

Self-perpetuated solitude: the world of the buendias



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True to its title, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* masterfully analyzes that human superego which brings each individual to a torturous state of perpetual solitary confusion. Although taking no stance on the validity of societal morale, Gabriel Garcia Marquez uncovers the ways in which each character's beating conscience leaves him in the solitude of abnegation and self-punishment. Ultimately, Marquez accentuates a reality where not even profound wisdom can save one from the power of carnal desires. In the world Marquez has created, neither uncanny self-awareness nor unmatched knowledge serve to enhance the personal lives of the characters when undercut by a societally-molded conscience. In this epic tale of the Buendias, Marquez articulates a brilliant commentary on the path of the human race through the use of family, and in turn, a group of individuals undeniably related physically and psychologically. He initially creates characters seemingly unique, yet who result in revealing glaringly similar characteristics, convictions, triumphs, and mistakes. Marquez particularly illuminates the solitary wisdom of the Aurelianos, and consequently, the personally meaningful yet ultimately meaningless pursuits of human life. At the onset of his innate wisdom, Aureliano Buendia enters the world impressing the family with his "open eyes" and keen sense of the inevitable. While Colonel Aureliano Buendia remains to be a figure most repeatedly referred to in the novel, his actions define him only as lowlier than the next character. Marquez deliberately makes an ironic comparison: Colonel Aureliano Buendia's being a war hero should, by humanity's standards, place him on an even higher pedestal, yet the endless occupation serves only to further convince the reader of his weakness and his being deserving of ridicule. With the same scrutinizing eye as the reader, Colonel Gerineldo

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Marquez tells him, " Watch out for your heart, Aureliano. You're rotting alive (179)." His originally recognizable profundity and strength of will fall invisible behind a war of self-punishment for loving and losing a child, and his inability to escape an anger-driven battle against the world. As long as the Aurelianos last, the reader can be sure to find them equally all-knowing and subsequently lonely. Farther down the line, Aureliano Jos's life will take similar shape; tormented by societally condemned incestuous love, he enters war, a metaphorical " revolution" against his carnal desires. Nevertheless, the Aurelianos' attempted denial of reality, of profound wisdom in the midst of surrounding corruption, is consistently in vain: for Aureliano Jos, " the more her image wallowed in the dung hill of the war, the more the war resembled Amaranta (163)." A soldier even admits, " We're fighting this war so that a person can marry his own mother (163)." Through these descriptions of the Aurelianos' roles in war, Marquez could not be more clear in defining their struggle as a futile attempt to abandon social standards. Marquez plants his characters in a world realistically distorted; some wild, opposing force will continuously interrupt the expected, everyday life of a Buendia. Thematically, Marquez uses unconventional sexual behavior to pull each character away from their accepted moralities. Meme's obsession with Mauricio Babilonia inevitably sinks her deeper into solitude, for not only does his entrance distort her previous life, but colors it such that all else seems bleak and meaningless. With respect to her relationship with her father, the novel states, " She was so sure of herself, so anchored in her solitude that Aureliano Segundo had the impression that no link existed between them anymore, that the comradeship and the complicity were nothing but an illusion of the past (311)." However distorted sexuality unites or separates <https://assignbuster.com/self-perpetuated-solitude-the-world-of-the-buendias/>

Marquez' vital characters, each results in living a life tainted with guilt. Paradoxically, the solitude of two characters only weighs down heavier in their coming together, leaving each to their own tense realities of lonely insecurity and disconcerting self-awareness. With all the criticism embellished between the pages of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Marquez does not leave the reader without a taste of inspiration. While the confined, solitary world of the Buendias may set the stage for solemn scrutiny of mankind, the author includes a character purposely signified as separate from the rest: " Remedios the Beauty was not a creature of this world (213)." Here, magic realism serves to characterize Remedios the Beauty, immediately giving her traits greater worth. Although " disquieting beauty" is all that earns her respect in the town, the reader recognizes her array of valuable behaviors as they differentiate her from the Macondo status quo. Whether refusing to " complicate her life with corsets and petticoats" or being " indifferent to malice and suspicion" or obeying the forces of spontaneity, Remedios the Beauty amusingly remains somewhat inhuman for the simple fact that she is comfortable. Ultimately, Marquez presents an individual utterly immune to humanity's incessant anxieties. Not surprisingly, her unperturbed, ceremonious actions of self-acceptance incite mostly unsurpassed adoration from those in the town. Her mannerisms differ, and so does her thinking: Remedios the Beauty's wisdom is supported by lack of concern for societal expectations, and therefore liberates her instead of imprisoning her in solitude. As a final reward for Remedios the Beauty, Marquez lets her bypass Macondo's ending destruction; having not been of this world, she disappears into " the upper atmosphere where not even the highest flying birds of memory could reach her (255)." At the novel's

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tumultuous ending, Macondo and its entire population are wiped out of existence simultaneously with Aureliano's deciphering of the infamous parchments. In a manner quite telling of humanity's persistent search for knowledge, Gabriel Garcia Marquez' climactic granting of enlightenment to the last of the Buendia line horrifyingly results in abrupt, utter destruction. In explanation of his bleak conclusion, Marquez clarifies the role of the parchments in the final line: " everything written on them was unrepeatable since time immemorial and forever more, because races condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth (448)." By the unraveling of the Buendia existence, Marquez' readers can clearly recognize his key characters as having been " condemned" to their solitude and identify their futile wisdom as the means of their irreversible downfall. Time was wasted in their searching, for the prophesy of their lives was unchangeable. The novel ends as its lucid characters finally strangle themselves with self-perpetuated solitude.