Valleys of the Shadow of Death: The Apocalypses of the Inferno and One Hundred Years of Solitude

Deirdre Ann Assenza

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VALLEYS OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH:
THE APOCALYPTES OF
THE INFERNO AND ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE

A Thesis
Submitted to McAnulty College and
Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Art

By
Deirdre Assenza

August 2010
VALLEYS OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH:

THE APOCALYPSES OF

THE INFERNON AND ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE

By

Deirdre Assenza

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ABSTRACT

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THE APOCALYPSES OF

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By

Deirdre Assenza

August 2010

Thesis supervised by Bernard F. Beranek, Ph.D.

The literary genre apocalypse is unknown or, at best, vague to literary scholarship. The genre apocalypse is an important category of religious and world literature. Apocalypses communicate diverse worldviews. They rationalize existence. They encourage audiences unto righteousness and warn audiences of sin. Their common forms and functions achieve their distinctive, visionary, revelatory quality and exhortative force. These forms and functions constitute the genre apocalypses’ definition, and differentiate apocalypses from other works. Dante’s Inferno and Gabriel García Márquez’s One Hundred Years of Solitude are both apocalypses, though they are not normally considered such. Each work manifests an apocalypse’s typical form and function. Each presents a unique vision of reality. Each exhorts consistently with it vision, aims its exhortation at its unique audience and era, and achieves all this through
vision, aims its exhortation at its unique audience and era, and achieves all this through typically apocalyptic motifs like those seen in Revelation. *Inferno* and *Solitude’s* apocalypticism reveals their meaning and explains their cultural effect.
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I. INTRODUCTION

Apocalypses are rarely discussed by literary scholars as literary forms. They are an infrequent topic of theological scholarly discourse, and are even less frequently analyzed by literary scholars as cohesive stories with specific structures and a “significant cluster of traits that distinguish them from other works” (Collins Imagination 1–4). Literary scholars too frequently appear ignorant of the genre’s existence, confusing the theological, literary definition of an “apocalypse” with the more general meaning, and labeling as an apocalypse any story treating mass disaster or death. Consequently, the genre apocalypse is too rarely acknowledged as an important category of world literature. The function of its “significant cluster of traits” is inadequately understood.

In this study, I argue such acknowledgment. I maintain that literary knowledge is incomplete without knowledge of the genre apocalypse, its function, and its traits. Therefore, I present the genre for examination. I further argue that the genre’s scope is broader than presumed, even by those who understand it as a genre. To demonstrate this, I examine accepted apocalypses alongside two great literary works, Dante’s Inferno and Gabriel García Márquez’s One Hundred Years of Solitude.

To be beneficially discussed by either theologians or literary critics, all apocalypses must be first subjected to literary critique. Only theologians may proceed from such critique to determination of an apocalypse’s status as divine revelation and truth, by comparison to religious tenets. A purely literary reading makes no such determination. This is this study’s focus. I make no critical analysis of truth claims. I merely seek to demonstrate how each apocalypse presents its truth claim, and why. This
demonstration will not only clarify the literary features of the genre apocalypse, but also
demonstrate the specific, central role its features play in the history of literary
communication.

This study examines Revelation and other acknowledged apocalypses, their
functions, and the typical narrative themes, images, and structures supporting those
functions. It gives evidence that, and how, the these elements interconnect to produce an
apocalypse and its unique effect. Inferno and Solitude are examined for such evidence to
prove their apocalyptic status. Inferno and Solitude are chosen as examples of the genre
for two reasons. First, and most importantly, they represent two extremely diverse eras
and examples of apocalyptic thought. They are each non-canonical, Inferno being both
literary and extracanonical, and Solitude being purely literary. Presentation of the genre’s
qualities within and without the currently accepted apocalyptic cannon and the Judeo-
Christian tradition will illuminate the genre’s scope and religious capacity. It will also
provide essential understanding of the genre’s place in contemporary eschatological
thought. Second, Inferno and Solitude receive very different treatments by scholarship for
their apocalyptic traits, and are nowhere systematically compared. Inferno has been
variously studied for unscriptural apocalypticism, but until now Solitude has not been
similarly studied. Comparative analysis will advance understanding of the genre
apocalypse’s relation to modern literature, world literature, and both works. It will also
display Inferno and Solitude’s relation to each other.

When relevant to discussion of Inferno, Purgatorio and Paradiso are discussed,
but they are not primary focuses of this study. This is largely because analysis of the
entire Divine Comedy is beyond current scope, but is also done to facilitate discussion of
the diverse worldviews apocalypses present. Like Daniel and I Enoch, the Comedy is a “complex apocalypse,” a long apocalyptic work containing within itself distinct apocalypses (Collins Daniel 3; “Prophecy” 77). Each of the Comedy’s integral apocalypses show individual aspects of a cosmic order the whole apocalypse shows collectively. Inferno presents hell to discourage sin. Paradiso presents heaven to encourage righteousness. Purgatorio presents the purge separating sin from righteousness. The Comedy is the overarching vision of this grand process. Like Inferno, Solitude presents sin to encourage resistance to it. However, while Inferno and Solitude are similarly thematically dark, Purgatorio and Paradiso are not, nor is Solitude a complex apocalypse like the entire Comedy. Thus, although examination of the whole Comedy would provide much insight into its worldview and apocalyptic traits, doing so would not add comparable volumes of insight into Solitude or, importantly, the genre apocalypse’s more general features and diversity of apocalyptic worldviews, the demonstration of which is one purpose of this study. Such extended examination is therefore reserved for later discussion.

This study is not founded on intentionalist argument. I do not suggest that either García Márquez or Dante intended to create apocalypses, understood as specific literary objects. Nor do I suggest such authorial intent is required for a work’s inclusion in the genre. However, apocalypses are partly determined by their communication of a worldview accepting that “human life is bounded in the present by the supernatural world of angels and demons and in the future by the inevitability of a final judgment” (Collins Imagination 8). The plausibility of such a view manifesting in Dante’s and García Márquez’s works must be demonstrated, thus historical and intentionalist arguments are
made. This criticism aids full understanding of analyzed elements, but is nevertheless presented with concession of its essentially hypothetical nature.

As said, *Inferno*’s apocalyptic traits are much more proved by scholarship than are *Solitude*’s apocalyptic traits. Unlike *Inferno*, which exhibits a Catholic worldview, *Solitude* manifests a worldview new to current understanding of the genre apocalypse. Discussion of *Solitude* as an apocalypse is thus more scholastically valuable. Discussion of the plausibility of *Solitude*’s worldview manifesting in the genre is also far more necessary. For this reason, *Solitude* is analyzed more than *Inferno*. Analysis of *Inferno* functions as discrete explanation of the work and the genre, but is also as a preparatory bridge to analysis of *Solitude*. This unevenness is limited as much as possible. My intent in allowing it is to adequately establish for scholarship the continuity of the genre’s ideological and formal traits over time and across a variety of worldview expressions, resultantly aiding a balanced, if initial, understanding of apocalyptic function, form, and diversity.

**II. THE GENRE APOCALYPSE**

The genre apocalypse was made popularly famous by the biblical book Revelation, the best known apocalypse, and has profoundly influenced the intellectual histories of Judeo-Christianity and the world. The word “apocalypse” connotes not just Revelation and the disaster it depicts, but “the ideas and themes associated with it” (Yarbro Collins “Revelation” 195). Apocalypses are generally understood to be myths that report particularly prophetic and cataclysmic visions of reality. More specific than general eschatology, apocalyptic eschatology keeps with Revelation’s story. It “concerns
visible, objective, and public events that are cosmic in scope and implication” and is “fundamentally concerned with God’s active and visible rectification (putting right) of the created world (the ‘cosmos’)” (de Boer 170). Apocalyptic eschatology envisions creation effected by “supernatural beings, angels and demons,” and an end to all known creation, an end usually accompanied by a last judgment that is punishing for some and salvific for others (Collins “Prophecy” 77). One “essential” component of apocalyptic eschatology is a dependence on “supernatural revelation” for wisdom that “received tradition and human reasoning” are otherwise unable to attain (85).

Apocalyptic eschatology is intrinsically related to the apocalyptic literary form. More focused than generally revelatory writing, an apocalypses is defined as “revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world” (Collins, qtd. in Collins Imagination 5; original emphasis). An apocalypse’s revelation is about apocalyptic eschatology, which is communicated through a distinctive narrative framework and group of recurrent motifs. These recurrent motifs include tribulations, exhortation, mythical imagery, pseudonymity, and cyclicality (5). These motifs manifest in a genre-typical “kind of plot,” the most prominent elements of which include judgment and destruction of the condemned, cosmic transformation, and presentations of the afterlife (Rosen xxi; Collins Imagination 7; see Fig. 1). Not each of these motifs or plot elements are required of a work for qualification as an apocalypse (12). Rather, apocalypses are primarily identified by their inclusion of at least several of these motifs and plot elements, and secondarily by
their employment of these to communicate some form of apocalyptic eschatology.

The genre apocalypse was first identified as a “macrogenre” of Jewish prophetic writing by biblical scholars such as John Collins (“Prophecy” 77). Two loosely defined subgenres fall within the macrogenre: otherworldly journeys and historical apocalypses (Imagination 5; McGinn “Introduction” 6). Generally, otherworldly apocalypses depict “the seer” receiving revelation “in the celestial realm” (6). Historical apocalypses generally depict revelation “conveyed on earth” (6). Otherworldly apocalypses typically reveal cosmology, astronomy, and the soul’s fate (6). Historical apocalypses usually reveal the meaning of history and anticipated final “crisis and divine judgment” (6). However, both types of apocalypses show “interest in the heavenly world” and “history and its end” and the difference between works of type is sometimes slight (6). Most apocalypses reveal a spatial and temporal transcendent reality including a supernatural world and eschatological salvation.

There is no one apocalyptic eschatology associated with the genre form. The eschatological worldviews of some apocalypses are decidedly opposed to others’, or even totally absent (de Boer 172). The Jewish apocalypses are inspired by an oppressed perspective, an awareness that something is wrong life that can only be righted in the afterlife, and this is generally common, but an “apocalypticism of the powerful” could just as easily manifest in the apocalypses of another era or culture (Collins “Prophecy” 86). Apocalyptic eschatological worldviews are expressed in works outside the genre apocalypse (85), and apocalypses express worldviews communicated in numerous other types of works. Apocalypses, literary works, are distinct from apocalyptic eschatology, defined above, and apocalypticism, a type of religious or political movement utilizing
apocalyptic eschatology (and, often, apocalypses) for communal support and action 
(Collins Imagination 13; de Beor 168). There is no “single unified social phenomenon” 
inspiring the Jewish apocalypses from which the genre definition was determined  
(Collins Imagination 38). The definition is literary. It pronounces common literary 
features for taxonomy and largely refrains from including any particular communal 
setting, influence, or application. “Apocalyptic” in this limited sense is akin to “drama” 
(2). Both words signify literary types and should not be conflated with their general 
meaning.

Throughout this study, I use “apocalypse” to refer specifically to the literary form 
and genre, and “apocalyptic” to refer to the literature’s qualities and its associated 
eschatological worldview. Much confusion will be avoided if the difference between the 
literary meanings of these words and their more general connotations of mass disaster are 
clear. Revelation, Inferno, and One Hundred Years of Solitude are each apocalypses in 
the literary sense. Revelation and One Hundred Years of Solitude also depict disastrous 
“apocalypses,” in the common sense, but such depictions are not essential to their literary 
classification. A literary drama can be “dramatic” or decidedly dull. In either case, it is 
still a drama. Many apocalypses, particularly the otherworldly type including Inferno, 
portray only preparations for a cosmic end, which will be inevitably disastrous for some, 
without portraying the disaster itself. No work is disqualified from inclusion in the genre 
apocalypse by lacking a disaster account.

Apocalypses describe and explain ultimate reality transcending normal, known 
experience. The Greek title of the New Testament’s famous end-times description 
translated as both “apocalypse” and “revelation” means “literally an unveiling of a
previously hidden truth or reality” (Yarbro Collins *Apocalypse* 4). Apocalypses are “narrative” examinations of “theology, philosophy, and history, and of inculcating a way of life” (Clifford 26). Apocalyptic myth and modern “discursive essay” alike are “intent on explaining the cosmos, the nature of evil, and the validity and the functions of basic institutions” (26).

One defining quality of myth is its depiction of creation’s transcendent purpose, and the unity of that purpose with man’s life, culture, and history (Ricouer 200–1). The first apocalypses built on the form and content of ancient Ugaritic combat myths, utilizing their images and themes of evil and chaos, divine action and wisdom, and most importantly divine victory and salvation (Clifford 4–16). Creation’s major threats in these combat myths are death and chaos, mythic constants, and Baal’s conquest over death and chaos is sometimes uncertain (21; Strauss 125). The Ugaritic combat myths, and the Jewish apocalypses developed from them, address the problem of evil and suffering by attempting to explain both, and console those enduring both, with transcendent presentations of reality in which evil is neither paramount nor victorious. In these myths, the victory over evil is salvific for at least the community from which the myths emerge.

Many have noted that the sayings of Jesus Christ refer as much to contemporary practical struggles as to eternal life, indicating an apocalyptic perspective on suffering’s purpose in the cosmic scheme (Allison 143). Christ’s apocalypticism expresses an essentially “catastrophic” eschatological worldview classifying catastrophic pain as “eschatological tribulation,” the mechanism removing evil from creation (154–5). This worldview gives suffering purpose in a grand plan to abolish suffering’s source, and transforms suffering into a temporary reign of evil that will pass when creation and joy
are renewed (Eliade Cosmos and History 128). Myths and worldviews foreseeing new paradise after present tribulation are somewhat universal, found beyond Judaism in Homer, Hesiod, Chinese and Babylonian texts, and the works of other cultures (128–9). These myths posit answers to fundamental human questions about the apparent meaningless of suffering and death, and the chaotic nature of existence (151). Foundationally for Christ’s perspective, the Jewish apocalyptic writers respond to the challenge of evil and chaos by describing their communities’ political and social turmoils “as necessary to Yahweh’s reconciliation with the people of Israel,” and thus as consoling, because they will eventually “restore man to eternity and beatitude” (108–24; original emphasis). These explanations are quite consoling, but also extend past consolation. They argue for specific courses of action and ideological stances, or “righteousness” as defined by the apocalyptic writer’s worldview. Particularly in the Jewish apocalypses, tribulation is depicted as the divinely ordained, determinative experience in human history.

Unanimously, apocalypses show that not all creation will be restored to divine unity. Only the righteous will “rise again.” By providing moving and graphic demonstrations of righteousness, apocalypses are intended to be instructive. They are revelations of transcendent reality and morality, explanatory examples of wisdom and sin. In Daniel’s apocalyptic vision of the Hellenistic wars, a “horrible abomination”:

[…] shall make some who were disloyal to the covenant apostatize; but those who remain loyal to their God shall take strong action. The nation’s wise men shall instruct many; though for a time they will become victims of the sword, of flames, exile, and plunder. When they fall, few people
shall help them, but many shall join them out of treachery. Of the wise men, some shall fall, so that the rest may be tested, refined, and purified, until the end time which is still appointed to come. (New American Bible, Dan. 12.31–5)

This exhortative prophecy is a typical example of the threat apocalypses lay before their audiences: man’s active response to tribulation identifies his status in the cosmic plan. In Revelation, tribulation is repeatedly described as a crucible testing and purifying men, and discovering and punishing their sins. But tribulation is only the illustrative component of apocalypses’ extremely multifaceted, continual exhortation. In apocalypses, angels, heavenly voices, and narrating prophets argue directly that all suffering, history, and creation adhere to a cosmic plan in which suffering makes sense and, most importantly, in which the audience is specifically involved.

Chapters 1 through 3 of Revelation are overtly hortatory, as are John’s expository comments and conclusion (13.9–10, 18; 22.18). In the otherworldly journey of I Enoch’s Book of the Watchers (specifically chapters XVII through XXVII), angels explain aloud that all creation is designed to reward righteousness and punish sin:

And he answered saying: ‘[…] And as for this fragrant tree no mortal is permitted to touch it till the great judgement [sic], when He shall take vengeance on all and bring (everything) to its consummation for ever. It shall then be given to the righteous and holy. […] Then Uriel, one of the

1 The instances are many. See Revelation 6.15–7; 7.9–14; 9.3–6, 18–21; 11.2–14; 12.1–17; 13.1–17; 14.9–13; 17.15–7; 18.1–20; 19.20–1; and 21.4–6.
holy angels who was with me, answered and said: ‘This accursed valley is
for those who are accursed for ever: Here shall all the accursed be
gathered together who utter with their lips against the Lord unseemly
words and of His glory speak hard things […]’ (XXV.3–5; XXVII.2)

These exhortations triply reiterate the division of humanity into two categories of
saved and damned. First, they state the division explicitly. Second, they address the two
categories somewhat separately. Third, they often anticipate and solicit from audience
actualizing responses that align the audience with one or the other group. Some
exhortations, often interjections by narrators like John, address only the “wise” or those
who “hear.” Other exhortations, often those by angels and heavenly voices,
authoritatively and indirectly speak on behalf of God to all creation, “hearing” or not. In
response to these exhortations, both in the apocalypse’s narrative and in reality, the
“wise” actualize the prophecy by hearing (understanding) it, accepting it, and beginning
(or continuing) with righteous conduct. The “unwise” actualize the apocalypse by failing
to understand it, by understanding it yet rejecting it, or by accepting it without
corresponding righteous acts. Thus, any given audience response automatically actualizes
the apocalypse’s division of saved and damned.

As already noted, the myths preceding the first apocalypses presuppose a
symbolic unity between God’s victory over chaos and righteous humanity’s victory over
suffering (Eliade Cosmos 60). In the ancient myths, the “hero’s victory” over great
villainy mirrors a solution attained by a separately accomplished, required, difficult
assignment (Strauss 125). In apocalypses, this difficult assignment is defined as man’s
righteousness. By accepting the role of the righteous and enduring righteously, man gains
the promise that he participates in the accomplishment of his own salvation, a reactualized cosmogonic victory invalidating his current pain (Eliade *Cosmos* 60). In this way, apocalypses depict both a precept of myth and true historical phenomenon. Being told they will be saved from history’s turmoils, believers are better able to “endure great historical pressures without despairing, without committing suicide or falling into that spiritual aridity that always brings with it a relativistic or nihilistic view of history” (152). In a very real way, “righteous” acceptance of apocalyptic prophecy contributes to survival.

Audiences’ acceptance of God’s victory includes acceptance of their own, as they understand their victory to be. For the early Jews, this promised victory is social and political. The Jewish apocalypses argue that anticipated spiritual salvation encompasses and accomplishes the Jew’s sociopolitical triumph. *I Enoch*’s Apocalypse of Weeks consoles and encourages Israel, as it endures a tumultuous past, with a deterministic prophecy that instructive laws will rescue Israel from sin and guide it to salvation. Daniel later encourages Israel, persecuted by the Hellenistic culture it rejects (Collins *Imagination* 65), with a similarly imaged prophecy of Greece’s destruction and Israel’s escape. After the Jews’ failed first century revolt, *4 Ezra* and *II and III Baruch* promise Israel eternal salvation and consolation that nullifies the defeat (Collins “Prophecy” 80). The victory promised by Revelation to early Christians, rejecting and persecuting by Rome, is similar. All these apocalypses cast their believers’ various current historical situations in the most optimistic light.

One half of audience actualization is belief that promised victory will occur. As anticipated historical victories fail to occur or audiences’ relationships to apocalypses
differ over time, so too do audiences’ understandings of victory. For centuries, people have allegorized Revelation’s “rule of the Beast” with their contemporary political governments, or Daniel’s four beasts with various current manifestations of power (Kovacs 22). Into modernity, believers actualize apocalypses by using them to shape understanding of contemporary social roles, “persons and events and to serve as a guide for action” (Kovacs 7–9). Continual actualization connects apocalypses with contemporary apocalypticism, because, for believers, continual reinterpretations do not undermine original prophecy, but rather continue it. The specific struggles and injustices of believers’ lives are viewed as ongoing manifestations of the great cosmic struggle, proofs of the basic format of reality. The eternal archetype assuring ultimate victory is thought to be equally personal and universal. If the assured fails to occur, the failure is interpreted as tribulation. If the assured occurs, it is seen as prophecy proved.

Belief that apocalypses’ promised ultimate victory formats contemporary, personal history appears frequently in literature not part of the genre apocalypse. Like Inferno, Pilgrim’s Progress uses Revelation “as a model of the progression from despair and darkness to the brilliance of the celestial city” (Kovacs 9). Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Blake, and their contemporaries believed Revelation’s prophecies played out in the French Revolution, likened their poetry to early prophetic and apocalyptic works, and sought to embody that prophecy in their own work, even when their work only loosely reflected Biblical themes (Kovacs 23). Like the Jewish apocalyptic writers, these poets sought to effect specific groups and urge specific, “righteous” courses of action in response to current political events. Works like theirs, which exhibit some of the ideological content of apocalypses but not their form, demonstrate a degree to which the
genre apocalypse’s “significant traits” extend beyond the religious, canonical literary category.

III. WORLDVIEWS & EXHORTATION

Extracanonical, noncanonical, nonreligious, and even irreligious works exhibit traits of the genre apocalypse. Some works may share with an apocalypse its eschatology but not the genre’s usual structural forms. Others may share form and themes but lack apocalyptic eschatology. Whatever their religiosity, works exhibiting a significant amount of the genre’s typical eschatology, form, and themes are, simply put, apocalypses themselves. *Inferno* and *Solitude* are two such works. *Inferno* manifests a definite narrative framework, clear mediation of revelation, obvious tribulation, exhortation, mythical imagery, pseudonymity, and cyclicality. It presents a reinterpretation of Revelation’s worldview, and lacks only a disaster account. *Solitude* also exhibits a definite narrative framework, mediation of revelation, obvious tribulation, mythical imagery, pseudonymity, and cyclicality, and even depicts a final, cataclysmic judgment. It is an atypical apocalypse mainly in that its structure is unlike acknowledged apocalypses, its exhortation is subtle, and its worldview is directly opposed to the Judeo-Christian concept. *Solitude* is an apocalypse of precisely that “spiritual aridity that always brings with it a relativistic or nihilistic view of history” the Jewish apocalypse’s are meant to prevent.

*Inferno*

The apocalyptic traits of *Inferno* and *Solitude* are best identified by “attending to their plot rather than to their ideas” (Clifford 6), but the meaning of their plots cannot be
fully understood until their ideas are made clear. Therefore, analysis of their structural
traits will come after discussion of their different eschatologies and themes. **Inferno** and
**Solitude** each thoroughly express the popular philosophies of their milieus. As has been
famously said of Dante, “the philosophy is essential to the structure” and “the structure is
essential to the poetic beauty” (Eliot 1). In **Inferno**, the “philosophic idea” is “almost a
physical modification” (5–6).

Just as the ideas of the Jewish apocalypses were transformed into the ideas of
Revelation through the influence of the gospels and the post-Pentecostal outlook of
John’s community, so too were Revelation’s ideas transformed into **Inferno**’s by the
influence of a reawakened post-Pentecostal climate spreading across medieval Europe
(Kovacs 3). Dante’s work is a direct product of many concurrent literary, theological, and
cultural shifts towards an apocalyptic worldview. For example, the idea that poetry is a
valid form of theological speculation became popular in the late middle ages (Balsamo
24–5). Dante was among many arguing poetry’s beauty and appeal highly suited it for
communication of spiritual truth. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1224) was one theologian
“proper” who gave “cautiously qualified” praise to “theologizing poets” for explaining
religious tenets through myth (24–5). Thirteenth century preachers’ manuals even urged
that sermons be delivered as pleasantly as songs sung by minstrels, in order to best reach
crowds (Hawkins 25). Dante’s work, and that of many of his early and late European
contemporaries like Geoffrey Chaucer (1343–1400), express the belief that “the cosmic”
appears in history, particularly in individual history, and therefore all men must learn to
“interpret the signs that make history intelligible” (Emmerson *Imagination* 34–6, 52). The
**Comedy** is a high-point in this expansion of Christian speculation from the “rites of the
altar” to the “terzine of the Christian epic” (Balsamo 47).

Also, the popularity of epics’ “ignoble art” and their treatment of the “vulgar” easily allowed experiment in theologically speculative poetry to simultaneously become speculation in the vernacular (25). Beguine St. Mechthild of Magdeburg’s (c. 1210–c. 1290) vernacular The Flowing Light of the Godhead claimed she was a visionary intercessor carrying “God’s call for repentance” (McGinn “Reform” 283). Beguin communities in southern France and Italy distributed vernacular translations of Franciscan apocalypticist Peter John Olivi (1248–1298) and reformer Arnold of Brescia (c. 1090–1155; Potestà 305–06). Meanwhile, Dante’s argument for the vernacular in Convito prefaced his Comedy’s immediately renowned demonstration of how vernacular theological speculation can leave laypeople “tinged with supernatural awe” (MacAllister Inferno 5).

Both poetic and vernacular speculative literature were products of the “rich stew of late medieval apocalyptic expectations” that the literature reciprocally fostered (McGinn “Reform” 283). The followers of St. Bonaventure (1221–1274), one of history’s great apocalyptic writers, lived across Italy in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries (297). Monastic Founder Joachim of Fiore (1135–1202) wrote a profoundly influential work depicting the onset of an era in which the “full flowering” of spiritual intellect would become universal (277). Joachim’s writings were so popular that derivative literature and movements began immediately and continued into end of the nineteenth century. Many also believed Francis of Assisi (c. 1181–1226) was one of Revelation’s “two witnesses” of the coming final judgment (see Rev. 11.3). Franciscan and anti-Franciscan movements sprung up and fought vigorously over the correct
communication of Francis’s message, or the correct form of righteousness. Gerardo Segarelli’s (c. 1240–1300) lay, anti-Franciscan Apostolics became popular and enrolled an unusually large number of women (Potestà 300). At the same time, the Franciscan Spirituals broke from the Friars Minor and, when they felt their goals subverted and themselves betrayed by the resignation of Pope Celestine V (1215–1296) and the subsequent election of Boniface VIII (c. 1235–1303), they argued both were illegal (302).

These movements and their associated writings had obvious, profound implications for the church. Numerous apocalyptic works were used “as ecclesio-political rhetoric” to encourage defense of Christianity from foreign enemies and support internal reforms “necessary for a Christian society that continued ‘to live in the shadow of the Second Coming’” (McGinn “Reform” 276). The various movements, and to some degree all the literature inspiring them, imagined the potential imminent collapse of the Christian empire in part due to the “moral failure of its subjects” (288). Joachim feared “the Antichrist or one of his henchmen” would become Pope (277). Dante expresses similar, if less drastic, concerns by placing Celestine V in the vestibule of hell and Pope Nicholas III (c. 1210–1280) in the third bolgia of circle eight, awaiting Boniface VIII (III. 55–7; XIX.1–128). Monarchy attempts to justify a desire also expressed by Friar Roger Bacon’s (1214–1294) Greater Work, which petitioned Pope Clement IV (c. 1195–1268) for clerical educational reform and conveyed a broader desire that both the pope and Holy Roman Emperor renew the entire church (McGinn “Reform” 282). But, Joachim ardently believed the emperor was “the final enemy of the church, who (even when dead) was ready to attack the righteous” (McGinn “Reform” 284). The movements inspired by Joachim first respected religious leadership, but by the late thirteenth and early fourteenth
centuries became “subversive” and “heretical” (Potestà 299–300).

Across Europe, and especially in Italy, the general desire for reform became deeply factional and Dante’s work expresses only one side of a multifaceted ideological divide concerning how reform would best be achieved. Some sought reform through purification of the clergy, while others sought it through universalization of monastic rules, and others sought it through imperial direction, and still others partly inspired by the obscure Prophecies of the Supreme Pontiffs imagined a unified “Angelic Pope” and a “Last Emperor” who “miraculously accomplish the political and religious reform of Christendom, uniting the Eastern and Western churches, recapturing Jerusalem, pacifying Italy, purifying the church and restoring it to a life of true poverty, and, finally, destroying all weapons of war” (McGinn “Reform” 277–89). Monarchy in fact advocates a version of this last ideal.

In Monarchy, Dante defends the belief that pope and emperor receive from God equal and independent authority over distinct spheres. He argues against the church’s then-current view that imperial authority is subject the pope’s, which is supreme. Monarchy disputes papal supremacy and its supporters so strongly that the book appeared on the first ecclesial list of banned literature and was often destroyed (MacAllister Purgatorio 280). Monarchy serves as an introduction to the Comedy’s arguments, in that, what Dante argues philosophically in the former, he vividly illustrates in the latter (Shaw xxxiv). Purgatorio’s invective against papal overreach bemoans:

You priests who, if you heed what God decreed,
should most seek after holiness and leave
to Caesar Caesar’s saddle and his steed—(VI.94–6)
Later in *Purgatorio*, pilgrim Dante witnesses a demonstrative assault on the church by various bestial manifestations of corruption (XXXII.109–60). In *Paradiso*, he hears St. Peter rage against those corrupting the church on earth (XXVII.19–66), and in the final vision of the Godhead, Dante identifies the “great throne already set” for emperor Henry VII (c. 1275–1313; XXX.132–8), whose reign Dante anticipated to be the restoration of God’s intended order, and by whose death Dante was bitterly disappointed.

Dante spent time in Mendicant schools, exposed to the apocalyptic works of Bonaventure and Joachim and to the apocalyptic cult of Francis (Hawkins 27). Aspects of their worldviews likely influenced his own (27). Many political and religious themes articulated by Dante in *Monarchy* and *Convito* are visible throughout the *Comedy*, most particularly the traits of the genre apocalypse and an apocalyptic worldview. In *Monarchy*, Dante sets classical poetry “alongside the Bible as true testimony of God’s intentions,” casting classical poetry as a “Bible of the Empire,” elevating pagan, mythic imagery to the level of scripture (Shaw xvi). He demonstrates this equivalence in the *Comedy* by depicting biblical and mythic figures as cohabitants and collaborators.\(^1\) In *Monarchy*, Dante asserts that mankind’s purpose is “constantly to actualize the full intellectual potential of humanity, primarily through thought and secondarily through action” (*Monarchy* 8), which is only enabled by full restoration of God’s order on earth. We are told Dante’s report of his tour through divine justice will educationally facilitate such actualization (*Paradiso* XXXIII.67–75). In *Monarchy*, Dante also condemns libidinous greed as the source of societal and political strife and the blindness or

\(^1\) See Ciardi’s note to *Inferno* canto I.13–30 for a very good articulation of Dante’s hybridization of Catholicism and pagan mythology.
“deafness” of Dante’s enemies (Shaw xxxi–ii). Dante illustrates this in Inferno by rendering sinners blind to events current and after final judgement. Their sins are in fact repeatedly described as rejections of reason (III.18, 43; VI.90; VII.40–54). Dante’s use of contrapasso in this exhortative manner is one more typically apocalyptic effect he employs. Contrapasso poetically and efficiently reformulates the Jewish apocalyptic writers’ illustrative, exhortative chastisement of sin.

Like John, Dante’s pseudo-pseudonymously utilizes himself as the Comedy’s pilgrim, further facilitating the Comedy’s exhortative effect. As a “real” man, Dante receives what must then be a “real” revelation, which must therefore implicate “real” people, specifically the audience. In addition to its primary function of elevating communication to the level of archetypal truth, the abundant classical, mythic material Dante draws upon also adds “needed prestige” to his claim to prophetic authority (MacAllister Inferno 10–1). Dante asserts his prophetic authority like a Jewish apocalyptic writer, continually self-affirming that “the poem is the Word of the Lord because it says it is” (Hawkins 33). In Monarchy, Dante likens himself to the biblical prophets Isaiah, Daniel, and Paul, “asserting in no uncertain terms that the Triune God has summoned him to speak” (Hawkins 22). In Convito, Dante asserts the etymological link between “autore” and “autentin,” meaning “worthy of trust and obedience” (Di Scipio 20–1). In the middle ages the word “auctor” also meant “sage” (20–1). In Inferno, Dante repeatedly refers to Virgil as a sage and repeatedly brags of Virgil’s, and Dante’s own, poetic fame (Di Scipio 20–1). All this gives a double-layered claim of “supreme

1 See I.85, 58–60, 113–4; III.72; and IV.80–103.
authority” to Dante’s mediation of Inferno’s revelation (Di Scipio 20–1).

The Comedy is a prolonged elaboration of an apocalyptic worldview. It displays Dante’s reverence for Revelation, John, and other apocalyptic figures. The three beasts of Inferno canto I are taken from Jeremiah chapter 5 (I.31–50). At the eighth bolgia, Dante recalls the ascension and chariot vision of Elijah (XXVI.34–40). Dante then hears separate account of Francis’s decent to hell to collect a fallen monk (XXVI.109–11). Dante even prefaces the circle of the simoniacs with an apostrophe to Simon Magus (XIX.1), who was then believed to be a model for, if not in fact, the antichrist. Resemblances between John’s vision in Revelation chapter 4 and imagery throughout Paradiso are clear (Hawkins 64–5). Dante also refers to Isaiah and John in Paradiso canto XXV, honoring John more for making “manifest this revelation to us far more expressly” (Hawkins 64; XXV.95–6). In Inferno, the ruins left by Christ’s harrowing of hell are noted and His second coming referred to repeatedly. Christ’s shattering impression on hell is in fact one of its more distinguishing architectural features. The pilgrims’ repeated notice of the ruins left by Christ’s decent portray Inferno as a sequel to and extension of the gospels’ and Revelation’s account of Christ’s salvific acts.

Revelation and the Comedy mark two points on the continuum of works constituting the genre apocalypse. The genre’s distinctive traits unite apocalypses from different eras and cultures and with various ideologies and historical details. Revelation’s early Christian ideology and narrative traits transform with history into the Comedy’s medieval ideology and traits, but the essential story of the former apocalypse remains in

1 See IV.49–63; VI.91–108; IX.88–96; XII.1–45; XXI.112; and XXIV.19–28.
the latter. John directs his message to early Christianity, while Dante directs his message to the Roman Catholic empire. Creation is to John unknowable but populated with Jewish mythical figures, while creation is to Dante a knowable Ptolemaic hierarchy of Christian and Roman figures. To John God is cognitively overwhelming, but to Dante God is rationally comprehensible, even predictable, according to the Ptolemaic order. Despite these differences, each apocalypse authoritatively reports essentially similar, morally significant, cosmic structures, ordained by God and affecting all humanity. Where Revelation specifically lists portions of humanity effected by a prophesized cataclysmic judgment, but clearly directs this allegorical message to early Christian churches, the Comedy presents the architecture of creation that will exist after the same judgment, directing this elaborated message to Rome and Italy. Each apocalypse simultaneously depicts a particular cosmic truth while also focusing its depiction into historically pertinent exhortative rhetoric.

**Solitude**

Every apocalypse exists somewhere on this continuum of structural, thematic continuity. Every apocalypse is unique in its sometimes radically different eschatological, ideological, or historical detail. As already noted, the genre apocalypse is distinct from apocalypticism, the ideological communities producing or appropriating apocalypses. Thus, various apocalypses can address different communities and express widely different views on ultimate reality. Even the first apocalypses’ eschatological visions are “radically far” from “traditional Jewish religious thought” and “similar concerns” seen elsewhere “the Hellenistic world” (McGinn “Introduction” 5). The apocalypses were new in their “manner of revelation, the content of [their] message, the kind of God who
reveals, even the kind of salvation promised” and they present “a variety of messages—
cosmological, speculative, historical, eschatological, and moral” that usher “into Western
history […] an interconnected series, of new religious mentalities,” which, despite
cultural “routinization,” continually challenge popular religious views (5).

One Jewish apocalypse, the post-exilic Apocalypse of Ezra, also known as the
apocryphal 2 Esdras or 4 Ezra, is “remarkable” in its expression of “a theology rejected”
by God’s mediating angel (Collins “Prophecy” 81). Pseudonymous author and speaker
Ezra questions God’s justice, saying:

    Lord that bearest rule, thou hast ordained in thy law, that the righteous
should inherit these things, but that the ungodly should perish.
Nevertheless the righteous shall suffer strait things, and hope for wide
[…] I know, Lord, that the most High is called merciful […] For if he
shall not multiply his mercies, the world would not continue with them
that inherit therein. And he pardoneth; for if he did not so of his goodness,
that they which have committed iniquities might be eased of them, the ten
thousandth part of men should not remain living. And being judge, if he
should not forgive them that are cured with his word, and put out the
multitude of contentions, There should be very few left peradventure in an
innumerable multitude. (4 Ezra 7.17–70)

The angel’s reply to Ezra is “harsh” and at the end of their conversation “Ezra is
not consoled” (Collins “Prophecy” 81). Ezra’s depiction of man’s relationship with God
differs dramatically from that depicted in Daniel or Revelation, in which Daniel and
John’s responses are never questioning but always awed, reverent, and accepting.¹

Differing further is I Enoch. Pseudonymous Enoch gives account of serving as visionary emissary for both God and His adversaries, the fallen angels (XIII.1–10; XV.1). Enoch is corrected, but his visionary status is nevertheless portrayed as neutral, not totally inviolable against utilization for sin. These apocalypses’ different portraits of revelation and the revelatory function demonstrate that, though Revelation’s depiction may be the genre apocalypse’s hallmark, it is not the rule. The alternative depictions of I Enoch and Ezra precede Revelation on the historical continuum of the genre’s “various explanations” for evil, creation, and mankind’s relationship to both (Collins “Prophecy” 70). The Comedy succeeds Revelation on the continuum, and succeeding the Comedy is García Márquez’s Solitude.

Just as Revelation’s ideas and narrative traits transformed into the Comedy’s under the influence of history and medieval ideology, so the Comedy’s traits transformed into Solitude’s under the continuing influence of history and its turn to nihilism and postmodernism. Solitude’s worldview is profoundly nihilist. Solitude contradicts much of the Comedy’s worldview. Dante’s address to the Catholic empire is now aimed by García Márquez at those whom the American and Catholic empires exploit. Dante’s ordered cosmic hierarchy is now García Márquez’s chaotic, scientific ambiguity. Catholicism’s rational God has now vanished. Nevertheless, Solitude is, like the Comedy, an exhortative, illustrative revelation of a transcendent structure binding creation and all humanity. Where John’s allegorical message focuses on early Christianity and the

¹ See Daniel 10.8–11, 15–20; 12.8–13. See also Rev. 5.4–5; 7.14–5; 10.4–11.1; 17.6–7; and 22.8–21.
Hellenistic word, and Dante’s message focuses on Italy, Rome, and the Catholic Church, García Márquez’s message focuses on Latin America and one Latin American family.

_Solitude_ clearly depicts a nihilist interpretation of human existence bound by supernatural forces and inevitable last judgment. Mundane treasures, benign ghosts, interchangeable enemy governments, loving incest, virgin blood scented like mud, intellectually dubious clergy, and the forgotten massacre all collectively demonstrate in _Solitude_ nihilism’s “arbitrary, idle, fantastic [...] metaphysics” lacking any “moral interpretation and significance” (Nietzsche “Attempt” 22; original emphasis). Yet, supernatural forces such as levitations, ascensions, unnatural long life, inherited memories, self-propelling streams of blood, ghosts, curses, plagues, and four-year storms are present throughout the narrative (_Solitude_ 50–1; 90; 144–45; 255; 339, 69, 84; 443). _Solitude_’s insomnia plague requires signs reading “This is the cow” and “GOD EXISTS” (52; original emphasis). José Arcadio Buendía’s “lucidly” insane debates with Father Nicanor erode the priest’s faith until the erosion and not faith most strongly urges the priest to the “building of the church” (91–2). Remedios the Beauty ascends to heaven for no other reason than she is beautiful and mentally disabled (255). Yet, _Solitude_’s most unifying concept is a usually Christian notion of man’s inevitable, ultimate punishment for sin, within humanity’s bound, finite existence (448).

_Solitude_ inflects nihilism’s “careful and hostile silence” for Christianity into familiar derision (Nietzsche “Attempt” 22). It presents, if not “antimoral propensity,” at least bestial amorality as “the truly metaphysical activity of man” (Nietzsche “Attempt”

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1 See _Solitude_ 1–5; 37; 89–95; 133–43, 52–3, 61; 201–2, 61; and 328–33.
23; original emphasis). García Márquez contradicts Christianity throughout his work. This is anecdotally evidenced by the title of Mario Vargas Llosa’s critical biography of García Márquez, *The Story of a Deicide* (Kennedy 62). Nevertheless, García Márquez’s continual contradiction of Christianity betrays Christianity’s importance to his work. *Solitude*’s contrary presentation of Christianity and Christian morality presupposes Christianity’s precedence to *Solitude*’s worldview. Christianity must inform nihilism for one fundamental nihilist tenet to be rejection of Christianity. One cannot attack what one does not already know.

Christianity’s importance to *Solitude*’s worldview explains *Solitude*’s apocalyptic eschatology. Moreover, Christianity predominates *Solitude*’s milieu, and so expectedly appears in the reality *Solitude* conveys. Central and South America’s religious and political imaginations owe much to apocalyptic, biblical, and even Joachite ideas (McGinn Continuum xiii). Native American religions had apocalyptic “conceptions of history” foreseeing cosmic destruction and return to “the earth of divine ancestors” for the “chosen” (Milhou 434). Brazil and Paraguay’s Tupi and Guarani people nomadically sought a “*Land without Evil*” that would “survive the coming deluge” expected to recreate the world (560; original emphasis). In the fifteenth century, Columbus “inaugurated modernity” with an immediately popular vision of America as New Jerusalem (420). Within another century, many believed America harbored the *Apocalypse of Ezra*’s ten “lost tribes” of Israel, and some claimed the “hidden Jews” were either concealed by or ancestors of Native Columbians (Milhou 425). By the eighteenth century, Mexico City was often compared to Rome and thought to become a new “capital city of Christendom” in place of Rome or Jerusalem (424). These
apocalyptic expectations fused with Latin America’s originary myths and culture. *Solitude* appropriately expresses such blended apocalyptic myth in the Buendía’s wandering originary exodus to found Macondo, the city that stands as a literary microcosm of Latin America and postmodern New Jerusalem (10–4).

Latin America’s apocalyptic myth historically coupled with “class-based resistance” (Milhou 547). One 1615 illustrated Native American chronicle pictures Atahualpa and Túpac Amaru as “martyrs,” and Native Americans as Christ facing “exploiters” purposefully reminiscent of “medieval apocalyptic bestiaries” (Milhou 436). In the 1890s, Native Chileans used apocalyptic legends to warn that divinely inspired earthquakes would “restore” Chileans’ land by destroying European settlements (558). After the Second World War, many apocalyptic communal movements began and developed “negative apocalyptic” focuses on the lower-class’s plight (545). Though most “stressed religious, not political goals,” groups like Peru’s Shining Path guerillas capitalized on the movements’ messages to “justify their insurgency,” and some “nativistic movements” blatantly rejected Christianity along with colonization (547, 58; 435). This fostered a pivotal transition away from apocalyptic hope in a “Judeo-Christian concept of a Jerusalem-navel of the world,” to alternative hope in a non-religious “utopia […] center of a secularized universe” (433; my emphasis). The New Jerusalem now posed (or debunked) by postmodern works is often just this secular ideal.

Despite Latin American postmodernism’s general attempt to “unwrite” and “rewrite” colonial, Christian versions of Latin America’s past, many Latin American postmodern authors, most notably García Márquez, focus intently on Revelation’s themes, Christian myths, and Latin America’s Christianization (González Echevarría
Vargas Llosa’s 1980 *The War of the End of the World* elaborately depicts America’s recreation of “Christian mythology” (González Echevarría 358). Alejo Carpentier’s 1949 *The Kingdom of this World*, João Guimarães Rosa’s 1956 *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*, and Abel Posse’s 1978 *Daimón* all present America as Satan’s “residence and field of operations” (González Echevarría 359). *Solitude* casts Macondo as both thoroughly Christianized with indigenized Christian myth, and yet full of irremediable “satanic” chaos. Macondo’s foundation on “illegitimacy” by “murder and incest,” and vignettes like the Guajiro Indians’ prior experience of the Buendía’s insomnia plague, symbolically rebut Christian morality and history (22–4; 41, 8; Aizenberg 1241). Amaranta’s “dramatic demand for certification of her virginity at the end of her life” ironically “demythologizes” the Christian “myth of virginity” as “sterility of destructiveness,” “psychological hermeticism,” “fear of life,” and “the nullity and decay of death” (Penuel “Virginity” 558). This mocks the “Iberian obsession with limpieza de sangre ‘cleanliness of blood’” by invoking “expurgated” history in which “colonial Latin American society was begotten through violation and mixture” (Aizenberg 1241–2). It refutes “Hispano-Catholic” claims to “sexual-racial purity and the Sacred and Legitimate Family” and presents Latin America’s transcendent moral history as instead anti-Christian and anti-moral (Aizenberg 1241–2). This history nevertheless remains transcendent and morally qualified in an exhortation against “evil” (that of Christianity) that is typical of any apocalypse.

*Solitude*’s secular apocalypse naturally results from Latin American apocalyptic myth’s evolution from Christianity to secularism. To García Márquez, *Solitude*’s “telluric” disaster does result only from the “political connotation” of absolute human
solitude and “anti-solidarity” (Guibert 39). It does not result from any spiritual retribution. Similarly, in both Love and Other Demons and Strange Pilgrims, García Márquez characterizes a tolerant and eclectic “cosmopolitan education” as superior to Church teachings (Penuel “Clash” 48). This antispirtuality is typical of a much broader trend of variously apocalyptic works. Solitude is perhaps the only true apocalypse of the trend. More research is required to know the full extent of postmodernism’s adaptation of the genre. However, Elizabeth K. Rosen’s cross-medium analysis shows that, clearly, numerous postmodern works attempt to nihilistically pastiche Jewish and Christian apocalypses’ revelations of ultimate reality, while communicating far bleaker worldviews. Daniel’s understanding of “an ordered universe with a cogent history” is now often replaced by “disillusionment” in a “meaningless universe” that is “chaotic and indifferent” (Rosen xi). Revelation’s expectation of justice and renewal is often negated by a “jeremiad, a lamentation over the degeneracy of the world” (xi). Judeo-Christianity’s One God with divine emissaries is frequently replaced by “alternative,” “amorphous,” or “ambiguous” deities, sometimes “omnipotent or omniscient” humans, sometimes an “apotheosized object, idea, or even ideology,” sometimes single figures of Christ and antichrist combined (xxii–v).

Importantly, depictions of “apocalypses” now often strictly reflect colloquial understanding, being foremost cataclysms meant “not to restore order to a disordered world and reward the faithful, but rather to express a literally all-consuming, punishing anger” (xiv, xi). These apocalypses typically facilitate revelation only secondarily by initiating a purely revelatory New Jerusalem (xxiii). New Jerusalem is now only a personally achieved vision, not an “actual place […] inherited by the faithful” (xxiii). The
postmodern wise gain only new “understanding allowing them to see the old world anew,” not new real metaphysical existence (xxiii; original emphasis). Usually, this new understanding casts reality as much bleaker than before, now full of “undifferentiated punishment [...] because there is nothing worth saving” and no saving God (xxiii). Apocalypses once “external” and “communal” are sometimes now entirely “internal” and “individual” (Rosen 75).

Solitude is an outstanding representative of these works. In Solitude, Colonel Aureliano Buendía’s transition from national hero to myth, and José Arcadio Secundo’s witness of a suppressed massacre and resulting insanity, demonstrate profound disillusion in societal memory and values (277–87; 331–7; 413). The Buendía’s ceaseless, confusing repetition of identities and fates portrays a world full of natural and moral chaos (320, 52–3, 61, 81). Macondo’s waste by capitalism voices bitter cultural lamentation (244–6; 322–33). The birth and death of the last infant Buendía, whose deformity proves the Buendía’s curse, even function as antichristic harbingers of final punishment (442–8). A wrathful “biblical hurricane” finally punishes by destroying Macondo at the instant Aureliano (Buendía) Babilonia realizes Macondo and the Buendías are doomed (442–8). His death opens a salvific “new heaven and a new earth” (Halka 109), specifically because all Buendías have died.

Early in the novel, José Arcadio Buendía and Melquíades foresee this salvific, damning New Jerusalem while attempting to prove God and predict the future:

Melquíades got deeper into his interpretations of Nostradamus. [...] 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. “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 secual
seculorum.”¹ (58; original emphasis)

Macondo’s microcosmic nature and “apocalyptic” destruction “of cosmic proportions” allegorize humanity’s inclusion in the Buendías’ death (Halka 109). Humanity’s destruction is also implied by the Buendías’ “complicated genealogy” with its “Old Testament ring” (González Echevarría 368). Many Buendías are “reminiscent of mythical heroes” (368). For example, “Remedios [the Beauty] ascends in a flutter of white sheets in a scene that is suggestive not just of the Ascension of the Virgin, but more specifically of the popular renditions” (368). This archetypal construction unites the Buendías’ fate with popular eschatology, thereby presenting Solitude’s nihilist, revisionist, inversion of Christian eschatology as an overriding alternative.

As said, this exhortative allegory is typically apocalyptic. So too is Solitude’s condemning explanation of sin’s origin and end. The Apocalypse of Ezra also acknowledges all men are sinners, while nevertheless prophesying an end to sin. Ezra petitions God for sin’s end through universal mercy and redemptive salvation of mankind, while Melquíades’s parchments accept man’s basic, amoral, unspiritual nature and so posit only mankind’s ultimate death. Both portraits convict man of sinfulness he

¹ Latin for “into all generations.” Idiomatically, “for ever and ever.” The title of the Tridentine Latin Mass, the Missa Por Omnia Saecula Saeculorum, and a frequent responsorial therein. Also, from Tobit 13:10: “Praise the Lord for his goodness, and bless the King of the ages, so that his tent may be rebuilt in you with joy. May he gladden within you all who were captives; all who were ravaged may he cherish within you for all generations to come.”
himself cannot correct and yet depict an end to sin. The twelfth century Apocalypse of Golias also depicts even the entire Church as eternally “debased and vicious” (Emmerson Imagination 80). In Golias, all are interminably evil and “differentiated” merely by location in the Church’s “perverse hierarchy” (Emmerson Imagination 81). This shows, again, Solitude and Ezra’s lack of moral diversity. Pre-apocalyptic Ugaritic combat myths, as well as other non-Judeo-Christian apocalyptic works, also, like Solitude, lack a monotheistic God. Yet these are all familiar and purely theological, not literary, variations from the genre norm. Though each apocalypse is ideologically unique, each is still apocalyptic in its particularly stylized exhortation about man’s ultimate moral fate.

However, García Márquez adamantly denies any “single conscious symbol” for “man’s destiny” in Solitude (Simons “Love and Age” 143; Dreifus 124; Guibert 39). He claims Solitude is constructed only according to “rigid laws” of “arbitrariness” like his unplanned structural need to extend Úrsula’s life beyond human possibility, or his spontaneous decision to raise Remedios the Beauty to heaven (“Journey” 87–8; González Bermejo 24). At the same time, García Márquez contradictorily confesses “critics made me see” that Solitude contained truth statements about Latin American life (Guibert 40). He also claims aspiration to “perfect structure,” like that he finds in Oedipus Rex or William Jacob’s “The Monkey’s Paw,” and admits fascination with apocalyptic themes (Simons “Politics” 157). He cites Daniel Defoe’s A Journal of the Plague Year as one favorite novel, because plagues are an “imponderable […] phenomenon of death on a mass scale” inspiring “great excesses” of an “almost metaphysical dimension” and “quality of destiny” (Simons “Politics” 156). In apocalyptic literature, predestined “extreme decadence” and “triumph of evil” always precedes prophesied cosmic
“renewal” and “change of aeon” like that enacted by Solitude’s catastrophe (Eliade Cosmos 128). Such apocalyptic traits pervade Solitude’s narrative, which is “perfectly” structured as a novel form apocalypse.

Ultimately, García Márquez’s lack of conscious intent that Solitude be an apocalypse is apparently, partly, untrue, but also inconsequential. García Márquez wrote Solitude in, and about, a society rich with apocalyptic myth and apocalypticism, and among contemporaries who explore apocalyptic themes like his. García Márquez may have constructed Solitude’s narrative without thought of its exhortative potential or eschatological content. He may have consciously yet accidentally chosen a form that happens to be an apocalypse. Nevertheless, an author’s conscious intent to create an apocalypse is not part of the form’s definition. All that is required of an apocalypse is utilization of the genre’s distinctive traits to exhort audiences about a transcendent, supernatural world. This Solitude does.

Like all apocalyptic writers, García Márquez believes his work faithfully reflects reality (Posada-Carbo 397). But unlike most, García Márquez denudes his presentation of reality of all spirituality. Secular education, and science are cast as salvation in García Márquez’s works because he admits no reality beyond the experienced, visibly evil world. Reality appears no less “supernatural” for García Márquez, than it is for John or Dante. It is just to García Márquez entirely mundane. Rather than attempting revelation of divine action, García Márquez instead depicts what he calls a “‘parareality,’ which isn’t less metaphysical, doesn’t have to do with superstitions or imaginative speculations, but which exists as a result of deficiencies or limits in scientific research, and so we still can’t call it ‘real reality’” (González Bermejo 10). “Parareality” is, he says, obfuscated by
the “superstitious interpretations” of “our most remote ancestors” (González Bermejo 10–1). Yet his descriptions of parareality remain remarkably faithful to those “superstitions.”

García Márquez says man interacts with parareality in much the same way man would with John and Dante’s divinity and demoniality, through visions “like magic whispers,” prophecies, premonitions, and telepathic phenomenon (Driefus 126). Judeo-Christianity believes divine revelation is perpetually mysterious. García Márquez substitutes the claim that parareality’s revelations and interactivity are impossible to “systematize” (126). Where Judeo-Christianity claims revelation appears to only the righteous, García Márquez says of parareality that “people don’t believe it or they don’t appreciate it or they don’t recognize it” because they lack “innocence” (126–7).

García Márquez’s statements about parareality clearly express a nihilist reinterpretation of Christian mythology and mysticism. Yet, these statements may be ironic. García Márquez credits his grandmother (upon whom Úrsula, his favorite character from Solitude, is modeled) with teaching him how to tell “wild tales of the supernatural with a most solemn deadpan facial expression” (Driefus 111, 13, 15). He ironically claims he once saw a man deworm a cow just by standing before it (112). But he also says such events were commonly believed in his childhood community (112). As a child, he believed his home was haunted and believed in his grandmother’s ghost stories (113). He admits his work represents that community and is inspired by such recollections (113). Therefore, even if García Márquez only ironically claims belief in parareality, he portrays parareality understood as real. García Márquez says he is committed “to a literature that refers to all reality” and parareality is “part of a reality we don’t know. And exploring that reality […] interests me as much as the other” (11).
Though I doubt this statement is ironic, its potential irony is immaterial. Indisputably, “the improbable and impossible as real” appears throughout his work (Kennedy 66). Parareality, or rather, magical realism, is García Márquez’s chosen expression of a definitionally apocalyptic worldview perceiving, and believing in, a supernatural world.

Macondo is García Márquez’s main vehicle for depicting magical reality. Macondo first appears in his 1955 Leaf Storm. In it, and other works like “Big Mama’s Funeral” and ultimately Solitude, García Márquez acts as “storyteller” to create a “universal myth of Macondo” (Sims 22). This myth presents reality as supernatural, apotheosized, deterministic, cataclysmic, and nihilist. Apotheosis of reality appears in Leaf Storm when the priest “the Pup” is said to have “a preoccupation with storms that’s almost theological” and preaches not “on the Gospels but on the atmospheric predictions in the Bristol Almanac,” (9). Determinism appears when a “mysterious force […] of which we were nothing but docile and insignificant instruments” is said to control “the course of our existence” in “fulfillment of a prophecy” (71). Retributive cataclysm appears when Leaf Storm’s storm finds “the taste it wanted” in Macondo’s “dissipation” and excess (67). Leaf Storm’s nihilism is revealed when the colonel feels he’s in “an immense gallery of prophetic images” while hearing the doctor is “just as upset thinking that God exists as thinking that he doesn’t,” and when an “invisible hand” is said to have “cracked the Christmas dishes” (66–67, 93).

Magical reality in Solitude’s Macondo is equally, if more subtly, supernatural, deterministic, cataclysmic, apotheosized, and nihilist. Melquíades’s parchments, Colonel Aureliano Buendía’s “clairvoyance,” and even Pilar Ternera’s “omen” are prophetic glimpses of predetermined events and cataclysm (38; 44; 58; 71–2, 7–9; 83). The rain of
flowers upon José Arcadio Buendía’s death is one of many inexplicable natural events (rather than coherent, divine actions) that are supernatural and emotionally or morally significant (153). José Arcadio Buendía’s visions of mirrored houses, both in Macondo and the afterlife, foreshadow Solitude’s nihilist New Jerusalem, a dystopia of the inescapable, irredeemable self (27, 153). Such events show God’s clear absence amid the presence of active supernatural forces. This unspiritual supernatural activity is García Márquez’s “magic.” Magic is miracle without God. Lacking God, miraculous reality receives God’s status. Reality itself is apotheosized. This is by far the most important quality of García Márquez’s magical realism. All of Solitude’s magic creates this primary effect: God does not exist in an otherwise supernatural and apocalyptic world.

In Solitude, mundane yet magical reality replaces God. With God removed, religion is invalidated. Thus, science and education naturally follow as Solitude’s primary source of revelation. As already noted, in Love and Other Demons and Strange Pilgrims, secular education is presented as superior to religion. In Leaf Storm, science usurps religion. In Solitude, religion fades to farcical background detail. The narrative centers on scientific exploration, which alone reveals truth. Melquíades writes his parchments while undertaking scientific experiments in his lab, alongside José Arcadio Buendía’s scientific quest for God (7, 38–9, 58). José Arcadio Buendía’s scientific experiments induce his lucid insanity enabling the erosion of the zealous priest’s faith (83–91). War is symbolically shown to assault religion (Father Nicanor). But it murders science (Dr. Alirio Noquera) and renders Colonel Aureliano Buendía blind to truth, a blindness typified by his failure to recognize the value of Melquíades’s abandoned lab (109, 260). José Arcadio Segundo is traumatized by war’s violence and driven insane by witnessing
the massacre, but finds relief in a psychic connection to Melquíades and ultimate “seraphic” refuge in the lab (281; 327–37). Later, José Arcadio Segundo works with Aureliano Babilonia to decipher the parchments’ language and, while doing so, reveals to Aureliano Babilonia the truth of the massacre (375–6, 80). After José Arcadio Segundo’s death, Aureliano Babilonia closes himself in Melquíades’s lab and communes with Melquíades’s ghost (383–4).

Aureliano Babilonia is rejected by pious Fernanda del Carpio and the Catholic schools, but educates himself with an encyclopedia (366–7). His encyclopedic knowledge is later shown greater than that of the supposed priest, the last José Arcadio (401-2). While deciphering the parchments, Aureliano Babilonia’s access to even the Catalanian’s bookstore is denied by Fernanda’s elaborately meaningless piety (392). When Aureliano Babilonia finally learns the parchments’ prophecy, he closes up his “dead ones” and “the pain of his dead ones” behind “Fernanda’s crossed boards so as not to be disturbed by any temptations” (445–6). In the final scenes, Christianity is cast as intellectual grief and death that distracts from and hinders truth. Throughout Solitude, religion is contraposed by science and education, which are portrayed as truth’s primary source.

Solitude is not alone among popular postmodern works in its apotheosis of reality and elevation of science to religion. In Kurt Vonnegut’s 1985 Galápagos, evolution is an “apocalyptic god” and “[s]cience has become faith itself” (Rosen 50). Vonnegut replaces God and religion with evolution and science by analogizing the Bible with Galápagos (Rosen 56). He analogizes Noah’s arc with Darwin’s ship, and Adam and Eve with Captain von Kleist and Mary, creating a new, “twisted version of the Genesis story,” in which Captain von Kleist casts “the metaphorical ‘Apple of Knowledge’ into the ocean”
and Mary is “literally unable to bear children” (Rosen 52–6). Vonnegut’s analogies supplant the Bible with Galápagos, in much the same way Solitude and Melquíades’s parchments fuse with and overwrite popular eschatological images. Galápagos and Solitude’s dogmatization of science is particularly noteworthy because they transform into religion precisely what, for many, profoundly undercuts religious faith (Rosen 50). Many now consider science the only source of incontrovertible truth. By exhorting modern audiences with scientific rather than religious revelations, Galápagos and Solitude have modern persuasiveness unattainable by traditional apocalypses.

Solitude additionally analogizes Melquíades with “the author,” Melquíades’s parchments with the author’s work, and Aureliano Babilonia with “the reader” (Halka vii). Audiences are drawn into “the reader” analogy in the final pages as they read Aureliano Babilonia’s reading. His revelation is also theirs. Solitude’s story is thereby united with audiences’ experience. The unification of readers’ and Aureliano Babilonia’s experiences replicates John’s verbal exhortations. García Márquez’s narrative automatically implies what John’s words claim: this prophecy applies to you. Moreover, many of Solitude’s characters are “composites” of real people (Driefus 113). García Márquez grew up next to the actual Macondo, in fact a remote town next to a banana plantation (Guibert 31). Solitude’s inclusion of such actual people, places, and events further conflates its fiction with truth.

Solitude is a myth and, in García Márquez’s words, “a metaphor for Latin America” (Dreifus 111; original emphasis). García Márquez says Solitude offers “a magnifying glass so readers can understand reality better” (112). Though he counters criticism of Solitude’s hopeless worldview by saying “it’s not the job of novels to furnish
solutions” (Bell-Villada “Compass” 137). He nevertheless says, in Solitude, “I try to lay out on the table all the negative factors that there are, so that we can realize what needs to be done” (Samper 176):

[W]ith One Hundred Years, I did want to give the idea that Latin-American history had such an oppressive reality that it had to be changed—at all costs, at any price! In any case, One Hundred Years of Solitude doesn’t say that progress isn’t possible. It says that Latin-American society is so full of frustrations and injustices that it would dishearten anyone. That really indicates a society that must be changed. (Dreifus 123; original emphasis)

Solitude is a revision of Columbia’s “supposedly ‘official history,’” a revision García Márquez uses to bolster “a new reading” of that history (Posada-Carbo 397). Solitude’s story of incest, madness, and catastrophe symbolizes what García Márquez sees as Latin America’s historical unconsciousness and resultant social and economic “disintegration” (Taylor 98). García Márquez contradicts official history with his new vision to exhort audiences to reconceive history and their place in it, and act in response. To successfully exhort, he seeks “to be accessible, not obscure” (Kennedy 66). His accessibility enables Columbians to be “great readers of García Márquez’s works,” even though they “are not great readers” (Posada-Carbo 399). For the Spanish-speaking world, Solitude’s popularity and literary importance is likened by Pablo Neruda to Don Quixote’s (Kennedy 62). Due to Solitude’s popularity, its effect on Columbian historical consciousness is equally great. Columbians’ preference for and belief in García Márquez’s stories has in fact made Solitude “today’s ‘official version’ of the
developments in the banana zone in the 1920s” (Posada-Carbo 399). Despite García Márquez’s admission that only several people died in the actual bananera massacre, Solitude’s fictional three thousand deaths is now the popularly endorsed number (Posada-Carbo 396). This reception is typical of apocalypses.

John’s apocalypse has reshaped audience understanding of creation and history’s meaning for more than two thousand years. Dante’s apocalypse awed contemporary audiences with what was then believed to be a blueprint of the Ptolemaic order. García Márquez’s apocalypse now convinces modern readers of history and creation’s chaos, of God’s absence, and of man’s ultimate responsibility for human redemption, or damnation.

IV. TRANSCENDENT COSMIC & HISTORICAL MEANING

Revelation, Inferno, and Solitude present three distinct visions of creation and history’s structure and meaning. Each apocalypse’s portrait of creation and history reflects the tenets of its author’s worldview. Each shows creation and time transcendently unified by the essential tenet of that worldview, and, most importantly, each emphasizes that transcendent unity’s consequence for man.

Revelation presents all creation and time unified in Christ. After John is “caught up in spirit,” Revelation’s first vision shows Christ holding power over the churches, which receive power, or “spirit,” from Christ (1.8–20). The supernatural nature of the scene and Christ’s preeminence in creation entail the scene’s cosmic relevance, and the scene is obviously personally relevant to the churches (see 1.17). The following messages to the churches at Smyrna and Laodicea restate Christ’s cosmic preeminence, describing
Him as the “first and the last” and “source of God’s creation” (2.8; 3.14). The message to Philadelphia calls Christ He “who opens and no one shall close,” “who closes and no one shall open,” attributing to Christ ultimate determinative authority (3.7). The message further says Christ holds “the key of David,” presenting His special power over, and empowerment of, Judaism (3.7). The message to Pergamum says Christ holds “the sharp two-edged sword,” characterizing Christ’s power over men as kingly and indiscriminate (2.12). The messages to Ephesus and Sardis recall the opening image of Christ at the center of the church, creating continuity between that image and the messages’ various statements (2.1; 3.1). At the end of the scene, Christ appears as the church’s power, creation’s center, David’s successor, Judaism’s sanctity, all men’s ruler, and the judge of all fate. Christ’s ubiquity appears transcendentally unifying and determinative.

Revelation’s later scenes add to this image. Revelation’s vision of the four creatures, who symbolize all creation, shows all creation and time hailing Christ’s accomplishment of God’s plan from creation, time, and the church’s center, in fulfillment of Jewish prophecy (4.5–8; 5.1–14; Ezek. 1).¹ The vision of the four horsemen shows Christ initiating God’s plan for divine justice amid social violence, economic injustice, disease, and death (6.1–8). The image of the great multitude shows creation and the righteous praising Christ’s salvation, which time reveals (7.9–17). The catastrophes of the

¹ Time is symbolized by the twenty-four elders. The symbolic meaning of the elders is disputed. I favor interpreting the twenty-four elders simply as the twenty-four hours, or, all time. The elders are similar to the four creatures that represent (at least, among other things) the four directions, or, all creation. The creatures’ status as “creatures” implies their role as creation. The elders’ status as “elders,” a signification of age, implies their role as time. The creatures and elders are also frequently paired, indicating their representation of the space-time pair.
three woes climax at the announcement that creation “belongs to our Lord and his Anointed” who “reign for ever and ever” (8.13–11.15). The vision of the signs shows the vastest expanse of creation upset by Satan’s attack on Christ (12.1–5). Satan’s failure to destroy Christ is shown as both the cause of earthly evil, that mainly persecutes Christians, and the advent of Christ’s salvation (12.7–11; 13–7). Revelation’s climax is Christ’s conquest of sin and the spirit’s consumption of all “flesh” (19.11–21). The climax preludes Revelation’s last vision of New Jerusalem, called Christ’s “wife” (20.11–5; 21.1–7). New Jerusalem is promised to the righteous in language previously used in the messages to the churches and other visions (21.7, 27). God and Christ are also described in identical language (21.6–7, 23; 22.1, 3, 12, 13–6). The repeated language again creates continuity among Revelation’s various scenes, each giving new facets to Christ’s image. Ultimately, Christ appears as the end of catastrophe, injustice, evil, combat, and death, and the center of creation, earthly life, humanity, time, the afterlife, justice, salvation, and Jewish prophecy. All these things receive meaning from Him. The cosmic is personally significant and the personal is cosmically significant because Christ unites the cosmos and humanity in their mutual dependence on Him. The cosmos is man’s moral allegory, while man’s history is cosmic law’s objective correlative. Most apocalypses present this correlation.

I Enoch’s apocalypses draw creation as morally allegorical for mankind, even more explicitly than does Revelation. I Enoch’s five opening chapters, which are the “extended framework” of the apocalypses, contrast humanity’s sin with creation’s order (Collins Daniel 5). The righteous and their deserved salvation are grouped with God’s obedient and therefore eternal creation (II.1–V.9). Sinners are called aberrations that will
be blotted out (V.1–9). **I Enoch**’s successive visions then glimpse parts of creation embodying moral laws. Stars are righteous angels that control the natural world (XX.1–8; XL.2–9; LXIX.15–25). Fallen stars are devils imprisoned for sinning like men (XVIII.11–XIX.2; XXII.1–10; LXIX.1–12). Hell is an “accursed valley” from which Satan’s devils emit war and chaos (XXVII.1–4; LIII.1–5). Eden grows in an unknown territory (XXXII.3–7). Seven metal mountains symbolize the varying uselessness of possessions and power (LII.1–9). Valleys of light and dark hold the righteous and sinful dead, respectively, who all await judgment (XXII.1–14). Enoch recounts physical detail as if scientific fact, but each is also punctuated by exhortation. The first two parables begin with condemnation of sin (XXXVIII.1–6; XLV.1–2). The third parable begins with praise of righteousness (LVIII.1–6). Noah’s retributive flood, and last judgment, are repeatedly presented (LI.1–4; LIV.7–LV.2; LX.1–24; LXII.1–LXIII.12; LV.1–LVII.13). The tribulation of the righteous and the reunion of the diaspora are also presented, after which it is said that righteousness reveals “the secrets of the depths of the earth” and death, and that sin causes natural disorder and catastrophe (LVI.1–8; LVII.1–3; LXI.5; LXXX.2–8).

Throughout **I Enoch**, humanity and creation are presented as contingent. Their experiences of divine retribution are reciprocal. Creation grandly manifests humanity’s moral laws, being equally bound and subject to judgment. Creation is also judgment’s vehicle. This was so in Revelation, which similarly presents creation as a crucible in which humanity’s end is consequent of human action. Creation’s role as humanity’s crucible adds significantly to apocalypses’ exhortation. Creation is shown undergoing a divinely ordered purge of sin, especially sinful men. Reconstructed “new creation” spares
and rewards only the righteous. This is a strong caution against sin and encouragement of righteousness. It asserts that creation’s essential nature rejects sin and preserves righteousness. The righteous are guaranteed life while the unrighteous are guaranteed death.

Such presentations of creation manifest several archetypes that articulate exhortation. The axis mundi archetype represents the “meeting point of the three cosmic regions” of “humanity,” “the underworld,” and “the gods” (Eliade Cosmos 15; Moon 36). It is the cosmic center. The axis mundi’s centrality to earth, hell, and heaven allows it to be the conduit for earthly sin’s purge to hell and earthly righteousness’ translation to heaven (Eliade Cosmos 15). It is supremely salvific. It is also the “the earth’s navel, the point at which the Creation began,” so it is infinitely regenerative (16). The axis mundi can appear as any image and in apocalypses it frequently overlaps a second archetype, the cosmic summit, earth’s “highest point” (Moon 36; Eliade Cosmos 12–16). The cosmic summit’s proximity to heaven symbolizes the location’s righteousness and assured salvation. Legend reports “Jerusalem and Zion were not submerged by the Deluge,” underscoring this archetypal, elevated, and salvific status (15). Jerusalem and Zion furthermore represent the sacred city temple archetype. The sacred city temple corresponds to a heavenly “prototype” (6–8). It is earth’s residence of divine salvation and sanctuary. In the apocalypse II Baruch, earthly Jerusalem copies heavenly Jerusalem’s revelation (Eliade Cosmos 8):

Dost you think this is that city of which I said: “On the palms of My

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1 Zion literally refers to the hill of the city of David within Jerusalem. It is also a metonym for Jerusalem and Judaism, specifically as the righteous and saved.
Hands have I graven you”? This building now built in your midst is not that which is revealed with Me, that which prepared beforehand here from the time when I took counsel to make Paradise, and showed Adam before he sinned, […] And again also I showed it to Moses on Mount Sinai when I showed to the likeness of the tabernacle and all its vessels. And now, behold, it is preserved with me, as Paradise. (II Baruch 4.2–6)

The axis mundi, cosmic summit, and sacred city temple archetypes frequently appear, across world literature, as one multifaceted image representing God’s proximity, imminent salvation, and earth’s righteousness (Eliade Cosmos 12). Jerusalem is apocalyptic literature’s ultimate manifestation of this. Heavenly Jerusalem is God’s throne, from where creation emerges (Rev. 21.22). God’s presence, thus also heavenly Jerusalem, is the paradise from which Satan is expelled (Rev. 12.2–9). Earthly Jerusalem is the central battleground for the ensuing war between Satan and God (Rev. 14.1; 15.5–8). Earthly Jerusalem’s reconstruction, or reunification with its heavenly counterpart, immediately precedes Satan and sin’s final destruction, which in turn culminates salvation (I Enoch LXXXV.1–90.42; Dan. 9.2, 21–25; Rev. 20–21.10). Heavenly and earthly righteousness expels sin at Jerusalem. Jerusalem is also Daniel’s “holy mountain” and, in Matthew, Jerusalem is the final home of the righteous, who are told in Christ’s Sermon on the Mount that they, themselves, are a “city set on a mountain” (Dan. 9.16; Mat. 5.14). In Revelation, John is taken to “a great, high mountain” to witness Jerusalem’s last descent (Rev. 21.10). Even in apocryphal legend, as noted, Jerusalem is sometimes reported not submerged by the flood, being effectively earth’s highest point.

Jerusalem’s archetypicality manifests beliefs inspiring ancient construction rituals.
that attempted to imitate “the cosmogonic act” (Eliade “Cosmos” 76). Participants in the rituals believed creation’s “archetypal model” was “reactualized” by their re-creative construction (76). These rituals joined “mythical time,” the “atemporal mythical instant,” and by joining it, reproduced it (76). An untainted “new era’ opened with the building of every house” (76). Each construction started an “absolute beginning” at a new “initial instant […] that contains no trace of history” (76). 

I Enoch’s New Jerusalem is a reconstruction of old Jerusalem accomplished precisely at the end of history and at the advent of salvation (LXXXV.1–XC.42). Daniel is told Jerusalem’s reconstruction will complete on the seventieth “week,” or the divine fulfillment of time (9.25). Revelation’s New Jerusalem descends at the moment of cosmic regeneration (21.1–10). Like the ancient construction rites, these apocalypses declare that Jerusalem’s reconstruction accomplishes creation and history’s regeneration. The apocalypses add the declaration that Jerusalem’s reconstruction, and creation and history’s subsequent regeneration, will be ultimate. Jerusalem’s initiation of creation and history’s last regeneration will permanently cancel history, sin, and death.

This multidimensional archetypal imagery renders apocalypses’ exhortation arresting by uniting contemporary reality with eschatological beliefs. The facts of Jerusalem are drawn as embodiments of personal expectation. The imagery implicitly threatens that rejection of Jerusalem, and the belief system in which it is so sacred, is rejection of personal salvation. The imagery promises that acceptance of Jerusalem, Judaism, and Jewish righteousness, facilitates guaranteed personal salvation. These messages particularly enhance apocalypses’ exhortation because apocalypses specifically confront audiences with transcendent cosmic reality’s personal importance. Drawn
archetypically, Jerusalem appears as, both, the cosmically central site of salvific regeneration and an actual location central to a human belief system. The audience’s various responses to that location and its system implicitly indicate their fate.

_Inferno_

As do many narratives, archetypal scenes allegorize spiritual wisdom that entails personal instruction. Archetypal images give that instruction compelling rationale, enhancing the ordinary levels of literary meaning Dante explains in _Il Convito_. Dante writes that all great literature has interconnected literal, allegorical, moral, and mystical significance (47–50). He calls Exodus’ report of Israel’s escape literal and also symbolic of “the Soul’s liberation from Sin” (_Convito_ 49). The facts of the exodus allegorize man’s struggle for righteousness and allegorically instruct that he escape sin to be spiritually free. Man’s liberation by righteousness also reveals the nature of some “Divine things of Eternal Glory,” which should motivate man to be righteous (_Convito_ 49). Such divine things include the factual exodus. Revelation’s vision of the exodus is similar. Allegorizing the exodus, Revelation literally shows a woman birth a son, escape a dragon, and flee to the desert where she is cared for by God (12.1–6). The story simultaneously allegorizes early Christianity’s persecution after Christ “was caught up to God” (12.5). Both allegories implicitly promise Christians “a place prepared by God” to be “taken care of” until salvation (12.6). They are implicitly instructed to trust in the reality of God’s care, seek it, and endure. The archetypal images add that God’s care is not just personally attainable but cosmically and transcendently in progress. God’s salvific defeat of cosmic chaos, an eschatological expectation, is already partly fulfilled. Judeo-Christian history proves this. Christianity’s salvation, and its persecutors’
destruction, is predetermined. The audience gains a compelling additional layer of encouragement from the archetypal images.

Dante’s concept of dimensions of literary meaning is a literary theorization of a worldview apocalyptic literature has reflected since the genre’s beginnings, as Revelation shows. The idea that great, single narratives have literal, allegorical, moral, and mystical meanings implies belief that unified existence has concrete, emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions.¹ Dante’s early philosophical love poetry formalizes his belief in the unity of spirit, mind, and emotion.² Predominating Dante’s work is his belief that those lacking God “can never study Philosophy, because love in them is entirely extinct, and for the study of Philosophy […] Love is necessary” (Convito 146). If divine love is philosophy’s precondition, love poetry is philosophical writing’s fitting formal precondition. Similarly, the Comedy’s terza rima formalizes Dante’s belief in the unity of spirit, mind, emotion, and matter. A presentation of “no less than the total universe,” including various human spiritual, mental, emotional, and material states, is suitably made without bias to any person, idea, emotion, or image attached to poetic forms lacking terza rima’s newness (Ciardi xv). This unified, multidimensional universe is fittingly sung about through terza rima’s rhyme pattern interlocking all “ends,” be they actions, thoughts, emotions, or objects. The universe’s hierarchical ascension from lowest

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¹ Allegories evoke emotional empathy fostering allegorical connections. Morality is a capacity of will and reason.

² Dante may have “liked writing in Italian rhyme rather than Latin metre” and “thought Italian rhyme ought to be confined to love-poems” (New Life 109). But this fails to explain Dante’s focus on philosophy, rather than solely romantic love, if his guiding motivation was preference for love poetry’s usual form.
to highest sphere is also appropriately sung about through terza rima’s interlocking movement from first to last rhyme.

The medieval Ptolemaic hierarchy represented in the Comedy is another, scientific, theorization of this worldview. Dante’s Inferno details the Ptolemaic hell, which was located at Earth’s center, Earth being located at the cosmic center (see Figs. 2 and 3). For believers in the Ptolemaic system, hell’s location at Earth’s center and sinners’ bodily condemnation there were true. All “matter was a projection of God’s will, and what we call physical law and what we call moral law derived equally from that will” (Ciardi xv). They saw no “distinction between moral and physical law; between, say, the moral law against incest and the physical law of gravity” (xv). Believing man’s soul ended in a physical location did not “cross categories” (xv). Hell was “another world” but materially part of the unified cosmic order.

Inferno artistically represents this order, showing sin’s emotional, mental, and spiritual consequences concretely, not abstractly (Eliot 16). Dante’s contrapasso is a foremost example. The carnally passionate are buffeted by storms (V.25–39). The violent are boiled in a river of blood (XII.100–26). Suicides are bodiless plants (XIII.22–108). The “the inner state of the damned” is “a physical reality” (Ciardi xiv). Inferno’s descriptions interchangeably refer to men’s interior states and Inferno’s physical spaces. Dante’s cowardly fear and his surroundings are equally “dim” and “shadowy” (II.37–48). God’s wrath, the damned’s souls, and Acheron’s waters are all also “shadowy” (III.100–20). Limbo’s abyss and its forsaken including Virgil are “dim” and “dolorous” (IV.7–30). The virtuous pagans’ castle and their “merit” are “radiance” and “lights” in the dark (IV.67–152). Hell’s architecture is shaped by man’s character. Man’s character responds
to hell. They correlate, as in Revelation and I Enoch.

Revelation’s tribulation accounts anthropomorphize the cosmos and natural forces, similizing and metaphorizing them with human attributes and functions. A fallen star receives “the key for the passage to the abyss” (9.1). Locusts are ordered to torment humanity and have human “faces,” “hair,” and “chest plates like iron breastplates” (9.3–9). Disastrous “hail and fire mixed with blood” descend, and the sea turns to human blood repeatedly (8.8–10; 16.3). I Enoch’s hell is “accursed” like the men within it (XXVII.1–2). Conversely, I Enoch’s anthropomorphized “unrighteousness” is similized with “dew on a thirsty land” (XLII.3). Revelation’s cosmic features mimic man and man’s sin, while punishing them. I Enoch’s hell is cursed like sinners whose unrighteousness is drunk like water. All three apocalypses use structure, imagery, and language to present man and the cosmos’ correlation and contingency.

All three apocalypses also present New Jerusalem archetypally, thereby enhancing exhortation. Inferno’s New Jerusalem appears indirectly but consistently with Purgatorio and Paradiso’s vision of a cosmically central, salvific, sacred city atop the cosmic summit. New Jerusalem is heaven, the “far-flung city,” the lowest part of which sits atop mount purgatory, which is “the other face of the Judecca” (Paradiso XXX.129; Purgatorio XXVII–XXXIII; Inferno XXIV.199). Virgil alludes to heaven as the “shining Mount of Joy/which is the seat and first cause of man’s bliss” (I.75–6). Virgil says God “rules the waters and the land and air” from heaven, His “court, his city and his throne” (Inferno I.120–1). The rescuing angel calls the heaven the “Throne that loosed the angel wrath/of Michael on ambition and mutiny” (VII.11–2). Inferno’s hell also completes the salvation New Jerusalem embodies. Satan is literally and symbolically sin’s center. His
punishment is literally and symbolically sin’s entrapment and “reversal,” redemption’s foundation, and heaven’s ultimate triumph. Most importantly, hell is New Jerusalem’s inverse. Hell opposes New Jerusalem gravitationally (XXXIV.82–120). Earth’s “smallest circle” and hell’s “abyss” are contrasted with New Jerusalem’s “wide heaven” (II.78–84). Virgil’s “anguish” in hell contrasts Beatrice’s imperviousness there (II.91–3). Dis’s “heavy citizens” and “red mosques” with “eternal fire” that illuminates “lower Hell” oppose New Jerusalem’s flying angels and holy, Christian lights (VIII.65–72). Upon their appearance, Dis’ “shades” contrast heaven’s angels, and Dis’ name, “Death’s Kingdom,” contrasts heaven’s “glory” (VIII.79–82). Hell’s manifested eschatological fears juxtapose New Jerusalem’s archetypally communicated eschatological expectations. Hell is the opposite of New Jerusalem’s archetypes, promising the opposite of eschatological hope. Hell torturously, eternally imprisons men (34.118–26). New Jerusalem salvifically, eternally frees them (Purgatorio XXVIII.121–8). Hell’s relation to its opposite intensifies Inferno’s warning.

All aspects of Inferno’s narrative exhort against sin. Inferno’s individual archetypal images symbolize divine, cosmic laws and forces redeeming righteousness and damning sin. Its cosmos manifests the belief that all creation is subject to and shaped by these laws and forces. Its terza rima formalizes this belief. The architecture of its hell likewise symbolizes while facilitating Pilgrim Dante’s redemptive education about this cosmos.

Inferno’s hell is architecturally a mandala. Mandalas visually symbolize the process required for man’s attainment of wisdom (Jung Archetypes 354–7). They present negative symbols of nature, chaos, eternal dark, or the devil, what must be resisted to
gain wisdom (Jung Psychology 104; Archetypes 299). They present positive symbols of exemplary wisdom to be emulated (see Figs. 4 and 5). Mandala’s central object is often the “God-image,” reflecting cosmological visions of God as the cosmic center, source, and goal (Jung Archetypes 354; Eliade Cosmos 16). Similar to mandalas are Revelation’s depictions of the seven lampstands and four creatures encircling Christ, and Ezekiel’s vision of the four spherical wheels of the Holy Spirit (Rev. 1.12; 5.6; Ezek. 1.16–20; see Fig. 6 and 7). Paradiso presents God and his angels arranged into circles repeatedly (XXIV.10–8, XXVIII.13–45, XXX.100–4, XXXI.1–24; see and Figs. 8 and 9). Ancient Greeks pictured God as a “crown” or circle “of glowing light,” a “mind on the spherical fire,” and the “round and revolving God” (Jung Archetypes 325–36). Jesuit Nicholas Caussin says these images inspire Psalm 12.9, “On every side the wicked strut,” meaning, the unrighteous “only walk round the periphery without ever reaching the center, which is God” (Jung Archetypes 325–36). Inferno’s panderers and seducers enact this view vividly (XVII.25–39).

Mandalas are “uniting symbols” that assist by symbolizing psychic unity and unity with the God-image resulting from rejection of sin and “concentration” on the God-image (Psychology 79–80, 95; Neumann Creative Unconscious 33–4). They symbolize the same “Quest for the Center,” from “the profane to the sacred,” “death to life,” and “man to divinity” that apocalypses instructively report (Eliade Cosmos 17–8). Mandalas present warning error and encouraging righteousness, as do apocalypses’ images of damnation, tribulation, and salvation. The Comedy’s depicted mandalas thus amplify its apocalyptic exhortation by archetypally symbolizing the eschatological meaning of the Comedy’s journey. The Comedy retells “the zealous journey from man’s recognized spiritual torpor
(neglect of God) to the active pursuit of his soul’s good (love of God),” that “man’s active embrace of his Godly experience,” and Dante “the artist’s pursuit of form” (Ciardi xiii). Inferno particularly retells Pilgrim Dante’s journey out of sin and death facilitated by his embrace of divine love. Hell’s mandala structure formalizes this journey.

Apocalypses present tribulation as the necessary mechanism achieving salvation. All myths require a difficult task’s completion before salvation is attained. Mandalas’ journeys to “the ‘center’” are common forms of this mythic “arduous,” perilous task (Eliade Cosmos 18). So too are heroic “danger-ridden voyages,” challenging temple “convolutions,” and sacred pilgrimages to places like Jerusalem (18). Pilgrim Dante’s journey is an arduous, dangerous course over a convoluted mandala’s “difficult road” to Jerusalem (17–8). It is the apocalypse’s necessary, salvific tribulation. Dante’s journey literally demands his constant recognition of God and rejection of sin. Hell’s mandala intensifies the importance of these required actions by containing them within its reproduction of the symbolism of the famous Chartres Cathedral labyrinth built around 1200 (see Fig. 10). Europe most commonly expresses the mandala as the labyrinth. Labyrinthine and pseudolabyrinthine images are found in prehistoric Italian cave art and numerous European landscapes. The legendary Greek Minoan labyrinth is one of the West’s most famous. The Chartres labyrinth is a circular, unicursal maze with a six-petalled center in which pilgrims contemplate the labyrinth’s symbolized pilgrimage to Jerusalem. To reach the center, pilgrims turn at and only at four broken “walls,” representing Christ’s cross. This symbolizes Christian gratitude, humility, and obedience emblematic of wisdom. The labyrinth also must be crossed to approach the cathedral’s main altar directly (correctly). This further symbolizes that the “path through the world of
sin” must be transformed “into a path towards heaven, or Jerusalem” (Moon 67). No “alternative pathways” occur in or around the labyrinth (67). Salvation requires the labyrinth’s process, but perseverant Christians “will not lose their way, for they are guided by God” (67).

Chartres labyrinth pilgrims receive guiding restriction from the labyrinth’s cross form. Attainment of the labyrinth’s physical goal is guaranteed by its restricted, unicursal path. Attainment of the labyrinth’s spiritual goal is assisted by its forced symbolic “conversions.” Pilgrim Dante receives identical guiding restriction throughout his journey through hell. Christ’s dominant, salvific harrowing of hell appears whenever “the ruined state of hell’s ‘infrastructure’” is noted (Hawkins 99). In circle seven, the poets face a “ruin” shattered by Christ’s harrowing (XII.1–9, 34–45). There, the poets face the mythic Minoan Minotaur, the bestial child of King Minos’ “lecherous queen” (Inferno XII.10–27). The Minotaur’s presence on the ruin Christianizes the Minoan labyrinth, affirming that the labyrinth is now ruled by Christ (Moon 67).¹ Dante and Virgil accordingly face the Minotaur as Christianized Icarus and Daedalus. Dante is guided by Virgil to God, where Virgil cannot go, like Icarus who flies on Daedalus’ wings to the sun, where Daedalus does not go. Virgil’s poetry is pagan, but espouses Christian virtue and assists Dante’s Christian pilgrimage, like Daedalus who builds the wooden cow in which the Minotaur is conceived, but also the labyrinth imprisoning the Minotaur, and the wings on which Daedalus and Icarus escape. All four endure the punishing labyrinth of the “king.”

¹ A contemporary medieval French manuscript similarly fuses the mythic and Chartres labyrinths, showing “the world of sin illustrated as a labyrinth of the [Chartres] type, with a horned being—perhaps the Minotaur or Satan—enthroned at the center” (Moon 67).
Dante even calls himself in this scene “Icarus, too close to the sun’s track” (XVII.103). Only Christianity alters the pairs’ ends. Virgil returns to hell, while Daedalus escapes. Dante returns to earth, while Icarus vanishes in the sea. The God absent from the mythic labyrinth promises Dante salvation Icarus lacks, and requires of Virgil damnation Daedalus is spared.

At *Inferno*’s beginning, Virgil tells Dante he “must” follow the “fated” path through hell to escape sin’s “wilderness” and reach heaven (I.89–90; XII.85–87). Virgil explains to Dante what they witness and repeatedly rebukes Dante for questioning divine wisdom (see III.10–15, 67–78; VI.99–108; VII.49–54, 67–72; XI.67–78). Dante’s trust is often what sustains him as they surpass the damned, whom experience hell as their “true goal” (see III.123; VIII.34–54, 94–105; XV.91–9; XVI.106–20; Ciardi xiv). Twice, Dante and Virgil make right turns in their otherwise left-turning course. It is thought “[n]o satisfactory reason can be given” for these unusual turns,¹ however the turns are very meaningful because they symbolize the ritualistic conversion demanded by a Chartres labyrinth. The poets’ first right occurs in circle six among the arch-heretics. Formal heresy is willed, prideful corruption of Christ’s teachings or refusal to submit to His teachings. Understood as gesticulated conversion, the poets’ right contradicts heresy. It represents submission to and homage of Christ, which the poets owe. The poets obtain access to the heretics’ tombs by an angel who strongly recalls Christ. The angel descends though hell’s gate, which “still stands open” after Christ’s harrowing, despite the daemons’ attempt to close it (VIII.123). Christ “opens and no one shall close,” like His

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¹ John Ciardi makes this statement twice his translation of the *Comedy*. See pages 80 and 138.
angel who crosses “dry-shod/the Stygian marsh” to open Dis with a touch before which
“all gates must spring aside” (Rev. 3.7; see John 16.16–21; Inferno VIII. 77–8, 127). The
angel’s appearance fulfills Virgil’s complaint, “Oh how time hangs and drags till our aid
comes!,” echoing Old Testament desires for a Messiah (IX.9). Like pre-Christian
righteous saved by Christ’s harrowing, the poets are saved from hell by Christ’s
messenger. The poets’ symbolic right honors this.

Their second right occurs in the third round of circle seven as the poets mount
Geryon to descend to circle eight (XVII.28–30; see Fig. 11). Virgil says Geryon must be
“reasoned” with while Geryon’s scorpion tail and lion paws threaten (XVII.38). Virgil
“scolds” Dante’s doubt in Christ’s dominion over the “most ravenous of beasts,”
inspiring Dante to become like a “servant brave in the presence of his lord” (XVII.23–
84). Again symbolizing recognition of Christ’s needed and granted salvation, the poets
move right to continue. However, the poets make no right when the giant Antaeus lowers
them into Cocytus, a situation almost identical to their ride on Geryon. Yet, this does not
contradict the symbolism of their rights elsewhere. Geryon and Antaeus, and their aid to
the poets, differ importantly. Geryon is a “prototype of Fraud” (XVII.7). Antaeus is the
only giant in hell left unbound (XXXI.99–100). As the only giant who refused to rise
against the gods, Antaeus merits more freedom and trust. Untrustworthy Geryon must be
dominated by Christ for the poets to wisely ride him, but Antaeus is appealed to by Virgil
for the “service” of lowering the poets into the pit (XXXI.22). Geryon must be ruled, but
Antaeus’ help is freely given. Accordingly, Virgil promises Antaeus that Dante will
“make new [Antaeus’] memory” in return for the giant’s help (XXXI.27). Christ’s special
authority over Antaeus is unnecessary, so special “right” honor of Christ not shown.
Pilgrim Dante’s journey through hell is a gift of divine love that saves him from being “astray” in sin’s “wilderness” (Inferno I.1–5, 64–127). In his Lyric Poems, Dante likens “straying from truth and knowledge” to spiritual meandering “lost and blind,” but conversely calls thoughts of love “a lovely labyrinth” (26, 33). Dante envisions the labyrinth as a guide to love and wisdom that opposes aimless sin and ignorance. The labyrinth archetype symbolizes cathartic descent to the underworld, “‘to the left’ (the ‘sinister’ direction),” and such descent’s contingency with “ascent to life and light in its turnings ‘to the right’” (Freitas 414). The Chartres labyrinth similarly symbolizes humble recognition of sin and repentance as necessary for salvation by Christ. In Inferno, the labyrinth provides Pilgrim Dante’s physical path through sin to God, which is his spiritual path to redemption by God. Within Inferno’s narrative, the archetype’s concrete manifestation literally accomplishes its symbolized mystical purpose.

In his pivotal work on historical conceptions, Mircea Eliade demonstrates the ancient ontological concept that all historical events perpetually “repeat themselves because they imitate an archetype” (Cosmos 88–90). This ancient view posits that apparent historical repetition is unavoidable, perpetual, and means not that life is chaotic or futile, but that life is “real” only “through the repetition of certain paradigmatic gestures” (35, 88–90). Such repetition transforms historical events “into categories,” realigning contemporary events with “the ontological order” of “archaic spirituality” (123). This realignment is salvific. It reunites current events with “the exemplary event” of “mythical and primordial time, ‘pure’ time, the time of the ‘instant’ of the Creation,” imbuing current history with the original epoch’s purity (88–90, 54). Ancient “ritual purifications,” like ancient construction rituals, repeated archetypal gestures to attempt to
cancel sin and attain historical “regeneration” and “a new birth” (54). Yet “any human act whatever” was also seen to gain some archetypal meaning from repetitious imitation of an original, archetypal event (22, 88–90). The actions of Pilgrim Dante and hell’s sinners, through contrapasso, literally enact the meaning of those actions’ archetypal models. Dante gains enough wisdom to unify with divine love, and is humble enough to gain redemption, while imitatively completing a mandala-labyrinth. Sinners stagnate blindly while repeating their sin eternally under the domination of condemning, prototypical sin. Their literal and symbolic unity with either righteousness’ or sin’s exemplary model literally depicts and allegorizes either historical, eschatological hope or fear. Dante’s active contact with exemplary salvation regenerates his personal history so that he is saved from his now nullified past sin, chaos, and futility (Purgatorio XXVI.127–143). Sinners’ detachment from exemplary salvation and active contact with exemplary sin regenerates their personal histories so that they are damned to chaos and futility despite any now nullified past righteousness (Inferno IV.31–39; VII.49–60). Dante experiences the personal, historical regenerative salvation typical of the ancient historical concept. Sinners experience as punishment that concept’s negative possibility.

All myths are both “in time” and “out of time” because they retell “a succession of events” with “significant value” that is “always current” (Lévi-Strauss Anthropology 2: 138). Myths report actions seeking “restoration of integral wholeness” through adherence to exemplary models from “the cosmic myth” (Eliade Cosmos 25). Just as do imitative repetitions of exemplary actions, stories of such imitative actions unify

1 Meaning, the qualitative value of that signified.
mundane life with divine, regenerative time. In the believing and active, watching, listening, or reading mind, while mundane and sacred actions unite, “time is suspended, or at least its virulence is diminished” (88–90). Narrative accounts of active contact with salvation, like Dante’s, contradict “time’s irreversibility” by presenting realities in which “time does not exist,” because, “where it becomes perceptible—because of man’s ‘sins,’” time “can be annulled” (85–6). Narrative repetitions of cosmic myths of transcendent generation allegorically project regeneration into believers’ present.

Jewish Messianism reconceives ancient concepts of eternally repetitious, cyclical historical regeneration into a concept of temporarily repetitious historical cycling to final regeneration. I Enoch’s Apocalypse of Weeks, one of the oldest Jewish apocalypses, was “probably the first Jewish document to envisage the end of the world in a literal sense” (Collins “Prophecy” 72). It reflects the Messianic view of time in which all historical events are believed to be “ordered by the will of Yahweh” (Eliade Cosmos 107).

Catastrophes are particularly understood to have “religious significance” as prophesied “chastisements” of Israel’s unrighteousness “inflicted by the Lord,” and as “negative theophanies” of “Yahweh’s ‘wrath,’” (103–5). These theophanies are seen as “ratifications” of Messianic prophecies and apocalypses (103–5). The Apocalypse of Weeks prophesies that wickedness will triumph over righteousness repeatedly before final historical salvation and a “new heaven” is realized (Enoch XCIII.1–14; XCI.12–7). It projects “hidden coherence” and “value” onto Israel’s repeated catastrophes and sufferings, consoling Israel with promises that tribulation proves Israel’s righteousness, and that Isreal’s final salvation is assured (Eliade Cosmos 103–5). The Jewish prophecies and apocalypses rationalize history by declaring Israel’s defeats “the concrete expression
of the same single divine will” temporarily allowing chaos’ “provisional victory” before chaos’ promised “final extinction” (37–8, 103–5). This was history’s first notion of “one-way time” and first transcendence of belief that “all things will be repeated forever” (103–5). Encouraged by this view and its prophetic, apocalyptic validations, Israel overcame many political struggles and defeats (37–8).

To the Messianic historical view, Christianity adds the view that salvation “is eternally of the present and accessible to anyone, at any moment” through conversion (129). The Christian view combines ancient belief in “periodic regeneration of the world” with the Messianic view to posit constant “regeneration of the human individual” happening while history approaches final, salvific regeneration (129). Christ, the “Word of God,” acts in mundane history with the effect of active or narrative archetypal repetitions. The “Living Word” constantly regenerates life by unifying it with salvation sourced in the instant of God’s Creation (John 1.1–14). While the ancient sees regenerative salvation from mundane history as only periodically achievable by repeated adherence to divine archetypes, and the Messianic sees salvation as only finally achievable by repeated and enduring adherence to Jewish archetypal righteousness, the Christian sees salvation as constantly and finally achievable by repeated and enduring (“remaining”) adherence to Judeo-Christian archetypal righteousness (Eliade Cosmos 129; John 15.1–4; my emphasis). The Christian is relieved of history’s daily burdens as much as the archaic man who periodically “abolished” history, but more than the Messianic Israelite who must endure (Eliade Cosmos 129). Yet the Christian is also relieved of history’s cumulative burden as much as the Israelite expecting history’s end, and more than the archaic man bound to eternal repetition.
Revelation presents the Christian vision of repetitious historical events cycling toward history’s end. Revelation’s “liturgical” vision of time, “in which different times seem inextricably mixed,” results from the Christian vision’s combination of ancient and Messianic historical concepts (Kovacs 40). The Christian (especially Catholic) liturgy is believed to imitate the archetypal gestures of Christ and the Christian divine assembly depicted in Revelation. Christian liturgical repetitions of archetypal gestures salvifically regenerate liturgy participants’ lives by uniting them with the divine assembly, just as in ancient purification ceremonies. The church periodically reunites with the divine assembly’s constant salvation. The constant divine assembly periodically unites with passing history, as Revelation’s scenes illustrate. During John’s time in the divine assembly, John witnesses past, present, and future earthly events’ symbolic enactment. Assessment of how many historical years the visions’ symbolize is prevented by their symbolic ambiguity. But clearly they recount lengths of mundane time vastly greater than the length of time John spends in the divine assembly. John watches mundane history from the assembly’s autonomous, transcendent perspective.

The divine assembly’s transcendent historical perspective is personified in the twenty-four elders who symbolize, among other things, the twenty-four hours, or “all time.” As “time,” they reveal to John the divine-temporal statuses of mundane historical events. The elders join the four creatures in proclaiming God’s precedence to creation (4.10–11). When John fears the prophetic scroll will be unopened, the elders teach John that Christ “has triumphed” (5.5). The elders offer to Christ the “prayers of all the holy ones,” and although Christianity is nascent at Revelation’s writing, they tell John Christ “purchased for God those from every tribe, tongue, people and nation” (5.8-9). When
John sees the great “multitude,” the elders teach him it contains all who “survived” coming tribulation (7.4–17). The elders announce God “assumed” His reign and brought “the time for the dead to be judged” (11.16–8). It is also noted that God “lives forever and ever” before and after the elders first praise God (4.9–10). The elders later repeat that God is He “who are and who were” (11.16–8). This literally states and symbolizes God’s transcendence of “all time” the elders represent. As a narrative motif, the elders illustrate the divine assembly’s precedence to, distinctness from, and, importantly, encompassment of mundane time.

Judaism and Christianity depict God as a multifaceted, incomprehensible “presence.” God’s presence is old and New Jerusalem, a burning bush, a pillar of fire, and especially the temple in the Torah. His presence is Christ, a brilliant, enthroned “one,” “the human race,” and also New Jerusalem in Revelation (1.8; 4.2–3; 21.3; 21.22–3). His presence is “heaven that does not exist in any place/but in God’s mind” in Paradiso (XXVII.109–10). In all examples, the righteous “dwell” in God, who dwells in them (Rev. 21.3). Their relationship is mysteriously reciprocal. In Revelation and the Comedy’s solely Christian perspective, dwelling in God is also an “eternal nunc” in which “history ceases” (Eliade Cosmos 129). God’s time is constant, eternal, yet “new” compared to earth’s “old” history that is, from the divine perspective, “done” (Rev. 16.17; 21.4–5). History’s salvific end is already, always “accomplished” in the Christian concept of God’s constant, eternal time, whether or not it has yet happened on earth (21.6). Thus, Christians remaining in God are perpetually saved from “fallen time” by remaining in the “fullness of time that is the Christian eternity” (Freccero 592; see Rev 5.8–9; 6.9–11; 7.4–17; 19.6). Nevertheless, Revelation and the Comedy evidence
retention of Messianism in their depictions of the constantly-saved righteous still awaiting historical justice. In Revelation, those “slaughtered” for attesting to “the word of God” cry from “underneath the altar” in heaven, “How long will it be […] before you sit in judgment and avenge our blood” (see Rev. 6.9–10). In Paradiso, Pilgrim Dante learns that sin and free will separate God from man, thus, the “the human family goes astray” and “there is none to govern” history (XXVII.141). The historical “order of the universe” takes from “heaven its first point of departure,” and “time’s taproot” is in God, but creation only is where “we see its spreading foliage and its fruit” (XXVII.106–7, 18–20). History does not affect heaven, and history’s chaos is man’s fault. Only at the end of time will God command the stars, who are “Celestial Beings” with the “Beatitude of the Active life” in “the government of the World,” to “ring” their “spheres” and set time’s “true course straight” (Convito 59; Inferno XXVII.144–8; see also Eliade Cosmos 144). 1

In both the Comedy and Revelation, constant salvation is always, already accomplished, yet the righteous still endure fallen history to its final end.

Inferno’s hell manifests God’s justice in which sin is always, already defeated. Hell’s gate reads, “only those elements time cannot wear/were made before me, and beyond time I stand” (III.7–8; original emphasis removed). Hell, sin’s punishment, is eternal. Spatially, hell results from Satan’s defeat and is Mount Purgatory’s base and sin’s depositary. Temporally, hell is farthest from and gravitationally opposite the empyrean, time’s source. Hell literally experiences time from the opposite angle as

1 Dante’s contemporaries, Albertus Magnus, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Roger Bacon, also held this “eschatological conception” of God’s will radiating through the stars to earth, dictating history and its end (Eliade Cosmos 144).
heaven. Hell’s temporal state reflects its spatial state, as its physical state reflects its sinners’ spiritual states. *Inferno*’s sinners are blind to Pilgrim Dante’s “human state” of constant salvation (X.97–105). The virtuous pagans are damned solely for lacking Dante’s “grace” of baptismal access to eternity (IV.35). Sinners only re-experience sinful pasts through contrapasso, and see the fallen future through clairvoyance. Several prophesy darkly. Ciaccio prophesies the Black’s victory over the Whites (VI.55–73). Farinata prophesies the Ghibellines’ resurgence (X.42–109). The anonymous suicide prophesies Florence’s trails (XIII.139–152). Brunetto Latino prophesies Dante’s persecution, and Pope Nicholas III prophesies Pope Boniface VIII’s death and entrance to hell (XV.30–79; XIX.46–81). All these prophecies are notably of sin only. Ciaccio’s “mournful” prophecy is of the “fallen,” “blood,” “burdens,” “oppressions,” “pride, avarice, and envy” (VI.62–72). Farinata predicts “grieves” (X.81). The suicide claims Florence’s “sorrow shall not end” (XIII.145). Latino warns of “blind,” “envious, proud, and avaricious people,” and Nicholas anticipates a “lawless Shepherd/of uglier deeds” (XV.68; XIX.77–8). Farinata calls sinners’ clairvoyance God’s gift of “light” (X.102). But this reveals Farinata’s ignorance, not understanding, of divine justice. Sinners’ clairvoyance is a “twisted sight” revealing only future sin and their own final destruction (X.100–8). Of divine comfort, sinners know only that they do not know it. Even righteous pagans can only forever “desire” God (IV.42). Blind to God’s salvific “now,” sinners have no comfort whatsoever in eternity (X.103–5). Though many seek comfort in their legacies, this also reveals their exclusion from salvific eternity (see VI.86; X.60; XIII.76–8; XV.18–9; XVI.82–5). Not only must sinners repeat past sins and foresee a hopeless future, they futilely desire prestige in that future. Their historical perspective precisely
inverts that of divine time, and intensifies sinners’ punishment.

Many of the sinners’ prophecies are *ex eventu* predictions “of events which have already taken place” (see Ciardi’s note to VI.61; Collins *Daniel* 11). For example, Pope Boniface VIII died in October 1303, three years after the date Pilgrim Dante gives his journey, but years before *Inferno*’s writing around 1310 (I.38–9). *Ex eventu* prophecies are found in all Jewish historical apocalypses and the otherworldly *Apocalypse of Abraham* (Collins *Daniel* 11). Such prophecies enhance apocalypses’ exhortation and consolation manifoldly. First, they appear as true foresight of real events. They lend compelling prophetic veracity to the entire apocalypse containing them. Second, they consolingly make history seem predictable and comprehensible, invalidating man’s “terror” of “the meaninglessness of profane existence” (Eliade *Cosmos* 91–2). Third, their “regnal” versions exhortatively reaffirm, specify, and contemporize the characters of righteousness and sin (Collins *Daniel* 11–2). Ciacco prophesies the Blacks will conquer the Whites amid the rejection of the “honest” and “a Babel of despair” (VI.61–72). The prophecy refers to discernable, real people, as is typical of this type of prophecy (Collins *Daniel* 12). It qualifies Dante’s exile as persecution of honest, non-babbling righteous by Florentine wicked. Similarly, Daniel chapter 11 prophesies several royal successions amid the tribulation of the righteous, “who remain loyal to their God,” and the destruction of the wicked with their “molten images” (11.2–12.4). This qualifies Israel’s faith as salvifically righteous and Israel’s Babylonian captors as damned. Fourth and finally, apocalypses’ *ex eventu* prophecies portray history as predetermined, cyclical, and finite. They project repetitious rises and falls, or cycles, of leaders or ages of history that has nevertheless “nearly run its course” (11–2). They illustrate Israel’s growth from ancient
belief in eternal repetition to Messianic belief in culminating time and contribute to
inarguable, urgent exhortation.

_Solitude_

Most prophecies are _not_ apocalypses (Collins _Imagination_ 269). But all
apocalypses either _contain_ prophecies or _are_ formally “distinctive” prophecies (269). The
genre apocalypse’s sub-generic historical apocalypses are specifically apocalyptic,
“eschatological prophecies” (35–7). As an historical apocalypse, _Solitude_’s review of
fictional history _illustrates_ an eschatological prophecy voiced at the novel’s end: “races
condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth”
(448).

_Solitude_’s prophecy applies allegorically to _Solitude_’s readers, and literally to the
fictional Buendías. The real prophecy for readers extends from the fictional prophecy, the
parchments’ _ex eventu_ “history of the [Buendías], written by Melquíades, down to the
most trivial details, one hundred years ahead of time” (9–11; 446–7). The reader’s
reading of _Solitude_ specifically allegorizes with Aureliano Babilonia’s final reading of
the parchments. Through this allegory, the reader deciphers the prophecy along with
Aureliano in “the instant that he was living, deciphering it as he lived it, prophesying
himself in the act of deciphering the last page” (447). Aureliano knows Macondo, “the
city of mirrors (or mirages) would be wiped out by the wind and exiled from the memory
of men” when Aureliano “would finish deciphering the parchments” (448).
Simultaneously, the reader knows his own construct of “mirages” will be destroyed and
forgotten the moment he fully understands _Solitude_. The parchments’ revelation to
Aureliano of his history literally ends his history. _Solitude_’s revelation to readers of their
history does likewise, allegorically and morally, by disillusioning the reader of false beliefs about history. Aureliano’s revelation nihilistically “saves” him from a doomed construct. The reader’s revelation literally saves him from a false construct.

**Solitude**’s real and fictional prophecies report, in alike style and detail, one narrative of the Buendías’ life from Sir Frances Drake’s attack on Riohacha, before José Arcadio Buendía and Ursula’s births, to Macondo’s destruction (446–7). The real prophecy (for readers) shares the apparent prophetic veracity of Melquíades’ *ex eventu* prophecy. Melquíades’ prophecy is explicitly fictional, but symbolizes reality and “predicts” a real event: the bananera massacre. **Solitude** “unrelentingly” mythologizes the bananera massacre, Columbia’s anti-capitalist “symbols and martyrs,” and Latin American history (Posada-Carbo 400; González Echevarría 360). **Solitude**’s “enormous mythic weight,” as noted, inspires many Colombians to believe **Solitude**’s vision of the massacre is true (Cato 185). This mythologization of history is analogous to, if not a pastiche of, Jewish apocalypses’ eschatological presentations of history. In the Apocalypse of Weeks, Enoch presents a symbolic “review of past history as if it were the future” (Collins *Imagination* 64; see Enoch 93.1–14, 91.12–17). Enoch’s vision of history symbolizes his specific eschatological desires, while appearing to verify them. **Solitude** similarly “prophesies” mythic past history, including a real massacre, while representing and appearing to verify García Márquez’s communist nihilism.

Enoch is a pseudonym used by Enochic apocalypses’ authors to present their visions as those of apocalyptic literature’s foremost “seer-hero” (Clifford 13–4). Seer-heroes like Enoch posses “powers superior to those of ordinary men,” displayed “courageously” for the “benefit of others” (Gaster 302). Enoch, and also Daniel, Ezra and
every pseudonymous seer-hero inspired by Enoch, “walked with God” to gain prophetic
“wisdom and knowledge” to be shared with “the human race” so “that succeeding
generations might learn by his example” (Clifford 13–4; Gen. 5.24; Sir. 44.16). Enoch’s
“prototype” is Mesopotamian Enmeduranki who ascended to heaven to learn “divination”
(Clifford 13–4). Seer-heroes “resemble one another” as a result of equal derivation from
the hero archetype (Eliade Cosmos 42). The hero archetype is a “quasi-human” myth of
“the superhuman” in “visible human form” (Jung Transformation 178). Heroes represent
ideal man, yet man as he is, however “fallen,” and his “personal development” (Origins
131). Heroes’ characters and experiences represent the “ideas” and “forces which grip
and mould the soul” (131). Their “ubiquitous” journeys through “the realm of the dead”
or ascents to heaven particularly represent man’s desire for new wisdom, knowledge, and
“spiritual status” (Balsamo 59–60; Jung Transformation 178). Imitations of the hero’s
formative journey, including mandala and labyrinthine passage rites, inflict the “perils of
the underworld” or “the twelve night hours” on participants to, it is believed, unify
participants with the hero’s mythic spiritual regeneration (Origins 161). Participants
become heroes through imitative repetition of the hero’s act. Thus any who undergoes a
hero’s trial gains heroic status. Any appearing as a hero is regenerated. This is why the
“necropolitan journey” is a “fundamental paradigm in the tradition of Christian epics”
(Balsamo 59–60). It is also why heroic pseudonyms are applied to apocalyptic seers.
Seer-heroes’ revelations are automatically archetypal revelations of man’s desired
spiritual regeneration and salvation. Furthermore, most seers’ revelations are experiential.
Enoch, Daniel, Ezra, John, and as noted, Dante, all actively facilitate their revelations in
some minor or major way. Their righteousness, as they define and demonstrate it, facilitates their salvific regeneration. For having “pleased God,” Enoch “was taken up so that he should not see death” (Luke 3.37; Heb. 11.5). No matter what is an apocalypse’s specific, contemporary content, when its seer is a hero, the apocalypse presents the regenerative, salvific story. A seer-hero’s presentation of his revelation is inherently authoritative.

Revelation’s “John” is not a pseudonym. Revelation is often authorized by attribution to apostle “John, the son of Zebedee” (Yarbro Collins “Revelation” 196). However, “the most reasonable conclusion about the authorship of Revelation is that it was written by a man named John who is otherwise unknown” (196). John’s lack of pseudonymity symbolizes his post-Pentecostal Christianity. Jewish apocalyptic writers assert apocalypses’ authority through pseudonymous attribution of apocalypses to authoritative “prophets who were before you and me” (Jer. 28.8). John’s attribution of Revelation to himself, “witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ,” asserts Revelation’s “new authority,” granted solely by Christ (Rev. 1.2; Collins Imagination 271). John envisions Christ “dwelling” with the “human race,” consequently giving all “common” believers’ “prophetic utterances” authority at least equal to Jewish prophets’ (Rev. 21.3; Collins Imagination 271). In John’s vision, real or apparent fidelity

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1 See Enoch XV.1–XVI; LXXXII.1; Dan. 1.8–9; 2.56–9; 4.5; 5.12–4, 29; 6.4–11; 9.22–23; 10.2–6, 11–2, 19; 12.9–13; 13.45, 59–54; 14.4, 27; Ezra 2.4; 4.47–52; 8.62; 9.24–7; 10.53–9; 12.51; 13.56–8; 14.7–9, 20–3, 37–48; Rev. 1.1–3, 11; 5.4–5; 10.8–11.10; 22.10; and Inferno II.98; IV.100–3; VIII.34–43; XIII.28–36; XIV.124–6; XV.79–99; XVI.106–11; XVII.85–7; XIX.112–7; XXIV.72–8; XXVI.64–72; XXXI.125–7; XXXIV.70–143. Note that John and Dante similarly use “cords” to accomplish what their mediators command of them.
to prophets is unnecessary. Prophetic authority, righteousness, and salvation all come from Christ. Similarly, in his letters, Paul renounces sacred ritual that Judaism viewed as obligatory, instead urging “spontaneous” and “ordinary” worship (Balsamo 38; see Exod. 8.4–25; Lev. 17.5–9). John and Paul rejected Jewish concepts of authority, righteousness, and salvation and John’s representation of himself as Revelation’s apocalyptic seer symbolizes this.

John’s self-identification as seer nevertheless exemplifies symbolic identification common to Jewish apocalypses. Symbolic names and descriptive identifications are frequent and indicate apocalypses’ mythic themes and depicted worldviews. Historic pseudonyms indicate a depiction of predetermined, continuous history (Collins Imagination 40; 271). Enochic pseudonyms indicate a depiction asserted as authoritative, mythic truth (40). Solomon pseudonyms indicate a message asserted as “wisdom” (40). John’s disclosed identity in Revelation indicates the therein depicted, asserted belief in Christ’s universal authorization. Dante’s equally disclosed identity in the Comedy indicates his therein depicted and asserted adherence to John’s concept of prophetic authority. Dante’s identity also indicates the Comedy’s depictions of poetic, political, scientific, and theological beliefs Dante held or for which he was famed. Animal identifications often also symbolize persons or entities’ specific characteristics, and therefore indicate the worldviews positing these characterizations (Clifford 20). Enoch’s Animal Apocalypse identifies Israel as “sheep” and its persecutors as many animals including “wolves,” “dogs,” “boars,” and “vultures” (LXXXV–XC; see Collins

1 See also Dan. and Ezra cited above
Imagination 64). The animals symbolically characterize Israel as obedient and pure and its persecutors as wild and ravenous, indicating pseudo-Enoch’s religion and politics. John identifies Satan as a “dragon” and “serpent,” characterizing Satan as destructively deceptive and indicating John’s definition of sin (12.9). Pilgrim Dante identifies Ghibelline Can Grande della Scala as “The Greyhound,” characterizing Della Scala as noble and indicating Dante’s politics (I.95). These animal identifications, and pseudonyms or lack thereof, are thematically revealing symbols constituting a motif found in most apocalypses.

The names of Solitude’s most prominent characters derive from the names of mythic or venerated historic figures (see Fig. 12). These derivative names indicate such characters’ corresponding analogies with their namesakes. All characters literally and tragically, or ironically and bitterly, enact their names’ associations. These enactments unite characters with their mythic and historic archetypes, implying characters’ equality with those archetypes, therefore further implying the mythic and historic truth of Solitude’s nihilist worldview and secular, communist, postmodern critique of popular Latin American religious and political beliefs. Through characters’ names and actions, Solitude analogizes with and thus appears as accepted myth and history, enhancing the exhortation of Solitude’s already exhortatively prophetic, cautionary tale. Subordinate character names in Solitude derive from or are words with literal meanings implying such characters’ natures or narrative actions or functions. These literally meaningful names

1 Many of Revelation’s figures symbolize persons or entities and John’s worldview. Revelation’s symbolic ambiguity prevents certainty about whom or what many figures symbolize. Regardless, they clearly symbolize someone or something and the basic nature of John’s worldview.
make Solitude’s meaning more accessible and, so, its exhortation more compelling.

The name of Solitude’s patriarch José Arcadio Buendía is most important. José Arcadio Buendía’s first name, “José,” is Solitude’s metonym for similarly spelled “Jove,” the name of the Roman king of the gods. The honoring of José Arcadio Buendía’s pseudo-godly “king” status, at his death, by a supernatural, “light rain of tiny yellow flowers,” indicates this metonymy (153). Numerous flower species are nicknamed “Jove’s flower.” The metonymy and its honoring together indicate José Arcadio Buendía and Jove’s analogous actions. José Arcadio Buendía threaten Úrsula into sex with the “notched spear […] with which the first Aureliano Buendía had exterminated the jaguars in the region” (24). Mythic Jove rapes Callisto after disguising himself as Diana, the goddess of the wild and hunt. ¹ Although Jove rapes Callisto just after Diana is described carrying arrows, Diana is frequently depicted with spears, which are regularly part of her apparel (see Fig. 13). José Arcadio Buendía is thus armed with weaponry equivalent to Jove’s. Both appear as archetypal wild hunters. Posed as such hunters, both men also analogize with mythic Arcas. Arcas, the product of Jove’s rape of Callisto, is a heroic hunter who unknowingly hunts his mother with arrows. As does Jove, Arcas pursues Callisto armed with Diana’s apparel. Therefore, Arcas, Jove, and José Arcadio Buendía are triadically analogous. All three appear before the respective women as archetypal wild hunters. Each man is violent, lustful, or both. Each also engages the women while deception and ignorance operate. Arcas is ignorant, deceived by Callisto’s bear form. Jove deceives Callisto, who is therefore also ignorant. José Arcadio Buendía and Úrsula

¹ The Roman and Greek variations of the myth are identical.
deceive themselves. They ignore their “common prick of conscience” and marry despite being cousins (22). Later, their great-granddaughter-in-law Fernanda deceives all into believing Aureliano Babilonia is not a Buendía, but rather, “she had found him floating in a basket” (316). This deception leaves Aureliano Babilonia and his aunt Amaranta Úrsula ignorant of their relation when, during a sexually charged, mock “fierce fight, a battle to the death,” they become lovers (426). In each confrontation then, deception or ignorance allow violence, lust, or both. This combination of circumstances in each confrontation precedes analogous transformations to animality. After Jove rapes Callisto, his wife Juno vengefully transforms Callisto into a bear. When Arcas later hunts Callisto, Jove protectively transforms them into the constellations Ursa Major and Minor. Latin “Ursa” means “she-bear” or “great bear” and is the root of Úrsula. José Arcadio Buendía and Úrsula’s first son has an abnormally large male anatomy “as unnatural as her cousin’s tail of a pig” (28). Aureliano Babilonia inherits this “impressive sex organ that was like a turkey’s wattles, as if he were not a human child,” and with it fathers the last Buendía born with the hereditary “tail of a pig” (316; 443). These analogous transformations to animality all finally conclude with analogous imprisonments. Still vengeful Juno bars Ursa Major and Minor from ever touching the sea, imprisoning them in the sky. José Arcadio Buendía and Úrsula’s flight from the shame of their marriage leads them to search for “an outlet to the sea,” but their endless search is abandoned where they found Macondo at the center of a swamp’s “whole vast universe” (11). Aureliano Babilonia understands at his revelatory moment that, as the family’s final punishment, “he would never leave” (448). Jove, Arcas, and José Arcadio Buendía’s respective violence, lust, deceptions, ignorance, transformations, and imprisonments are as analogous as their
names unambiguously indicate. José Arcadio Buendía’s middle name, “Arcadio,” is Spanish for Greek “Arkadios,” meaning “of Arcadia,” the city named for Arcas. “José Arcadio’s” metonymy with “Jove” and “Arcas” indicates that José Arcadio Buendía’s story correspondingly mimics those of both mythic men. José Arcadio Buendía is violent and lustful. As Jove’s deception of Callisto causes ignorant Arcas’ deception, ignorant José Arcadio Buendía deceives himself. This pattern repeats with the name “José Arcadio.” The Buendías’ continuous violence, lust, deceptions, self-deceptions, and ignorance are punished, as are Callisto and Arcas, with animality and imprisonment in Macondo. José Arcadio Buendía’s surname name even indicates this fate. “Buendía” is a medieval word for “good omen,” ironically signifying that being a Buendía is a “bad omen.” The Buendía “race” is “condemned” (448). They are Solitude’s myth of the specific types of violence, lust, deception, and ignorance Solitude condemns. Their imprisoned animality is Solitude’s warning vision of condemnation. Their names are typically symbolic indicators of this typically apocalyptic exhortation against sin.

José Arcadio Buendía analogizes with Jove and, therefore, God. But he also analogizes with Arcas and, therefore, the damned. He is an image of a damned God, righteously causing salvation and sinfully causing damnation. He is Solitude’s irreligious prototype for man, who saves or damns himself. José Arcadio Buendía begins a God image of the “highest value,” “fullest intensity of life,” and “optimum psychological vitality” (Jung Types 179). Early in Solitude José Arcadio Buendía is Macondo’s “most enterprising man” and “youthful patriarch” whose enterprising actions analogize directly with Christ’s (9). José Arcadio Buendía arranges Macondo’s houses allowing all residents to “reach the river and draw water with the same effort” and none “more sun
than another” (9). Christ issues to New Jerusalem “the river of life-giving water” flowing “down the middle of its street,” and Christ is New Jerusalem’s “lamp” allowing “no night” (Rev. 21.22–4, 6; 22.1–2). José Arcadio Buendía informs officials that “we are so peaceful” in Macondo “we don’t need judges here because there’s nothing that needs judging” (Solitude 61). In Christ’s New Jerusalem, “nothing unclean will enter it, nor any (one) [sic] who does abominable things” (Rev. 21.27). Under José Arcadio Buendía, Macondo is “a truly happy village where no one was over thirty years of age and where no one had died” (Solitude 9–10). Under Christ, New Jerusalem is heaven where “there shall be no more death or mourning” (Rev. 21.4–22). While vital, José Arcadio Buendía is Christ-like. He is righteously salvific. José Arcadio Buendía’s analogy with unpresented Christ illustrates Solitude’s worldview: vital man, not Christ, saves man. However, José Arcadio Buendía rapidly devolves from Christ-like vitality to completely introverted fecklessness. His devolution illustrates Solitude’s exhortation against sin: only vital man saves man. Devitalized man damns man. José Arcadio Buendía saves Macondo only while vital, and his vitality is partial and brief. His discovery that the earth is round occurs amid endless speculation, “without having to leave his study” while “Úrsula and the children broke their backs in the garden” (4–5). His “plan to move Macondo to a better place” ends “in a web of pretexts, disappointments, and evasion until it turned into nothing but an illusion” (14). His attempt to connect Macondo to the world leaves him and his followers wandering “like sleepwalkers through a universe of grief” (12). His attempt to alchemically double Úrsula’s gold produces “a thick and pestilential syrup” (8). He is eventually “dragged off by his imagination into a perpetual delirium from which he would not recover” (84). José Arcadio Buendía’s sins of violence, lust,
deception, and ignorance degrade and nullify his early, salvific vitality. Deception and ignorance are presented throughout *Solitude* as most damning, directly causing José Arcadio Buendía’s final introverted fecklessness. His final degraded state analogizes directly with Arcas’ imprisoned animality.

Before founding Macondo, José Arcadio Buendía pivotally murders Prudencio Aguilar for mocking José Arcadio Buendía’s unconsummated marriage (23–4). The murder is forebodingly animal and enclosed, occurring in a cockpit with the jaguar hunting spear thrown “with the strength of a bull” (24). José Arcadio Buendía and Úrsula afterwards consummate their marriage over the spear, in a breeze “loaded with the weeping of Prudencio Aguilar’s kin” (24). The spear and weeping ritualistically unite their sex, and their self-deception regarding their incest, with the murder’s violence. Prudencio Aguilar’s ghost symbolizes this violence, and embodies the violence’s memory. Prudencio Aguilar haunts José Arcadio Buendía and Úrsula with “nostalgia” and “immense desolation” (25). Prudencio Aguilar is a specifically memorial image of violence’s desolation. José Arcadio Buendía’s threat to kill Prudencio Aguilar’s ghost, and later killing of his own “magnificent fighting cocks” and burial of the jaguar spear, symbolize José Arcadio Buendía’s willed forgetting (25–6). José Arcadio Buendía “kills” and “buries” symbolic “reminders.” His willed forgetting is increasing self-deception. José Arcadio Buendía’s final willful self-deception occurs when burying the bones of Rebecca’s parents. After burying the bones, José Arcadio Buendía feels “free of a burden that for a moment had weighed on his conscience as much as the memory of Prudencio Aguilar” (83). Happy, he tells Rebecca to similarly “Get those thoughts out of your head” (83). Days later, Rebecca tends José Arcadio Buendía while he mentally disintegrates
(84). His insanity is the ironically retributive consequence of his willed forgetting. By willing to forget, José Arcadio Buendía’s wills himself into “forgetting’s signified unconscious oblivion.

Solitude presents José Arcadio Buendía’s insane oblivion as further exhortatively retributive by presenting it as the occasion of Prudencio Aguilar’s return (84). José Arcadio Buendía not only wills himself insane. By so doing he inflicts upon himself all that his forgetting was supposed to prevent. Delirious José Arcadio Buendía loses awareness of time as he and Prudencio Aguilar befriend each other (84). José Arcadio Buendía’s attempt to forget and thereby redeem his history deprives him of historical consciousness altogether, leaving only exactly what he tried to forget. After a sleepless night calling to Prudencio Aguilar, José Arcadio Buendía smashes his laboratory and workshop with “savage violence” (84–5). The violence José Arcadio Buendía tried to forget overtakes him as devitalizing savagery. While “barking” and “giving off a green froth at the mouth,” José Arcadio Buendía is tied to a tree and left “under a shelter of palm branches” (84–6). The unrestrained lust he tried to forget overtakes him as imprisoning, gross animality. These consequences of José Arcadio Buendía’s forgetting maximize at his death. Prudencio Aguilar returns at José Arcadio Buendía’s death to discuss with him “fighting cocks” and an afterlife partnership in breeding more “magnificent birds” (152). Prudencio Aguilar feeds José Arcadio Buendía and tells José Arcadio Buendía “splendid news of an unknown person called Aureliano,” José Arcadio Buendía’s son (152). Prudencio Aguilar remains “in the room of reality” while leading José Arcadio Buendía into death, “an intermediate room” José Arcadio Buendía thinks is “the real room” (153). At death, José Arcadio Buendía knows and expects only whom he
most wanted to forget—whom is by then more vital and historically conscious than himself. José Arcadio Buendía dies regressed to a sardonically nihilist “state of total innocence,” forgetting’s unconscious oblivion (86). His final state directly opposes his early vitality. Unlike Christ who wills to be “lifted up” on a cross, José Arcadio Buendía remains under the tree until his death throws “not because he wanted to but because it was the habit of his body” (John 3.14; 18.11; Solitude 152–3). He dies devitalized and imprisoned in unconsciousness. He is dehumanized. Solitude presents no human soul beyond the will and mind. Thus, feckless, unconscious José Arcadio Buendía is an animal. His degradation is Solitude’s image of damnation. Appropriately, the Jovian flower rain at his death “smothered the animals who slept outdoors” (154).

José Arcadio Buendía ends a “Terrible Father,” the “masculine-negative side of the First Parents” (Jung Origins 185). The terrible father archetype symbolizes any “principle that disintegrates consciousness” and “fixes it in a wrong direction,” any “devouring force” “of self-destruction” and “will to regression” that must “be killed” (178–86). José Arcadio Buendía’s willed forgetting of his violent lust dissolves his mind after fixing it to toward regression into unconscious, animal oblivion. José Arcadio Buendía’s sins are a damned, devouring force that Solitude’s ending catastrophe retributively, violently kills. He becomes a nihilistic God image of death, an inverted image of Christ who “was life” (John 1.4).

José Arcadio Buendía’s degeneration from salvific God to condemned terrible father is comparable to Inferno’s vision of hell as New Jerusalem’s opposite. As heaven’s opposite, hell is more horrific, being objectively horrible but comparatively torturous. Hell’s sinners suffer more for lacking God. Revelation likewise prefaces its tribulation
visions with warnings that Christ’s rejection precludes salvation’s bliss, in addition to
ensuring the visions’ depicted torment (chapters 1 through 3). Revelation’s finale of
salvation immediately follows its climax of judgment, reiterating the contrast (19.11–
21.1). Revelation, Inferno, and Solitude alike show damnation as salvation’s
consequently more painful inverse. In Revelation, damnation is loss of God’s salvific
bliss. In Inferno, loss of God’s bliss worsens damnation’s horror. In Solitude,
damnation’s horror causes bliss’ devoured ruin. Solitude mimics Revelation and Inferno
by presenting José Arcadio Buendía’s damnation as objectively fearful, but
comparatively terrifying for depriving him and Macondo of conditions analogous to
salvation. Solitude’s exhortation against his sin thus compels with the strength of
eschatological hope.

Every male Buendía is a new terrible father. For example, the terrible father is
often pictured as a character with “overwhelming aggressiveness of phallic instinct”
(Jung Origins 186). José Arcadio and Aureliano Babilonia accordingly have abnormally
large phalluses with which they commit incest. The terrible father is also often pictured
as “a destructive monster” (186). Aureliano Babilonia’s son, the last Buendía, is a
“mythological animal that was to bring the line to an end” (Solitude 447). Importantly,
the terrible father is often pictured as “the twin” (Jung Origins 186). Twin terrible fathers
particularly represent self-destructive, regressive will (186). Twins Aureliano Segundo
and José Arcadio Segundo accordingly inherit only “the defects of the family and none of
the virtues” (Solitude 205). In them the Buendía sins are particularly “concentrated”
(Solitude 205). As terrible fathers like José Arcadio Buendía, every male Buendía is
violent, lustful, deceptive, ignorant, and damned (205, 78–9). All inherit José Arcadio
Buendía’s appetite for “war, fighting cocks, bad women,” and “wild undertakings” that is “the downfall of their line” (205, 78–9). However, only the Aurelianos are preponderantly violent. Only the José Arcadios preponderantly lust. Twin terrible fathers Aureliano Segundo and José Arcadio Segundo illustrate this clearly. As children the twins are physically identical and transposed (197–8). José Arcadio Segundo is raised as Aureliano Segundo, and vice versa. Aureliano Segundo grows “to monumental size like his grandfathers,” the José Arcadios (198). “José’s” official meaning, as Spanish for Hebrew “Yoseph,” is “he will enlarge.” Meanwhile, José Arcadio Segundo is “bony like the colonel” Aureliano Buendía (198). When the twins simultaneously die, their corpses are “placed in identical coffins,” which are “mixed up” and buried “in the wrong graves” (Solitude 381; González Bermejo 14). The twins are sardonically correctly identified only “in death” (14). The twins reveal their transposition in life by displaying sins “correspond to the Aurelianos and the José Arcadios, switched around” (14). Aureliano Segundo plays “the accordion at his concubine’s noisy parties,” while José Arcadio Segundo is “a cockfight man” (Solitude 205). Aureliano Segundo shudders “at the idea of witnessing” the execution José Arcadio Segundo longs to see (199). Aureliano Segundo acts like a lustful José Arcadio and José Arcadio Segundo acts like a violent Aureliano. This leads Úrsula to “suspect” the twins are “shuffled like a deck of cards,” which is true (198). The Aurelianos and José Arcadios are recurrent twin terrible fathers. The Aurelianos are violent and exemplarily self-destruct. The José Arcadios lust and exemplarily regress.

The Buendía twins duly illustrate respective self-destruction and regression. Furthermore,

1 The Josés express “José’s” mythic metonymy in Solitude and Hebrew meaning. This equality implicitly equates Judeo-Christianity with myth.
Solitude’s report of Aureliano Segundo’s misidentification highlights his real identity and thus anomalous fatherhood. He is notably not Aureliano Segundo, but rather José Arcadio Segundo, when he fathers Renata “Meme” Remedios, the last José Arcadio, and Amaranta Úrsula. The real Aureliano Segundo therefore notably is not their father and is like previous Aurelianos. No Aurelianos produce surviving children. All are effectively sterile. They self-destruct. Only the José Arcadios perpetuate “the Buendía line” (Halka 16; González Bermejo 14). Every José Arcadio sustains the family’s mythic analogy, and his inherited analogy with Jove, by producing an analogue Arcas. Every José Arcadio continues the family regression. Violent self-destruction and lustful regression equal only in José Arcadio Buendía and Aureliano Babilonia. José Arcadio Buendía’s murder self-destructively begins the family’s incestuous regression. Aureliano Babilonia’s incest regressively ends the family’s violent self-destruction. José Arcadio Buendía and Aureliano Babilonia bracket Solitude’s condemnation of the Buendías’ sins. The Aurelianos illustrate Solitude’s portrayal of violence as a self-destructive force. The José Arcadios illustrate Solitude’s portrayal of lust as a regressive force. The first, last, and collected intermediate Buendías illustrate Solitude’s portrayal of all their sin as an eminently self-destructive and regressive force that is as damning as Revelation’s Christ, “the beginning and the end,” is salvific (Rev.2 1.6).

Colonel Aureliano Buendía is Solitude’s exemplary self-destructive terrible father. He inherits and maximizes José Arcadio Buendía’s self-destructive violence. Colonel Aureliano Buendía’s character is Solitude’s strongest exhortation against violence, particularly military violence. His violent militarism destroys and sterilizes him. His name indicates his fate. “Aureliano,” is Spanish for Latin “Aurelianus,” a form of
"Aurelius," the given name of Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Marcus Aurelius was a renowned stoic philosopher who ruled Rome’s most peaceful and “happiest” era (Healy). During the Pax Romana, Marcus Aurelius “easily repelled” most attacks (Healy). During the plague’s later “devastation” and an eventual war of “threatening proportions,” he “obtained a glorious victory” in which “his enemies were hopelessly overthrown” (Healy). Marcus Aurelius is remembered for these accomplishments as one of antiquity’s “best men” (Healy). Colonel Aureliano Buendía begins somewhat literally analogous to Marcus Aurelius. Young Colonel Aureliano Buendía is Solitude’s analogue stoic. He is “clairvoyant,” repressed, and ethical (Solitude 55). He is symbolically “born with his eyes open” (15). He makes accurate prophesies (45). In adolescence, he is only vicariously sexual and a virgin into adulthood (33–55). He has “patience” (47). As a young man, he is unable to “understand how people arrived at the extreme of waging war” and joins the war only out of sympathy for “the rights of natural children” and distaste for an election fraud (104–5). After joining the war, Colonel Aureliano Buendía becomes Marcus Aurelius’ opposite. Colonel Aureliano Buendía grows ignorant, superstitious, lustful, and unethical. When he accepts a war death, his clairvoyance “abandoned him” (138). He cannot see the lab’s supernaturalism and is the only Buendía blind to José Arcadio Buendía’s ghost (260). He takes reports from “inside the chalk circle that his aides had drawn” on the floor (182). He fathers seventeen illegitimate sons with seventeen different mothers (113). He wears boots covered with “dried blood” and “a holster with the flap open” so his hand may be “always on the butt of the pistol” (170). He leaves Macondo to his nephew, “the cruelest ruler that Macondo had ever known” (112–5). He ends “a man capable of anything,” openly fighting empty wars “only for
power,” and “rotting alive” with a “metallic hardness” like “the coldness of his insides” (170–83). His final character is only most superficially, literally connotative of Marcus Aurelius’ name. “Aurelius” is Latin for “little golden one.” Colonel Aureliano Buendía repeatedly mints and recycles “little gold fishes” (113). Colonel Aureliano Buendía devolves from aspirational similarity with Marcus Aurelius to Marcus Aurelius’ antithesis.

Colonel Aureliano Buendía’s retribution for violent antipathy with Marcus Aurelius’ peace is condemned antipathy with Marcus Aurelius’ veneration. Colonel Aureliano Buendía is totally historically obliterated by a self-destructive, sardonically hyperbolic form of Marcus Aurelius’ urged stoic abstinence. Colonel Aureliano Buendía is a total failure. He organizes “thirty-two armed uprisings,” all of which fail (112). By his first capture, “[o]f the twenty-one men who had followed him to war, fourteen fell in combat, six were wounded, and only one accompanied him at the final moment of defeat” (134). He is utterly unfruitful. All of his children die before him. His first son Aureliano José dies of a gunshot in the back (156–68). His unborn twins die with their mother (94). His enemies “exterminate” sixteen of his war sons “on a single night before the oldest one had reached the age of thirty-five” (113; 257–8). The seventeenth, Aureliano Amador, temporarily escapes by vanishing into the “labyrinth of the mountains” for decades (258–9). But he emerges only to be immediately rejected unrecognized by the last José Arcadio and Aureliano Babilonia and shot twice in the head (402–3). None of Colonel Aureliano Buendía’s sons are fathers. Colonel Aureliano Buendía even lacks a heroic death. He dies while urinating “like a baby chick” and is discovered because of the “descending vultures” (286–7). Colonel Aureliano Buendía’s memory is eventually
repressed (even by some Buendías) as “anarchist,” his photograph misattributed to a “tartar warrior,” and his historical existence brushed off by Macondo’s residents as that of “a figure invented by the government as a pretext for killing Liberals” (347, 75; 419). Colonel Aureliano Buendía’s self-inflicted obliteration condemns his violence with the strength of Marcus Aurelius’ millennial veneration, like José Arcadio Buendía’s anti-Christic doom condemns his sin with the strength of eschatological hope. Colonel Aureliano Buendía’s violence obliterates his analogy with Marcus Aurelius, depriving Colonel Aureliano Buendía of analogous glory, and Macondo of analogous amity.

Violence, particularly militarism, appears eminently destructive of desired glory and amity, and is thus discouraged with those desires’ weight. All Aurelianos inherit Colonel Aureliano Buendía’s name and, as their names indicate, his sterilized fate. Solitude reiterates its condemnation of violent militarism with each Aureliano’s death.

Historical awareness worsens Colonel Aureliano Buendía’s obliteration. He suffers “torment” over his “desolate wasteland of glory” and in “rage” confesses his self-destruction by repeating, “A person [screws] himself up” (141; 260). Similarly, José Arcadio Buendía is initially “tormented” by Prudencio Aguilar’s “immense desolation” (25). But José Arcadio Buendía then becomes unconscious of history and Prudencio Aguilar’s desolation and, so, untroubled. Colonel Aureliano Buendía is troubled until death with “inescapable memories” (286). Then only does he fall “into the trap of nostalgia” and oblivion (286). Colonel Aureliano Buendía’s damnation is thus worse than his father’s. Unlike José Arcadio Buendía, but like Revelation and Inferno’s sinners, Colonel Aureliano Buendía knows he is damned and lacks saved glory. Like those sinners’, his knowledge hurts him more. Unlike any, Colonel Aureliano Buendía also
knows his devitalization condemns him further. To his confession that man “[screws] himself up,” Colonel Aureliano Buendía adds, “and he can’t do anything about it” (141). Colonel Aureliano Buendía’s “blind and directionless rage” accompanies a “broad feeling of impotence” (259–60). Self-consciousness tortures him. He despairs of salvation because he cannot save himself, not because he lacks God’s grace. He illustrates *Solitude*’s vision that devitalized man damns man. His admission of damned devitalization also betrays his degenerated historical perspective. Young Colonel Aureliano Buendía prophesies while learning “the art of silver work to perfection” and discovering a solution to the insomnia plague (51). Similarly, young José Arcadio Buendía sees Macondo’s future while working with Melquíades on numerous scientific inventions (58). When vital, Colonel Aureliano Buendía and José Arcadio Buendía are prophetic. Both are historically aware. Both can see and thus *effect* the future. They can save themselves. Devitalized, violent Colonel Aureliano Buendía sees only historical desolation. Rage makes him “close his eyes,” which then return to “the burning coals that had startled those who had seen him born” only when seeing his sixteen sons’ death (141; 259–60). He reawakens merely to historical loss. Devitalized, self-deceived José Arcadio Buendía neither sees nor effects history. Each man suffers oblivion directly opposed to his lost historical power. Once prophetic Colonel Aureliano Buendía is devoured by violence and damned to historical oblivion. Once salvific José Arcadio Buendía is devoured by self-deception and damned to personal oblivion.

Deception damns Macondo. The Buendíass and Macondo’s every deception achieves destructive retribution opposite intended results. José Arcadio Buendía self-deceptively denies his incest to commit it, and represses his past to escape it, and thereby
begins the family destruction, squanders salvation, and imprisons himself in oblivion. Colonel Aureliano Buendía self-deceptively blinds himself to his violence to attain just glory. He thereby gains ignominious injustice, squanders potential great leadership, and leaves himself aware of only violence’s desolation. Fernanda deceptively hides Meme’s affair and Aureliano Babilonia’s identity to contain scandalous vice. Her deception enables Aureliano Babilonia and Amaranta Úrsula’s more scandalous incest. Beyond the family, the banana company deceptively denies the bananeras’ hardship. The deception builds to ironically hyperbolic “solemn decrees that the workers did not exist” (324). The bananeras respond by striking (324–5). The company and government respond with slaughter (326–9). The slaughter is deceptively concealed en masse. The mass deception ends with the ironically hyperbolic assertion that “Nothing has happened in Macondo, nothing has ever happened, and nothing ever will happen” (333–7). Macondo is thereafter retributively “crumbled” for “four years, eleven months, and two days” by constant, “destructive storms” and “hurricanes” that “knocked down walls and uprooted every last plant of the banana groves” (339). The company’s attempt to prevent financial loss incites supernatural retribution costing the company all workers, facilities, and product. Macondo’s attempt to prevent company and government punitive action incites the same retribution nearly obliterating Macondo. Every lie is punished with extreme realization of either the lie itself or the truth concealed. Macondo’s lies are its own damnation.

Incest correlates with and symbolizes Macondo’s deception. Incest is Solitude’s most eminent exhortation against deception. The Buendías are as chronically incestuous as they are self-deceptive and ignorant. Incest precedes cousins José Arcadio Buendía and Úrsula’s incestuous marriage and continues to the last adult generation (22–8; 426–
José Arcadio Buendía and Úrsula’s first son, José Arcadio, pseudo-incestuously marries his adopted sister Rebeca (100–2). His son Arcadio lusts for his own mother Pilar Ternera (122). Colonel Aureliano Buendía’s son Aureliano José, also mothered by Pilar Ternera, has a nearly-consummated affair of “unrelieved excitement” with his aunt Amaranta (156–64). Aureliano Babilonia and his aunt Amaranta Úrsula are lovers who suspect they are siblings and produce the last Buendía (439–3). The Buendías’ incest corresponds with their deceptions and ignorance. This is revealed at Solitude’s close. When Aureliano Babilonia sees his dead son, he freeze’s “not because he was paralyzed by horror,” but because “Melquíades’ final keys were revealed to him” (445–6). Sight of his son reveals the parchments’ meaning, which includes the his son’s meaning. Inspired, Aureliano Babilonia reads first that “Amaranta Úrsula was not his sister but his aunt” (447). He learns the truth of his incest and concealed identity at once. He reads that his son, conceived “through the most intricate labyrinths of blood,” was destined to initiate this revelatory reading (447). Aureliano Babilonia learns that incest’s revelation and concealed history’s revelation are reciprocal. He last reads that his son was destined to bring “the line to the end” at the same “prodigious instant” Aureliano Babilonia “would finish deciphering the parchments” (447–8). He learns that incest and concealment of history end simultaneously. The Buendías’ incest and deceptions are finally revealed as corresponding and thus correlatively revealed and ended.

Incest’s connection with deception in Solitude reflects incest’s common symbolism and matrix. Incest is seen as “preeminently symbolic” (Willner 138). It is regarded by anthropologists as “a subject about which species-wide generalizations could be made” (135). Vast majorities of people connect incest “with a variable freight of life’s
fears, sorrows and of myth and belief about them” (152). Incest inspires uniquely profound feelings of “secrecy and shame” (137). Consequently, voluntarily incestuous family members avoid these feelings with complicit secrecy. Involuntarily incestuous family members maintain secrecy under threat, compulsion, and pretence of protecting others. Even “non-participating members” of families in which incest takes place “actively deny the incest” to avoid these feelings “and thereby crystallize the family relations in which [incest] occurs” (146). Voluntarily incestuous and non-incestuous family members alike defend “against loss” with denial that fosters “the climate which stimulates” incest and its losses (146). Repeated incest therefore “makes statements” about the “disorder” of family and social relationships (142). Recurrent incest normally triggers recurrent repression, which promotes more incest, etc. Thus families and communities’ frequent incest indicates and symbolizes their repressive, historically unconscious, and deceptive tendencies. Incest is therefore a profoundly precise and exhortative symbol of the Buendías’ historical deceptions and repression. Incest indicates these tendencies exactly and adds to Solitude’s exhortation against them the force of primal disgust.

Incest evidences the Buendías’ mental disorder. Their incest and mental disorder manifest as physical devolution. Incest “results from and expresses psychological disturbance” (Willner 146). Accordingly, numerous Buendías (incestuous or not) are psychologically disturbed. José Arcadio Buendía is insane for decades. Colonel Aureliano Buendía is consumed by rage. He is also a pedophile. Colonel Aureliano Buendía’s attraction to his juvenile wife Remedios begins when she is only nine (Solitude 63–4; 87–8). Colonel Aureliano Buendía’s pedophilia is “a physical sensation that almost
bothered him when he walked” and in fact spawns his life-long rage (64; 103). As a child, Rebecca only eats “damp earth” and “the cake of the whitewash that she picked off the walls” (46). Amaranta’s affair with Aureliano José is unconsummated only because of her lifelong, morbidly unyielding and bitterly heartbroken, fearful virginity (80–1; 121; 236, 86; 303). Amaranta’s name, Greek for “unfading,” ironically symbolizes her frigidity, which ironically caricatures mythic Penelope’s undying love. Amaranta spends her last years “absorbed” in “weaving” from “flax” the “magnificent shroud” in which she is buried (271, 77; 303). Remedios the Beauty derisively caricatures Virgin Mary. Remedios the Beauty ascends a “mentally retarded” virgin who haphazardly walks naked and paints “little animals on the walls with a stick daubed in her own excrement” (214, 55). Before “seraphic” José Arcadio Segundo’s insane hermeticism, in which his bald head is, symbolically, literally “devoured,” he is “taken” with bestiality (202–6337).

Traumatized Meme, is mute (316). The last José Arcadio is abhorrent.¹ He fosters “concupiscent” fantasies about his great-aunt Amaranta (393–401). While “thinking about Amaranta,” he is intimately tended by four preteen boys whom “came out naked from the bedroom, drained the pool, and filled it with champagne” and then fell “sleeping in a naked heap” (399–401). He whips their nakedness with his “ecclesiastical cat-o’nine

¹ The last José Arcadio is, “like his mother,” only more intensely, a personificative criticism of Catholicism (393). He purports to be a priest and has “the same artificial appearance as the hair on the saints” (393–401). His mother Fernanda similarly arrives as a mock Catholic icon “sovereign of bangles and crepe paper” with “legitimate authority” (214–7). She is rigidly frigid after receiving “no news of the world” until puberty (213–4, 21). She observes “venereal abstinence” on “Holy Week, Sundays, holy days of obligation, first Fridays, retreats, sacrifices, and cyclical impediments,” reducing her sexually “effective year” to “forty-two days” (224–5). Her name is Spanish and Italian for “a peaceful venture over the hill,” ironically symbolizing her husband Aureliano Segundo’s pursuit of her “highland accent” across “a hallucinated plateau” into “labyrinths of disappointment” (224; 447).
tails” and later dies “enormous and bloated and still thinking about Amaranta” (404). Incest, “bestiality, homosexuality, rape, adultery, fornication and so on” are as a rule considered grave violations of “sacred values” and “social and moral order” (Willner 137). Sacred values and rules differentiate “culture from nature” (137). Sex crimes such as the Buendías’ violate and erode this distinction (137). Amoral and perverse Buendías devolve. Similarly, José Arcadio Buendía’s prototypical insanity regresses him from salvific humanity to animal oblivion. Other insane Buendías similarly do, and are doomed to, regress. Thus, the Buendías’ perversities and mental disorder equivalently accomplish the Buendías’ dehumanization. Perverse Buendías lose human moral and social standing. Absent social vitality, they are devitalized and dehumanized within Solitude’s vision. They are condemned to “solitude” (448). Insane, unconscious, devitalized Buendías lose the mental vitality Solitude posits as definitionally human and salvific. The Buendía’s physical devolution merely physically evidences the Buendías’ mental, moral state.

The Buendías’ physical devolution is retribution. Throughout Solitude, Úrsula issues “frightening admonitions” that the Buendías will “suffer the shame of breeding iguanas” for their incest (22; 443). Female Buendías likewise warn that incestuous progeny will “be born with the tail of a pig” (163; 248). Male Buendías counter, “I don’t care if I have piglets” or “armadillos” (23; 163). The women willingly give in. The Buendías’ devolution is willingly, if ignorantly and self-deceptively, self-inflicted. Meme gives “herself out of rebellion” to Mauricio Babilonia who “mercilessly” pulls her into and “animal-state” to conceive Aureliano Babilonia amid a butterfly swarm and scorpions vividly symbolizing the family’s ironically devolving metamorphosis (308–
13). Aureliano Babilonia is left “breathless” by Amaranta Úrsula’s “sisterly embrace” (414). Only after they conceive the last Buendía is he “tormented by the certainty that he was his wife’s brother” and does she feel a “twinge of horror in her heart” (439). The family history of assents to incest, lust, and myriad other sins, culminate in the last Buendía’s birth. The birth evokes a primal ceremony like José Arcadio Buendía and Úrsula’s prototypical consummation. While dying from an “uncontainable torrent” of blood, Amaranta Úrsula is “mistreated with wild gallops” by a “smiling mistress” who “straddled her stomach” and “recited cauterizing prayers that were infallible for man and beast” (442-3). Amaranta Úrsula dies and receives a “halo of alabaster” after birthing the final, fatal “mythological animal” “predisposed” to “cleanse” the family “of its pernicious vices” (442-7). The Buendías’ vices are “the downfall of their line” (205, 78–9). Archetypical evil “makes us feel ourselves to be the victims in the very act that makes us guilty” (Ricoeur 200). This is the Buendías’ story. They are evil. Their evil torments them.

García Márquez calls Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*, “the most important book in my life” (Guibert 41). In 1996, García Márquez said he “recently realized I could adopt it to the reality of Colombia” (Paxman 181). But he also admits attempting “writing something to be called *Oedipus the Mayor*” years before (Guibert 41). García Márquez says he only writes after “I have the story and structure completely worked out’ (Simons “Politics” 157). He attributes to *Oedipus* “a perfect structure, where the investigator find that he himself is the murderer” (Paxman 181). This suggests *Solitude*’s derivation from *Oedipus*. This suggested derivation highlights *Solitude* and *Oedipus*’ shared themes. All names in *Oedipus* “have a common feature” of “hypothetical meanings” (Lévi-Strauss
1.215). All “refer to difficulties in walking straight and standing upright” (1.215). 

*Oedipus* famously displays “blood relations that are overemphasized, that is, are more intimate than they should be” (Lévi-Strauss 1.215). Like *Solitude’s*, these incestuous relationships compose *Oedipus’s* final revelation. Importantly, *Oedipus* depicts “fate beyond the control of man” (Neumann *Origins* 164). It presents an eschatological expectation of “total dependence upon fate” (164). *Solitude* presents this darkly. It projects an eschatological expectation of hopeless, nihilist, fated doom.

*Solitude* is a postmodern representation of ancient, mythic eschatological concepts. *Solitude* recounts a sort of Orphic myth as an apocalypse. Orphic myths present all material creation as “evil” (Ricoeur 202). They imagine the “body-as-prison” and existence as “infernal punishment, as if life in the body were the image of hell” (202). In Orphic mythology, “Life is then a death, which calls for a death that will be true life” (202). This eschatological and historical conception is a precise inversion of the Christian historical view. The Christian historical vision evolves from and combines the ancient cyclical and Messianic linear views. The Christian is always, constantly saved by repetition of Christ’s archetypal righteousness. The Christian simultaneously progresses toward final salvation from history. The Buendías, foremost José Arcadio Buendía, are *Solitude’s* anti-Christ. All Buendías are always, constantly damned by repetition of José Arcadio Buendía’s archetypal sins. All simultaneously progress towards final, nihilistic “salvation” from, through obliteration out of, history. The Buendías are always, constantly, and finally damned to and within history for their failure to save themselves from it.

*Solitude* mythologizes García Márquez’s understanding of Latin American social
disintegration. In this myth, Latin American disintegration is caused by “persistent and repeated […] forgetting and repressing” of “the past” (Taylor 98). Macondo represents Latin America plagued with general “ignorance, official repression and other outside forces” that “prevent a consciousness of history from developing” and thus foster catastrophe (98). The Buendías represent Latin Americans, whom are therefore presented as afflicted with “psychological patterns” that profoundly “inhibit” their “abilities to see the past in other than extremely personal and destructive ways” (98). These destructive historical visions foster sin. **Solitude** counters this historical unconsciousness with apotheosis of historical awareness and mental vitality. **Solitude** begins with Colonel Aureliano Buendía’s memory and ends with Aureliano Babilonia’s final revelatory “act of reading” that “is, simultaneously, an act of memory, of recovering the past” (**Solitude** 1; 446–8; Palencia-Roth 356–60). Archival writing, reading, and remembrance are continually depicted as “preservative” “acts of reclamation” (Palencia-Roth 354). **Solitude** poses them as stimulus for reclamation of a “lucid consciousness of the West,” a version of which **Solitude** mythically offers (González Echevarría 376). **Solitude** presents a “clearly achieved historicity in the face of the circularity and repetition” that prompts audiences to analogize their history with **Solitude**’s and take warning (González Echevarría 376). **Solitude**’s deeply nihilistic vision is given is as a personally warning shock.

The Buendías’ nihilist history enacts exactly the modern critique of all previous historical conceptions. The modern view sees ancient man imprisoned by “the mythical horizon of archetypes and repetition, with his creative impotence” (Eliade *Cosmos* 155–6). Ancient man cannot act on history and is effectively sterile because condemned to
repetition of the past. Yet, this critical view also sees “everything” “denied” to the modern man “except the freedom to make history,” which history itself precludes (156). Modernity’s population density, information saturation, and consequently overabundant and dark historical awareness create existential and aspirational despair. Moreover, modern man’s history “is not only irreversible but constitutes human existence” (Eliade Cosmos 157). Regenerative salvation of history is not attainable for the modern man as it is for the ancient, continually saved man. Modern man neither effects history nor escapes history through any means but self-destruction.

The Buendías’ retributive destruction is apocalyptically typical. As discussed above, numerous apocalypses including Inferno present sinners punished with the exemplary physical manifestation of their sins. Revelation’s tormenting locusts appear human (9.3–9). Inferno’s suicides becomes bodiless plants (XIII.22–108). In Revelation, Inferno, and Solitude, “the inner state of the damned” becomes “a physical reality” (Ciardi xiv). Solitude envisions a nihilist, secular, postmodern reinterpretation of apocalyptic divine retribution. The Buendías retributively physically manifest their mental and moral, not any spiritual, conditions. The Buendías, not God, inflict retribution upon the Buendías. The Buendías, not God, damn the Buendías to history. Yet the Buendías do experience supernatural retribution illustrating Solitude’s moral, eschatological, and cosmological scope. This experience is consistent with that presented in normative apocalypses. Also like such apocalypses, Solitude presents all creation, not merely sinners’ bodies, supernaturally, physically manifesting sinners’ condition and accomplishing their punishment. The Buendías are ultimately wiped out by “the wrath of the biblical hurricane” (447). Before this, they suffer plagues, mass disasters, and
catastrophic storms (49; 328–37; 339–40). They are imprisoned in Macondo. No Buendías successfully leave (see Fig. 14). Macondo is “surrounded by water on all sides” (13). It is symbolically submersed in chaos. When any Buendía passes the water, he or she returns or disappears in mind if not in body. José Arcadio, leaves as a gypsy, returns as a sailor, and is mysteriously shot to death (37, 97–8, 145). Úrsula leaves to find him, fails, returns, and lets in the world’s corruption (37–40). Colonel Aureliano leaves on a war campaign and returns destroyed. His seventeen sons born outside Macondo are killed in single night. Aureliano Segundo leaves on a quest to find the most beautiful woman in the world and returns with cold and rigid Fernanda (217–325). He leaves and returns again to die of possibly venereal “steel crabs that were eating his throat” (380). José Arcadio Segundo is shipped out in a boxcar full of murdered workers and returns an ostracized lunatic (329–31). Remedios the Beauty spontaneously ascends into the sky and is never heard of again. Traumatized, mute Meme is sent to a nunnery into which she vanishes (315–9). The last José Arcadio is sent to Europe for papal education and returns detestable and to be murdered (389-94). Amaranta Úrsula is also sent for an education and returns to die birthing the last Buendía (405).

Macondo is hell. García Márquez confesses, “if you give a writer the choice of living in heaven or hell, he chooses hell . . . there’s much more literary material there” (Guibert 56). Macondo is García Márquez’s nihilist, inversion of Revelation’s New Jerusalem. Angels cry in Revelation, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great. She has become a haunt for demons. She is a cage for every unclean spirit, a cage for every unclean bird” (18.2). José Arcadio Buendía “filled not only his own house but all those in the village with troupials, canaries, bee eaters, and redbreasts” immediately after Macondo’s
founding (10). The “concert of so many different birds became so disturbing that Úrsula would plug her ears with beeswax so as not to lose her sense of reality” (10). Amaranta Úrsula later repeats this. She returns from Europe in Solitude’s last pages with “twenty-five pairs of canaries so that she could repopulate the skies of Macondo” (407). This is called “most lamentable” (407). Also, Aureliano Babilonia is fathered by Mauricio Babilonia. “Mauricio” is a form of Roman “Maurus,” meaning “moor” or “black man.” Babilonia is Spanish for “Babylon.” Thus, a “black man of Babylon” fathers the last adult Buendía. Revelation’s “black horse” and “rider” with “a scale in his hand” symbolize anticipated cataclysmic economic injustice (6.5–6). Mauricio Babilonia has “tarnished hands and nails that had been shattered by rough work” (305). Macondo is a nihilist merge of Revelation’s New Jerusalem and Babylon. Revelation’s Babylon is “thrown down, and will never be found again” (Rev. 18.21). Macondo is “wiped out by the wind and exiled from the memory of men” (Solitude 448). García Márquez grew up near a town diacritically called “Macondo” (Guibert 31; “Macondo”). However García Márquez also claims he can write “only on condition that I find the right name for each character” (157). He says, “If I don’t have the name that exactly suits the character, it doesn’t come alive. I don’t see it” (Simons “Politics” 157). This suggest Macondo’s more than circumstantial naming. “Macondo” in fact means what Macondo is. “Ma” is a North African and Levantine Arabic negative prefix. “Condo” is Latin for “to build” or “to erect.” Thus, “Macondo” means “to not build” or “to not erect.” “Macondo” means “to deconstruct” or “to fall down.” José Arcadio Buendía corroborates this. He names Macondo while leading his followers on his twenty-six month, wandering exodus from Riohacha. Colonel Aureliano Buendía recalls when “they camped beside the river, his
father’s host had the look of a shipwrecked people with no escape” (Solitude 26). That night, Macondo’s name comes to José Arcadio Buendía in a dream of “a noisy city with houses having mirror walls” (26–7). As punishment for breaking the Sinai tablets, God tells Moses “look out to the west, and to the north, and to the south, and to the east. Look well, for you shall not cross this river Jordan” (Deut. 3.27). In Genesis, God tells Abraham, “I am making you the father of a host of nations” (17.5). North African and Levantine Arabic is the language of Israel, Palestine, and Jordan. Latin is the language in which lucidly insane José Arcadio Buendía successfully begins “to break down the priest’s faith with rationalist tricks” (Solitude 91). Thus, the languages in which Macondo is named reveal Macondo’s identity. Macondo is a punitive denial of salvation by God, a denial made to a man who broke the commandments and leads a lost people, a people who live in a damned city reflecting their image, and city finally revealing that there is no God. “Macondo” is a place that “falls down.”

V. CONCLUSION

Apocalypses depict men “incapable of arriving at true understanding by their own efforts” (Yarbro Collins Apocalypse 4). They present man “alienated from the creator,” thus, wisdom “is not something” man “can arrive at through observation or reflection” alone (4). Wisdom must be provided, or rather, mediated. Apocalypses illustrate mediation. Most commonly, angels and books (or scrolls) provide wisdom to seers, as they do in Revelation.¹ Inferno’s mediating spirit Virgil precedes Purgatorio and Paradiso’s mediator Beatrice, whom precedes Paradiso’s last mediator St. Bernard (see

¹ See Rev. 1.11; 5.1, 5; 7.13–7; 10.2, 8–10; 17.7–18; 19.9–10; 21.9–10; and 22.10.
Purgatorio XXX.49–73 and Paradiso XXXI.64–96). Solitude’s mediator Melquíades produces Solitude’s central mediating parchments. Most importantly, apocalypses conduct mediation. They are themselves mediating books. John is commanded, “Do not seal up the prophetic words of this book […] The righteous must still do right, and the holy still be holy” (Rev. 22.10–1). Apocalypses characterize themselves as conveyances of otherwise unattainable, necessary wisdom. Vividly illustrating this is I Enoch. I Enoch’s Similitudes reverse Sirach’s story of wisdom, in which wisdom says, “Then the Creator of all gave me his/command,/and he who formed me chose the spot/for my tent,/Saying, ‘In Jacob make your dwelling,/in Israel your inheritance’” (Sir. 24.8; Collins Imagination 179). Unlike Sirach, the Similitudes report, “Wisdom went forth to make her dwelling among the children of men,/And found no dwelling-place:/Wisdom returned to her place,/And took her seat among the angels” (42.2). Wisdom does not “dwell” with humanity in the Similitudes’ version of the story. Wisdom no longer even speaks to humanity. The Similitudes shift narrative voice from first to third person. The Similitudes’ voice now reports wisdom’s previously self-disclosed actions. The Similitudes mediate, literally.

Most commonly, cycles mediate apocalypses’ unattainable wisdom. Narrative cyclicalality is a very prevalent motif of the genre apocalypse. Apocalypses are often narratively cyclical, presenting repetitious structures, themes, events, dialog, or images. Nearly all apocalypses report some spatial or temporal circularity or repetition. This cyclicalality conveys “fullness of meaning that can never be reduced to literalness” (Collins Imagination 108). It gives narrative the “poetic nature of myth” in which meaning “resides” in “patterns showing affinity” that are in fact “one complex pattern” to be
“combined” and “read as a whole” (Collins *Imagination* 108; Lévi-Strauss 1:210). Every cycle of an apocalypse presents “the basic structure” of the encompassing vision, but no cycle “exhausts” the vision’s “total message” (Collins *Imagination* 107). Each cycle’s iteration of the message is required for complete revelation.

Jewish apocalypses present cycles formalizing Israel’s “terrifying dialog with Yahweh” (Eliade *Cosmos* 108). This dialog demonstrates Israel’s “steadfast will to look history in the face” and attempt to draw “moral and religious fruit” from historical “defeats” (108). The apocalypses illustrate Israel’s repeated struggle to rationalize its history of, apparently, “only chaos or catastrophe” (Eliade *Cosmos* 108; McGinn “Introduction” 9). *I Enoch*’s Apocalypse of Weeks presents time divided into epochs of “weeks” occurring in predetermined order (*Enoch* XCIII.1–14; XCI.12–7; Collins *Imagination* 64). The weeks’ repetitious similarities delineate a historical pattern placing Israel’s suffering in transcendent, comforting context. Evil repeatedly arises from good, but is judged, judgment accompanies universal revelation, and revelation precedes final, permanent perfection. Evil is presented as realistically recurrent, but temporary. Israel’s suffering is presented as realistically harsh, but indicative of Israel’s righteousness. Israel’s righteousness and salvation are presented as finally eternal. Revelation’s cycles similarly rationalize early Christian suffering. Revelation is divided into “two great cycles” of six serried visions.¹ The visions order all existence around Christ, whose salvation is intimate, omnipotent, historically transcendent, mythically true, and eminently victorious over all manifestations of evil. This vision of the epitomic Christian

¹ See Kovacs 42; 109; 134–6, 147–51; and Yarbro Collins *Apocalypse* 12; 56; 82–91; 133; “Revelation” 198–9.
order encourages the early Christian community persecuted by an alien culture by presenting Christians’ suffering as one throw of evil’s cosmic destruction. By rationalizing Christian persecution as part of a cosmic order, the cycles additionally broaden the message. The early church is addressed throughout Revelation, but cycles further address the “forty-four thousand marked from every tribe of the Israelites” and the “great multitude” from “every race, nation, people, and tongue” (7.1–9). All “those who dwell on earth” are exhorted in Revelation’s cyclical montage of good and evil’s battle across all creation (14.6). Cycles thus give Revelation cohesion amid contradiction that accomplishes simultaneous specificity and universality. Most apocalypses likewise attain through cycles specific yet universal applicability that thereby gives apocalypses mysterious appeal.

Inferno reports a cyclical cosmic architecture formalizing Dante’s attempt to rationalize both his dark history and an overwhelmingly unknown metaphysical reality. Each of Inferno’s successive Ptolemaic rings present a new vision of Dante’s and Europe’s strife rationalized, evil justly disempowered and punished, trusted Christian dogma endorsed, venerated historical ideals retained, and threatening new science explained. Furthermore, Inferno’s rings formalize a vision of history from the ancient cyclical angle, of those before Messianism and lacking a Messiah. Dante’s journey follows fallen history’s downward cycling to ultimate damnation. Likewise, Purgatorio’s rings formalize a vision of history from the Christian angle, of those repeatedly saved, as Dante follows saved Christians’ cycling upward to salvation out of fallen histories. Paradiso’s linear path formalizes a vision of history from the Messianic angle. Dante follows history’s linear approach to final salvation. Aggregated, the Comedy presents a
transcendent, cycling vision of all creation and history and all angles on both. Each of
Inferno’s rings unifies a challengingly diverse cosmic and historical vision into a
contiguous, comprehensible divine order.

Solitude reports a cyclical genealogy that formalizes García Márquez’s attempt to
exhortatively rationalize, without spiritualizing, man and Latin America’s historical evils
and catastrophes. Every Buendía generation illustrates a new, exhortatively painful
revelation of human sin and history’s evils. Each Buendía enacts new sins in new ways at
a newly evil time. Yet the Buendías’ repetitious similarities blend all into a composite
everyman. Thus, this composite everyman’s perversity encompass all sin across all time.
The genealogy’s cyclicalty orders diverse sin into a vision of man’s universally evil
nature, rationalizing sin as man’s inevitable output, but highlighting specific sins as
particularly condemning. These specific sins and man’s evil nature are equally
condemned in the Buendías’ doom. Solitude’s cyclicity thus renders it a personally and
historically specific, yet also universal condemnation. This condemnation is presented as
an exhortation that comforts only by offering hope of change.

Apocalypses are visions of creation and history intended to reveal wisdom,
explain suffering, encourage righteousness, and warn against sin. Apocalypses
communicate these visions through genre-typical literary, narrative techniques intended
to convey authority, veracity, force, specificity, and universality. All this is meant to
motivate all audiences to accept apocalypses’ wisdom, take comfort, be righteous, and
avoid sin. Audiences are meant to understand, endure, and overcome – even, and
especially, when apocalypses envision their ignorance, despair, and death.
Fig. 1. Plot Elements of Jewish Apocalypses, graphic, from John J. Collins, *Imagination*.

Judgment or destruction of the wicked is the only universal plot element. Cosmic transformations, eschatological upheavals, and presentations of the afterlife are also prominent.
Fig. 2. “Christian Aristotelian Cosmos,” illustration, from Peter Apian, *Cosmographia*, 1524. The Ptolemaic hierarchy pictures man on earth as creation’s center and influenced by divine, cosmic laws and forces. This illustration presents the zodiac symbols just inside the “empireum,” heaven.
Fig. 3. “The Abyss of Hell,” painting, by Sandro Boticelli, c. 1480. Boticelli’s hell stands at the center of the Ptolemaic cosmos. It is the cosmic axis, vortex of sin, and furthest point from the empireum and God.
Fig. 4. “Shri Yantra Mandala,” Nepalese miniature painting. The yantra, “restraining,” mandala’s “outer rim” symbolizes “the fire of concupiscence, ‘desire’” (Jung Archetypes 356; see Figs. 4 and 5). Its inner rings symbolize hell’s “torments,” the graveyard’s “horrors,” a lotus garland of divinity, a “monastery court-yard” of “sacred seclusion and concentration,” and “the four basic colours,” red, green, white, and yellow, of “the four directions” and “psychic functions” (356). The last “magic circle” contains “the essential object or goal of contemplation” (356).
Fig. 5. “Overview of Dis and the tombs of the heretics,” woodcut illustration, by Alessandro Vellutello, 1544. This illustration depicts Dis with a yantra mandala’s four gates, graveyard, and central circle leading to further revelation.
Fig. 7. “Ezekiel’s vision,” illustration, by Gerard Hoet, 1792. Ezekiel’s spherical wheel mandalas are rimmed with eyes and appear similar to the Bhutadamara mandala’s wheel-spokes lined with deities.
Fig. 8. “Sastradhara Hevajra,” painting from central Tibet, c. 1400s. This mandala’s central god, Hevajra, is surrounded by rings of deities, guardian animals, and historical teachers. All but those on the bottom row face Hevajra.
Fig. 9. “The celestial rose,” woodcut illustration, by Alessandro Vellutello, 1544. This illustration shows the dove of the trinity surrounded by rings of “all those whom Christ in his own blood espoused” in thrones facing center (Paradiso XXXI.1–3). Saint Bernard and Dante stand facing God.
Fig. 10. “Le labyrinthe de Chartres,” web illustration constructed from various representations, by Jacques Herbert. The labyrinth’s four perforated cross walls, scalloped center, and fringed outer rim contain the path sections. Its circular shape and “squared” walls and sections present a mandala’s “uniting” symbolism.
Fig. 11. “Dante at the edge of the seventh circle,” woodcut illustration, by Alessandro Vellutello, 1544. The path to the central circle of this illustration mimics a Chartres labyrinth’s main cross wall, where the path enters the labyrinth and the center. Dante and Virgil appear in several positions above and below Geryon, indicating their movement.
Each name literally or ironically signifies its corresponding character’s narrative, thematic, and mythic actions, function, or significance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Form of</th>
<th>Meaning, Myth and History</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macondo</td>
<td>Arabic, Latin</td>
<td>Ma Condo</td>
<td>Negating prefix. “To erect, establish, build” or “To store, place.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>José</td>
<td>Hebrew, Roman</td>
<td>Joseph, Jove</td>
<td>“God will increase.” King of the Gods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arcadio</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Arkadios, Arcadius</td>
<td>“Of Arcadia,” named for Arcas, son of Jove and Callisto.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buendía</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Good day.” Medieval sign of “satisfaction with birth,” or “good omen.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melquíades</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td></td>
<td>Roughly, “King by the grace of god.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Úrsula</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>Ursa</td>
<td>“A female bear,” or “Great bear.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iguarán</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td></td>
<td>Name of García Márquez’s grandfather, Colonel Nicolás Ricardo Márquez Iguarán.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aureliano</td>
<td>Roman</td>
<td>Aurelianus</td>
<td>“Little golden one.” Name of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segundo</td>
<td>Roman</td>
<td>Secundus</td>
<td>“Second.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amaranta</td>
<td>Greek, Arabic</td>
<td>Ammar</td>
<td>“Unfading.” “Long-lived.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td></td>
<td>“To tie.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remedios</td>
<td>Latin, Spanish</td>
<td></td>
<td>“That which cures.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moscote</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Mosca</td>
<td>“Fly.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meme</td>
<td>English, Greek</td>
<td>Gene, Mime</td>
<td>“To imitate.” A cultural or behavioral trait whose populational transmission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 This list is incomplete. All minor characters have significant names as well. All meanings were found through various simple research.
and persistence is non-genetic but analogous to genetic inheritance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Language 1</th>
<th>Language 2</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Pillar Ternera        | Spanish     | Pillar Ternura | “Pillar.”  
“Tenderness.”

| Don Apolinar          | Spanish     | Greek      | “A Spaniard,” Christian prefix of rank, honor, and class.  
Sun god. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Renata</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>Renatus</td>
<td>“Reborn.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Santa Sofia de la Peidad | Latin   | Greek      | “A female saint.”  
“Wisdom of the.”  
“Sense of duty towards gods.” |
| Fernanda del Carpio   | German, Italian  | Spanish | Perhaps, “Peaceful venture.”  
“Of the hill.” |
| Petra Cotes           | Greek       | Middle English | “Stone”  
A small shelter for laborers, small animals, or for storing anything. |
| Gaston                | French      |            | “ Outsider.” |
| Mauricio Babilonia    | Roman       | Spanish   | “Moor,” meaning black or Muslim.  
Powerful Mesopotamian empire.  
Biblical symbol of “evil” and site of tower of Babylon, meant to ascend to God. |

1 Her name is likely a bawdy double entendre.
Fig. 13. A Roman coin, minted in Rome in 74 BC. On the coin’s right, Diana is portrayed with bows in a quiver. On its left is one of her hunting hounds with a spear below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Macondo</strong></th>
<th><strong>Outside World</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>José Arcadio Buendía and all (José Arcadio Buendía never leaves)</td>
<td>↩️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca (never leaves)</td>
<td>↩️ José Arcadio (returns)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Úrsula (dies in Macondo)</td>
<td>↩️ José Arcadio (returns) Úrsula (returns)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>José Arcadio (dies in Macondo)</td>
<td>↩️ Colonel Aureliano Buendía (returns)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonel Aureliano Buenía (dies in Macondo)</td>
<td>↩️ Aureliano Segundo (returns)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aureliano Segundo (dies in Macondo)</td>
<td>↩️ Aureliano José (returns)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aureliano José (dies in Macondo)</td>
<td>↩️ Remedios “the Beauty” (ascends/disappears/dies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amaranta Úrsula (dies in Macondo)</td>
<td>↩️ Renata “Meme” Remedios (is institutionalized)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>↩️ Amaranta Úrsula (returns)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 14. The Buendía’s travels from and to Macondo. The number of travels from and to Macondo are equal.
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“Mandala of Bhutadamara.” Painting. c. 1400s. “Mandala of Bhutadamara.”
“Sastradhara Hevajra.” Painting. c. 1400s. “Sastradhara Hevajra.”


