aracataca y me encontré con que todo estaba exactamente igual pero un poco traspuesto, poéticamente. Es decir, que yo veía a través de las ventanas de las casas una cosa que todos hemos comprobado: como aquellas calles que nos imaginábamos anchas, se volvían pequeñas, no eran tan altas como nos imaginábamos; las casas eran exactamente iguales, pero estaban carcomidas por el tiempo y la pobreza, y a través de las ventanas veíamos que eran los mismos muebles, pero quince años más viejos en realidad. Y era un pueblo polvoriento y caluroso; era un mediodía terrible, se respiraba polvo. Es un pueblo donde fueron a hacer un tanque para el acueducto y tenían que trabajar de noche porque el día no podían agarrar las herramientas por el calor que había. Entonces, mi madre y yo, atravesamos el pueblo como quien atraviesa un pueblo fantasma: no había un alma en la calle; y estaba absolutamente convencido que mi madre estaba sufriendo lo mismo que sufría yo de ver como había pasado el tiempo por ese pueblo. Y llegamos a una pequeña botica, que había en una esquina, en la que había una señora cosiendo; mi madre entró y se acercó a esta señora y le dijo: "Como está, comadre?" Ella levantó la vista y se abrazaron y lloraron durante media hora. No se dijeron una sola palabra sino que lloraron durante media hora. En ese momento me surgió la idea de contar por escrito todo el pasado de aquel episodio.<sup>6</sup>

(Well, an incident occurred which, only right now I am realizing, is probably a turning point in my life as a writer. We, I mean my family and everybody, left Aracataca where I was living until I was eight or ten years old. We went away to live elsewhere. When I was about fifteen, I found out from my mother that she was going back to Aracataca to sell the house that we have spoken about, the one full of ghosts. Well, I just naturally told her, "I'm going with you." And we arrived in Aracataca and I found that everything was exactly the same but a little askew, poetically. I mean that I was going through something that everybody has known. The streets that once looked wide to my imagination turned out to be quite small and not nearly as long as we imagined. The same houses were not the same but were yielding to time and to poverty and through the windows we saw that the furniture was the same but fifteen years older in reality and it was a dusty and hot village. It was terrible midday; dust hung in the air. It is a town where they went to make a reservoir for the aqueduct and they had to work at night because by day they couldn't grasp the tools on account of the heat. Well, my mother and I went across town as if we were passing through a ghost town. There was not a soul in the street, and I was absolutely convinced

that my mother was suffering what I was from seeing how time had dealt with the village. And we arrived at a little shop, that was on a corner, in which there was a woman sewing; my mother entered, approached the woman, and said to her, "How are you, friend?" She looked up and they embraced and cried a whole half hour. They didn't say a single word, but they cried for half an hour. At that moment, the idea came to me to tell in writing what was behind the incident.)

Places like Bogotá seemed cold and traumatizing to the young García Márquez when he compared them to the birthplace of his memory. He turned more and more to writing and less and less to the customary study of law in order to perpetuate the mystery that he had once helped to compound when he was a wide-eyed, baby-child listener in the dusty parlors of his hometown.

#### Nabokov's Gift to His Homeland

García Márquez could travel back to Aracataca at least once--albeit a painful journey--in order to connect his past to his present. For Nabokov, home was more elusive than it was for the South American. The loss of home fueled Nabokov's early fiction (which was written under the name of V. Sirin). Mashenka (Mary, 1926) features a Russian emigre protagonist who yearns for the girl that he left behind in Russia. As his friendship grows with Alferov, Ganin finally realizes that Alferov's happily awaited bride is Ganin's long-lost sweetheart. After scheming to be the one who meets the train, Ganin leaves the station before the train's arrival. He decides that Mashenka-present cannot equal Mashenka-past.

Donald E. Morton linked the girl to the exiles' longing for the lost homeland: "It is a novel about the dangers of nostalgia which, Nabokov warms, tends to remain 'throughout one's life an insane companion.'" <sup>7</sup>

We see nostalgia drifting in and out of Nabokov's very important early novel The Gift. In this work, Fyodor Godunov-Cherdyntsev writes at night while tutoring Germans by day. A third-person voice vacillates between seriousness and mockery over Fyodor's struggles to write with freshness and acumen. He longs to understand his eminent, vanished father while overcoming nostalgia for him and for his lost homeland. The playful-serious third person narration which centers upon the consciousness of Fyodor often melts into a playful-serious "I":

Fyodor . . . abandoned himself to all the demands of inspiration. This was a conversation with a thousand interlocutors, only one of whom was genuine, and this genuine one must be caught and kept within hearing distance. How difficult this is, and how wonderful. . . . And in these talks between tamberles, tantam my spirit hardly knows. . . .8

Fyodor searches for the genuine interlocutor while his third person narrator cajoles from the margins:

After some three hours of concentration and ardor dangerous to life, he finally cleared up the whole thing, to the last word, and decided that tomorrow he would write it down. In parting with it he tried reciting softly the good, warm, farm-fresh lines:

Thank you, my land; for your remotest  
Most cruel mist my thanks are due  
By you possessed, by you unnoticed  
Unto myself I speak of you.  
And in these talks between somnambules  
My inmost being hardly knows  
If it's my demency that rambles  
or your own melody that grows (68).

Words obtrude rather than transport Fyodor as often as not. Dreams might more vitally attest to the search. But then one wakes mired in words worthless for sculpting the dream. Fyodor chafes and evokes the strain:

I clutched at the first hackneyed words available, at their ready-made linkages, so that as soon as I had embarked on what I thought to be creation, on what should have been the expression, the living connection between my divine excitement and my human world, everything expired in a fatal gust of words,

whereas I continued to rotate epithets and adjust rhymes without noticing the split, the debasement and the betrayal--like a man relating his dream (like any dream infinitely free and complex, but clotting like blood upon waking up), who unnoticed by himself and his listeners rounds it out, cleans it up and dresses it in the fashion of hackneyed reality, and if he begins thus: "I dreamt that I was sitting in my room," monstrously vulgarizes the dream's devices by taking it for granted that the room had been furnished exactly the same as his room in real life (165).

Godunov-Cherdyntsev tries to realize some understanding of his father--an understanding based outside the standard biography. The reader comes to know the father and son as they merge in Fyodor's quests and dreams. The complex study of the father given life by the probing, dreamlike infusions of the son never evolves into a graspable biographical form.

Behind the writer's search for his father also lies Fyodor's estrangement from his homeland:

Suddenly, he felt a bitter pang--why had everything in Russia become so shoddy, so crabbed and gray, how could she have been so befooled and befuddled? Or had the old urge "toward the light" concealed a fatal flaw . . . until it was revealed that this "light" was burning in the window of the prison overseer, and that was all? When had this strange dependence sprung up between the sharpening of thirst and the muddying of the source . . . and "what to do" now? Ought one not to reject any longing for one's homeland, for any homeland besides that which is with me, within me, which is stuck like silver sand of the sea to the skin of my soles, lives in my eyes, my blood, gives depth and distance to the background of life's every hope? Some day, interrupting my writing, I will look through the window and see a Russian autumn (187).

Nabokov offered his Gift to Russia and to Russians and sailed to America with wife and child in 1940. Still a child at this time, García Márquez had had to say goodbye to his favorite gifts: Colonel Nicolas was dead and Aracataca lay very still within the grasp of time. Bogotá left the young coastal Colombian in the cold and the rain while his Russian counterpart was adjusting eagerly to North America, his new home.

## García Márquez, a Journalist Adrift

Nabokov had experienced 15 years of a second career as an American fictionist, lepidopterist, and lecturer when García Márquez began writing in Colombia. About the time that Nabokov was looking for a publisher in Paris for Lolita, García Márquez was telling the world about a sailor that nobody wanted to claim. Working for El Espectador, a Colombian newspaper, García Márquez interviewed a sailor whose survival at sea refuted the official facts. Even the title of the account leaves little unsung: Relato de un naufrago que estuvo diez días a la deriva en una balsa sin comer ni beber, que fue proclamado héroe de la patria, besado por las reinas de la belleza y hecho rico por la publicidad, y luego aborrecido por el gobierno y olvidado para siempre ("Story of a Castaway who was Lost at Sea for Ten Days in a Raft With Nothing to Eat or Drink, Who was Proclaimed a National Hero, Kissed by Beauty Queens and Made Rich by Publicity, and Later Spurned by the Government and Forgotten Forever" --translated by David William Foster).<sup>9</sup>

This early work of García Márquez foreshadows the author's preoccupation with people who strive daily against oblivion. The article itself has survived oblivion while it parodies the tenuousness of survival, let alone fame. It also presages García Márquez's career-long conflict with politics.

Gabriel García Márquez supplies the journalistic frame for displaying a political fiction. The Colombian government under Gustavo Rojas Pinilla did not welcome what William David Foster saw as "the interplay between untrustworthy official versions and the truth of sailor Velasco's narrative as unintentional exposé" (50). Luis Alejandro Velasco, from the perspective of his government, needed to have drowned and was

reported accordingly. Instead of the sailor drowning from a storm at sea as alleged, Velasco fell overboard, along with less fortunate mates, when contraband cargo shifted weight.

After the Velasco narrative, El Espectador sent the young journalist on assignment to Switzerland and to Italy. Nevertheless, the paper was brought to a close that year (1955). García Márquez moved to Paris and wrote fiction full time. By 1957, the Colombian writer had returned to South America (Venezuela) and to journalism for a livelihood. Several of the essays that he wrote in the fifties have been collected and issued in several printings under the title Cuando era feliz e indocumentado. (When I was Happy and Undocumented).

Many of these essays in Cuando era feliz emphasize human drama: an Argentine revolutionary's daring escape from a Chilean jail just before extradition would send him certainly to execution at home ("Kelly sale de la penumbra"); revolutionary priests assisting the people in the successful strike and overthrow of Pérez Jiménez in Venezuela ("El clero en la lucha"); portraits of four Venezuelan leaders whose exiles ended with the fall of Jiménez ("La generación de los perseguidos"). "Adiós, Venezuela" treats the immigration impasse as an example of governmental shortsightedness and disregard for poor people. The essays above prefigure the fictionist who would write (and was then compiling) material about thwarted expectations of patriots and the isolation of individuals. He also made up his mind to write a novel about the vicissitudes, the corruption, and the loneliness of power.

"Caracas sin agua" displays the fragility of a newborn, moderate government. Without water, the people teeter between bestiality and heroics. The arbitrary influence of the weather highlights this prose piece narrated from the perspective of a rehabilitated German refugee.

Nabokov, the Russian refugee who wrote an impressive canon of novels, poems, and essays in Russian while he was in Germany, turned in 1940 to the new world. The Gift is his finest offering from work that he wrote between 1923 and 1940. From The Gift, we get a sense of Nabokov's desire to look at everything, including Russia, through a clean, freshly-ground lens. He used the precision of a lepidopterist to advantage in developing a writing technique. His integrity as a scientist and as an artist helped to protect him from overdoses of nostalgia while he was assessing his losses in his homeland.

#### A New World

Ten years after the publication of Invitation to a Beheading, Nabokov, prime example of gesellschaftlich man, had not only moved to the United States, but he had also switched from writing in Russian to writing in English. Bend Sinister is his first American novel. The "lever of love" that Nabokov mentions in the introduction operates throughout the novel as a means of transport from one world to another. Initially, Krug's incriminating love for his son becomes a weapon against him in the hands of his enemies, but the recurring image of the puddle in the novel mirrors rather than muddies the idea of people being able to pass over the boundaries of mortality on levers of love. One such lever connects Krug to his dead wife Olga; yet another connects Nabokov to Krug. Nabokov explains in the introduction to the novel:

The puddle thus kindled and rekindled in Krug's mind remains linked up with the image of his wife not only because he had contemplated the inset sunset from her death-bedside but also because this little puddle vaguely evokes in him my link with him: a rent in his world leading to another world of tenderness, brightness and beauty.<sup>10</sup>

The nuance of tenderness in a brutal world distinguishes Nabokov's fiction, as do other qualities in Bend Sinister: disparate points of view, grotesquery, and deception. Nabokovian irony reaches its harshest limits when David, the child whose existence was to be so useful to the state, becomes a sacrifice, accidentally, to behavioral science. The end of the novel, Krug's "rescue," features a not unusual authorial intervention. One morning before Krug awakes fully, Nabokov "slid toward him along an inclined beam of light" and handed him madness, "saving him from the senseless agony of his logical fate" (233).

If the readers make a "bend sinister" in their study of Nabokov, they take up the search for The Real Life of Sebastian Knight. Brother seeks brother through art.

Readers have V.'s descriptions of and responses to Sebastian's art as their criteria for knowing both brothers. The larger frame of the novel encompasses Nabokov (fictionist) providing V.'s insights as a brother and biographer to Sebastian (fictionist). At one point in The Real Life of Sebastian Knight, V. is describing one of Sebastian's fundamental strengths in his art. Sebastian, V. says,

used parody as a kind of springboard for leaping into the highest region of serious emotion. . . . With something akin to fanatical hate Sebastian Knight was ever hunting out the things which had once been fresh and bright but which were now worn to a thread, dead things among living ones; dead things shamming life, painted and repainted, continuing to be accepted by lazy minds serenely unaware of the fraud.<sup>11</sup>

Nabokov takes the reader, like Alice through the looking glass, toward a fresh perspective on getting to the bottom of biography, tyranny, and madness wherein lies "the weird essence of things."<sup>12</sup> His fresh descriptions, his convoluted patterns, his inlaid puzzles, his wide range of humor, his general lack of sentimentality and his virtuosity with languages depict beings adrift: Gesellschaft.

Andrew Field has shared the endeavors of Fyodor and V. by trying to get to the bottom of Nabokov and his work. Instead of using Alice's looking glass, Field looks at Nabokov's references to an omnipresent, portable bath tub:

There were two rubber baths between the three men during their escape from Russia aboard a small boat called Hope. . . . Sergei won a bet on the voyage by declaring that he could take a bath with a glassful of water. So still that mysterious appliance follows me--its slosh, its peculiar resinous smell, Nabokov even drew it for me once, but it looked rather like a diminutive W.W. II life raft, and I cannot imagine how it functioned on so little water--and reminds me that if I cannot understand so simple a thing (one could research the matter in an instant, of course, but better not) how little a part of another person's life one may grasp.<sup>13</sup>

Field's two-volume study of Nabokov's work and life repeated Fyodor's and V.'s scrutiny of the work and the life of human beings. The reader of the second volume (quoted above) will not have the standard, linear, chronological and biographical form to fall back on in his or her desire to know the real Vladimir Nabokov. Field wrote in a style that is a mixture of that found in The Gift and Speak, Memory. Field assumed a persona akin to Fyodor's in The Gift and he composed a work after the fashion of Speak, Memory. The reader carries from the book rather varied impressions of Nabokov: the Russian, the American, the writer, the scientist, the traveler, the lecturer, the family man, and the wandering aristocrat.

#### A Novelist's Demons

Where Fyodor and other Nabokovian protagonists write of their anguish in merging language and form, Gabriel García Márquez talks to Fernández-Braso about the same thing:

Mi problema más importante era destruir la línea de demarcación que separa lo que parece real de lo que parece fantástico. Porque en el mundo que trataba de evocar esa barrera no

existía. Pero necesitaba un tono convincente, que por su propio prestigio volviera verosímiles las cosas que menos lo parecían, y que lo hiciera sin perturbar la unidad del relato. También el lenguaje era una dificultad de fondo, pues la verdad no parece verdad simplemente porque lo sea, sino por la forma en que se diga. . . . [H]abía que contar el cuento, simplemente, como lo contaban los abuelos. Es decir, en un tono impertérrito, con una serenidad a toda prueba que no se alteraba aunque se les estuviera cayendo el mundo encima, y sin poner en duda en ningún momento lo que estaban contando, así fuera lo más frívolo o lo más truculento, como si hubieran sabido aquellos viejos que en literatura no hay nada más convincente que la propia convicción (La Soledad 119-120).

(My biggest problem was erasing the line of demarcation between what seems real and what seems unreal. Because in the world that I was trying to evoke, no such barrier existed. But I needed a convincing tone which could convert unapparent realities into verisimilitudes and which could do this without disturbing the unity of the work. Also, language was a major problem, well truth does not seem true because it is, but rather because of the form it takes. . . . I had to tell the story simply, like my grandparents told it. I mean in an intrepid tone, with a serenity which would not alter at any cost, even if the sky were falling, and without casting doubts for a second on what they were telling--whether it be the most frivolous or the most ferocious--as if those folks had known that in literature there is nothing more convincing than one's own conviction.)

Perhaps part of the conviction that one finds in García Márquez's writing comes from his having to learn "how much a dead man weighs."<sup>14</sup> Not only did García Márquez's grandfather customarily stop him in the midst of a paseo with the allusion above to a homicide on his hands, but the author had an aunt (the factual forerunner to the fictional Amaranta) who truly did weave her own shroud in anticipation of death (El olor 8). The center of her gemeinschaftlich environment, García Márquez's grandmother happily employed the family ghosts in the management and entertainment of her household. Five-year-old Gabriel would be cemented to his chair at dark when the ghosts were expected: "Si te mueves--le decía la abuela al niño--va a venir la tía Petra que está en su cuarto, o el tío Lázaro" (El olor 7). ("If you move," the grandmother would say to

the child, 'Aunt Petra, who is in your room, will come--or Uncle Lazarus.'")

Aware of that time when García Márquez returned to a decimated Aracataca and felt the shock of a cold present moment seeping under the blanket of a warm past, Mario Vargas Llosa, biographer, critic, and novelist, talked about a novelist's demon:

Escribir novelas es un acto de rebelión contra la realidad, contra Dios, contra la creación de Dios que es la realidad. Es una tentativa de corrección, cambio o abolición de la realidad real, de su sustitución por la realidad ficticia que el novelista crea. Este es disidente: crea vida ilusoria, crea mundos verbales porque no acepta la vida y el mundo tal como son (o como cree son). La raíz de su vocación es un sentimiento de insatisfacción contra la vida; cada novela es un deicidio secreto, un asesinato simbólico de la realidad (Historia de un deicidio 85).

(Writing novels is an act of rebellion against reality, against God, against God's creation which is reality. It is an attempted correction, change, or abolition of real reality, of substitution by the novelist's fictive reality. Such a one is a dissident. He or she creates an illusory life; he or she creates verbal worlds because he or she does not accept the world as it is (or as it seems). The root of a novelist's vocation is a feeling of dissatisfaction with life. Each novel is a secret detonation, a symbolic assassination of reality.)

García Márquez struggled to locate his fictive world. It was cumbersome work. Luis Harss described the Macondo of La hojarasca as a "pueblo angustiado por siniestros presentimientos de pestilencia y catástrofe. El ambiente es epidémico"<sup>15</sup> ("a town in the throes of sinister premonitions regarding pestilence and catastrophe. The atmosphere is contagious.") Citing La hojarasca, Vargas Llosa claimed that "Macondo is still a subjective country, a metaphor of evil. . . . Macondo bears the metaphysical dew of Yoknapatawpha County . . . [and] appears as a mental territory, a projection of the guilty conscience of man" ("From Aracataca to Macondo" 135-135).

Hence, La hojarasca was the first stage of development in what was for García Márquez the long struggle to write the later novel Cien años. Language and form in this first piece demonstrate the author's inexperience. Nor has he learned how to use humor in order to soften the edges of his subject matter. The author does succeed, however, in adumbrating Macondo, sweltering and struggling with psychical forces once known to Creon, Antigone, and Thebes.<sup>16</sup>

In the 12 years between the publication of La hojarasca (1955) and Cien años (1967), García Márquez continued to work with the idea of Macondo. In La hojarasca, the doctor seems the epitome of alienation and the colonel, the apex of gentility--a la Faulkner. Both men share the impact of the environment upon which the colonel soliloquizes:

I saw him across from me, still sad and alone. I thought about Macondo, the madness of its people burning banknotes at parties; about the leaf storm that had no direction and was above everything, wallowing in its slough of instinct and dissipation where it had found the taste it wanted. I thought about his life before the leaf storm had struck. And his life afterward, his cheap perfume, his polished old shoes, the gossip that followed him like a shadow that he himself ignored.<sup>17</sup>

The colonel of La hojarasca has prestige and feels disdain for economic invaders, those bits of chaff (hence the title, which translates Leaf Storm).

The title character of El coronel no tiene quien le escriba is not the town patriarch (and the setting for El coronel is not Macondo). A man with no money and no food, this colonel faces opposing demands: his wife wants to eat, but the fighting cock must also eat in order to maintain his physical supremacy in the pit. More than just a hopeless addiction to cockfighting is at stake with the colonel's attachment to the rooster. In a grotesque way, the rooster symbolizes the people in the town who oppose the local boss. They live in a pit defined by strong-

handed local politics and by a national bureaucracy that offers no recourse or recompense for aggrieved citizenry. The colonel has gone to the dock every Friday in hopes of receiving the first evidence of his long-promised military pension, but only the cock pit offers itself as any kind of possible benefit actually at hand. The people of the colonel's ilk see the cock pit as a chance to break free, although it be an illusory chance. They think that somehow they can win there, forgetting that the rooster's former owner (who was the colonel's son) was shot down as a violent echo to the rooster's last victory in the pit. Ernesto Volkening sees the colonel's relationship to the rooster as an intensely personal one:

El gallo, cuya imagen va arrimándose, poco a poco, al sitio que ocupaba en la conciencia de su dueño la carta vanamente esperada, parece un animal como cualquier otro, pero en realidad es una quimera, un monstruo insaciable, la emplumada encarnación del anhelo que, compitiendo con el gusano en las entrañas del coronel, le devora el alma.<sup>18</sup>

(The rooster, who gradually reaches the point in his master's mind where he takes the place of the hopelessly awaited letter, seems like any other animal but actually is a chimera, an insatiable monster, a plumed rendition of anguish which, competing with the worm in the colonel's insides, devours his soul.)

The following dialogue between the colonel and his wife reveals the author's emergent skill with dialogue and with description, whereby tenderness creeps within rage or with outrage, and stoicism blends with irony and humor to depict Gemeinschaft.

"It's winter," he repeated to himself patiently. "Everything will be different when it stops raining." And he really believed it, certain that he would be alive at the moment the letter arrived. . . .

But in reality his hoping for the letter barely sustained him. . . . [H]e couldn't attend to his needs and the rooster's at the same time. In the second half of November, he thought that the animal would die after two days without corn. Then he remembered a handful of beans which he had hung in the chimney in July. He opened the pods and put down a can of dry seeds

for the rooster. [The colonel's sick wife is in the other room.]

"Come here," she said.

"Just a minute," the colonel answered, watching the rooster's reaction. "Beggars can't be choosers."

He found his wife trying to sit up in bed. . . . She spoke her words one by one, with calculated precision:

"Get rid of that rooster right now."

The colonel had foreseen that moment. He had been waiting for it ever since the afternoon when his son was shot down, and he had decided to keep the rooster.

He had had time to think. . . .

The colonel wiped her forehead with the sheet.

"Nobody dies in three months."

"And what do we eat in the meantime?" the woman asked.

"I don't know," the colonel said. "But if we were going to die of hunger, we would have died already."

The rooster was very much alive next to the empty can. When he saw the colonel, he emitted an almost human, guttural monologue and tossed his head back. He gave him a smile of complicity:

"Life is tough, pal."<sup>19</sup>

This scene foreshadows the end of the novella when the colonel tries to placate his disconsolate wife again by vivifying the glory of the all-too-distant fight. She broaches the possibility of the cock's losing on that day, and she returns to the basic question:

"And meanwhile what do we eat?" . . . She shook him hard.

It had taken the colonel seventy-five years--the seventy-five years of his life, minute by minute--to reach this moment. He felt pure, explicit, invincible at the moment when he replied:

"Shit" (62).

Angel Rama talks about the colonel and his wife:

[La relación de] los dos viejos cóyuges--el coronel con su flora intestinal podrida, y su mujer vencida por el asma, ambos obsesivamente centrados en la muerte violenta del hijo--está hecha de una delicada ternura que enmáscara el humor, tal como la relación de dos jóvenes.<sup>20</sup>

([The relationship of] the old couple--the colonel with his rotten intestines, and his wife vanquished by asthma, is made of a delicate tenderness that humor masks--much like the relationship of two youths.)

A different setting is emerging in this novel and in its successor La mala hora. Although many critics treat Macondo as the setting for all preliminary works which certainly do make up a "Macondo canon," I agree with those who make a critical distinction in the setting for these pieces.

Macondo sees its first glimmering of light in La hojarasca, begins to find itself in the more fantastic stories of Los funerales de la Mamá Grande and comes into full view during Cien años. The village that appears in El coronel, La mala hora, and other stories in the Mamá Grande collection is a place that García Márquez had to recognize and to deal with before successfully entering the extra-reality of Macondo.

This preliminary village, actually quite lively, was part of a dead weight that García Márquez needed to get off his hands. The other part of his dead weight was having trapped in his brain an idea that needed a Macondo without his having developed the means to embody the idea. The village of García Márquez's early novels is a fictional place whose construction affords the author the necessary artistic apprenticeship that allows him to venture fully forth to Macondo later, not unlike José Arcadio Buendía's venturing forward under the impetus of Prudencio Aguilar.

The village in La mala hora (In Evil Hour) is instrumental to García Márquez's unburdening process. He looks straight into the eye of local

politics without sabotaging his art. Vincenzo Bollettino noticed the author's rendition of the town mayor who is the political boss:

Gabriel García Márquez no parece condenar, en absoluto, la tiranía del alcalde sino que trata de justificarla por el ambiente caótico que reina en el pueblo.

El odio a muerte que los habitantes le tienen hace que éste se aísle. Su vida es una vida llena de temores, de amenazas constantes que debe combatir con la frialdad, con la violencia y la autoridad tiránica; con el revólver y con amenazas.

La figura del alcalde parece, a veces, adquirir rasgos positivos en La mala hora. Busca la paz, soporta admirablemente las impertinencias y ofensas de la gente. Lucha por la justicia y el bienestar de los habitantes. En cuanto a su carácter es hombre pacífico y compasivo frente al dolor humano.<sup>21</sup>

(Gabriel García Márquez does not appear to condemn entirely the tyranny of the mayor but rather attempts to justify it since anarchy is threatening the village.

The mortal hatred that the populace holds for him isolates him. His life is a life full of fears, of constant threats that he must combat with coldness, with violence and with tyrannical authority; with his gun and with threats.

The figure of the mayor appears, at times, to take on positive qualities in La mala hora. He seeks peace, puts up admirably with impertinences and offenses from the people. He fights for justice and the well-being of the inhabitants. As far as his character goes, he seems passive and compassionate when confronted with human sorrow.)

In other words, García Márquez's mayor is human, and the human condition implicates everyone in the village. His horrendous toothache encompasses not only his own moral decay but the relative uneasiness of the entire village in its existential state of decomposition. This is a remarkable feat for a writer who once, perhaps in frustration and only half in jest, said that literature did not shape the world but that police certainly did. García Márquez's mayor in the village of La mala hora paves the way for the later treatments of power experienced by Macondo's Colonel Aureliano Buendía and for the loneliness depicted in Cien

años, El otoño del patriarca (Autumn of the Patriarch), El amor en los tiempos del cólera (Love in the Time of Cholera), and El general en su laberinto (The General in His Labyrinth). The author reverts to episodic structure with La mala hora and succeeds more than he did with this technique in La hojarasca. This time the author uses his village to good advantage: the reader, similar to the audience in the film High Noon, comes to know very well the barber shop, the pool hall, the church, the movie house, the dentist's office, the mayor's headquarters, the judge's house, as well as the residences of the widow Montiel, of Cesar Montero, and of the widow Asis and her son Roberto.

Priests and the church form an important part of the transition as García Márquez's work moves from the unnamed village toward Macondo. If the author connected the church's appreciation for the marvelous with his grandmother's propensity for the unreal, he would have a strong creative force--and a wonderful source of ambivalent humor as well.

Many of the stories in Los funerales de la Mamá Grande were originally intended as episodes in La mala hora, but "Un día después del sábado" and the title story signify a breakthrough for the author.

Speaking of "Un día después del sábado" ("A Day After Saturday"), Ferguson observed,

The appearance of the devil and the Wandering Jew to the old priest [Father Antonio Isabel] are possibly only imaginary and could be attributed to his senility, but even these preposterous allegations contribute to the aura of mystery that permeates the story and increases its resemblance to Cien años.<sup>22</sup>

Referring to the title story, "Los funerales de la Mamá Grande," Robert Lewis Sims remarked,

From Rome the Supreme Pontiff can take his <<larga góndola negra>> . . . and in one night, he can arrive in Macondo. Macondo's spatial context . . . and its boundaries fluctuate substantially between H and CAS. The addition of a number of fantastic details also expands Macondo's mythical context.<sup>23</sup>

During his apprenticeship with novels, the artist hauled a novitiate's freight from an inchoate Macondo into an unnamed village. By the time his work reached Mamá Grande's magnitude, García Márquez had the creative skills requisite for releasing his burden. Regina Janes noted that in García Márquez's earlier work,

[P]owerlessness is the essential condition within which his characters live and move, and the world is sad, compounded of losses and hopelessness. . . . In later fictions, García Márquez discovered the transforming power of art, rhetoric, and magic and learned to set against the limitations of human experience the liberating inventions of the imagination (Wonderland 17).

Gabriel García Márquez, the journalist whose childhood was rooted in Gemeinschaft, learned how to observe and to report daily life. Many years and several attempts at fiction would have to precede the materialization of a magical space inhabited by the Buendías--a space fraught with natural and supernatural life.

### Conclusion

The most secure geographic space that Nabokov ever enjoyed was the one he could not physically regain. From 1919 on, Nabokov never owned any furniture, never lived in his own home, never stayed very long in any location. Like Ada's wasp, he alighted rhythmically from place to place: Russia, Germany, France, the United States, Switzerland.

Nabokov's love of lepidoptery was a way to accommodate, even to celebrate, his transience. He walked the earth with his eyes open. His mind was a zestful curator of the universe's scents, colors, designs, and ploys. Lepidoptera represented this world well. They could cross geographical boundaries easily. A study of lepidoptera expanded one's knowledge of the rest of life. Butterflies, when caught and mounted, had

a life-likeness, but words could impel a particular liveliness if the right vehicle could be found for them.

Nabokov's writing bequeaths to the reader a long line of writers. Hermann, Fyodor, Cincinnatus, V., Humbert Humbert, John Shade, and Charles Kinbote struggled to define personal territories and to write their ways through rebellion, tyranny, madness, confession, joy, love, biography, poetry, and fiction. All of these protagonists seek to expand the empirical world through language and imagination. All of them strive to break through the "wall separating me and my bruised fists [Nabokov speaking] from the free world of timelessness" (Speak, Memory 20). These protagonists are critics as well as poets: they strive for reader assent, and they ponder the means to make a "commonplace word to come alive and to share its neighbor's sheen, heat, shadow."<sup>24</sup>

For Nabokov and Garcia Marquez, not only was the commonplace word invested with magic and vigor, but each writer constructed a common place endowed with very different energies and inhabitants. When readers join in the sojourns of the Veens and the Buendias, they encounter fictional territories as different as the two families themselves--territories as different as the examples of Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft from which the authors and their creations came.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Vladimir Nabokov, Speak, Memory (Rev. ed.) (New York: Putnam, 1966), 30-32.

<sup>2</sup>Regina Janes has looked into the nine principal demands of the workers in their petition, this phrase denoting a principal concern. See Janes, Gabriel García Márquez: Revolutions in Wonderland (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1981), 11. See also Janes' "Liberals, Conservatives, and Bananas: Colombian Politics in the Fictions of Gabriel García Márquez," in Hispanofila 82 (Sept. 1984), 79-102.

<sup>3</sup>The standard work on "La violencia" is Monseñor German Guzman, Orlando Fals Borda, Eduardo Umaña Luna, La Violencia in Colombia (2 vol.) (Bogotá: Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 1963-64).

<sup>4</sup>Miguel Fernández-Braso, La soledad de Gabriel García Márquez (Barcelona: Planeta, 1972) 41. Earlier, Fernández-Braso's Gabriel García Márquez: una conversación infinita had been published (Madrid: Editorial Azur, 1969). The translations are my own in this chapter unless another translation is cited.

<sup>5</sup>Fernández Braso noted that "corbata" in Colombia is slang for sinecure or "little work and good money."

<sup>6</sup>Mario Vargas Llosa in Historia de un Decidio (Barcelona y Caracas: Monte Avila, C. A., 1971) 90-91.

<sup>7</sup>Donald E. Morton, Vladimir Nabokov (New York: Unger, 1974) 128.

<sup>8</sup>Vladimir Nabokov, The Gift, trans., author's collaboration with M. Scammel (New York: Putnam, 1963) 68.

<sup>9</sup>David William Foster, "Latin American Documentary Narrative," PMLA (January, 1984), 41-55.

<sup>10</sup>Vladimir Nabokov, introd., Bend Sinister (1947; New York: McGraw, 1973) ix.

<sup>11</sup>Vladimir Nabokov, The Real Life of Sebastian Knight (1941; New York: New Directions, 1959) 91.

<sup>12</sup>Robert Amis, "The Sublime and the Ridiculous," Vladimir Nabokov: A Tribute, ed. Peter Quennell (New York: Morrow, 1980), 73.

<sup>13</sup>Andrew Field, Nabokov: His Life in Part (197; New York: Penguin, 1977) 135.

<sup>14</sup>Mario Vargas Llosa, "García Márquez: From Aracataca to Macondo" 70 Review (New York: Center for Inter-American Relations, 1971) 131. A less concerted but equally interesting examination of García Márquez is the compilation of questions and answers called El olor de la Guayaba o Conversaciones con Plinio Apuleyo Mendoza (Bogotá: Editorial La Oveja Negra, 1982) 9. Mendoza's account: "A veces se detenía en plena calle, con un repentino suspiro, para confesarle (a él, un niño de cinco años de edad): 'Tú no sabes lo que pesa un muerto.'" ["Sometimes he would stop right in the street with a sudden sigh and confess to him (a child five years old): 'You don't know how much a dead person weighs.'"]

<sup>15</sup>Luis Harss, "La cuerda floja," Sobre García Márquez, ed. Pedro Simon Martínez (Montevideo, Uruguay: Biblioteca de Marcha, 1971) 14.

<sup>16</sup>See Pedro Lastra, "La Tragedia Como Fundamento Estructural de La Hojarasca," Sobre García Márquez, 78-89.

<sup>17</sup>Gabriel García Márquez, Leaf Storm and Other Stories, trans. Gregory Rabassa, Harper Colophon ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1979) 32.

<sup>18</sup>Ernesto Volkening, "Otras Opiniones," Sobre García Márquez, 215.

<sup>19</sup>Gabriel García Márquez, No One Writes to the Colonel, trans. J. S. Bernstein, Harper Colophon ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1979) 29-31. Subsequent references to text are cited parenthetically.

<sup>20</sup>Angel Rama, "Una novelista de la violencia americana," Sobre García Márquez 63. See this article also in Gabriel García Márquez, ed. Peter Earle, Serie El Escritor y La Crítica (Madrid: Taurus ediciones, S. A., 1982) 30-39.

<sup>21</sup>Vincenzo Bollettino, De La hojarasca a Cien años de soledad: Preparacion y Reiteracion de una Novelistica, diss., Rutgers University, 1972 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1972) 72-27530 86.

<sup>22</sup>John Wesley Ferguson, Gabriel García Márquez: A Study of Cien Años de Soledad, diss., Florida State University, 1971 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1971) 71-25785 52.

<sup>23</sup>Robert Lewis Sims, The Evolution of Myth in Gabriel García Márquez: From La hojarasca to Cien Años de Soledad (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1981) 32.

<sup>24</sup>Vladimir Nabokov, Invitation to a Beheading, trans. Dmitri Nabokov and Vladimir Nabokov (New York: Putnam, 1959) 93.

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