ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE: AN EPIC OF LONELINESS

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CHAPTER II

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Gabriel García Márquez's masterpiece, _HYS_, provoked a literary earthquake in Latin America when it was first published in 1967. It depicted the true colour and nature of the sorrows of Latin America. The book was an immediate success, became a universal bestseller, and was acclaimed as a work of genius. The shock of recognition it imposed on the readers was something new in all Hispano-American literature. The Spanish speaking world recognized it as their classic. The book inspired a sense of liberation in the minds of the readers. It liberated them from dull realities into a world of magic and fantasy.

In an interview with Rita Guibert, García Márquez asserts that solitude is "the only subject" he has "written about" from his "first book to the last one" (Guibert, 1973, 314). His characters are always lonely. "There is an element of anti-solidarity even among people who sleep in the same bed". (Guibert, 314). García Márquez believes that the "disaster of Macondo", in _HYS_, "results from the lack of solidarity -- the solitude which results when everyone is acting for himself alone" (Guibert, 314). 

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The word 'solitude' echoes through the entire book. Ursula is the matriarch of lonely, desperate and introspective Buendias who seek out their lonely destinies and plunge themselves in solitude as if it were their only solace. Ricardo Gullon's comment is very relevant: "Solitude is a vocation imposed by birth, in accordance with a law; it is an indelible mark" (Gullon, 1971, 30).

THE MYTH, MACONDO AND MAGICAL REALISM

HYS encompasses all of man's life on earth and reduces all civilization to the family level. It is a recapitulation of our evolutionary and intellectual experience. Garcia Marquez "also makes it clear that his tale is more a dream of art than a collection of social and historical truths..." (Richardson, 1970, 3).

Macondo is a country of myth. Here a priest can levitate six inches by drinking a cup of cocoa, a girl can ascend to heaven and a banana company can conjure up a rain to wipe out all traces of a massacre. John Leonard thus comments on the mythical elements in the novel:

We emerge from One Hundred Years of Solitude as if from a dream, the mind on fire. A dark
ageless figure at the hearth, part historian, part haruspex, in a voice by turns angelic and maniacal, first lulls to sleep your grip on a manageable reality, then locks you into legend and myth (Leonard, 1970, 39).

The novel is not only the story of the Buendia family and of Macondo. Macondo is Latin America in microcosm. "The novel's beginning is Genesis; its end is the Apocalypse; rain is equivalent to the Flood; wars are War" (Gullon, 32).

The beginning of the novel evokes a distant Eden-like epoch, a pleasant and pristine world. Jack Richardson comments on the beginning of the novel:

At once we know that we are not only in the memory of a character but also in a historic and mythical moment... and Garcia Marquez's characters appear as beings dreadfully mortal, if not outright ghastly (Richardson, 3).

Garcia Marquez "has extraordinary strength and firmness of imagination and writes with the calmness of a man who knows exactly what wonders he can perform" (Kazin, 1972, 14). In HVS, no single myth or mythology prevails. "Instead, the various ways in which myth
appears give the whole novel a mythical character without it being a distinct version of one given myth" (Echevarria, 1984, 358).

A pattern of Latin American history lurks behind the pattern of myth. The history and conquest of Latin America is there in the founding of Macondo by the conquistador, Jose Arcadio Buendia. The colonial period and the great Civil Wars between the Conservatives and the Liberals follow. The great dictators pave the way for the U.S. interference and 'the gringo imperialism'. The suppression of the working class and the violence perpetrated on them is reflected in the massacre of the Banana Company workers. As Echevarria comments:

The blend of mythic elements and Latin American history in One Hundred Years of Solitude reveals a desire to found an American myth. Latin American history is set on the same level as mythic stories, therefore it too becomes a sort of myth (Echevarria, 359).

Myth appears in the novel in various shapes. There are stories that resemble Biblical myths. For instance, the founding of Macondo and its primal innocence evoke Genesis and Paradise. The insomnia
plague resembles the Plagues sent by God to punish the Pharaoh of Egypt. The rain that continues four years eleven months and two days echoes the Deluge in the Bible. The end of Macondo in a great hurricane is the Apocalypse. There are characters who stand as replicas for Biblical characters. Jose Arcadio Buendia is a Moses-like figure, the man who leads his people to the promised land. Remedios the Beauty, like Virgin Mary, ascends to Heaven. Supernatural elements also stress the mythical pattern of the novel. For example, Jose Arcadio's blood returns to his household when he dies. The whole novel is founded on the myth of incest and violence.

"The non-rational elements of myth also serve to expand the narrow dimensions of objective everyday reality and lend universal significance to the experience of characters" (McMurray, 1977, 74). The plot is developed in a series of circularly composed units with frequent repetitions. This helps to impose an aura of mythical time on the plot. Certain characters live out a mythical existence. Ursula who tries to ward off incest lives in a world increasingly menaced by chaos and "her quest for permanence and stability is underscored by her acute awareness of the cyclical nature of time" (McMurray, 77). When she
dies, her mythical existence is luminated by orange discs, that pass across the sky and the birds which break into the houses and die. Paul West compares Garcia Marquez to God: "Garcia Marquez is rather like an infatuated God watching a planet seethe and bubble, settle and cool and then develop forms of life that finally annihilate themselves" (West, 1970, 5).

Jack Richardson feels that the novel derives its strength from its mythical undercurrents:

Garcia Marquez transports his characters into a literary myth, a myth which at once set them permanently beyond the common laws of life and at the same moment dissolves them forever in a deliberate artistic obliteration. His tale is more a dream of art than a collection of social and historical truths.... At the work's end when this dream takes on the force of a metaphor for all the cycles of human life that have vanished, one realizes that the excellence of the book lies in its victory over the quaint and anecdoted, in its sustained vision of the vanities and futile passions with which humanity tries to forestall its fate of being, in art and actuality, comically impermanent (Richardson, 3).
Gerald Martin calls HYS "the greatest of all Latin American family histories since the story of the Buendia family is obviously a metaphor for the history of the continent since Independence, that is, for the neo-colonial period" (Martin, 1987, 97). Solitude, its central theme, derives from "their abandonment in an empty continent, a vast cultural vacuum, marooned thousands of miles away from their true home" (Martin, 104).

Time and loneliness are inseparably connected in HYS. "The repetitive patterns and rhythmic momentum generated by mythical time create a mytho-poetic atmosphere" (McMurray, 158) in which Garcia Marquez's lonely characters find asylum. It is an absurd world devoid of regular laws or events. "The Buendia house and the city of Macondo are representations of a vast universe where everything has its proper place, including time" (Gullon, 28).

Garcia Marquez does not care for dates and exact chronology. The action in HYS begins in the first half of the nineteenth century and ends in the 1930s. The Colombian Civil War which ravaged the country between 1897 and 1902 is presented with exactness. The War of the Thousand days (1889-92) is
reflected in the Treaty of Neerlandia. Col. Aureliano Buendia is modelled on General Raphael Uribe, the hero of the Civil Wars. "The novel clearly transcends physical particularizing and offers instead a parable of man's history and human nature" (Gullon, 29). In *HYS*, according to George McMurray:

The lineal history of Macondo's founding, development, economic boom, decline and destruction is imbued with the mytho-poetic atmosphere of cyclical recurrences and archetypal patterns that modify temporal progression, establish a more unified interior structure and provide a background of greater thematic and stylistic richness (McMurray, 73-4).

Ricardo Gullon in his essay "Gabriel Garcia Marquez and the Lost Art of Story telling" opines thus: "The presence of a well-defined, concrete geographical space (Macondo) does not lessen its universality; it re-enforces it" (Gullon, 28).

The cyclical and mythical pattern of time in a way helps escape from the hard realities of history. The past, present and future are fused as if they exist in a single moment. The repetition of names and
characters help to create a pattern of cyclical rhythm. The recurring incidents of incest-urge again stresses the cyclical pattern. "These episodes not only help to sustain dramatic momentum but also foreshadow the apocalyptic denouement by keeping alive the myth of Original Sin" (McMurray, 77).

"A sustained synthesis, One Hundred Years of Solitude covers centuries, perhaps millenia" (Gullon, 30). Ursula, the matriarch, is the most important character who is aware of the cyclical nature of time. She feels that time is turning in a circle. Her renovations of the Buendia home at regular intervals in the novel is an attempt for permanence and stability in the flow of time. When she grows very old, everyday reality slips through her hand and she feels the disruption of time. Then she goes blind and succumbs to the forces of degeneration.

"The novel has the circular and dynamic structure of a gyrating wheel" (McMurray, 148). Pilar Ternera realises this fact. She feels that "the history of the family was a machine with unavoidable repetitions, a turning wheel that would have gone on spilling into eternity were it not for the progressive and irremediable wearing of the axle" (HYS, 320). The
gyrating wheel is a proper structural image for HYS Melquiades, the gipsy, sees time in its totality -- without past, without future and without duration. In this magical realm events happen simultaneously. In the turning of the wheel the beginning and the end are linked together. The signs of repetition multiply in the course of the novel. Aureliano Segundo returns to Petra Cotes after the flood to find her repeating the activities for the prosperous raffle. Ursuala hears Jose Arcadio II repeating the words of Colonel Aureliano Buendia, as if time had not passed. By locating one moment that happened in another, the author is able to stretch the temporal boundaries of his novel. For instance, Ursula curses the day Sir Francis Drake attacked Riohacha, an event that happened four hundred years ago, as if it were an event of her immediate past. At the end of the novel, the gipsies who brought scientific discoveries to Macondo, return with the primitive wonders like the magnet and the magnifying glass, discoveries that had produced a tremendous impact on Macondo.

Though the plot has a cause and effect pattern, the narrative accommodates the past and the future. Phrases like 'many years later', 'actually' and 'that distant afternoon' shift the narrative
backward and forward. They take us to a timeless world where everything is possible. "Garcia Marquez owes this technique to his vision of the mad repetitiousness of history in his country" (Kazin, 16). He always "writes backwards, from the end of the historical cycle and all his prophecies are acerbic without being gloomy" (Kazin, 14). Alfred Kazin summarizes his views thus:

In every Garcia Marquez work, a whole historical cycle is lived through, by character after character. And each cycle is like a miniature history of the world from creation to the final holocaust. Garcia Marquez is writing that history line by line ...

(Kazin, 16).

The mythical time "blurs sordid reality and thrusts the readers into a kind of temporal void where the laws of cause and effect tend to become meaningless" (McMurray, 158).

Actually, 'Macondo' was the name of a small plantation near Aracataca in Colombia's Caribbean coast. Aracataca, Garcia Marquez's home town, is the basis for Macondo. Nearly all his works explore this remote swampy town. Macondo may be a metaphor for Colombia, Latin America or even the Universe.
"Macondo is everywhere and nowhere" (Harss and Dohmann, 1967, 310). According to Kiely, "Macondo is no never never land" (Kiely, 1970, 24). It is widely presented as a framework for the novel from its beginning to the end. At the beginning, it is a Paradise with its primal innocence. It is a lonely town totally isolated from the rest of the world. Here, Nature exists in its primordial purity. The polished stones on the bed of the river look like prehistoric eggs. The inhabitants also have the innocence and purity of Nature. Many things lack names. The village becomes a town within a few years. Permanent settlers arrive and set up stores and workshops. The gipsies arrive with modern discoveries. The people welcome them, though later they are considered as harbingers of perversion and concupiscence."

"A harsh mysteriously arid peasant village like Macondo experiences everything...over and over again like those characters in One Hundred years of Solitude who promptly reappear after dying" (Kazin, 16). Macondo is a self-sufficient and self-reliant village. When it becomes a town, the state imposes rules and restrictions. A magistrate is sent to mete out justice and peace. The inhabitants resist his order to paint the houses blue. He brings the
machinery of suppression, the police. Politics turns the peaceful town to a burning one. When elections are announced, there emerge the Liberals and the Conservatives. The Liberals go to war. Many of the inhabitants are involved; some are killed, others have to leave the town. After an armistice the opposing parties unite to share power and glory.

Alfred Kazin comments: "What makes his subject 'New World' is the hallucinatory chaos and stoniness of the Colombian village, Macondo, through which all history will pass" (Kazin, 16). The coming of the banana company is another important event in Macondo. Corruption and exploitation precipitate the resentment of the employees. They demand better living conditions and end up in a big strike. Decrees and proclamations are issued to suppress the revolt. The authorities then resort to violent methods to wipe out the leaders of the strike. It is carried out so systematically that it appears as a hallucination.

"Macondo oozes, reeks and burns even when it is most tantalizing and entertaining. It is a place flooded with lies and yet it spills over with reality" (Kiely, 5). Life becomes sedentary. All are confined to their private lives. It is a process of regression
which leads to solitude. The Buendia family is the nucleus around which everything turns in Macondo. The town is geographically isolated from other parts of the world. There is an impenetrable mountain chain in the east, and swamps to the south and west. The only possibility of contact with civilization lies along the northern route which itself is an adventurous course.

"God damn it", Jose Arcadio Buendia, the founder shouts, "Macondo is surrounded by water on all sides... We'll never get anywhere", (HVS, 18) he prophecies the sinister predicament of the town. All the characters act out their roles diverging from or converging upon Macondo. "By converting a family heritage into the narrative device of genealogy, chronicle and myth he (Garcia Marquez) made Macondo's boundaries historically and geographically elastic" (Brotherston, 1977, 133).

Melquiades, the gipsy, is the greatest benefactor of Macondo. He brings to this secluded village things which will change day to day life. In Macondo, the magnet, the magnifying glass and the daguerrotype are accepted as wonders of the world. Macondo is born of Garcia Marquez's "nostalgia for the life he lived as a young boy more than twenty years ago in a vanished Colombia..." (Mead, 1968, 26).
Selden Rodman in his article "The Triumph of the Artist" comments: "In much of his work, Garcia Marquez has turned his home town into a dream kingdom of shattered expectations built on nostalgia" (Rodman, 1983, 16). So Jose Arcadio Buendia searches to find a path to get out of this enclosed village. The drive for the unknown does not take him anywhere. His fantasy leads him to the unexplored regions of memory. His imagination goes astray and he turns mad.

"Solitude the novel's central theme, knits personal destinies closely" (Gullon, 30). Ursula, the guardian angel of the Buendia family, is bound to Macondo. Pilar Ternera, its sooth-sayer, witnesses its growth and decay. Melquiades leaves and returns; repudiated by his tribe, he settles down in this corner of the earth that has not yet been discovered by death. Jose Arcadio leaves it in a state of seraphic inspiration with a gipsy girl, but returns. Rebeca reaches here with her vice of eating the earth. Don Apolinar Moscote and his family come to settle down here. Pietro Crespi, the Italian, comes to repair the pianola but lives and dies here. Fernanda comes as the Queen in a beauty contest and becomes the wife of Aureliano Segundo. Col. Aureliano Buendia leaves it but returns to spend his final days. Meme leaves in
unfortunate circumstances. Amaranta Ursula leaves but returns to the Buendia family. "Each particular character's life and vital concerns are interrelated with the collective life of the town from the beginning..." (Gullon, 30). According to Ronald Christ:

Reality -- the one Garcia Marquez deals with -- is nothing less than the ethos of Latin America, and in order to make his discovery, in order to say the truth about the world he lives in ... he has had to invent a territory -- Macondo -- to conceive a people -- the Buendias -- and to inform his geography and population with a mythology -- a Borgesian Eternal Return (Christ, 1970, 622).

In a word, the story of Macondo and the Buendias is a resume of the Ages of man. Ronald Christ comments:

Garcia Marquez has single-handedly mythologized a whole continent in telling the multiple story of the Buendias, a story, first of guilt and innocence in a prototypical endeavour to found a community, then of subsequent generations confronting forces
from the outside world and eventually of the family's deterioration from within and final obliteration (Christ, 622).

"As in Borges's story, the book contains the world and the world contains the book, in a mirror like way" (Monegal, 1973, 489). D.P. Gallagher analyses the loneliness of Macondo:

Every single character in the novel is a victim of appalling loneliness and many of its characters end their lives in total isolation: locked for years in a room, tied for years to a tree or long forgotten in a deserted house. What is the cause of this loneliness? Not to forget the obvious, one reason can be found for it in the isolation of Macondo itself, in the isolation of a forgotten Colombian backwater (Gallagher, 1973, 161).

Fantasy is one of the central ingredients of contemporary Latin American fiction. There is no barrier between the real and the fantastic in the fiction of Garcia Marquez. The levelling of between reality and unreality is a characteristic of HVS. Ricardo Gullon writes on the uniqueness of Garcia Marquez thus:
The difference between Garcia Marquez and other novelists is that the latter may dispose themselves in a welter of ways, but he does not. His need to tell a story is so strong that it transcends the device he uses to satisfy the need (Gullon, 32).

In an interview with Claudia Dreifus published in *Playboy* in 1983 Garcia Marquez speaks of Latin American environment's "openmindedness to look beyond reality" (Dreifus, 1983). He knows how to present a strange event with an aura of magic. He makes "the fantastic seem real, and the real fantastic, thus eliminating the barrier between objective and imaginary realities" (McMurray, 90). The real and the fantastic are fused in Garcia Marquez's fictional world. The death of Jose Arcadio is an example. Though unrealistic this event is made credible by:

The meticulous stylistic precision, down to earth language and numerous everyday details surrounding the occurrence....Thus reality becomes relative, elusive and even contradictory. Its authenticity depends on the eye of the viewer (McMurray, 89-90).
Williamson defines magical realism thus: "...magical realism is a narrative style which consistently blurs the traditional realist distinction between fantasy and reality" (Williamson, 1987, 45). Unheard-of-events and miracles mingle with household events. Phantoms and ghosts live side by side and they communicate quite naturally. "The contrast between tone and rhythm...is one more reason why this novel attracts, convinces and seduces the reader" (Gullon, 29).

Fantasy is an escape from loneliness; unreality is an escape from the drudgery of loneliness. So the Assumption of Remedios the Beauty is presented as an ordinary event. A priest (by drinking a cup of chocolate) can levitate and a rain of yellow flowers crams the streets when a patriarch dies. "Reality, by logical contrast, is delirious" (Gullon, 29).

"One's distinction between fantasy and reality depends a great deal on one's cultural assumptions" (Gallagher, 148). To the people of Latin America, reality is something one can fabricate at one's own expense. We cannot blame them if they believe in the assumption of a local girl, Remedios the Beauty. D.P. Gallagher justifies the author thus:
And who can blame Garcia Marquez, for choosing to liberate himself from official lies by telling his own lies or otherwise for choosing to exaggerate the government lies ad absurdum. Many of the fantasies of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* are indeed absurd but logical exaggerations of real situations (Gallagher, 148-9).

Salman Rushdie is of the view that "'El Realismo magical', magical realism...is a development of surrealism that expresses a genuinely 'Third World' consciousness" (Rushdie, 1982, 4). Garcia Marquez, according to Vilhjalmsson, "marries realism and objectivity" (1973, 10-11). In Ciplijauskaite's view:

The realm of the fantastic lies between the real-explicable and the supernatural, with a continuous fluctuation of boundaries and an uncertainty intensified by the total absence of the narrator's guiding point of view (1973, 479).

Garcia Marquez causes the whole story to 'float' by disrupting the natural temporal sequence. The fantastic becomes the ordinary, it is everyday life. When the distinction between reality and fantasy
is blurred, a tragi-comic reality emerges. So, we hear the cloc-cloc sound of Rebeca's parents' bones, Melquiades returns from the dead, Petra Cotes's animals proliferate when she copulates with Aureliano Segundo.

"The narrator destroys the very idea of a possible barrier between the real and the imaginary" (Gullon, 32). The ascension of Remedios the Beauty is the culmination of fantasy. Garcia Marquez tells incredible things as if they are real everyday happenings.

He successfully fuses social issues and magical realism. Macondo rises to the level of a universal existence. Earlier, Jose Luis Borges has demonstrated that all writing is fictive. His poem, "El Otro Tigre" is an example. A tiger evoked in a poem is very different from the beast that paces the jungles of Bengal. Then, why not, Borges argues, write about a tiger with three legs that reads Sanskrit and plays hockey? "The narrative is a magician's trick in which memory and prophecy, illusion and reality are mixed and often made to look the same" (Kiely, 5).

Gallagher accounts for the charm of the novel thus: "Much of the novel's appeal lies in the sense of liberation it inspires in one: liberation from a
humdrum real world into a magical one that also happens to he funny" (Gallagher, 1973, 145).

The local myths of his home town and the superstitions of its people helped Garcia Marquez to shape his imagination. In this novel "he used fantasy to underscore the reality and the historical veracity that were the basis of his fiction" (Frosch, 1973, 498). His reading of William Faulkner and a pilgrimage through the Yoknapatawpha county helped him to mould "his protean imagination" (Duffy, 1972, 85).

Garcia Marquez succeeds in "trivializing wonder"; he makes them "quite ordinary and accountable" (Frosch, 501). In George R. McMurray's view:

The amazing totality of his fictional world is achieved through the contra-puntal juxtaposition of objective reality and poetic fantasy that captures simultaneously the essence of both Latin American and universal man (McMurray, 6).

The banana plague and the great deluge blend myth, history and imagination. Garcia Marquez's use of magical realism is very much evident here. He presents fantastic events in an objective style. "In all, it is
a panoramic socio-political sub-plot constructed with utmost craftsmanship and imagination" (Bell-Villada, 1987, 391).

The banana strike and the great flood accelerate the decline of Macondo. It prepares us for the final whirlwind that destroys the city. The banana plague and the mass execution of the workers are based on real events which took place in Colombia. Pablo Neruda had written about the events in his poem, "La United Fruit Co". Bell-Villada observes:

The episode of the banana strike and military repression in One Hundred Years of Solitude constitute the highest point in Garcia Marquez's exclusive chronicle of Macondo. It is a vivid and dramatic scene packed with socio-political suspense with sanguinary horror and followed by uncanny official silence and a fantastical rain (Bell-Villada, 391).

The critic is also of the view that "the Banana strike and military repression are to the history and literature of Colombia what the Napoleonic invasion and retreat were to the history and literature of Russia" (Bell-Villada, 403). The description is
"history carefully reconstructed, and then artfully exaggerated" (Bell-Villada, 392).

The great banana strike "is the last occasion in which the Macondoites and their Buendia leaders will collectively resist the meddlings of a high-handed central government (Bell-Villada, 391).

The extermination of the workers " is executed in such a novel way that even those upon whom it is perpetrated think of it as an hallucination" (Gill, 1987, 148).

More than three thousand people, Jose Arcadio Segundo among them, gathered around the station. They waited till three o' clock. The officer didn't turn up. Then an army lieutenant read out Decree No.4 of the civil and military ruler, General Carlos Cortes Vargas, authorising the army to shoot the workers. The army gave them five minutes to withdraw. The crowd protested. "Intoxicated by the tension...and held tight in a fascination with death the crowd remained on a kind of hallucination" (HYS, 248). The Captain gave the order and the machine guns started firing. The reader never finds fault with Garcia Marquez's sub-tale of exploitation, resistance and slaughter.
The description of the massacre is very famous:

At first it seemed that the machine guns were loaded with caps... No reaction was perceived...the compact crowd seemed petrified by an instantaneous invulnerability. Then a cry of death tore open the enchantment: 'Aaagh mother'. A seismic voice, a volcanic breath, the roar of a cataclysm broke out in the centre of the crowd with a great potential of expression.

The people in front of Jose Aracadio Buendia... had been swept down by the wave of bullets. The survivors tried to get back to the small square and the panic became a dragon's tail as one compact wave rose against another which was moving in the opposite direction, towards the other dragon's tail in the street across the way where the machine guns were also firing without cease. They were penned in swirling about in a gigantic whirlwind that little by little was being reduced to its epicentre as the edges were systematically being cut off all round like an onion being peeled by the insatiable and methodical shears of the machine guns (HYS, 247-8).
Jose Arcadio Segundo fell unconscious. When he again opened his eyes, he was in a moving train packed with dead bodies. It was a two hundred-car train heading to the sea. The corpses would be thrown into the sea like rejected bananas. He jumped into the darkness and walked in the other direction. After three hours he saw the first house. The woman in the house nursed him but refused to accept his version of the story that there must have been three thousand corpses in the train. "There haven't been any dead here", she said (HYS, 251).

Garcia Marquez's description of the banana strike is "a symbiosis between history and fiction..." (Bell-Villada, 400). The government made a proclamation that the workers left in peace and that there was no casualty. Mr. Brown the owner of the banana company announced that the conflict was over. He ordered a torrential rain over the whole banana region. The company suspended all its activities. The army continued to hunt the workers. They took them out of their houses and nothing more was heard of them. They declared that nothing was happening. Thus they wiped out the union leaders. Jose Arcadio Segundo miraculously survived. Hidden in Melquiades's room he became invisible. Though the soldiers searched the room, they couldn't find him.
It rained for four years eleven months and two days. Macondo was in ruins. The streets were covered with the corpses of animals. The new-comers left Macondo. The houses built during the banana fever were abandoned, the banana company tore down its installations, the wired-in city was ruined. The only memento was a glove belonging to Patricia Brown found in an abandoned automobile. The region of the banana plantation became a bog of rotting roots.

The Biblical flood becomes instrumental for a temporary spiritual purification. It eradicates the corruption of materialism and revives innocence. Love and mutual understanding are regenerated. Thus, Aureliano Segundo learns of true love. Listening to Fernanda's monotonous sing-song of complaint he destroys the vessels in the house. Gradually he learns the lesson of a harmonious relationship. The invasion of imperialism had converted Macondo, the village, into a town. But the final chapters of the novel describe its deterioration and disappearance. With the deluge, things take the disastrous turn towards the cataclysmic end. "It is a bitter-sweet and melancholy denouement..." (Bell-Villada, 391).
In an interview with Gene H. Bell-Villada, conducted in 1983, Garcia Marquez revealed that the sequence of events in the novel sticks closely to the facts of the United Fruit Strike of 1928. The novelist was born the same year. "The only exaggeration is in the number of dead", Garcia Marquez commented, "though it does fit the proportions of the novel. So, instead of the hundreds dead, I upped it to thousands" (Bell-Villada, 1983, 26).

Tonny Tanner analyses the balancing of fantasy and reality thus: "In One Hundred Years of Solitude, Garcia Marquez carefully balanced reality and fantasy to make the improbable occurrences in the town of Macondo appear quite natural and common place" (Tanner, 1970, 393). His famous account of the insomnia plague is an example. We believe the funny events associated with the insomnia plague because they happen in such an earthly, human and real world.

Rebeca brings the insomnia plague to Macondo. Visitacion, the Indian woman of the Buendia household, is the first to notice its invasion. One night, while she sleeps with the children, she wakes up by chance and hears a strange sound. She mistakes it for the sound of the footsteps of an animal. She finds Rebeca
in the rocking chair "sucking her finger and with her eyes lighted up in the darkness like those of a cat" (HYS, 43). Visitacion recognises in Rebeca's eyes the symptoms of the very sickness to escape from which she has fled from her kingdom with her brother, Cataure.

Cataure, the Indian, leaves the house the next morning. Visitacion does not leave because she knows that the lethal sickness will follow her "even to the farthest corner of the earth" (HYS, 43). The most fearsome part of the sickness is not the impossibility of sleeping but a loss of memory. When such a person becomes used to insomnia, the recollection of his childhood is erased from his memory. He will forget the name and notion of things, the identity of people and even the awareness of his own being. Finally, he will sink to a kind of idiocy that has no past. Jose Arcadio Buendia considers it as an Indian superstition but Ursula takes the precaution of isolating Rebeca from the other children.

Jose Arcadio Buendia himself is the next victim of the insomnia plague; Ursula and Aureliano are the next victims. All the members of the family, including the children, remain awake at night: "Once it gets into a house no one can escape the plague" (HYS, 44).
As a remedy to total forgetfulness, Ursula prepares and makes them drink a brew of monkshood. But the victims spend the whole day dreaming. "In that state of hallucinated lucidity they saw not only the images of their own dreams but also of others. It was as if the house was full of visitors" (HYS, 44).

Rebeca dreams of her parents who once brought her a bouquet of roses.

The insomnia plague is spread in the town through the candy animals made in the house.

Children and adults sucked with delight on the delicious little green roosters of insomnia, the exquisite pink fish of insomnia and the tender yellow ponies of insomnia. So, that dawn Monday found the whole town awake (HYS, 44).

No one is troubled because so much is to be done in Macondo in the free time. They work so hard that soon there is nothing else to do. They will be seen sitting idle at 3'o clock:

With their arms crossed, counting the notes in the waltz of the clock. Those who wanted sleep, not because of fatigue but because of their nostalgia for dreams, tried all kinds of methods of exhausting themselves (HYS, 44).
They converse endlessly, repeat the jokes again and again and play endlessly the game of the story about the capon. By these meaningless repetitive actions they try to get rid of boredom. Later, Aureliano Buendia will do the same, moulding and melting gold fish, in order to escape from his terrible boredom.

Jose Arcadio Buendia summons the heads of the families to discuss the problem. They take measures to prevent it from spreading to other towns. They place bells at the gates of the town. All strangers who visit the town have to ring the bell so that the sick will recognize the healthy. They are not allowed to drink or eat because the insomnia spreads through contaminated food and drink. Thus the plague is restricted to Macondo. The quarantine is so effective that people accept it as a natural event. They forget the useless habit of sleeping.

It is Aureliano Buendia who conceived a formula to protect them against the loss of memory. He forgets the name of the anvil and pastes a paper on it with the name. Then he forgets the names of all the objects in his house. Jose Arcadio Buendia imposes the new scheme invented by Aureliano Buendia on the whole
village. They mark everything with an inked brush: 'table', 'chair', 'clock', 'door', 'wall', 'bed' and so on. The animals also are marked: 'cow', 'goat', 'pig', and 'hen'. When Jose Arcadio Buendia realizes that the use of the things will be forgotten, he becomes more elaborate in inscriptions. The sign that hung from the neck of a cow is an example:

This is the cow. She must be milked every morning so that she will produce milk, and the milk must be boiled in order to be mixed with coffee to make coffee and milk... Thus they went on living in a reality that was slipping away, momentarily captured by words... (E, 46).

At the entrance of the town, they place a sign board that said 'Macondo'. Another board is placed on the main street that said 'God exists'. In all the houses keys to memorizing objects and feelings have been written. But many fall victims to an imaginary reality. Pilar Ternera contributes to the mystification by "reading the past in cards as she had done before" (HYS, 46). By means of that recourse:

...
The insomniacs began to live in a world built on the uncertain alternatives of the cards, where a father was remembered faintly as the dark man who had arrived at the beginning of April and a mother was remembered only as the dark woman who wore a gold ring on her left hand, and where a birth date was reduced to the last Tuesday on which a lark sang in the laurel tree (HYS, 46).

Jose Arcadio Buendia now tries to build a memory machine. (It anticipates the invention of the computer). It could review every morning the totality of knowledge acquired during one's life. It was a spinning dictionary with a lever. By turning it, one could have all the information needed. Jose Arcadio Buendia has entered fourteen thousand entries in his machine. While the town was "sinking irrevocably into the quicksands of forgetfulness" (HYS, 47), Melquiades returns with his magic potion that cures the insomnia plague. Jose Arcadio Buendia drinks it to get rid of the "forgetfulness of death" (HYS, 47). He recovers his memory. The entire townspeople soon recover from the insomnia plague.
In _HYS_, Garcia Marquez forces upon us at every page the wonder and extravagance of life. Jack Richardson remarks:

When the book ends with its sudden selfnowledge and its intimations of holocaust, we are left with the pleasant exhaustion which only very great novels seem to provide... They allow us...to hold a vision...of the beginning and ends of all the enterprises of living (Richardson, 4).

**LOVE INCEST AND SOLITUDE**

The most interesting parts of _HYS_ are those which describe "the various aspects of love -- as communion, as frustration, as a breaking away from accepted patterns" (Hall, 1973, 256).

From Jose Arcadio Buendia to the last Aureliano, most of the characters crave love and sexual relief. Jose Arcadio, the eldest son of Jose Arcadio Buendia, approaches Pilar Ternera, the country whore, in a "bewildered anxiety" to flee from his state of "exasperated silence and that fearful solitude" (_HYS_, 30). When he reveals his secrets to his brother, Aureliano, the latter feels the same anxiety and both
take refuge in solitude. "Anxious for solitude and bitten by a virulent rancour against the world" (HYS, 33), Aureliano visits the gipsy camp. With a desperate anxiety he finds sexual pleasure which "lifted him up into the air towards a state of seraphic inspiration" (HYS, 35).

Linda B. Hall comments on the devastating nature of love: "The love which furnishes a release from solitude is always a love which defies society and leads to ultimate destruction and the return of solitude" (Hall, 225). The young Buendia girls, Rebeca and Amaranta turn towards Pietro Crespi in a desperate attempt to get rid of their solitude. This ends in death and disaster. Hall further observes thus:

In One Hundred Years of Solitude, loves which are forbidden between members of the same family, between individuals of varying ages, between people of different social classes are endowed with universal mythic qualities (Hall, 256).

Arcadio is attracted towards his own mother, Pilar Ternera, unknowingly. As a substitute, Pilar arranges a mistress, Santa Sofia de la Piedad, for him. Their sons, the twins, Aureliano Segundo and Jose
Arcadio Segundo make love with Petra Cotes. Aureliano Segundo later marries Fernanda, the beauty queen. Their daughter Meme loves Mauricio Babilonia and gives birth to Aureliano Babilonia. Aureliano Babilonia and Meme's sister Amaranta Ursula fall into an incestuous affair. "The novel is characterised, in general terms, with a movement away from the repression or restraint of desire, to a greater release of desire" (Kennedy, 1987, 56).

Garcia Marquez believes that only through love man can transcend his solitude. But in HVS love itself ends in catastrophe. The lives of Amaranta, Rebeca, Meme and Mauricio Babilonia are examples. Amaranta Ursula and Aureliano Babilonia try to conquer their solitude through frantic love and wild erotic deeds. A child is born with a pig's tail; and fulfilling the prophecies, it is eaten by ants. Jorge Luis Borges, another great Latin American writer, also has explored the connection between solitude and the labyrinth. In Borges's short stories the deciphering of the labyrinth is a metaphor for the search for remedies to get rid of loneliness. The characters trapped at the centre of the labyrinth are locked in solitude also. The only solution is to penetrate into the centre and rescue the victim. But it often leads to the destruction of the
person who penetrates and the one who is locked in solitude. D.J. Enright, in his journal article "Longer than Death", comments on the importance of the theme of loneliness:

What each one has suffered, whether a recluse like Rebeca, or a man of action like the Colonel, is solitude, a word which echoes through the novel: they are all marked with the pox of solitude (Enright, 1970, 252).

Catarino's store, like Pilar Ternera's house, is an asylum for the solitary characters of HYS. It also serves as a public place where people gather now and then. It is here that Francisco the Man, a vagabond, tells in great detail the things that have happened in the towns along his route. Members of the Buendía family haunt this place seeking friendship and love. In HYS, "instances of sexual desire are almost always characterised by the word 'anxiety' that men seek relief for their stomachs by a visit to Catarino's" (Kennedy, 57).

Here Colonel Aureliano Buendía finds a beautiful Mulatto girl who is subjected to prostitution for accidentally burning out her grandmother's house. (This is the theme of "Innocent Erendira"). But in her
presence, he feels terribly alone. When he is
 tormented by thoughts of little Remedios, he visits
 Catarino's store again. By then the establishment is
 expanded with a gallery of wooden rooms where women
 sell themselves for a few cents. A group, to the
 accompaniment of an accordian and drums, plays the
 songs of Francisco the Man. Aureliano and his friends
 drink fermented cane juice. One of the women caresses
 him, but he rejects her. He gets drunk to forget
 Remedios. Then he goes to Pilar Ternera's house to
 unburden his problems.

 Later, Arcadio, the civil and military ruler
 of the town, visits Catarino's store. The trumpeter
 in the group greets him with a fanfare that makes the
 customers laugh. Arcadio orders him shot for showing
 disrespect to the authorities.

 When a commission is sent to discuss with him
 the situation after the war, Colonel Aureliano Buendia
 orders his men to take them to the whores. They spend
 their days in conference and their nights in Catarino's
 store, accompanied by an escort and accordian players.

 Jose Arcadio Segundo also is seen at
 Catarino's. He brings French matrons with gaudy
 parasols, silk hand-korchiefs and coloured creams on
their faces. They bring a breath of renovation. Their magnificent arts transfigure traditional methods of love and their sense of social well-being abolishes Catarino's antiquated place.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez is "a writer with very intimate knowledge of street life and plebian ways" (Bell-Villada, 1983, 27). When Bell-Villada asked him how he could write so well on this topic, the writer gave an interesting reply: "It is in my origins, it is a vocation too. It is the life I know best and I have deliberately cultivated it" (Bell-Villada, 27).

The threat of incest looms over the Buendia family throughout the hundred years of its solitude. Incest is a recurring concern of the novel. Many of the characters are tempted to commit incest despite its terrible consequences. "The self-reflexiveness of the novel is implicitly compared to incest, the self-knowledge that somehow lies beyond knowledge" (Echevarria, 1984, 377).

The incest taboo exists in primitive societies because it prevents communication between various groups of kin. It has a social basis as it is a hindrance to social cohesion. If women are kept in the same family with incestuous relationships it is not
possible to form bonds with other families. So women are offered as wives to other families. The increasing temptation for incest in HYS shows the failure of the Buendias to communicate with other families.

As Edwin Williamson says, "the fundamental impetus of One Hundred Years of Solitude springs from the wish to avoid incest" (Williamson, 48). Garcia Marquez himself asserts the importance of this theme in his interview with Rita Guibert when he says that he wanted to "tell the story of a family who for a hundred years did everything to avoid having a son with a pig's tail and because of their very effort to avoid having one, they end up having one" (Guibert, 314). "For over a hundred years the family struggles through births, dreams, wars and deaths to avoid ending in aberration, but at last it ends with a monstrosity" (Richardson, 4).

The curse hanging over the Buendia family that the offspring born out of an incestuous relationship will have a pig's tail has its origin in the founding of the family itself. The founder Jose Arcadio Buendia and his wife Ursula Iguaran are cousins. "Actually they were joined till death by a bond that was more solid than love: a common prick of conscience" (HYS, 23).
Their own relatives have tried to prevent their marriage as they fear that the inbreeding of the two races will breed iguanas. There is a precedent also. An aunt of Ursula who married an uncle of Jose Arcadio Buendia had given birth to a child with a pig's tail. Ursula's mother "terrified her with all manner of sinister predictions about their offspring" (HVS, 24). Ursula, frightened, refuses to consummate the marriage and wears a rudimentary kind of drawers to protect her chastity. She remains a virgin and people doubt the virility of Jose Arcadio Buendia. When Prudencio Aguilar insinuates it, after losing a cock fight, Jose Arcadio Buendia kills him. That night their marriage is consummated. But the ghost of Prudencio Aguilar haunts them with "a livid expression on his face, trying to cover the hole in his throat with a plug made of esparato glass" (HVS, 25). Jose Arcadio Buendia threatens the ghost, but feels pity for the deadman who is terribly lonely:

He was tormented by the immense desolation with which the dead man had looked at him through the rain, his deep nostalgia as he yearned for living people, the anxiety with which he searched through the house looking for some water with which to soak his esparato plug (HVS, 26).
When Ursula finds the ghost uncovering the pots on the stove for water, she places water jugs all about the house. When Jose Arcadio Buendia finds Prudencio Aguilar in his room, he decides to leave the town. After an adventurous expedition he discovers Macondo. His rebellious drive against incest taboo results in his departure to build a new village.

As Alan Kennedy observes, "The incest theme is part of the characterisation of the way in which a disconnected society suffers both from displaced desire and a lack of place in human history" (Kennedy, 57-8). Garcia Marquez himself has commented in his Nobel Acceptance Speech that more atrocities flourish in countries disconnected from the history of the rest of the world. "Indulgence in unrestrained sexual license is not a road to the future and more life, but a road to solitude and destruction" (Kennedy, 57).

The theme of incest is further explored in Amaranta's relationship with her nephew, Aureliano Jose. She has brought him up ever since he was a child. She undresses in front of him in the bathroom. The child asks some innocent questions about her breasts. As he grows up, he feels a strange trembling at the sight of her nakedness. "He kept on examining
her, discovering the miracle of her intimacy inch by inch, and he felt his skin tingle as he contemplated the way her skin tingled when it touched the water" (HYS, 121). From his childhood onwards he sleeps with Amaranta. Even after attaining manhood he sleeps with her.

He felt Amaranta's fingers searching across his stomach like warm and anxious little caterpillars.... Although they seemed to ignore what both of them knew and what each one knew that the other knew, from that night on they were yoked together in an inviolable complicity (HYS, 122).

He becomes "a palliative for her solitude" (HYS, 122). Garcia Marquez describes their relationship thus:

They not only slept together, naked, exchanging exhausting caresses, but they would also chase each other into the corners of the house and shut themselves up in the bedrooms at any hour of the day in a permanent state of unrelieved excitement (HYS, 122).

One afternoon, Ursula discovers them kissing in the granary and she asks Aureliano Jose about his love for his aunt. This becomes an eye-opener to
Amaranta and she comes out of her delirium. She realizes that she is "floundering about in an autumnal passion, one that was dangerous and had no future, and she cut it off with one stroke" (HYS, 122). "The result of her action is that both of them are cast into a new solitude.... Her rebellion had led to a double solitude and a desire for murder and suicide" (Kennedy, 61-62).

Later in the novel, Aureliano Jose returns from the war with a secret determination to marry Amaranta. She avoids him. He goes to her bedroom and "starting with that night the dull inconsequential battles began again and went on until dawn" (HYS, 126). "The phrase 'inconsequential battles' is only one of the many markers alerting us to the way that sexuality and politics are interwoven in Marquez's text" (Kennedy, 61). Aureliano Jose proposes to go to Rome to get a special dispensation from the Pope to marry his aunt. Amaranta rejects him telling him that "any children will be born with the tail of a pig" (HYS, 129). Gerald Martin is of the view that "the morbid fear of the birth of a child cursed with a pig's tail is a condensed metaphor for the combined ideologies of Original Sin and biological determinism" (Martin, 1987, 105).
Every relationship in the family is under the threat of incest. Marriage does not result in procreation, but the family moves through surrogate lovers. A thwarted desire always leads to an illicit affair which leads to the birth of a child. Later the child is added to the family line. Jose Arcadio and Col. Aureliano Buendia had illicit sons by Pilar Ternera. They are grudgingly admitted to the Buendia family. Marriages fail because often the legitimate wife is a substitute for a desired mistress. For instance, Arcadio desires his mother but has children by Santa Sofia de la Piedad. Marriage is often barren but illegal mistresses and casual lovers produce children. Genuine desire does not lead to legitimate children. Instead, surrogates produce children. As a result, the legitimacy of the Buendia line is destroyed. The line becomes mixed by bastards and illicit relationships. This results in a confusing situation which sometimes makes characters commit incest without knowing their real kinship.

When Ursula dies her taboo regime breaks down. All the forces she has set against incest fall to pieces. It tempts the last Buendias to indulge in incestuous desires.
The prophecy is fulfilled in the violent incestuous relationship between Amaranta Ursula and Aureliano Babilonia. In order to hide Meme's shame, Aureliano is reported as found in a basket. He searches through the parish register to unravel the mystery of his parentage. Amaranta Ursula believes that he is the son of Petra Cotes. Aureliano is shocked to think that he is his wife's half-brother. "They accepted the story of the basket because it spared them their terror.... They became more and more integrated into the solitude of the house" (HYS, 330).

Sexual freedom blinds them to the inherent flow of incest. Amaranta's provocative behaviour burns the latent passion of Aureliano Babilonia. Ursula's barriers are broken. Sexual indulgence is given free play.

Decay creeps into the house as degeneration in human relationship leads to incest. The decay is enhanced by ants as they devastate the entire house. The house which Ursula looked after so carefully is forgotten in the orgy of sexual pleasure. Amaranta Ursula gives birth to a male child;

...one of those great Buendías, strong and wilful like the Jose Arcadios, with the open
and clairvoyant eyes of the Aurelianos, and predisposed to begin the race again from the beginning and cleanse it of its pernicious vices and solitary calling, for he was the only one in a century who had been engendered with love (HYS, 312).

He has the tail of a pig. They are not alarmed because they are not aware of the family precedent. Amaranta Ursula dies and the child is eaten by the ants. Incest is a metaphor for regression. It is a reversal and denial of history, and it leads to destruction and solitude.

Thus, Ursula's taboo-regime fails to prevent incest. She succeeds in suppressing or displacing the passions but is helpless before the potent incest urge lurking in her grand-children and great-grand-children. "Since the Buendias cannot fulfil themselves they become unhappy with their actual condition and tend to withdraw into a frustrated solitude..." (Williamson, 51). When the incest urge is thwarted or displaced they become apathetic to their world and regress to nostalgia. They often indulge in pointless and meaningless repetitive activity.
In *HYS*, incest is a part of the characterisation. For instance, Jose Arcadio's incestuous feelings for his mother find an outlet in his relationship with Pilar Ternera. This woman is a surrogate-mother/lover. She becomes the object of desire for her own son. Pilar's son, Aureliano Jose, has an urge for Amaranta. Her great-nephew Jose Arcadio also experiences similar feelings for Amaranta. Rebeca marries her step-brother Jose Arcadio. Petra Cotes is mother-surrogate/lover for Jose Arcadio Segundo and Aureliano Segundo. Williamson has studied in detail the theme of incest in his journal article "Magical Realism and the Theme of Incest in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*":

In spite of Ursula's taboo ridden anxieties, we find the spectre of incest stalking the family, criss-crossing the generations to form a web of endogamous passion lurking beneath the surface of legal kinship (Williamson, 51).

Normal marriage is not at all successful in *HYS*. Free-love seems to be more enduring. The relationship between Aureliano Jose and Petra Cotes is an instance. Whenever they copulate the number of their live-stock miraculously multiplies. So, free-
love seems to pave the way for prosperity. When the family imposes taboos, it leads to incest. The other incestuous relationships produce no issue. But Amaranta Ursula's and Aureliano's union produces the formidable male child with a pig's tail. If Aureliano was not kept in isolation he would have contacted other females and formed other relationships. Similarly, if he had known that Amaranta was his aunt, he would have stayed apart.

Incest shows the failure of the Buendias to communicate. It is a self-centred family, introspective and self-contained. The autarchic nature of the family hinders all communication with the outside world. It is further evident in the bond that keeps the family intact. All the characters who leave it return to it. The seventeen illegitimate sons of Col. Aureliano Buendia reach there on the same occasion without knowing each other. Jose Arcadio's blood returns to the family.

To Garcia Marquez, incest is analogous to Original Sin. The fear of incest reminds us of Oedipus Rex and the theme of guilt and inescapable fate. Here the children multiply the father in illegitimate relationships. Later they are incorporated into the
family. The hand is not raised against the father. In contrast to the story of Oedipus, HYS deals with erratic paternity. "Nobody is truly legitimate", Julio Ortega quotes Rene Girard, "there is no real father" (Ortega, 1988, 8). As Ricardo Gullon comments:

The birth of Aureliano V is the end of the novel; in him the prophecies of destruction are fulfilled, and Macondo, reduced to dust, disappears forever and with it the memory of those who made and inhabited it (Gullon, 32).

George R. McMurray summarises the features of the novel thus:

One Hundred Years of Solitude impresses readers not only as a commentary of profound concern for the terrible realities of the human condition but also as a haunting premonition of disaster.... Ultimately, however it is a monumental tour de force by a non-pareil spinner of yarns whose sombre vision of a disintegrating world is surpassed only by his sense of humour and artistic excellence (McMurray, 107).
THE CHARACTERS

Garcia Marquez's characters have lives of their own. "They may fulfil their tragic destiny, but they behave with so much spontaneity and good humour that we remember them as the better parts of ourselves and accept their world of irrational 'happenings' as the real one" (Rodman, 1983, 17). Jose Arcadio Buendia is a conquistador, one who longs for new experiences and knowledge. Robert Kiely has commented thus:

In a sense, Jose Arcadio Buendia and Ursula are the only two characters in the story, and all their children, grand-children and great-grand-children are variations in their strength and weakness (Kiely, 24).

The fear of incest, the belief that the sexual union between people who are relatives, will lead to engendering a monster with a pig's tail, plays an important role in the married life of Jose Arcadio Buendia and Ursula. They, in a way, re-enact the Oedipus myth. Jose Arcadio Buendia's story is the story of guilt and repentance.

Throughout **HYS** ghosts regularly mingle with the living. Their presence is accepted as a normal
event in day-to-day life. Nobody is shocked, nobody
tries to drive them away. People always welcome them.
Gabriel Garcia Marquez's "characters appear, even at
their most rambunctious, as beings dreadfully mortal if
not outright ghastly" (Richardson, 3).

The family moves to the wilderness to escape
from the torments of Prudencio Aguilar's ghost. Jose
Arcadio Buendia, another Moses, leads a small group of
men to the promised land. In Macondo, another arcadia,
he tries to escape the forces of retribution and
Original Sin.

After establishing the foundations of the
village Jose Arcadio Buendia plunges into a search for
knowledge. He searches for gold with the help of two
magnets supplied by a wandering gipsy named Melquiades.
The gipsy brings the modern inventions to this far-off
place where death is still unknown.

Jose Arcadio Buendia's dream of a city with
mirror walls is a creation myth. His relationship with
Melquiades reminds us of the liason between Faust and
Mephistopheles. Jose Arcadio Buendia uses the
daguerrotype to discover the existence of God. HYS
"expresses a vision full of lunges, spurs, mild or
maniacal hallucinations, preternatural heavings and
bulging gargoyles" (West, 4).
But, Prudencio Aguilar returns to talk with him. Jose Arcadio Buendia's talks with the ghost lead him to the absurd realms of reality. Frustrated by the chaos he encounters, he goes mad. It is the punishment for going beyond the realms of knowledge permitted to man. He is tied to a chestnut tree where he remains for years babbling in Latin incoherent words. "At the moment of his death, he envisions himself lost in a labyrinth of identical rooms resembling 'a gallery of parallel mirrors'" (McMurray, 83).

When he dies a rain of tiny yellow flowers crams the streets as if Nature itself were mourning the death of the patriarch. He is a Promethean hero, one who transcends the physical universe to unravel the mysteries of the universe. He finds comfort in the solitude of madness. His "solitude of madness is accompanied by the failure of language" (Gullon, 20).

When we read HVS, we feel "magnified" and "anthropologically enlarged" (West, 4). It is "a Techni-colour tableau of fools which got up as a family saga, stretches the mind by cramming it and re-enacts Paradise found and lost as a version of Latin America's own history..." (West, 5).
George McMurray analyses the features of Garcia Marquez's characters:

The disproportion between the characters' intentions and the adverse reality they face illuminates the futility of their struggles for self-fulfilment and lays the groundwork for the absurdities and baffling inconsistencies that occupy a central position in their lives (McMurray, 105-6).

Ursula is the linchpin, the axis upon which the entire story turns in HYS. As Susanne Kappeler opines"...Ursula is more like the stem which runs down that entire tree, supporting all its branches" (Kappeler, 1983, 155). This great matriarch keeps the family line going till her death. No other character dares to inherit her name or characteristics till the end of the novel. When her role as the matriarch fades, degeneration falls on the family.

Ursula is an embodiment of loneliness. "The solitude of the title derives not just from Macondo's physical isolation but from the solitary destiny of the family itself which she (Ursula) embodies more fully than anyone else" (Brotherston, 127).
Ursula is an "active, small, severe woman of unbreakable nerves who at no moment in her life had been heard to sing" (HYS, 15). She has an immense capacity for work. She keeps the house free of dust. She is, thus, the personification of endurance and will-power.

"The contrast between his (Garcia Marquez's) male and female characters provides an important source of dramatic tension and irony" (McMurray, 182). The most obvious example is the contrast between Jose Arcadio Buendia and Ursula in HYS. Jose Arcadio Buendia is a rudderless dreamer while Ursula is against her husband's hare-brained schemes and holds the clan together for many generations.

Garcia Marquez believes that "it is the power of women in the home and society...that enables men to launch out into every sort of chimerical and strange adventures..." (Guibert, 316). When he tries to shift from that locality after a failed exploration, she objects with all her might. She feels an affinity for the place and refuses to leave because she has a son (Aureliano) there. Her husband has a witty reply: "A person does not belong to a place until there is someone dead under the ground" (HYS, 19). Ursula is
even prepared to die if it is essential for the rest of them to stay there. Neither her husband's charm, nor the promise of a prodigious world, can change her mind.

_HYS_ has no single clearly defined protagonist. Ursula fulfils that role to an extent. She is the clan's mainstay. Her stability stands in contrast with her husband's wavering temper. She goes in search of Jose Arcadio when he leaves Macondo with a gipsy girl. She returns after six months, rejuvenated and exalted. She grudgingly admits Jose Arcadio's illegitimate child (by Pilar Ternera) to her household. She keeps a prosperous business in small candy animals. When the family becomes large with children, she undertakes the enlargement of the house. She knows "that her children were on the point of marriage and having children and that they would be obliged to scatter for the lack of space" (_HYS_, 51).

In _HYS_, "Ursula is both a mother and The Mother" (Gullon, 28). Her normal everyday domestic activities create a centre where decisive events take place.

Thus, she supervises the dancing lessons of Pietro Crespi. When both Amaranta and Rebeca fall in love with him, Ursula takes care of the sick girls.
Her tenderness is nowhere more obvious than when she weeps with rage and curses the day it had occurred to her to buy the pianola. She fixes Rebeca's marriage with Pietro Crespi and takes Amaranta on a trip to the capital to alleviate her disappointment. She agrees to Aureliano's choice to marry Remedios though Jose Arcadio Buendia objects to his son's decision to marry the daughter of his enemy, Don Apolinar Moscote.

"Ursula is the female custodian of the Buendia house" (Gill, 153). She imposes a strict mourning for the death of Remedios and lights a lamp before her daguerrotype. When Jose Arcadio returns, Ursula welcomes him thus: "And there was so much of a home for you, my son, and so much food thrown to the hogs" (HYS, 81). She does not allow Jose Arcadio and Rebeca to enter her house when they get married. She flogs Arcadio when he becomes a cruel dictator. When Arcadio tries to shoot Don Apolinar Moscote, Ursula displays all her strength and vitality. Rushing to the barracks she whips him and chases him to the back of the courtyard. Ursula releases the magistrate and the prisoners.

Ursula is virtually the ruler of the town from that day onwards. She restores peace and many of the
good old customs. She re-establishes the Sunday mass and cancels Arcadio's decrees. "But in spite of her strength, she still wept over her unfortunate fate. She felt so much alone that she sought the useless company of her husband who had been tied to the chestnut tree" (HYS 93). Their children have grown up and they are alone. She tells her husband the important details of the family as if to get rid of her sorrows. She even tells her husband lies, to console herself. But he is beyond the reach of any sorrow.

The spirit and will of Ursula give structure to HYS. She strives hard to live, to keep the family moving with honour, sanity and respect. Richardson reviews the admirable qualities of ursula:

Through generation after generation of her family she lives on, overcoming grand and petty calamities, growing blind and wizened, finally dwindling to nothing but a bent little toy for her great-grand-children's amusement, yet never giving up her sensible notion that there must be some decent goal to be reached after all the frenzy and passions she has witnessed (Richardson, 4).
Ursula visits her condemned son Colonel Aureliano Buendia, in jail when he is brought back to Macondo to carry out the death sentence. She finds him "pale, taller and more solitary then ever" (HYS, 107). She feels troubled by the aura of command and "the glow of maturity that radiated from his skin" (HYS, 107). She has secretly brought a revolver. But Aureliano rejects it.

In HYS, "Ursula's function is to impregnate the fictional space with everyday realities so that the marvellous may enter it smoothly" (Gullon, 28).

Ursula accepts Arcadio's children to her house but refuses to baptize his daughter by her name: "We won't call her Ursula because a person suffers too much with the name" (HYS, 112). When her son Jose Arcadio dies, his blood comes in search of her:

A trickle of blood came out under the door, crossed the living-room, went out into the street, continued on in a straight line across the uneven terraces, went down steps and climbed over curbs, passed along the street of the Turks, turned a corner to the right and another to the left, made a right angle at the Buendia house, went in under the closed door,
crossed through the parlour, hugging the walls so as not to stain the rugs, went on to the other living room, made a curve to avoid the dining room table, went along the porch with the begonias, and passed without being seen under Amaranta's chair as she gave an arithmetic lesson to Aureliano Jose and went through the pantry and came out in the kitchen where Ursula was getting ready to crack the thirty six eggs to make bread (HYS, 113-4).

She follows the route and finds the dead body of her son. She has another premonition when the soldiers bring Colonel Aureliano Buendia to Macondo. When he is poisoned Ursula fights against death to save him. She cleans his stomach with emetics, wraps his body in hot blankets, feeds him egg whites until he regains his health.

"As against the imaginative demiurge of her husband, Ursula embodies the feelings of autochthon in all its complexity" (Gill, 150). She takes good care of Jose Arcadio Buendia when Colonel Aureliano informs her of his imminent death. Again, Ursula warns Aureliano Jose when his relation with Amaranta leads towards incest. Ursula keeps the family intact in evil
times: "In spite of time, of the superimposed period of mourning and her accumulated affections, Ursula resisted growing old" (HYS, 125). She continues her pastry business and earns enough coins to run the family. She saves a big amount for the future. With all the tenderness of a grandmother she baptizes the seventeen illegitimate sons of Col. Aureliano. She is helpless; she brings up her grandchildren only to lose them when they become mature. She laments: "They are all alike....At first they behave very well, they are obedient and prompt and they don't seem capable of killing a fly but as soon as their beards appear they go to ruin" (HYS, 129).

Ursula fights against the cruelties of her son Col. Aureliano when he turns dictator. She brings the mothers of the revolutionary officers to testify for General Moncada. She tries in vain to save his life. "Her gloomy dignity, the weight of her name and the vehemence of her arguments made the scale of justice hesitate for a moment" (HYS, 154). When Colonel Aureliano sentences his closest friend Col. Gerineldo Marquez to death she declares she will kill her son if the order is carried out. Col. Aureliano has to withdraw his order.
Ursula has another premonition when Col. Aureliano signs the Treaty of Neerlandia. He shoots himself. At that moment, in Macondo, when she takes the cover off the pot of milk on the stove, she finds it full of worms and exclaims: "They have killed Aureliano" (HYS, 149). But he is out of danger. "At dusk through her tears she saw the swift and luminous discs that crossed the sky like an exhalation and she thought it was a signal of death" (HYS, 149).

When Col. Aureliano confines himself to the house, Ursula rejuvenates it with a vitality that seemed impossible at her age: "There won't be a better, more open house in all the world than this mad house" (HYS, 151).

She feels that she will go mad when her grandchildren acquire the defects of the family and none of its virtues. She is then a hundred years old and almost blind from cataract but still has her physical dynamism, her integrity of character and her mental balance intact. She hopes that Jose Arcadio will become a priest to restore the prestige of the family. She realizes that the four calamities that led to the downfall of her family are war, women, cockfights and wild undertakings. She warns her great grandchildren against these evils.
Against atavistic tendencies she stands as a citadel. "As a result, she provides a reference point for measuring the imbalances, inadequacy and perversion imminent in other characters" (Gill, 154).

Ursula advises Fernanda to change the strange customs of the latter's ancestors. As long as Ursula has full control of her faculties, many of the old customs of her family survive. But when she loses her sight, Fernanda controls the family. She stops the pastry business of candy animals. The doors of the house, wide open from morn to night, are closed. Ursula tries to bring up Remedios the Beauty as a useful woman. She advises her: "Men demand much more than you think. There is a lot of cooking, a lot of sweeping, a lot of suffering over little things beyond what you think" (HYS, 194).

She is blind in her final years but none discovers it. She does not reveal it as it will render her useless. By depending on other people's voices and odours she manages to survive. She learns the movements of the members of the family and behaves as if she has normal eyesight. Quite diligent even in those days, she makes fresh conclusions about the behaviour of the members of the family: Col. Aureliano
is incapable of loving anyone; it is sinful pride that led him to wars; Amaranta is a victim of immeasurable love.

She is thoroughly disillusioned with the acts of her great-grandson Aureliano Segundo. She "tried to get rid of the shadows that were beginning to wrap her in a strait jacket of cobwebs" (HYS, 206). She now prefers death and asks God if people are made of iron to bear so many troubles and mortifications. She wants to shout words of abuse at the world that she finds so degenerated. She witnesses the death of Amaranta. She pleads for Amaranta's final reconciliation with Fernanda. She collapses with the mourning for Amaranta. Totally blind, she realizes the inner tribulations of Meme. She wants the rain to stop in order that she may die.

In her final days, Ursula becomes a plaything in her great-great-grandchildren's hands:

They looked upon her as a big broken down doll that they carried back and forth from one corner to another wrapped in coloured cloth and with her face painted with soot and annatto, and once they were on the point of plucking out her eyes with the pruning shears as they had done with the frogs (HYS, 266).
She loses her sense of reality and confuses present time with remote periods in her life. She weeps for Petronila Iguaran who was buried a century ago. Even in that labyrinth of madness she keeps a margin of lucidity. When the rain stops, she regains her lucidity and rejoins the life of the family. She weeps when she learns what her great-great-grandchildren have done to her. She washes her painted face and removes the lizards and frogs from her body.

Then she realizes that her house has fallen into a state of ruin, she again tries to restore it. She loses her sense of reality once again and mixes up the past with the present:

Little by little she was shrinking, turning into a foetus, becoming mummified in life to the point that in her last months she was a cherry raisin lost inside of her night gown, and the arm that she always kept raised looked like the paw of a marmonda monkey (HYS, 277).

Santa Sofia feeds her like a baby. The children take her in and out of the bed room and lay her in the altar and hide her in a closet. On Palm Sunday they carry Ursula out by neck and ankles. They consider her dead. In a final prayer, Ursula requests
God to keep her house, keep the light burning before Remedios's daguerrotype and prevent incestuous relationships. She dies on Good Friday. As if to indicate the importance of the event, strange things happen: the roses smell like goosefoot, a pad of cheekpeas falls down and the beans lie on the ground in a perfect geometrical pattern of a star-fish and a row of luminous orange discs passes across the sky.

"When Colonel Buendia dies one feels the poignancy in the death of a single being, but when Ursula is buried one understands that life itself can be worn down to nothing" (Richardson, 4). After her death all disasters against which her life has been a bulwark, descend upon the Buendia family.

To critics like Edwin Williamson, Ursula represents an order of taboo mentality. Her taboo regime is repressive and inefficient. Ursulas's order fails to eradicate the urge to incest as it is based on fear rather than understanding. Her taboo-regime represses instinct and will. The characters cannot, as a result, realize a distinctive personality. When they are unable to attain independent characteristics, they become victims to generic traits and hereditary vices. "This subservience to an impersonal family typology is
evidenced by the almost bewildering recurrence of names -- the Arcadios, Aurelianos, Amarantas, Ursulas and combinations thereof" (Williamson, 52). The names symbolically represent the psychological characteristic of the type. For instance, "the Aurelianos are clairvoyant while the Jose Arcadios are sexually voracious" (Williamson, 52). To every name is attached a group of analogies and parallels. When a child is named Aureliano or Arcadio "a bunch of stock patterns repeat themselves" (Williamson, 52).

The gipsy, Melquiades, is a combination of mythical and human elements. He is without a beginning or an end. He appears after his spurious deaths when he could not bear the solitude. In HYS he plays the role of a prophet and the scribe. The novel is "Melquiades's version of the history of Macondo" (Echevarria, 376).

Melquiades is "a heavy gipsy with an untamed beard and sparrow hands" (HYS, 9). He brings modern discoveries like the magnet and the magnifying glass to Macondo. He believes that things have a life of their own and wants to wake up their souls. "Melquiades is successively and simultaneously alchemist, adventurer, experimenter, scientist, encyclopedic sage, he is
mortal and immortal, a resurrected being" (Gullon, 28). Gullon observes the relevance of Melquiades thus:

Melquiades is the wanderer who circulates freely through the space of the novel and beyond, crossing without effort the boundaries between one world and another. He serves as a link and messenger between the living and the dead (Gullon, 28).

When he again reaches Macondo, he appears to have aged with surprising rapidity and is worn down by some tenacious illness. It is the result of multiple and rare diseases contracted on his trips around the world. "Death followed him everywhere, sniffing at the cuffs on his pants, but never deciding to give him the final clutch of its claws" (HYS, 12). A fugitive from all the plagues and catastrophes, he has survived "pellegra in Persia, scurvy in the Malayan archipelago, leprosy in Alexandria, beriberi in Japan, a bubonic plague in Madagasker, an earthquake in Sicily and a disastrous shipwreck in the Straits of Magellan" (HYS, 12). "Melquiades and his gipsies.... burst into the solitude of Macondo as men wiser and older than its founding family" (Brotherston, 123).
This gloomy man who knows the predictions of Nostradamus is enveloped in a sad aura and has an Asiatic look. He wears a large black hat that looks like a raven with widespread wings. He wears a violet vest across which "the patina of the centuries had skated" (HYS, 12). "One Hundred Years of Solitude is built upon predictions of what will happen to characters in the future..." (Griffin, 1987, 91). In spite of his immense wisdom, he is involved in the small problems of daily life. He suffers from ailments of old age and economic difficulties. He has stopped laughing long before because scurvy has made his teeth drop out. He tells strange stories to the children.

He teaches Jose Arcadio Buendia alchemy.

When Melquiades appears again he is youthful and unwrinkled. He disappears again. He is reported to be dead. When Macondo plunges into an insomnia plague, Melquiades reappears with a daguerrotype laboratory. "He really had been through death but he had returned because he could not bear the solitude" (HYS, 47). He decides to stay with the Buendias. He spends time interpreting the predictions of Nostradamus. One night, he predicts the future of Macondo, a city of glass walls, where there is no trace of a Buendia. Garcia Marquez's characters live "in the
heart of an immense gallery of prophecy so that we feel things have to be because they were written before a story was written about them" (Blakeston, 1973, 73).

In HYS the events are narrated twice: first in Sanskrit by Melquiades and then in Spanish by the narrator. There is no discrepancy between Melquiades's version and the narrator's. Melquiades becomes an old man again and is neglected by the Buendías. They abandon him to solitude because communication with him is difficult. He loses his sight and hearing. He confuses people and speaks in a strange language. He gropes in the air without his false teeth. He scribbles in an enigmatic language on the parchments he has brought with him. No one understands his broken language. His reading aloud from his parchments resembles encyclicals being chanted. He advised Arcadio to burn mercury for three days to make him immortal. One day he is drowned. Jose Arcaido Buendia tries in vain to resurrect him by burning mercury. He is buried as Macondo's greatest benefactor. On the tomb, they write the only thing they know about him: 'Melquiades'. In the novel, "prodigious events and miracles mingle with reference to household events" (Gullon, 27). Phantoms and ghosts live side by side with the living. "In the novel's space, proven and fabulous events are equally true..." (Gullon, 27).
Loneliness is so unbearable that the gipsy again returns during the time of Aureliano Segundo. The latter tries to decipher Melquiades's manuscripts which look like clothes hung out to dry on a line. They resemble musical notations. Aureliano Segundo feels the presence of a stranger in the laboratory. It is Melquiades, who was under forty years of age. His hereditary memory helps Aureliano Segundo to recognise the gipsy. Melquiades refuses to translate the manuscript. No one shall read them, he believes, until Macondo has reached one hundred years of age. They talk, but no one else sees or hears Melquiades.

Then Jose Arcadio tries to read the parchments. He becomes unaware of everything and everyone leaves him to his solitude. After Jose Arcadio Segundo's death, Aureliano Babilonia tries to decipher the parchments. He finds that they are written in Sanskrit. Melquiades asks him to buy a Sanskrit primer from the Catalanian's store. He tells Aurelino that he has enough time to read them. Melquiades gradually vanishes into the elements. His room "is that timeless space of memory, the domain of history and literature...marked by the diaphanous purity of its air, its immunity against dust and destruction..." (Martin, 1987, 109).
As long as he haunts the room it is invulnerable to dust and ants. It remains as fresh as the day it is built. When he leaves, it becomes "vulnerable to dust, heat, termites, red ants and moths who would turn the wisdom of the parchments into saw dust" (HYS, 298). Finally, when Aureliano reads the manuscript, he finds the story of the hundred years of solitude of Macondo. At that moment, the city and its people are destroyed in a violent hurricane, as Melquiades has predicted in his parchments. When Melquiades dies, time pursues its work in his room. There "it is always Monday and March for some characters..." (Echevarria, 370).

The gipsy holds the past, present and future of Macondo in a single moment of thought. He tells the story of Macondo in a magical way. When the magic is discovered the city fades away. "Reading itself becomes an act of creation and as such it changes reality" (Luchting, 471).

As Aureliano finishes reading Melquiades's manuscript, everything is obliterated. "In a final stroke of magic and of art, Melquiades (Marquez) not only ends the story of the Buendias, he eradicates it forever in one luminous moment" (Richardson, 4). When
Macando is destroyed, the time and space of the narrator's world, and the time and space of the world he narrates, become one and the same. "Our own anagnorisis as readers is saved for the last page, when the novel concludes and we close the book to cease as readers..." (Echevarria, 378).

_HVS_ is the story of characters like Jose Arcadio Buendia, Ursula Iguaran and Pilar Ternera who are marooned on the remote, swampy village. In Michael Wood's view:

The solitude is that of most people in the book, but especially that of Colonel Aureliano Buendia, Ursula's sad revolutionary son, fighting vague lost battles, and ultimately betraying his dimly understood cause to return to the loneliness of Macondo (Wood, 163).

Garcia Marquez presents the theme of loneliness through the life and actions of a few memorable characters. Among them Colonel Aureliano Buendia has a prominent place. In his interview with Rita Guibert, Garcia Marquez says: "The story of Colonel Aureliano Buendia -- the wars he fought and his progress to power -- is a progress towards solitude" (Guibert, 315). The first sentence of the novel itself
introduces Colonel Buendia: "Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendia was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice" (HYS, 1). Many of the readers believe that Garcia Marquez's grandfather is the model for Colonel Aureliano Buendia. The author is of the opinion that Col. Aureliano Buendia resembles his grandfather's friend and hero in the Civil War, General Raphael Uribe. A reader finds resemblances to Simon Bolivar also. Edwin Williamson aptly summarises the features of this character in his article, "Magical Realism and the theme of incest in One Hundred Years of Solitude"

Colonel Aureliano Buendia becomes the most highly individualised member of the family, he remains an isolated, eccentric figure who offers an alternative to the stock Buendia response to the impotence of failure (Williamson, 54).

He is the first human being to be born in Macondo. He is silent and withdrawn. He has wept in his mother's womb and is born with his eyes open. Then he examines the people and things in the room with fearless curiosity.
He has an infallible intuition from an early age. At three, he warns Ursula that a pot of boiling soup on the stove is going to spill. The pot falls and is broken. When his brother, Jose Arcadio, visits Pilar Ternera, Aureliano lies awake in his solitary bed, sharing his brother's suffering and enjoyment. When Pilar Ternera offers to do the chores, Aureliano dismisses her. He predicts the coming of Rebeca.

As he grows up, Aureliano has a languorous and clairvoyant look. He is an expert silver-smith and spends his time in the laboratory unaware of time and space. He seems to be taking refuge in some other time. He remains a womanless man all his life.

He falls in love with Don Apolinar Moscote's nine-year-old daughter, Remedios. Pilar Ternera helps him and Ursula supports his choice. When the girl reaches puberty he marries her. She takes care of him. She has a sense of responsibility, natural grace and calm control. Her merry vitality changes the entire house. Aureliano finds in her the justification he needed to live. It seems that he is settled for a comfortable family life. He suffers from loneliness even then:
But his sedentary life, which accentuated his cheekbones and concentrated the sparkle of his eyes did not increase his weight or alter the parsimony of his character, but on the contrary, it hardened on his lips the straight line of solitary meditation and implacable decision (HYS, 78).

Remedios's death in an accident does not produce the despair he has feared. It vanishes as a feeling of frustration and solitary rage.

Aureliano's life takes another course when martial law is imposed and all weapons are confiscated. He witnesses the rigging of the elections. He acquires a passive sympathy for the Liberals, but is opposed to bloody assassinations. When the soldiers with their rifle butts kill a lady who is bitten by a mad dog, Aureliano organises his friends, captures the garrison, seizes the weapons and kills the soldiers. After declaring Arcadio as the civil and military ruler of the town he and his comrades leave the town to join the revolutionary forces. Williamson examines his motives:

His rebellions are a bid to establish the differences (between Conservatives and Liberals) to assert his independence from an
order of things which exacts unthinking conformity to a hereditary set of values (Williamson, 53).

He becomes a great General. He organises thirty-two armed uprisings and loses them all. He has seventeen sons by seventeen different women. They are all killed one night. He survives many attempts on his life. He refuses the Order of Merit. He rises to be the Commander-in-Chief of the revolutionary forces. He refuses pension and lives in old age by manufacturing little gold fish.

Colonel Aureliano Buendia's political struggles echo the great Colombian Civil Wars, the terrible conflict between the Conservatives and the Liberals. Aureliano Buendia an apolitical and solitary dreamer, leads the country into a labyrinth of Civil Wars. But he is gradually trapped in a maze from which he couldn't come out. He finally admits defeat after a number of bloody revolutions. He feels as if he has gone through these trials before. He hands over his poems to be burnt and refuses to accept a revolver brought secretly by his mother. He waits for premonitions but no signal comes. He is certain that his death will be announced to him with a definite unequivocal signal.
He has other similar premonitions. Once a beautiful woman comes to kill him. (The story is repeated in GIL). Before she turns with the weapon, he feels that she is there to shoot him. On another occasion his friend, Colonel Magnifico Visbal who lies in Aureliano's bed is killed. The premonitions will come suddenly in a wave of supernatural lucidity. When he is condemned to death, he demands that the order is to be carried out in Macondo. His brother Jose Arcadio saves him.

Aureliano leaves Macondo to begin another war. He does not gain anything and is not happy. He realises the futility of his wars. He even suspects that he is fighting because of pride. Yet he continues war and does not agree for talks. His death is announced many times. He becomes the most feared enemy of the government. A court-martial sentences him to death in absentia. "His Odyssey through the Caribbean also represents a metaphoric, internalized journey to disillusion and solitude..." (McMurray, 80). When he returns to Macondo he has become a lonely despot, protected by guards. No one is allowed to approach him closer than ten feet. He places his hand always on his pistol. His face becomes hard and he looks like a man capable of anything. He organises a court-martial and
his enemies are shot. His mother's pleading has no say in his authoritarian rule. He himself is startled to see how much he has aged, how his hands shook and how indifferent he was to death. He feels disgusted at himself. General Moncada, his enemy, reminds him of his degeneration. Fighting against the corrupt military and the politicians, he has ended up as bad as they are. He ends up as the most bloody dictator the country has ever seen. He may even shoot Ursula to pacify his conscience.

Aureliano never allows anyone to enter his realm of confidence. As the war continues his memories fade into a universe of unreality. War becomes nothing but an emptiness. The politicians repudiate him as an adventurer but he is not bothered and sits giving orders. He destroys the house of Gen. Moncada when his wife asks him to get out of the house. "You are rotting alive", Col. Gerineldo Marquez warns him. (HYS, 139). When a rebel commander Gen. Teofilo Vargas becomes a threat to his position, he is murdered. The corruption of power has reached his inner core. "An inner coldness shattered his bones...and the intoxications of power began to break apart under waves of discomfort" (HYS, 140). He felt more lonely than ever. He does not believe his own officers. His position is very pitiable:
He was weary of the uncertainty of the vicious circle of that eternal war that always found him in the same place, but always older, wearier, even more in the position of not knowing why or how or even when. Alone, abandoned by his premonitions, fleeing the chill that was to accompany him until death, he sought a last refuge in Macondo in the warmth of his oldest memories (HYS, 140).

Alan Kennedy in his essay, "Marquez: Resistance, Rebellion and Reading" finds it as the fate of every dictator: "Buendia's fate seems to be an allegory of the fate of the rebellious: they are transformed into what they oppose and threaten to become dictators in their turn" (Kennedy 52).

When he signs a pact with the Liberals, all oppose it. He condemns his closest friend Col. Gerineldo Marquez to death. He spends "many hours trying to break the hard shell of solitude" (HYS, 140). He feels the worthlessness of the wars. "He had to start thirty-two wars and had to violate all of his pacts with death and wallow like a hog in the dung-heap of glory..." (HYS, 140). Then he tries to put an end to the war. It takes one year to force the government
to propose conditions of peace favourable to the rebels. It takes one more year to convince his own soldiers. It becomes more difficult to stop a war than begin one. He has to kill his own officers. In a way he is fighting for his own liberation. He returns to his house as a stranger, alien to everything.

Ursula understands his misery. His affection for her has rotten away. No one can put a lasting impression on his mind. "The countless women he had known on the desert of love and who had spread his seed all along the coast had left no trace in his feelings" (HYS, 145). Like an absurd hero Col. Aureliano Buendia realizes the disproportion between his intentions and reality.

During the following days he destroys all traces of his passage through the world. He destroys his clothes, his poetry and his weapons. He keeps one pistol with one bullet. On the day of the armistice he is more taciturn and solitary. At Neerlandia he is tormented by the failure of his dreams. After signing the treaty he shoots himself but doesn't die, and this helps him regain his lost prestige. But he hesitates to begin another war.
Leaving all contacts with the reality of the nation he encloses himself in the workshop making little gold fish. He sells them and converts the gold coins to gold fish. It is a vicious circle. The concentration he needs to link scales, fit minute rubies into the eyes etc. make him forget the disillusionment of the war. It provides him the peace of spirit. He learns the secrets of solitude.

Taciturn, silent, insensible to the new breath of vitality that was shaking the house, Colonel Aureliano Buendia could understand only that the secret of a good old age is simply an honorable pact with solitude (HYS, 166).

He works all day in his workshop and allows nothing to disturb his solitude. He has to "cast and recast tiny golden fish, in a stultifying re-enactment of his military campaigns" (Richardson, 4). Edwin Williamson delves deep into the Colonel's mind:

Defeat may have forced the Colonel into a fruitless solitude, but his attitude is the very opposite of resignation. He keeps alive his bitterness at historical failure in a rancorous disaffection from the established
order of things...unwilling to escape from history into some magical sphere where the problems of his actual situation can be dissolved (Williamson, 53-4).

He does not take part in the jubilee and refuses the Order of Merit. He begs them to leave him alone to spend his final days as an old man manufacturing little golden fish. When his seventeen sons are assassinated he thinks of organising another rebellion. These are bad days for him. He feels anger and rage. He abandons his work and wanders through the house. He tries to rouse the omens that have guided him through the desolate paths of glory. He is lost in that mad house.

Nothing can take him out of his self-imposed imprisonment. He does not care for food. He stops selling his gold fish when he learns that people are buying them as relics. He makes two gold fish everyday and when the number reaches twentyfive, melts them down and starts all over again.

"On the last day of his life, his alienation is expressed symbolically when he falls asleep in his hammock and dreams of entering an empty house with white walls" (McMurray, 81). The Colonel dies utterly
alone. The absurdity of his life is conveyed by the passing circus. When the procession passes by his house "he finds himself contemplating his miserable solitude mirrored in the expanse of the street where a few onlookers are still peering over the precipice of uncertainty" (McMurray, 82).

George R. McMurray in his remarkable critical study, Gabrial Garcia Marquez, sums up the character of the Colonel: "Colonel Aureliano Buendia is the patriarch who gives glory to the town as well as its denouement.... His heroic feats have been soon erased from the collective memory of Macondo" (McMurray, 82).

Pilar Ternera is a surrogate mother/lover, fortune-teller and initiatress. She acts as "the deputy matriarch who is annexed to the House of Buendia like the stables or the granary" (Kappeler, 159). Pilar Ternera is a merry, foul-mouthed and provocative woman who comes to the Buendia family to help with the chores. Ursula seeks her help to know the future of her son, Jose Arcadio. "As against Ursula, Pilar Ternera is the female version of a traveller" (Gill, 151). In a voice that resounds like a spray of broken glass she tells the future of the boy. It arouses in him immense desire for her. She initiates the boy into the world of sexual pleasure.

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"Pilar is the village whore who populates Macondo with bastards fathered by the young men of three generations while waiting for the perfect man promised by her Tarot Pack" (Richardson, 4). She has a tragic past; she is dragged to the unknown place by her family to separate her from the man who raped her at fourteen. He continues to love her but never marries her. Jose Arcadio, in terrible loneliness, finds pleasure in this woman whose explosive laughter frightens off the doves.

Jose Arcadio and Pilar Ternera become lovers, "...they even came to suspect that love could be a feeling that was more relaxing and deep than the happiness, wild but momentary, of their secret nights" (HYS, 32). But when she becomes pregnant Jose Arcadio is shocked. Pilar Ternera's son is brought to the Buendia family and is given the name 'Arcadio'. She has a son by Aureliano too. "She had become tired of waiting for the man who would stay, of the men who left, of the countless men who missed the road to her house confused by the uncertainty of the cards" (HYS, 62). She realises Aureliano's craving for love and understanding. She offers to help him marry Remedios. She predicts Rebeca's future. Rebeca, Pilar Ternera announces, will not be happy as long as her parents'
bones remain unburied. She also predicts that Aureliano will become a great soldier.

Pilar Ternera is in a pitiable state when her son Arcadio, who never knows his parentage, is attracted towards her. She has lost her charm, but her smell still haunts men. She resists his attempts. Finally she sacrifices her savings and sends a virgin, Santa Sofia de la Piedad, to his room. Pilar is capable of motherly tenderness also. She quarrels with a woman when her son Arcadio is ridiculed.

Pilar accepts Aureliano Jose as her son. "More than mother and son, they were accomplices in solitude" (HYS, 30). Her laughter changes to the tone of an organ. Her heart grows old without bitterness. Renouncing the illusions of her cards she finds consolation in other people's love. She gives her room to the girls from the neighbourhood to receive their lovers.

She never charged for the service. She never refused the favour, "just as she never refused the countless men who sought her out, even in the twilight of her maternity without giving her money or love and only occasionally pleasure" (HYS, 130).
Aureliano Jose is the tall dark man promised by her cards, but he is stamped with the mark of death and is killed soon.

She warns Col. Aureliano Buendia to watch out for his mouth. When he is given poison this prophecy becomes true. She does not require the cards to tell the future of a Buendia. She gives Meme and Mauricio Babilonia her bed for their trysts. The last Buendia, Aureliano also seeks relief in her lap when he is in hopeless love with his own aunt, Amaranta Ursula. Pilar knows the secrets of the family.

There was no mystery in the heart of a Buendia that was impenetrable for her because a century of cards and experience had taught her that the history of the family was a machine with unavoidable repetitions, a turning wheel that would have gone on into spilling into eternity were it not for the progressive and irremediable wearing of the axle (HYS, 320).

Pilar is a very old woman by then. She runs a zoological brothel in her final days. When the last Aureliano comes in search of her, she recognises him immediately because "he was marked for ever and from the beginning of the world with the pox of solitude"
(HYS, 319). She is reminded of Col. Buendia. When she is one hundred and forty five, she had given up the pernicious custom of keeping track of her age and she went on living in the static and marginal time of memories in a future perfectly revealed and established, beyond the futures, disturbed by the insidious snares and suppositions of the cards (HYS, 319).

"It is no wonder that Garcia Marquez gives his women long lives, for they seem far more able to make a pact with life than men" (Richardson, 4). Pilar soon dies in her wicker chair. She is not buried in a coffin, but sitting in her rocker chair which eight men lower by ropes into a huge hole dug in the centre of the dance floor. The mulatto girls observe a number of shadowy rites. They throw into the pit their earrings brooches and rings. Her tomb bears neither name nor dates. "In Pilar's tomb among the psalms and cheap whore jewellery, the ruins of the past would rot" (HYS, 322). Amaranta's story repeats the same tale of solitude. Ricardo Gullon in his "Gabriel Garcia Marquez and the Lost Art of Story telling" comments:
Amaranta's solitude is that of rancour and death in life. She lives along with her hate and solely for it. Her communication with death is normal and no different from that which she has with people around her (Gullon, 137).

'Amar' means love, the eternal passion, in Spanish but Amaranta nurtures solitude instead of love. Tejwant S. Gill is of the view that "Amaranta and Rebeca are the isolated facets of Ursula's integrated wifehood" (Gill, 153). As a child Amaranta is "light and watery like a newt" (HYS, 32). Both the girls are brought up under the strict vigilance of Ursula. When Ursula orders for a pianola, it leads to many important events in the lives of these girls. Both fall in love with Pietro Crespi, the young Italian sent by the company to assemble it. The Italian is not prepared to accept Amaranta's love. He considers her as a capricious little girl and ridicules her by offering to send his younger brother for her. Amaranta feels humiliated and she takes a pledge to stop her sister's marriage at any cost. She threatens to kill her to stop the marriage. Rebeca knows her sister's character, the haughtiness of her spirit and the virulence of her anger. When the marriage is fixed,
Amaranta sends a false letter announcing Pietro Crespi's mother's imminent death. The wedding is postponed and Pietro returns home. It is never discovered who did the mischief. Amaranta weeps with indignation and swears her innocence in front of the altar. The day is again fixed with the inauguration of the new church. It takes three more years. Amaranta then undertakes another subterfuge. She removes the moth-balls from Rebeca's wedding dress. Moths perforate it. But her plan fails because Amparo Moscote offers to sew a new dress within a week. Amaranta's response is quite shocking:

Amaranta felt faint that rainy noontime when Amparo came to the house wrapped in the froth of needlework for Rebeca to have the final fittings of the dress. She lost her voice and a thread of cold sweat ran down the path of her spine... (HVS, 77).

She trembles at the thought that she has to poison Rebeca. She poisons Rebeca's coffee with laudanum. By a mistake, Remedios dies. The marriage is again postponed.

Amaranta suffers a crisis of conscience. She has never expected this sort of an obstacle.
Remedios's merry vitality has sent a whirlwind of good health in the entire house. When she has announced that she is going to have a baby, Amaranta and Rebeca have declared a truce to knit blue and red clothes for the baby. As a penance for killing Remedios, she adopts Aureliano Jose whom Remedios is bringing up as her son.

Rebeca marries Jose Arcadio. But Amaranta continues her rancour against her. This is an opportunity she has never dreamt of. Pietro Crespi turns his affection towards Amaranta. She looks after him with a loving diligence, knows his needs and keeps him happy company. But she repeatedly rejects his proposals. Every day he comes and spends his evenings with her. There is no obstacle. Nobody supervises their meetings. Crespi becomes quite desperate and neglects his business. Finally, he commits suicide on All Soul's Day. Amaranta feels sorry for his death. She burns her hand as repentance. The burns heal gradually and she overcomes her sense of guilt. But she keeps a bandage of black gauze on her hand until her death. "Amaranta, because of a bad moment of love as a girl, spins out the rest of her long existence doing embroidery, held to life only by the desire to outlive the woman she hates" (Richardson, 4).
Col. Gerineldo Marquez courts her. But she rejects his proposals. She brings up Aureliano Jose in order to alleviate her solitude. But soon the relationship moves to the plane of an incestuous affair. It turns into a dangerous one. She puts an end to that dangerous autumnal passion, by which, the mature maiden has been trying to let loose her repressed feelings.

Yet, she does not bar the door of her bedroom when Aureliano Jose returns from the war. When he enters her bed, completely naked, instead of fleeing, instead of shouting, she lets herself be saturated with a soft feeling of relaxation. He promises to get a special permission to marry his aunt. But, finally Amaranta rejects him also.

Col. Marques again courts her "unaware of the secret designs of that indecipherable heart" (HVS, 136). Though Amaranta is upset by the perseverance, loyalty and submissiveness of this officer, she rejects him even after four years of his courtship. She herself cannot bear the weight of her obstinancy and she weeps over her solitude.

Amaranta spends her days doing household duties. She acts as a guardian to Remedios the Beauty.
She has a deep compassion for her brother, Aureliano. She takes his children, the seventeen Aurelianos to church on Ash Wednesday. Fr. Antony Isabel makes the sign of the cross in ash on their foreheads. The mark becomes indelible. They are all killed by unknown criminals.

Even in her old age Amaranta continues her rivalry with Rebeca. She remembers every minute that her "rival was alive and rotting in her wormhole" (HYS, 181). She thinks of her when she awakens from her solitary bed, when she soaps her withered breasts and lean stomach, and when she wears the corsets of an old woman. She thinks about Rebeca because solitude has purified all other feelings except her hatred for her rival. She even tries to inculcate hatred in the mind of Remedios the Beauty towards Rebeca by narrating unpleasant events. She thus longs to prolong her hatred beyond her death.

In her extreme old age Ursula analyses Amaranta's hardness of heart and bitterness. She considers her as a tender woman who possesses immeasurable love and an invincible cowardice. This has led to her rejection of Pietro Crespi and Col Gerineldo Marquez.
Amaranta grows old, isolated from everyone. Still she looks firm, upright and healthy. No one knows her feelings. She never expresses her sorrow. Memories are quite painful to her. She becomes angry and pricks her fingers with the needle. Her sense of loss and approaching death make her bitter.

She thinks of Rebeca whose memory is scalding to her. She prays to God not to send her the punishment of dying before Rebeca. She waits for the funeral procession of Rebeca to pass by. "She would pull off buttons to sew them on again so that inactivity would not make the wait longer and more anxious" (HYS, 227). She prepares a shroud for Rebeca. She imagines decorating the corpse and throwing it to the worms after elaborate funeral rites.

Her plans fail because she dies before Rebeca. She is not frustrated because death has awarded the privilege of announcing itself several years ahead of time. "She saw it on one burning afternoon sewing with her on the porch a short time after Meme had left for school. She saw it because it was a woman dressed in blue with long hair, with a sort of antiquated look..." (HYS, 227).
Death on one occasion asks her the favour of threading a needle. Death orders her to begin sewing her own shroud. Amaranta is asked to make it as complicated as possible because she will die without pain, fear or bitterness when it is finished.

According to Ricardo Gullon, "Amaranta sews and unsews buttons and alternatively weaves and unweaves her shroud to retard the coming of death. These are solitary games, designed to regain lost time" (Gullon, 32). To prolong the activity Amaranta spins the thread out of rough flax. It alone takes four years and then she starts sewing the shroud. She realizes that she will die before Rebeca. But she accepts the idea without frustration. Only then she realizes the vicious circle of Col. Aureliano Buendia's golden fish. Only then she understands the misery of solitude.

She even wants to rescue Rebeca from her impenetrable solitude. With this realisation, she speeds up the work. She finishes the work on the fifth of February and then announces to the world that she is going to die at dusk. She intends to make up for a lifetime of meanness with one last favour to the world: she will take letters to the dead.
She receives a carton full of letters besides verbal messages to be delivered to the dead. She calls a carpenter to make her measurements for the coffin. Ursula alone takes her action seriously because she knows that the Buendias die without any illness. Amaranta divides her things among the poor and wears a simple cloth and slippers. She receives mock farewells also. When Fr. Antonio Isabel asks her to have confession, she replies that her conscience is clean and she does not need any spiritual help. When Fernanda blames her preference for an impious death, she asks Ursula to give public testimony as to her virginity. "Let no one have any illusions" , she shouts, "Amaranta Buendia is leaving this world just as she came into it" (HYS, 230). She lies on the cushion and sees her face in a mirror for the first time in more than forty years. She is surprised at the resemblance with the image she has of herself. Ursula asks her to get reconciled to Fernanda but she refuses. She dies with the black bandage on her hand.

George R. McMurray is of the view that "the solitude shared by all the Buendias is directly related to their egocentricity, i.e., a tendency to turn inward on themselves rather than towards others" (McMurray, 69). The story of Rebeca illustrates this fact.
Rebeca is eleven years old when she comes to Macondo with some cattle dealers from Manaure along with a letter to Jose Arcadio Buendia. She carries a rocking chair and a bag containing her parents' bones. She is Ursula's cousin and is the daughter of Niconor Ulloa and Rebeca Montiel. Neither Jose Arcadio Buendia nor Ursula can remember her parents or the person who sent the letter.

Rebeca does not speak till the Guajiro Indians ask her to in their language. They call her Rebeca. She does not eat anything for several days. She secretly eats the damp earth of the courtyard and the cake of whitewash from the walls. They try various means to stop this practice. Finally Ursula gives her a medicine and uses various punishments. Gradually she joins the life of the family. She can dance and sing. She loves Ursula better than her own children. She brings the insomnía plague to Macondo.

"Although she seemed expansive and cordial she had a solitary character and impenetrable heart" (HYS, 58). When she falls in love with Pietro Crespi, she again eats earth. It is an expression of agony and an earnest desire. She eats handfuls of earth in a suicidal drive and falls unconscious.
She consults Pilar Ternera who predicts that she will not be happy as long as her parents' bones remain unburied. Jose Arcadio Buendia buries them. Her marriage is postponed due to her long-lasting rivalry with Amaranta. When little Remedios is killed the marriage is again postponed. Rebeca "seemed to be bleeding to death inside the black dress with sleeves down to her wrist" (HYS, 79). When Jose Arcadio returns, she is easily impressed by his manliness. She marries him. Ursula does not allow them to enter her house. They rent a house and spend a scandalous honeymoon:

The neighbours were startled by the cries that woke up the whole district as many as eight time in a single night and three times during siesta and they prayed that such wild passion would not disturb the peace of the dead (HYS, 83).

Rebeca can change the ways of her husband's life:

They led a happy married life. Rebaca's firm character, the voracity of her stomach, her tenacious ambition absorbed the tremendous energy of her husband who had been changed from a lazy woman-chasing man into an enormous work animal (HYS, 99).
Rebeca is a good housewife. She has forgotten everything about her past. Her husband is a good hunter. After Arcadio's death they live in his house. But, soon he is shot dead in mysterious circumstances. Garcia Marquez's comment is interesting: "That was perhaps the only mystery that was never cleared up in Macondo" (HYS, 113).

After her husband's death, "Rebeca closed the doors of her house and buried herself alive, covered with a thick crust of disdain that no earthly temptation was ever able to break" (HYS, 114). She goes out to the street only once in the rest of her life. She kills a thief with one shot when he is trying to break into her house. Except for Argenida, her servant, no one ever had any contact with her.

When she becomes very old Ursula remembers Rebeca with repentance and admiration: "Rebeca, the one with an impatient heart, the one with a fierce womb, was the only one who had the unbridled courage that Ursula had wanted for her line" (HYS, 204).

Aureliano Triste tries to renovate Rebeca's house with the help of the Aurelianos. But she does not allow them to enter her house. Then she pays them in coins that are no more in use. She lives as a secluded widow till her death.
Aureliano Segundo decides to bring her to the Buendía house and take care of her. But Rebeca refuses. She "had needed many years of suffering and misery in order to attain the privileges of solitude and she was not disposed to renounce them in exchange for an old age disturbed by false attractions of charity" (HYS, 182). Rebeca's life and death bears out George R. McMurray's view that in HYS Garcia Marquez creates "a fragmentary and chaotic world in which loneliness and pain appear to be the only constants" (McMurray, 90).

Gregory Rabassa opines in his essay "Beyond Magic Realism: Thoughts on the Art of Gabriel García Marquez" thus: "With death and destruction all around García Marquez's tropical people, his positive characters, always seem to keep on running, until they drop" (Rabassa, 1973, 50). Pietro Crespi's tragedy is an instance. His story is one of the most memorable incidents in the novel. Crespi is young and blond, the most handsome and well-mannered man who had ever been seen in Macondo. Well-dressed and quite patient in work, he is liked by all. He teaches Amaranta and Rebeca how to dance. Both fall in love with him, he prefers Rebeca.
When Jose Arcadio returns Rebeca is impressed by his manliness and marries him, neglecting Pietro Crespi, whom she considers a sugary dandy. Pietro Crespi rises above his defeat with severe dignity. Now Amaranta nurses him and keeps good company. Soon he proposes marriage, but Amaranta refuses his offer. Their friendship deepens and they are good lovers. But he is again rejected.

Pietro loses his control and weeps miserably. He exhausts all manner of pleas and goes through incredible extremes of humiliation. He prowls near her bedroom "like a tormented emperor" (HYS, 97). He spends days writing wild notes and sends a valuable gift which she rejects. One night he sings and Macondo wakes up hearing that angelic stupor. Amaranta is dumb to all pleas. His death is described in a startling manner:

On November second, All Soul's day, his brother opened his store and found all the lamps lighted, all the music boxes opened, and all the clocks striking an interminable hour and in the midst of that mad concert he found Pietro Crespi at the desk in the rear with his wrists cut by a razor and his hands thrust into a basin of benzoin (HYS, 96).
Ursula buries him in the cemetery against the wishes of Fr. Nicanor. "In a way that neither you nor I can understand that man was a saint", she says (HYS, 96). The whole town supports her. Amaranta alone keeps aloof.

When we read HYS we "have the sense of living along with the Buendias (and the rest), in them, through them, and in spite of them, in all their loves, madesses, and wars, their alliances dreams and deaths" (West, 4). The John Leonard comments on the pattern of solitude in his article "The Myth is alive in Latin America":

The Buendias (inventors, artisans, soldiers, lovers, mystics) seem doomed to ride a biological tragi-cycle in circles from solitude to magic to poetry to science to politics to violence back again to solitude (Leonard, 39).

The life of Arcadio, Pilar Ternera's illegitimate son by Jose Arcadio, is an example. He has an unfortunate childhood. He never knows his true identity. Ursula grudgingly admits him to her household. Visitacion, a Guajiro Indian woman, takes care of him. As he grows up he inherits the physical
drive of his father. Aureliano teaches him to read and write.

When the magistrate founded a new school Arcadio is given the charge of it. The Liberal fever spreads and the school becomes the centre of political activities. Arcadio even blames Aureliano for his lack of interest in politics. Arcadio becomes the civil and military ruler of the town when Aureliano and his friends kill the soldiers and capture the town. He turns a dictator; he wears a uniform with ornaments; arms his former pupils and gives fiery proclamations.

He imposes compulsory military training, prohibits the Mass and organises a firing squad. He mercilessly kills those who oppose him. He assualts the magistrate's house, flogs his daughters and tortures Don Apolinar Moscote, the magistrate. Ursula interferes to rescue him. She bursts into the headquarters (formerly the school), whips him and releases the prisoners. The dictator is helpless.

Arcadio collaborates with Jose Arcadio, his father, in usurping public property and public funds. He imposes tax even for burying the dead. He builds a big house, squandering public funds. When Aureliano loses the war, he sends a messenger to Arcadio with
instructions to surrender. Arcadio puts the messenger in the stocks and fights bravely. He is defeated and captured by the soldiers.

After a summary court-martial Arcadio is shot against the wall of the cemetery. He faces death bravely. "He thought about his people without sentimentality, with a strict closing of his accounts with life, beginning to understand how much he really loved the people he hated most" (HYS, 103). He is not shocked when he is condemned to death. He feels the formality of death quite ridiculous. Death does not matter to him but life does, and he feels no fear but nostalgia. As his last wish, he gives instructions regarding the names of his children. He does not repent and embraces death.

Arcadio's story illustrates the loneliness of power. His repressed childhood is responsible for his future behaviour. He grows up as a frightened child in the midst of the insomnia plague. He suffers from his old shoes, patched pants and female buttocks. He succeeds in communicating only with Visitacion and Cataure in their language. Melquiades is the only person who cares for him. Arcadio weeps and tries to resurrect him. The school, where they pay attention to him and respect him, and then power, free him from his loneliness.
In this context, the opinion of Michael Wood is quite apt:

Loneliness in Macondo and among the Buendias is not an accidental condition, something that could be alleviated by better communication or more friends.... It is a particular vocation, a shape of character that is inherited, certainly, but also chosen, a doom that looks inevitable but is freely endorsed (Wood, 165).

Remedios the Beauty is a femme fatale, a fatal woman who brings danger to men. She lives in a world of imagination unaffected by the great events of her time like the banana plague. "She was becalmed in a magnificent adolescence, more and more impenetrable to formality, more and more indifferent to malice and suspicion, happy in her own world of simple realities" (HY, 190). When the members of the family pester her to keep her hair clean, she shaves her head. She does not wear corsets and petticoats. She wears a cassock "without taking away the feeling of being naked" (HY, 190). She is a woman whose beauty tortures men.

The startling thing about her simplifying instinct was that the more she did away with fashion in search for comfort and the more she passed over conventions as she obeyed
spontaneity, the more disturbing her incredible beauty became and the more provocative she became to men (HYS, 190).

Ursula feels that Remedios's provocative presence may lead to an incestuous affair. She warns her to keep away from the sons of Col. Aureliano Buendia because any children born out of a relationship will have a pig's tail. She is such a provocative presence that the sons of Col. Aureliano Buendia do not sleep at the house. Remedios is least bothered about such precautions. She never learns of her fate as a disturbing woman. When she appears in the dining room it causes a panic of exasperation among the outsiders. It is quite evident that she is completely naked under her night shirt. Everyone misunderstands her ways of behaviour as a provocation to men. The strangers soon realize that "she gave off a breath of perturbation, a tormenting breeze that was still perceptible several hours after she had passed by" (HYS, 191). The natural smell of Remedios the Beauty produces an anxiety not experienced before by men.

It is possible to find out the exact place where she has been. Only the strangers distinguish her odour. A young commander dies of love and another gentleman goes crazy. But she is unaware of her charm. She is indifferent to the rules of the house.
Sometimes she wakes up at three and sometimes she sleeps all day long. Sometimes she gets up at eleven o’clock and shut herself up in the bathroom till 2 o’clock. Bathing is a ritualistic ceremony to her, 'a solitary rite' that helps her to pass time.

"The smell of Remedios the Beauty kept on torturing men beyond death, right down to the dust of their bones" (HYS, 193). She does not give off a breath of love, but a fatal emanation. The man who tries to attack her is killed by a horse the same day. She is believed to possess the powers of death.

Ursula expects that a miracle will happen and take Remedios away. Fernanda considers her as an idiot. Col. Aureliano Buendia considers her as the 'most lucid being'. But,

Remedios the Beauty stayed there wandering through the deserts of solitude, bearing no cross on her back, maturing in her dreams without nightmares, her interminable baths, her unscheduled meals, her deep and prolonged silences that had no memory... (HYS, 195).

One day, while she is folding Fernanda's bed-sheet, a wind begins to blow and she ascends to heaven. The outsiders believe that she must have eloped with a man. But most people believe in the miracle and even light candles and celebrate novenas.
Fernanda, "an outsider" and "foreigner" to Macondo, "acts as a stern wife" and "attempts to force the chain of isolation on the Buendia home" (Gullon, 30). As a result Aureliano Segundo, her husband, falls desperately into solitude. He takes shelter in this to escape his wife's solitude. Fernanda likes to live entombed, faithful to the paternal decree to be buried alive. Her father has done so and she imposes the same punishment on her daughter and grandson.

Fernanda remains as an outsider; nothing can incorporate her into the family. Her behaviour and speech are strange to the members of the family. She quarrels with Amaranta and imposes the customs of her ancestors. She puts an end to the custom of eating in the kitchen. Prayer is recited before dinner. The business in candy animals is stopped, the doors of the house are closed, the aloe branch and loaf of bread are removed from the door. Thus she makes the isolation of the Buendias more intense.

Fernanda is responsible for the tragedy of Meme. Her rigidity and narrow-mindedness spoil Meme who knows that her father lives with his concubine. When she gets freedom, she makes full use of it. The girl turns to gossips and parties. She finds pleasure
in drunken revelries. Aureliano Segundo cannot save the girl from the rigidity of Fernanda. Any other woman will have realised that the girl is in danger. Ursula, though blind, realises that Meme spends sleepless nights. Only much later does Fernanda realise that the girl is in love with a mechanic. She locks her up in her house. But the lovers meet in the bathroom. The lover is shot by the guard and Meme is taken to a far-off convent. Meme withdraws into an unbreakable silence. She gives birth to a child. Fernanda has to bring him up.

Fernanda seeks refuge in an illusory world. She keeps a touching correspondence with the invisible physicians. She writes regularly to her son, but the letters are full of lies. Her husband is away with his concubine. She thinks that she has a serious ailment and prepares herself for a telepathic operation.

Fernanda is immune to the uncertainty of the outside world. She quarrels with her husband who objects to her decision in Meme’s fate. She shows her husband the papers which indicate that she joined the convent on her own account. Fernanda’s only consolation is her correspondence with her invisible doctors.
After her husband's death she leads a lonely life. She has to depend on her daughter's illegitimate son to prepare food because she never knew how to light a stove. She has to depend on her husband's concubine, Petra Cotes, who sends rice and other necessaries. Her correspondence with the invisible doctors fails. They operate on her but do not find anything wrong. They advise her to use a pessary. Fernanda gradually sinks into a world of illusions. She thinks that the house is full of elves. She believes that someone misplaces things to confuse her. She wears the dress of the queen in her final days. One day Aureliano finds her dead in her room. When her son comes four months later, she is still intact.

Fernanda's loneliness results from her illusions of dignity and grandeur. George R. McMurray's words are quite relevant here:

Man's loss of innocence in a universe from which God has withdrawn has brought about his detachment from nature as well as the severance of his intimate relations with his fellow men. The result is the kind of cosmic homelessness reflected in the character's solitude... (McMurray, 105).
Meme is very active and awakens the house with her dancing steps. She seems unaware of the solitary fate of the family. She likes the house and enjoys her holidays. But she is close to the festive mood of her father and enjoys the excesses of revelry. On her third vacation she brings to her house four nuns and sixty eight classmates to spend a week.

Meme has to suffer from the rigidity of her mother, Fernanda and the bitterness of Amaranta. Her father spends his time in the house of his concubine. He is a "genial orgiast, someone always in need of company" (Richardson, 4). She is a frivolous girl but shows extreme maturity at the clavichord. She learns this instrument not to irritate Fernanda. Thus she earns her freedom. Fernanda allows her to go to the movies and welcomes her friends. Her tastes lie at the other end of discipline, in noisy parties, smoking and even in drunken debauchery. She hates Fernanda and Amaranta and wants to show her contempt for them. She wants to shatter their illusions of grandeur and good manners.

Aureliano Segundo spends more time for her daughter. It frees him from the bitter solitude of his revels. Meme falls in love with Mauricio Babilonia, a mechanic in the banana company.
Ursula realises Meme's tribulations and questions her. Meme avoids the queries of the poor old woman. She spends sleepless nights. Fernanda fails to notice the deep silences, the sudden outbursts, the changes in mood and the contradictions of her daughter.

Yellow butterflies precede the appearance of Mauricio Babilonia. "Meme could not sleep and she lost her appetite and sank so deeply into solitude that even her father became an annoyance" (HVS, 236). They meet at the movies often. She wants to be with him leaving all other engagements. She wants to sink into his stupefying odour of grease washed off by lye. Her future is uncertain. So she visits Pilar Ternera who advises her to go to bed with him. She offers her own bed. She tells her of methods to avoid an unwanted conception. Meme goes to Pilar Ternera's house and surrenders willingly to Mauricio Babilonia.

One day Fernanda finds Meme kissing a man in the theatre. She locks her up in her house. Mauricio Babilonia and Meme make love in the bathroom. Later, Fernanda is shocked to find mustard plasters in Meme's room. She invites the new Mayor to her house and asks him to station a guard at the backyard because the hens are stolen. The next day the guard shoots down
Mauricio Babilonia as he is lifting up the tiles to get into the bathroom where Meme is waiting for him. He dies of old age, bed-ridden for the rest of his life due to a bullet lodged in his spinal column, in total solitude, ostracized as a chicken thief.

Fernanda packs Meme's clothes and takes her in the train to a far-off convent where she has been brought up many years ago. Meme does not open her mouth again. She dies in old age in utter loneliness, closed up inside the four walls of the convent. But as a nasty trick of fate, Fernanda has to bring up her daughter's child, "like the return of a shame that she had thought exiled by her from the house" (HYS, 239). "The solitude of silence is a prison and a refuge. In the case of Meme, solitude is a form of desperation..." (Gullon, 30).

Aureliano Babilonia is a surrogate for the reader. He is born in a convent as the illegitimate child of Meme and Mauricio Babilonia.

Aureliano Babilonia spends his time in Melquides's room. He reads the books, talks to himself and resembles Col. Aureliano Buendia. He buys a Sanskrit Primer to read Melquiades's prophecies. When Santa Sofia leaves the house he takes over the kitchen.
duties. He prepared food for Fernanda which she ate alone on the dining table. Even under these circumstances Aureliano and Fernanda do not share their solitude. They live in their own rooms.

When Fernanda dies and Jose Arcadio returns, Aureliano Babilonia withdraws into his solitary room. Though he has the freedom now, he rarely goes out. He remains shut up, in the parchments. Gradually, Jose Arcadio and Aureliano Babilonia become good friends. It gives them hope:

That drawing closer together of two solitary people of the same blood was far from friendship, but it did allow them both to bear up better under the unfathomable solitude that separated and united them at the same time (HYS, 302).

But soon Jose Arcadio is killed. Only then does Aureliano Babilonia realize that he has begun to love him.

When Amaranta Ursula returns with her husband, Gaston, to live in the house, she gives Aureliano new clothes and teaches him to dance. They wish to incorporate him into the family but he is a hermetic
man. He spends most of his time reading the parchments. The return of Amaranta Ursula changes his life. He watches the men and the scenes in the town. He wanders through the solitary streets, nostalgic about its lost glory. He finds a Negro girl, Nigromanta, and befriends her.

Amaranta Ursula's movements make him crazy. To quench the torment, he sinks deep into the parchments. He visits the book store of the Catalonian and becomes friendly with four youngsters. They are the only friends he ever had. They visit brothels and find pleasure in revels. He abandons the parchments for a while, but returns to them with a new vigour to find out the keys.

When Amaranta pricks her hands trying to open a can of peaches, Aureliano dashes out to suck the blood. Then he reveals his passion for her. He tells her how he spends sleepless nights thinking about her. Amaranta Ursula is irritated. She tells him that she will leave Macondo in the first ship. Aureliano visits Pilar Ternera to unburden himself in her lap.

Pilar consoles him and advises him to approach the girl. He finds her when she comes out of her bath. Amaranta defends herself sincerely but finally succumbs to him.
The Catalonian returns to his Mediterranean village. Aureliano's friends also leave Macondo. Gaston has already left it. Aureliano and Amaranta are the happiest people on the face of the earth, "...secluded by solitude and love and by the solitude of love" (HYS, 326). They make mad love. "It was a mad passion... which made Fernanda's bones tremble with horror in her grave and which kept them in a state of perpetual excitement" (HYS, 326).

Aureliano abandons the parchments. They destroy the furniture and ruin the house with their violent love-making. "Both of them remained floating in an empty universe where the only every day and eternal reality was love" (HYS, 328). When the news of Gaston's return comes, they are shocked. Amaranta writes a letter informing him that she cannot live without Aureliano. Gaston leaves them to their fate. They live happily.

When Amaranta Ursula becomes pregnant, they try to know about the identity of Aureliano. He checks the baptismal register but finds nothing. They believe the version of the child found in a basket. Both are frightened by the fear that they may be brother and sister. Soon they are more and more integrated into
the solitude of the house. They leave the house to the tenacious assault of destruction. Amaranta gives birth to a male child. He has the tail of a pig, fulfilling the premonitions. The mother bleeds profusely and the midwife tries all the means -- spiderwebs, balls of ash and a cauterizing prayer -- to save her. But she dies, smiling.

John Leonard has noted that solitude is "one's admission of one's own mortality and one's discovery that the terrible apprehension itself is mortal..." (Leonard, 39). Only then Aureliano realises the horror of solitude. He leaves the house, leaving the child in a basket and covering the face of the corpse with a blanket. He wanders aimlessly through the streets. He goes to the Catalonian's store and weeps. He goes to the bar and shares his sorrow with the bar-tender. He shouts at his friends: "Friends are a bunch of bastards" (HYS, 333). Nigromanta rescues him from total desolation. She takes him to her room. Then he remembers the child and returns to his house. He cannot find the child anywhere. He thinks that the midwife may have taken care of him.

Then he finds the child. It has become a bloated and dry bag of skin that the ants are dragging towards their hole. The keys of Melquiades are revealed to him at that instant. He remembers the epigraph of
the parchments: "The first of the line is tied to a
tree and the last is being eaten by the ants" (HYS,
334).

Gordon Brotherston in his essay, "An End to
Secular Solitude" comments that "The final chapter of
One Hundred Years of Solitude, announces itself as a
finale..." (Brotherston, 134). He starts reading the
parchments. It is the history of the Buendia family
from its origin to its end. It is written in Sanskrit
with minute attention to the detail. First he reads
about the past. He skips the pages to know about his
fate. Then a wind begins to blow. He reads about his
grandfather, his mother and his own origin in a
bathroom. The cyclone blows again and tears the
windows and doors off the hinges, pulls off the roof of
the eastern wing and uproots the foundations. He
discovers that Amaranta Ursula is not his sister, but
his aunt. He skips again to find out his end. A
fearful whirlwind is then destroying the entire town.
He realizes that he will never go out of the room.
"Aureliano is like Scheherazade who tells her stories
on the verge of death" (Echevarria, 370). The moment
he finishes reading the parchments the city will be
wiped out by the wind even from the memory of mankind.
"Everything written on them were unrepeatable since
time immemorial and for ever more because races
condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth" (HYS, 336).

The ending of the novel is very famous. "When manuscript and novel become the same text, character and narrative become the same entity, engaged in reading the same retrospective prophecy of their socio-historical experience" (Foster, 1979, 51). "In a final stroke of magic and of art, Melquiades -- Marquez -- not only ends the story of Buendias, he eradicates it for ever in one luminous moment" (Richardson, 4). "By means of an unreading, the text has reduced us, like Aureliano, to a ground zero, where death and birth are joined together as correlative moments of incommunicable plenitude" (Echevarria, 378).

Loneliness, the novel's central theme weaves together the individual destinies of characters. All the characters are born condemned to suffer it. It is a universal law and no one can avoid it. Gullon thus sums up his views:

Whoever lives his solitude as these people do, incapable of communication with the alive-dead souls, is at the same distance from the other people as he is from the dead-alive, or the dead. Solitude is a common denominator that tinges them with a common sadness (Gullon, 30).
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