Alchemy of the Imagination

John Prigge Emerson

Every new town, every new house that is built, imitates afresh, and in a sense repeats, the creation of the world. All houses—like all temples, palaces, and cities—stand in the center of the universe.

Patterns in Comparative Religion, Mircea Eliade

Macondo is not a place, it is a state of mind.

Gabriel García Márquez[1]

[1] *The Scent of the Guayaba: Conversations With Plinio Apuleyo Mendoza*, Editorial La Oveja Negra, 1982.

The Author

One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel García Márquez is a magnificent celebration of the creative imagination. On the way to Acapulco with his wife and two sons the poetic genius of Garcia Marquez, which had been pondering the occasion for going on two decades, suddenly forced him to turn the car back home, where he spent the next eighteen months creating the town of Macondo and the house of the Buendía family; a masterpiece that soon fascinated readers from all over the world. In *Psychology and Literature*, C G Jung writes, "Whenever the creative force predominates, human life is ruled and molded by the unconscious as against the active will, and the curious ego is swept along on a subterranean current, being nothing more than a helpless observer of events. It is not Goethe who creates *Faust,* but *Faust* which creates Goethe."

To this the creator of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* might have said what he did say in an interview with Claudia Dreifus in 1982 regarding psychoanalytical interpretations of his work, "I don't have much admiration for that." However, as if anticipating Jung, he went on to say, "Nothing I do is consciously that way. I understand that literary work, especially fiction, exists on the edge of consciousness, but when somebody tries to explain that unconscious part of my work, I don't read it. I like to leave the unconscious where it is. To do that has given me good results as a writer." And as for *Faust* creating Goethe, in an interview with Ernesto González Bermejo, Márquez said, ". . . I thought that Colonel Aureliano Buendía would be as marginal a character as in the other books, that he'd simply be passing through Macondo. But that was at the beginning, and I didn't know a lot of things that happened later in the book. . . What's simply tremendous about writing is. . .to discover the book, discover the characters, see how they create themselves."

Jung died in 1961, six years before the publication of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, nevertheless he would have wholeheartedly agreed with the author's statement, as he

believed that the poet created at the behest of his work and there was no obligation for him or her to interpret it for others. Jung emphasizes his point, "The truth is that poets are human beings, and what a poet has to say about his work is often far from being the most illuminating word on the subject. What is required of us, then, is nothing less than to defend the importance of the visionary experience against the poet himself."[2] And Márquez himself told Rita Guibert in 1971, "My position is that of a creator, not a critic. It's not my job, it's not my vocation, I don't think I'm good at it."

Depending on his mood and the attitude of his countless interviewers, García Márquez could be less or more forthcoming on the subject of the meaning of his novel and the unexpected fame its astounding success brought him. Sometimes he would reply dismissingly that it is just a story of married cousins wishing to avoid their children being born with pig's tails and that generations later their worst fears were realized. With Ernesto González Bermejo in 1971, four years after the first publication of the novel, he is in a more receptive mood when asked, "What do you think there is about this crazy book that could achieve such a degree of communication?"

"That's what I wonder. Because apparently there are two levels, but maybe there are three or four, who knows how many? The British have seen this very well and have made an edition with two different covers, and they sell it accordingly here or there: one for readers who're interested in the literary side, another for those interested simply in an adventure story. And I believe that between those two extremes there are other levels I haven't the slightest idea about and don't want to know either. That is, I don't want to become conscious of the recipe to *One Hundred Years of Solitude*."

The premise of Jung's essay *Psychology and Literature* is that there are two types of literary works; psychological and visionary. To be clear, Jung is not presuming to be a literary critic, and states that what is of importance for the critic may be irrelevant for the psychologist. "For instance," he writes, "the so-called 'psychological novel' is by no means as rewarding for the psychologist as the literary-minded suppose. Considered as a whole,

[2] *Psychology and Literature, Collected Works, Volume 15*, C G Jung.

such a novel explains itself." To distinguish from this Jung speaks of the other artistic creation as *visionary*. It is worthwhile to quote him at length on this subject.

> "The psychological mode deals with materials drawn from the realm of human consciousness—for instance, with the lessons of life, with emotional shocks, the experience of passion and the crises of human destiny in general—all of which go to make up the conscious life of man, and his feeling life in particular. This material is psychically assimilated by the poet, raised from the commonplace to the level of poetic experience, and given an expression which forces the reader to greater clarity and depth of human insight by bringing fully into consciousness what he ordinarily evades and overlooks or senses only with a feeling of dull discomfort. The poet's work is an interpretation and illumination of consciousness, of the ineluctable experiences of human life with its eternally recurrent sorrow and joy. . .
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> "The profound difference between the first and second parts of *Faust* marks the difference between the psychological and the visionary modes of artistic creation. The latter reverses all the conditions of the former. The experience that furnishes the material for artistic expression is no longer familiar. It is a strange something that derives its existence from the hinterland of man's mind—that suggests the abyss of time separating us from pre-human ages, or evokes a super-human world of contrasting light and darkness. It is a primordial experience which surpasses man's understanding. . . The primordial experiences rend from top to bottom the curtain upon which is painted the picture of an ordered world, and allow a glimpse into the unfathomed abyss of what has not yet become. Is it a vision of other worlds, or of the obscuration of the spirit, or of the beginning of things before the age of man, or of the unborn generations of the future?"

Jung then provides examples of visionary literature. "It is therefore to be expected of the poet that he will resort to mythology in order to give his experience its most fitting expression. . . he must resort to an imagery that is difficult to handle and full of contradictions in order to express the weird paradoxicality of his vision. Dante's

presentiments are clothed in images that run the gamut of Heaven and Hell; Goethe must bring in the Blocksberg and the infernal regions of Greek antiquity; Nietzsche returns to the hieratic style and recreates the legendary seer of prehistoric times; Blake invents for himself indescribable figures, and Spitteler borrows old names for new creatures of the imagination."

In 1971 Márquez talked of how he came upon a clearer idea of the concept of reality and how, as a writer, to portray it. "The immediate realism of *No One Writes to the Colonel* and *In Evil Hour* has a certain reach. But I realized that reality is also the myths, beliefs, and legends of the people. These are their everyday life and they intervene in their victories and defeats. I realized that reality isn't just the police who arrive and shoot people, but also the entire mythology, all the legends, everything that comprises people's lives. And all of that needs to be included."[3] And so, after those uninterrupted eighteen months writing *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, he could state unequivocally, "In Macondo there's always a mythic element."[4] In telling that story the creative imagination of Gabriel García Márquez expressed itself in the voice of Old Testament and Pre-Columbian mythology, wild Rabelaisian humor, and, most importantly, in the voice of his own eccentric grandmother.

When Ernesto González Bermejo asked him about the luxuriant handling of the prose, he answered, "I conclude that *One hundred Years of Solitude* had to be written that way because that's how my grandmother talked. I tried to find the language that was most suitable for the book, and I remembered that my grandmother used to tell me the most atrocious things without getting all worked up, as if she'd just seen them. I then realized that that imperturbability and that richness of imagery with which my grandmother told stories was what gave verisimilitude to mine."

All things intertwine. The world is an intricate embroidery of fine, multi-colored threads that fashion all that is both vivid and obscure. And the supernatural, night world of

[3] *García Márquez Speaks of García Márquez*, Ernesto González Bermejo, *Triunfo*, 1971.
[4] Ibid.

Márquez's grandmother weaves into the rational, day world of his grandfather. "My most vivid and constant memories are of the house in Aracataca where I lived with my grandparents. Every day of my life I awaken with the impression, real or false, that I have dreamed of this house. Not that I have returned, but that I am there, without any particular age or motive, as if I had never left that old and enormous house. And, even in the dream, there persist the dominate feeling I experienced during that time; the nightly terror. The hopeless sensation would begin in the afternoon and disturbed my sleeping hours until I could see through the cracks of the door the light of a new day. I haven't been able to define it well, but to me it seems that the terror had a specific origin, which is that at night all the fantasies, omens, and superstitions of my grandmother materialized. This was my relation to my grandmother; a type of invisible cord by which we both communicated with a supernatural universe. My grandfather, on the other hand, was for me the absolute security within the uncertain world of my grandmother. Only with him did the terror subside, and I could feel my feet on solid ground in the real world. The strange thing is that, thinking of it now, I wanted to be like my grandfather—realist, courageous, confident--, but I could not resist the constant temptation to peer into the world of my grandmother."[5] A quote from Erich Neumann's *The Origins and History of Consciousness* almost seems to allude specifically to Márquez's childhood, ". . .not only in the history of mankind is consciousness a late product of the womb of the unconscious, but in every individual life, consciousness re-experiences its emergence from the unconscious in the growth of childhood, and every night in sleep, dying with the sun, it sinks back into the depths of the unconscious, to be reborn in the morning and to begin the day anew." Day is symbolical of order and rational consciousness and night of chaos and the irrational unconscious. Adam and Eve dwelt in the dark paradise of a perpetual night. There was no fall from the Garden of Eden. It was a leap to the dawning of a new day. Or, if not quite a leap, then "what falls, that shall one also push!"[6] Eden is not a place. It is a state of mind. But now modern humankind attempts to live in perpetual light and

[5] *The Scent of the Guayaba: Conversations With Plinio Apuleyo Mendoza*, Editorial La Oveja Negra, 1982.
[6] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book For Everyone and No One*, Friedrich Nietzsche, Barnes and Noble, 2012. First published 1883-1885.

represses the dark world of the unconscious. They are the ones who, in their war against the spontaneous and incomprehensible, cut down Wotan's oak, hung midwives as witches, and prohibit women from being ordained as priests. The transpersonal has been reduced to the personal and symbols to signs. The *mysteries* of religion have hardened into simple, literal objects of belief. Humanity has lost its myths and rituals and the emotions they elicited; which is, of course, partly what Nietzsche had in mind when he said God was dead. We have left the darkness of Eden, but with that exodus we have lost the ability to hear the intuitive, obscure, and impulsive voices of the gods. But, one way in which we can be in touch again with those emotions is through art. This holds true for both the creator and the beholder of the creation. The artist plumbs the depths of the unconscious, is enthralled by it, and emerges anew with the enchanting treasure; a work of art.[7] With *One Hundred Years of Solitude* Márquez delves into both the day of his grandfather and the night of his grandmother and creates a fascinating passage between the objective and subjective, consciousness and unconsciousness, order and chaos. "I tell you: one must have chaos in one, to give birth to a dancing star."[8] And those dancing stars make a cosmos.

To Claudia Dreifus he elaborated further on his grandmother's world view. "With her, every natural event had a supernatural interpretation. If a butterfly flew in the window, she'd declare, 'A letter is coming today.' If milk boiled over on the stove, she'd say, 'We must be careful—someone in the family is sick.' When I was a child my grandmother would wake me in the night and tell me horrible stories of people who, for some reason, had a presentiment of their death, of the dead who appeared, of the dead who didn't appear."

This is the world view that Jung describes in his essay *Archaic Man*. "To all that is in any way out of the ordinary and that therefore disturbs, frightens or astonishes him, archaic man ascribes what we should call a supernatural origin. For him, of course, these things

[7] *Jung On Art: The Autonomy of the Creative Drive,* Tjeu van den Berk, Psychology Press, 2012. I wish to express my gratitude to Luz Hartasanchez for making me aware of this book.
[8] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Friedrich Nietzsche.

are not supernatural; on the contrary, they belong to his world of experience. . . That is the world of unrestrained, capricious powers with which primitive man has to deal day by day. The extraordinary event is no joke to him. He draws his own conclusions, 'It is not a good place'—'The day is unfavorable'—and who knows what dangers he avoids by following such warnings?. . . In the primitive world everything has psychic qualities. Everything is endowed with the elements of the human psyche, of the collective unconscious, for there is as yet no individual psychic life." Jung used Levy-Bruhl's term *participation mystique* to describe this state of mind.

Two verses from Goethe's *Faust*, one of the examples Jung cites as a visionary work, illustrate well the role Márquez's grandparents played in his childhood:

"Though one day greet us with a rational gleam,
The night entangles us in webs of dreams."

"Whoever speaks in primordial images speaks with a thousand voices," Jung writes. "He enthralls and overpowers, while at the same time he lifts the idea he is seeking to express out of the occasional and the transitory into the realm of the ever-enduring."[9] Possibly for that reason *One Hundred Years* of Solitude has meant thousands of things to thousands of people. Including, unfortunately, the ridiculous. Such critics as Gunther Lorenz, Luis Cova García, and Marcelle Bargas have claimed or hinted that the novel is a plagiarism of Balzac's *Quest of the Absolute*. García Márquez responded to this in the interview with Rita Guibert. "It's strange; someone who had heard these comments sent me Balzac's book, which I had never read. . . It struck me that to say one book derives from the other is pretty light and superficial. Also, even if I had read it before and decided to plagiarize it, only some five pages of my book could possibly have come from *Quest of the Absolute*, and in the final analysis a single character, the alchemist. Well. . . I ask you, five pages and one character against three hundred pages and some two hundred characters that don't come from Balzac's book. I think the critics should have gone on and searched two

[9] *On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry, Collected Works, Volume 15*, C. G. Jung.

hundred other books to see where the rest of the characters came from."[10] There are many correspondences between Dante's *Divine Comedy*, another example of Jung's visionary works, and Ibn Arabi's *Meccan Revelations*, written a century before and translated into Spanish and Latin, but no one is insinuating plagiary.

That is all that needs to be said about that, except to point out to such disingenuous and unimaginative critics that the character of an alchemist obsessed with transforming common matter into gold could occur to two different authors, and many more, independently of each other. Jung accounted for these occurrences, which have been witnessed for thousands of years, by positing the existence of a collective unconscious. He showed that below the personal unconscious is another vast, psychic layer as common to all human beings as our physical instincts. "The whole psychic organism corresponds exactly to the body, which, though individually varied, is in all essential features the specifically human body which all people have. In its development and structure, it still preserves elements that connect it with the invertebrates and ultimately with the protozoa. Theoretically it should be possible to peel the collective unconscious, layer by layer, until we come to the psychology of the worm. . ."[11]

Whether it was intentional or not, five years later, when Jung was asked to write an essay on James Joyce's *Ulysses*, he uses an example from the quote above, "If worms were gifted with literary powers they would write with the sympathetic nervous system for lack of a brain. I suspect that something of this kind has happened to Joyce, that we have here a case of visceral thinking with a severe restriction of cerebral activity and its confinement to the perceptual processes. One is driven to unqualified admiration for Joyce's feats in the sensory sphere: what he sees, hears, tastes, smells, touches, inwardly and outwardly, is beyond measure astonishing. . . Objective and subjective, outer and inner, are so constantly intermingled that in the end, despite the clearness of the individual images, one wonders whether one is dealing with a physical or with a transcendental worm. The

[10] *Seven Voices; Seven Latin American Writers Talk to Rita Guibert*, Rita Guibert, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1973.
[11] *The Structure of the Psyche, The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche, Collected Works, Volume 8,* C. G. Jung, Princeton University Press, 1970.

tapeworm is a whole living cosmos in itself and is fabulously procreative; this, it seems to me, is an inelegant but not unfitting image for Joyce's proliferating chapters. It is true that the tapeworm can produce nothing but other tapeworms, but it produces them in inexhaustible quantities."[12]

Of course, the primordial images of the collective unconscious are not limited to the psychology of the worm. In the case of poets Jung felt that by their intuitive experiences delving into the depths of the collective unconscious they were able to voice aloud what others only dream.[13] Inn *Psychology and Literature* he writes, "It is a fact that in eclipses of consciousness—in dreams, narcotic states and cases of insanity—there come to the surface psychic products or contents that show all the traits of primitive levels of psychic development. The images themselves are sometimes of such a primitive character that we might suppose them derived from ancient, esoteric teaching."

His favorite example comes from the visions of a patient suffering from megalomania, a symptom that Jung termed 'ego-inflation', and believed himself to be the Savior. Jung came across him one day in the corridor of the clinic and observed him looking out the window at the sun and moving his head from side to side. When asked what he saw the man was astonished that Jung saw nothing and exclaimed, "Surely you see the sun's penis—when I move my head to and fro, it moves too, and that is where the wind comes from."[14]

Four years later, during his extensive researches into mythology, Jung came across a recently published book by the philologist Albrecht Dieterich regarding an ancient Greek papyrus on a liturgy of the Mithraic cult. It included a series of instructions, invocations, and visions. And one of these visions is described in the following words, "And likewise the

[12] *Ulysses: A Monologue, Collected Works, Volume 15*, C. G. Jung.
[13] *Psychological Types, Collected Works, Volume 6,* C. G. Jung, Princeton University Press, 1971.
[14] *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, Collected Works, Volume 9 Part 1*, C. G. Jung, Princeton University Press, 1968 and *The Structure of the Psyche, Collected Works, Volume 8*, C. G. Jung.

so-called tube, the origin of the ministering wind. For you will see hanging down from the disc of the sun something that looks like a tube."[15]

Rather than charge his patient with plagiarism, Jung did further research to show that the occurrence of this primordial image was not something that could have appeared through *crptomnesia*,[16] nor that it was just by chance coincidence either. "We must therefore show that the idea of a wind-tube connected with God or the sun exists independently of these two testimonies and that it occurs at other times and in other places. Now there are, as a matter of fact, medieval paintings that depict the fructification of Mary with a tube or hose-pipe coming down from the throne of God and passing into her body, and we can see the dove or the Christ-child flying down it. The dove represents the fructifying agent, the wind of the Holy Ghost."[17]

As a result of his studies of comparative mythology and religion Jung went on to clarify the ubiquity of the primordial images from the collective unconscious and how their similarity "extends so far that one finds the same myths and fairy tales motifs in every corner of the world: a negro in the southern states of South America dreams the motifs of Greek mythology and a Swiss business apprentice repeats in his psychosis the vision of an Egyptian Gnostic."[18]

Jung later termed these primordial images of the collective unconscious as archetypes. Over the millennia of human evolution these archetypes have settled like psychic sediment into the swamp of the unconscious. And that abundant sediment is teeming with life. One of these archetypes is the figure of the alchemist searching to turn lead into gold; a metaphor, for the adept, in transforming the fragmented ego into a united, transcendent Self; a higher synthesis of ego, consciousness and unconsciousness. Certainly it wasn't necessary that Nietzsche read *Quest for the Absolute* in order to complain in a

[15] Ibid.
[16] Cryptomnesia: Greek, meaning literally *hidden memories*. The term was coined by Theodore Flournoy (1854-1921) and occurs when experiencing a memory as if it were a new inspiration. In *Cryptomnesia, Psychiatric Studies, Collected Works, Volume 1* Jung cites an example he found in the chapter titled *Great Events* in Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra.*
[17] See footnote 14.
[18] *Psychological Types, Collected Works, Volume 6,* C. G. Jung.

letter to a friend of a particularly bad time spent with his mother and sister that "if I don't discover the alchemist's device for making gold out of this shit, I'm lost."

Not only does Garcia Marquez create the characters of Melquíades the alchemist and José Arcadio the apprentice, but he himself, the author, is a type of alchemist. The lead for Márquez was his first attempt to write *One Hundred Years of Solitude* when he was about twenty years old. It was called *The House* then. But he felt he lacked the drive, the life experience, and the literary resources for such a work. For seventeen years this material brewed within him, until, as the world knows, he turned the lead into gold. The work of both the writer and the alchemist "must be performed with the true imagination."[19] In *Jung On Art* Tjeu van den Berk also uses the analogy of alchemy in writing of the collective unconscious and the creative process. "The human person is merely the blossom and fruit of one season, sprung from a centuries old system of roots of which he and she are an intrinsic part by means of *participation mystique*. The artist in particular knows how to descend into these roots and to excavate the prima material from the underworld like a true alchemist and to transform it into a work of art."

And the writer, like the alchemist, is alone at his creative work. García Márquez said, ". . . when I sit down to write, which is the essential moment of my life, I am completely alone. Nobody can help me. Nobody knows exactly what I want to do—and sometimes I don't know. I can't ask for help. It's total solitude."[20] And Jung wrote, "The alchemist, on principle, worked alone. This rigorous solitude, together with his preoccupation with the endless obscurities of the work, was sufficient to activate the unconscious and, through the power of imagination, to bring into being things that apparently were no there before."[21]

From their solitude both the alchemist and the creative artist seek inspiration. "The creative process, so far as we are able to follow it at all, consists in the unconscious

[19] *Individuation: A Study of the Depth Psychology of C. G. Jung*, Josef Goldbrunner, University of Notre Dame Press, 1964.
[20] *Conversations With Gabriel García Márquez*, Edited by Gene H. Bell-Villada, Claudia Dreifus.
[21] *Alchemical Studies, Collected Works, Volume 13,* C G Jung.

activation of an archetypal image, and in elaborating and shaping this image into a finished work."[22] Specifically regarding the alchemists Josef Goldbrunner states that "during their work they had hallucinations or visionary perceptions which cannot have been anything but the projections of unconscious contents." The 15th century alchemist George Ripley wrote, "All our secrets are derived from an image." And Jung, writing specifically of the artist in *Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious,* says, ". . .it would never do to foist our conscious psychology upon the unconscious. Its mentality is an instinctive one; it has no differentiated functions, and it does not *think* as we understand *thinking*. It simply creates an image that answers to the conscious situation. Such an image would be better described as an artist's vision."

García Márquez has remarked many times that all his works have begun in the manner described above. In answer to Rita Guibert's question in 1971 as to what the starting point was for his novels he said, "A completely visual image. I suppose that some writers begin with a phrase, an idea, or a concept. I always begin with an image. The starting point of *Leaf Storm* is an old man taking his grandson to a funeral, in *No One Writes to the Colonel* it's an old man waiting, and in *One Hundred Years*, an old man taking his grandson to the fair to find out what ice is." "What's incredible now is that all of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* started with that all-so-simple image." And, eleven years later, speaking specifically of *One Hundred Years*, he said, ". . . one day, in 1965, I think, I was going to Acapulco by car. And all of a sudden—I don't know why—I had this illumination as to how to write the book. I had the tone, everything! . . . It was as if I had read everything that was to be in it."[23]

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, still another of Jung's examples of visionary work, Nietzsche writes, "Of all good things the origin is a thousandfold—all good roguish things spring into existence for joy…" These experiences of creation are always accompanied intense emotions. Jung writes, "It is as though chords in us were struck that had never resounded before, or as though forces whose existence we never suspected were unloosed. . . when

[22] *Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry, Collected Works, Volume 15*, C. G. Jung.
[23] See footnote 21.

an archetypal situation occurs we suddenly feel an extraordinary sense of release, as though transported, or caught up by an overwhelming power."[24] Garcia Marquez expressed this emotion when speaking on the writing of his novel. "It was a fiesta for me, especially at the end of the book, when I had it in my hands. I knew the book wouldn't escape me and I got around to playing out of sheer joy."[25] And, among millions of readers of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* a corresponding chord was struck.

The Novel

In solitude there grows what any one brings into it.

Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Friedrich Nietzsche

Santa Sofía de la Piedad spent the day in the bedrooms driving out the lizards who would return at night.[26]

In stating that *One Hundred Years of Solitude* was just the story of the Buendía family wishing to avoid the prophecy that their offspring would be born with tails, Gabriel García Márquez also made it clear that this seemingly dismissive remark was a purposeful "exaggeration about as large as that of critics who try to find explanations and symbols where there are none. I maintain that in the entire book, there isn't a single conscious symbol."[27]

That Márquez specifies that the novel has no symbol that was *consciously* made seems to open the way once again to the chaotic, irrational, "supernatural universe" of the night

[24] *Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry*, C. G. Jung.
[25] *García Márquez Speaks of García Márquez*, Ernesto González Bermejo, *Triunfo*, 1971.
[26] All quotes in italics are from *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez.
[27] Interview with Claudia Dreifus, *Conversations with Gabriel García Márquez*.

world of his grandmother, where he descended and by way of the creative imagination and its unconscious language and inclinations, made a passageway to the day world of his grandfather. Symbols are the creative result of that descent into the unconscious.

And so the image and symbol of the tail. Which brings to mind the archetype of the tail-biter, the snake forming a circle as it bites its own tail, the uroboros dragon. The original archetype of the collective unconscious. In fact, it is the only archetype because in this state the ego consciousness still slumbers in a dense, perpetual darkness where no day arises yet to awaken it. Neither good and evil, joy and sorrow, nor night and day exist. The uroboros is a state prior to these opposites. All is interwoven and at one with the universe, but not aware of this paradisal state; there is no part to comprehend the whole. It is the undifferentiated, inchoate, pleromatic home of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. And like all the archetypes that are later created with the dismemberment of the uroboros dragon as consciousness eventually awakens and flexes its muscles, it manifests a dark side as the symbol of chaos and amorphousness,[28] and a light side as a circle of conscious wholeness.

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* the archetype of the uroboros is embodied by Remedios the Beauty. *She was becalmed in a magnificent adolescence. . .happy in her own world of simple realities. Remedios the Beauty was not a creature of this world. Until she was well along in puberty Santa Sofía de la Piedad had to bathe and dress her, and even when she could take care of herself it was necessary to keep an eye on her so that she would not paint on the walls with a stick daubed in her own excrement. She reached twenty without knowing how to read and write, unable to use the silver at table, wandering naked through the house because her nature rejected all manner of convention*. She is so beautifully oblivious that she doesn't even bother to wear the censoring biblical fig leafs of Adam and Eve. And Úrsula, the matriarch of the Buendía family, believing her great granddaughter to be simpleminded and defenseless, wishes to *protect her from all earthly temptation, not knowing that Remedios the Beauty, even from the time she was in her*

[28] *The Origins and History of Consciousness*, Erich Neumann, Bollingen Series XLII, Pantheon books, 1964.

mother's womb, was safe from any contagion. In fact, due to the dark, chaotic side of all archetypes, it is the men who come within her orbit that need protection. *Unaware of the restless circle in which she moved, of the unbearable state of intimate calamity that she provoked as she passed by, Remedios the Beauty treated the men without the least bit of malice and in the end upset them with her innocent complaisance. Until her last moment on earth she was unaware that her irreparable fate as a disturbing woman was a daily disaster.* And so, at least four men come too close and are seized in the dense gravity of her incredible beauty and fall to utter ruin. And in the same magical and passive manner of her life without memory in the garden of Macondo, she waves goodbye as she begins to ascend *in the midst of the flapping sheets that rose with her, abandoning with her the environment of beetles and dahlias and passing through the air with her as four o'clock in the afternoon came to an end, and they were lost forever with her in the upper atmosphere where not even the highest-flying birds of memory could reach her.*

Unlike Remedios the Beauty, it is the fate of most of humankind, for good or ill, to dismember the uroboros dragon with the sundering blows of emerging consciousness. To the alchemists lead represented the unconscious, circular state of the dragon or snake eating its own tail and the *nigredo*, *albedo*, and *rubedo* processes the metal went through to reach gold symbolized the individual's search for conscious wholeness, symbolized no longer by the tail-biting snake, but by the sacred circle or mandala. The uroboros is a closed circle that never leaves the boundaries of its paradise of oblivious bliss, while the sacred circle of the mandala becomes a spiral which whirls both upwards into light and downwards into darkness. This process, this struggle to shatter the uroboros dragon, in turn creates a multitude of new archetypes, each just as eager to overwhelm the individual as the dragon. José Arcadio Buendía, the patriarch of the family, obsessed in his fascinated attempts at the alchemist's art, only succeeded in creating *a large piece of burnt hog cracklings that was firmly stuck to the bottom of the pot.*

Macondo exists in a mythical state where *the world was so recent that many things lacked names, and in order to indicate them it was necessary to point*. The town stands not just in the center of the universe, but in the center of a swamp. Melquíades and his nomadic

tribe of gypsies inform the town that all about lay *the whole vast universe of the great swamp, which had no limits*. And the image of the swamp has been interpreted by Bachofen "as symbolic of the dank level of existence on which, uroborically speaking, the dragon lives, devouring her progeny as soon as she has produced them."[29] And even for the emerging embryo of consciousness that has managed to crawl up and out from this abyss there always exists the danger of being swamped once again by the contents of the collective unconscious. Almost every member of the eccentric Buendía family is in danger of slipping back into the mire through the intoxicating, but also devastating, contact with the archetypes. The description of José Arcadio Buendía's attempt to discover a route out of Macondo's isolated location recalls the collective unconscious of Carl Jung. *The men on the expedition felt overwhelmed by their most ancient memories in that paradise of dampness and silence, going back to before original sin*. And when the search ends in failure the frustrated patriarch shouts, *God damn it! Macondo is surrounded by water on all sides.*

One of the many José Arcadios, the son of Aureliano Segundo and Fernanda del Carpio, groomed by his mother and great-great-grandmother Úrsula to be pope someday, makes a feeble effort to slip out of the universe of the swamp, but he isn't strong enough to avoid the fate of the archetype of the struggler.[30] His childhood is reminiscent of Márquez's own, with *terror-filled nights* instilled by Úrsula's tales and then the light of dawn *releasing him from the terror.* His only comfort is the morning caresses of his great aunt Amaranta in the bath and the *pleasure of being powdered between the legs with a silk puff. . .* Even in Rome, where he never actually attends the seminary, he has fantasies of *Amaranta rising out of a marble-edged pool with her lace petticoats and the bandage on her hand. . .* When José Arcadio does finally return to Macondo, the Buendía house, once teeming with life, is now only occupied by another Aureliano, the illegitimate son of his sister Meme. And so, unable to realize his desire of uroboric incest with his great aunt, frustrated in returning to the blissful and oblivious state before any consciousness first

[29] *The Origins and History of Consciousness*, Erich Neumann.
[30] Ibid.

tormented him, he plunges into sexual perversities by picking up children to bring to the house where, after removing his shabby robe with golden dragons, four favorites *would get into the pool to soap him from head to toe as he floated on his back thinking of Amaranta*. This image recalls the tales of the Roman emperor Tiberius in the grottoes of Capri with his 'minnows'; young children who would swim about him and nibble at his genitals.[31] And eventually, like the more heroic strugglers such as Pentheus and Actaeon, José Arcadio is slayed, as the children he has abused act out their revenge by drowning him in that same bath until his body has *slipped down to the bottom of the fragrant water* and where Aureliano will later find him *floating on the perfumed mirror of the pool*, (not unlike one version of the fate of another struggler; Narcissus), *and still thinking of Amaranta*.

The languid, never-to-be pope José Arcadio isn't the only struggler in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* to fall into the web that Amaranta has relentlessly woven from her impenetrable place in the Buendía household. Her nephew Aureliano José has struggled to forget his own incestuous fantasies with his aunt by going off to the civil wars with his uncle Colonel Aureliano Buendía, and one of her two jilted and desperate suitors commits suicide after Amaranta answers his proposal by saying, *Don't be simple, Crespi. I wouldn't marry you even if I were dead*. Amaranta devours the weak-willed strugglers with temptations of a return to the original passive states, but she herself is entangled in the fabric of her own archetype; that of the virgin. *Ezekiel 44:2* declares "This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because God has entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut." But Amaranta is not just a virgin by her chaste physical state, but also in the original sense of the word; a virgin meaning a woman completely independent of any man. In Amaranta's case that includes the patriarchal Judeo-Christian

[31] In Catholic tradition there is a patron saint for almost everything. There is a saint for soldiers, sailors, artists, gamblers, the insane, gardeners, headaches, bowel disorders, volcanic eruptions, weavers, writers, virgins, impossible dreams, and solitude, to name just a few. Saint Martin is the saint of both wine makers and alcoholics. But Saint Germaine Cousin protects only the victims of child abuse. There is no saint for the actual perpetrators of sexual abuse of children. Therefore, since during his lifetime he protected the Catholic clergy from the consequences of their crimes, it would be fitting that Pope John Paul II be their patron saint.

God, as not even he can enter her closely guarded gate. In her *virginal widowhood* she weaves a *solitude unto death*.

Throughout *One Hundred Years of Solitude* Amaranta is relentlessly sewing, embroidering, knitting baby clothes, handkerchiefs, table clothes, lace and needlepoint, and also invisible but entangling webs about her. Freud believed that women invented weaving when braiding their pubic hairs in order to form the absent penis, but certainly it is Amaranta the sovereign virgin who emasculates the men caught in her webs. She is the virgin male-eating spider, the eternal weaver of the illusory world of the senses, relentlessly fashioning the fabric of her solitary universe. And far from an absent penis, *she braided her long hair and rolled it about her ears as death had told her it should be on her bier*. Because one day death appears to Amaranta as a woman dressed in blue with long hair, so real that *on one occasion asked of Amaranta the favor of threading a needle*. And death orders her to begin sewing her own shroud and tells her *that she would die without pain, fear, or bitterness at dusk on the day that she finished it.* Amaranta is finally overwhelmed by the unconscious forces of the archetype of the virgin and her own webs drag her back into the uroboros state where her life is now spent in weaving her shroud, and *it might have been said that she wove during the day and unwove during the night*. Just like Penelope, except she had a purpose; to stymie her suitors while she awaited the return of Odysseus, whereas Amaranta waits only for oblivion. So that when she calls on her mother from her death bed to give testimony to her virginity, Úrsula cries, *Amaranta Buendía is leaving this world just as she came into it*. True both in body and in spirit.

After his disillusionment with the civil wars, in which Colonel Aureliano Buendía *organized thirty-two armed uprisings and lost them all*, and *survived fourteen attempts on his life*, *seventy-three ambushes, and a firing squad*, he too wishes he could be the same as when he first came into this world. Although he has become the stuff of legend as the ubiquitous warrior-chief simultaneously declared *victorious in Villanueva, defeated in Guacamayal, devoured by Motilón Indians, dead in a village swamp, and up in arms again in Urumita*, Colonel Aureliano is soon swamped by the dark side of the archetype of the warrior-hero and *lost in the solitude of his immense power, he began to lose direction. . .*

He felt scattered about, multiplied, and more solitary than ever. There is for him no sacred circle, no mandala of wholeness, but instead he stands isolated in a literal and physical chalk circle *that his aides would draw wherever he stopped, and which only he could enter. . .* Finally, desperate to eradicate his miserable existence, and not believing he could ever recover the blissful state of first coming into the world, he attempts suicide. But, alas, still another circle, the circle of iodine that he asks his doctor to paint on his chest to indicate his heart, also fails him, and the pistol shot goes straight through without damaging any vital organs.[32]

And so, as Amaranta wove her death shroud during the day only to unweave it at night, Colonel Aureliano, after leaving the vicious circle of the civil wars, once again begins making the little gold fish that had provided his happiest moments of childhood. And *since he had decided not to sell any, he kept on making two fishes a day and when he finished twenty-five he would melt them down and start all over again*. Calling these circles vicious would seem to assume intent, whereas Aureliano's little gold fish and the death shroud of Amaranta are unconscious endeavors, just as unconscious as the swamp, which "begets, gives birth, and slays again in an endless cycle."[33] Just as Colonel Aureliano Buendía wishes to become *an artisan without memories whose only dream was to die of fatigue in the oblivion and misery of his little gold fishes*.

The matriarch Úrsula is so vital to keeping the Buendía household intact that, even when she is well over one hundred years old and blind and feeble, and has become a great-great-great-grandmother to still another Aureliano, García Márquez realized that he could not let her die quite yet as only she held everything from falling apart. She is witness to all the obsessions, possessions, and passions of the family, and as the archetype of the Great Mother she often intercedes to check their more flagrant excesses. And it is Úrsula, from her night world where she sees only by intuition, odors, memory, and clairvoyance, who notices Meme's secret and pressing matters, which eventually result in the birth of

[32] Though García Márquez was an avid reader of Joseph Conrad, it does not necessarily follow that he knew that a young, *struggling* Conrad put a gun to his chest and that, just like Colonel Aureliano, the bullet passed through without harming any vital organs.
[33] *The Origins and History of Consciousness*, Erich Neumann.

Aureliano, long before her own mother Fernanda becomes aware of anything amiss. And Úrsula is not swamped by her archetype; in fact, it is she who reaches the other side of the surrounding swamps of Macondo and finds *the route that her husband had been unable to discover in his frustrated search for the great inventions*. Though no one in what she often refers to as the madhouse has inherited her strength, that does not infer that after so many calamities and mortifications, she does not finally feel *irrepressible desires to let herself go and scamper about like a foreigner and allow herself at last an instant of rebellion, that instant yearned for so many times and so many times postponed, putting her resignation aside and shitting on everything once and for all and drawing out of her heart the infinite stacks of bad words that she had been forced to swallow over a century of conformity. "Shit!" she shouted*. Úrsula is not overwhelmed by the archetype of the Great Mother, but she is certainly liable at times, when seeing all too often that shit just refuses to turn to gold, of accepting the burden only under protest.

Her husband, the patriarch José Arcadio Buendía, also protests. But, unlike Úrsula, he has never held back from expressing the emotions of his many frustrations. He lives a life of frenzied and relentless insurrection against the limits of the imagination. In the beginning, as an enterprising young man, he sets forth from his birthplace with Úrsula and a band of followers on an exodus through the wilderness *for the land that no one had promised them*. And also unlike Moses, who spent forty years to cross two hundred miles of desert, purposefully going in circles so that the generation which remembered captivity in Egypt would die out, including himself, José Arcadio and all who followed soon establish the town of Macondo in the middle of the limitless swamps.

But, with the coming of Melquíades and his tribe of gypsies, who bring along the latest inventions of mankind, José Arcadio is forthwith seized by the archetype of the alchemist. He is obsessed by all the new inventions, and especially the alchemical laboratory that has been set up for him in his house, and views it all as a way to escape from the irrational abyss of the swamps all around Macondo. To him everything has a rational purpose and so he encourages the material needs of his ego while ignoring any symbolical aspects to his pursuits. The lead that José Arcadio works with in the wild undertakings of his laboratory

is just the literal chemical element, and that can never turn to the gold of the true alchemist. All his frenzied efforts are directed outwards. He attempts to dominate all the mysteries of life and looks for hidden treasures in the inner workings of Pietro Crespi's mechanical toys and the pianola. And with his newly acquired daguerreotype laboratory he believes he can obtain empirical proof regarding the biggest mystery of all; *Through a complicated process of superimposed exposures taken in different parts of the house, he was sure that sooner or later he would get a daguerreotype of God, if He existed, or put an end once* and *for all to the supposition of His existence*. Since José Arcadio has never peered into his own inner workings to possibly discover a god, a psychic treasure, that would give a deeper meaning to his life, he ignores a basic need that Jung spoke of. "The idea of God is an absolutely necessary psychological function of an irrational nature, which has nothing whatever to do with the question of God's existence. The human intellect can never answer this question, still less give any proof of God. Moreover such proof is superfluous, for the idea of an all-powerful divine Being is present everywhere, unconsciously if not consciously, because it is an archetype."[34]

But José Arcadio, all too aware of the abysmal swamps surrounding him, devotes all his vast energy and imagination to the ascension of his rational ego and loses touch with his natural instincts and intuition. Now convinced by his camera that God does not exist,[35] he sets it up again to catch the invisible player of the pianola, and failing in that, he dismembers it to discover the mystery within. But his fate is like another of Jung's mental patients, who, devastated by unrequited love, goes to a river to drown himself. However, gazing at the reflections in the flowing water, he has a Dantesque vision. "It seemed to him that the stars were swimming two by two down the river, and a wonderful feeling

[34] *The Personal and the Collective Unconscious, Collected Works, Volume 7*, C. G. Jung.

[35] A mental patient once declared to Jung, "Doctor, last night I disinfected the whole heavens with bichloride of mercury, but I found no God." In referencing his own cases Jung writes in *The Assimilation of the Unconscious*, "In mental cases we can observe all the phenomena that are present only fleetingly in normal people, in a cruder and enlarged form." He also gives an account of a layman's reaction to being taken through the sick wards of a psychiatric clinic in Zurich. "I tell you, it's just like Zurich in miniature! A quintessence of the population. It is as though all the types one meets every day on the streets had been assembled here in their classic purity."

came over him. Gradually he became aware that every star was a face, and that all these pairs were lovers, who were carried along locked in a dreaming embrace. The memory of the girl grew distant, blurred; but instead, he felt with complete certainty that untold riches were promised him. He knew that an immense treasure lay hidden for him in the neighboring observatory."[36] And, just as José Arcadio searches only for treasures that he can hold in the palm of his hand and weigh on a scale, Jung's mental patient is arrested at four in the morning in the act of breaking and entering into the observatory.

The fate of the dismembered pianola is much in question for an eagerly anticipated ball at the Buendías. *Two days before the party, swamped in a shower of leftover keys and hammers, bungling in the midst of a mixup of strings that would unroll in one direction and roll up again in the other, he* [José Arcadio] *succeeded in a fashion in putting the instrument back together.* But, of course, when the music roll is set in motion it creates only a jarring cacophony; not unlike José Arcadio's own state of mind.

Before he soared so high that he exhausted all his conscious faculties, José Arcadio had conceived of a memory machine that would have been the envy of Giulio Camillo or Giordano Bruno. Bruno himself had imagined endless rooms so teeming with profuse meanings that he used even the shadows of the furnishings as further devises for prompting memory. But José Arcadio has a recurrent dream of *getting out of bed, opening the door and going into an identical room with the same bed with a wrought-iron head, the same wicker chair, and the same small picture of the Virgin of Help on the back wall. From that room he would go into another that was just the same, the door of which would open into another one just the same, and then into another exactly alike, and so on to infinity*. Unlike Goethe, who became Faust's medium for creating a visionary work of art, José Arcadio, lacking any symbolic life, exhausted by the frenzied pursuits of his ego, is heaved up by his archetype and flung down into madness. As Nietzsche wrote not long

[36] *Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious, Collected Works, Volume 7,* C G Jung.

before his own descent into dementia, “You stone of wisdom! You threw yourself high, but every thrown stone must—fall.”[37]

José Arcadio never acknowledged something that Heraclitus realized more than two thousand years before; that one who soars high into the light must also plunge deep into darkness. The only passage to the next day is through the night, where we are in commune with the gods, our own inner voices, which, if ignored or trivialized, forfeit to us the possibilities of discovering extraordinary, hidden treasures because, to paraphrase Nietzsche, when the sun goes down it pours gold into the sea. The gods must be acknowledged or they will eventually retaliate. The hero Bellerophon was favored by Minerva, who presented him with Pegasus, the winged horse of the Muses, to mount and fly into battle against various adversaries. In his conquest of Chimaera he made much better use of lead than José Arcadio ever did. Flying above the monster he thrust a lump of lead into her throat, where her fiery breath caused it to melt and flow down her throat, scorching her insides. So victorious was Bellerophon in his exploits that he presumed to ascend to the heavens mounted on Pegasus. But, Zeus sent a gadfly to sting the winged horse, whereupon the hero was bucked from his mount and madly plunged to earth. A quotation from Jung’s essay on Nietzsche*, The Other Point of View: The Will to Power*, comes to mind; “If heroism becomes chronic, it ends in a cramp, and the cramp leads to catastrophe or to neurosis or both.”

Pegasus flew on to Olympus. It is he, with his moon shaped hoof, who struck the soul-inspiring fountain of Hippocrene from the mountain of the Muses. He is a friend to poets and wherever he kicks, a rousing spring bursts forth, as it was when he struck Gabriel García Márquez on the highway to Acapulco. And so he struck Nietzsche, who, unlike José Arcadio Buendía, never mistook the lead or the gold as solely chemical elements. Nietzsche could delve deeply into the inner workings of the collective unconscious, dance in ecstasy with the archetypes, uncover hidden treasures from the summits and the abysses, and, in contrast to José Arcadio and Jung’s mental patients, return to the rational

[37] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Friedrich Nietzsche.

world. Until he didn't. During his life he had uncovered hidden treasures from the summits and the abysses. Some treasures are too heavy and drag one down, while others are too light and heave one up. As Nietzsche himself warned in *Zarathustra*, "Too easily would I be pulled upwards and away."

The mania of Nietzsche and José Arcadio Buendía which heaved them up is just as harmful to the psyche as the melancholy of Amaranta and Colonel Aureliano which dragged them down. Nietzsche knew that human beings were fragmented and believed that the summits and abysses must be comprised together. He was aware of the need "to compose and collect into unity what is fragment in man."[38] There is an art to living. Jung described it as a process of individuation, which begins with birth and early childhood in *participation mystique*, the uroboros state; then the child begins to differentiate between an inner and outer world; and later the rational mind begins to dominate the individual's world view. Jung warned that men and women in this last state can find life meaningless. "The individual who has attained consciousness of the present is solitary. That is so of necessity and at all times, for every step forward towards a fuller consciousness of the present removes the individual further from the original *participation mystique*—from submersion in a common unconsciousness."[39] But there is a way out of this dilemma in Jung's final stage of individuation; an intentional re-immersion into *participation mystique*. This is what the visionary artist brings to pass. And when the archetypes unite the conscious with the unconscious, the experience can be exhilarating and numinous.[40] As García Márquez said regarding the writing of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, "I knew the book wouldn't escape me and I got around to playing out of sheer joy." This is the culmination of the alchemical process taking the adept from leaden fragmentation to golden unity, from the circle of the uroboros to the circle of the mandala. Nietzsche expressed this process of individuation in insights such as; "He who wishes one day to fly,

[38] Ibid.
[39] *The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man, Collected Works, Volume 10*, C G Jung.
[40] And beneficial to good physical health. Márquez had suffered most of his life from boils. While writing *One Hundred Years of Solitude* he realized that Colonel Aureliano Buendía had to endure some terrible physical ailment. He decided to give him boils. From that moment on Gabriel never suffered from boils again.

must first learn standing and walking and running and climbing and dancing; one does not fly into flying!"[41]

Of course, there are many obstacles on this path of individuation. And each individual's way is unique. Some turn back to a prior spot on the path. The same person can be at different places simultaneously. Many of the Buendías wander completely off the paths and are lost in the limitless swamps surrounding Macondo. There is one, though, who appears to steer clear of that fate.

Several Buendías have searched for hidden treasure. But always their efforts, which sometimes tear up the house and garden, are, like the conquistadors hunting for El Dorado, for the material gain of discovering where Ursula has concealed the three bags of gold that three wayfaring strangers left in her safe keeping many years before. But the quest of Meme's son, the last Aureliano, is for a treasure infinitely more intangible and sublime. His archetype is the poet. And the treasure he seeks is more in keeping with the *Hadith* verse that God is a hidden treasure wanting to be found. Or *Matthew 13:44*, "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. . ." Aureliano's own genesis is biblical-like; he was found floating in a basket and is unaware of his origins. His grandmother Fernanda del Carpio, who denies the existence of her daughter's illegitimate son, declares, *If they believe it in the Bible, I don't see why they shouldn't believe it from me*. Since Aureliano is innocent of his origins, his birth could be divine. And, like other heroes of mythology, he is illegitimate and has been both hidden and imprisoned. And he has a task; to discover the meaning of the manuscript that Melquíades had written in his indecipherable scribbling that *looked like pieces of clothing put out to dry on a line*. Having seen something similar in an English encyclopedia he discovers that Melquíades wrote the book in Sanskrit. Aureliano, all alone now, like the writer and alchemist at their works, delves into the enigma of the parchments and reveals the hidden treasure of the archetypes of the collective unconscious and then sees Melquíades *with his crow's-wing hat like the materialization of a memory that had been in his head since long before he*

[41] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Friedrich Nietzsche.

was born. And through this transcendent contact he is told where to find a Sanskrit primer. In *The Symbolism of the Cross* Rene Guénon writes that *sutra* is the Sanskrit word for thread and that a book is formed by a collection of *sutras*.[42] In the sacred scripture of the *Upanishads* it is written that the supreme Brahma is "That upon which the worlds are woven, as warp and weft." Warp, *shruti*, is the series of threads stretched vertically on the loom and weft, *smriti*, is the thread that passes horizontally with the to and fro movement of the shuttle. In the symbolism of weaving in the Orient the vertical warp represents the *yang*, active force, the immutable, principal elements, the direct light of the sun, and the connecting thread between different states of being, while the horizontal weft is symbolic of the *yin*, passive force, the variable, contingent elements, the reflected light of the moon, and is the thread where each state of being is experienced. In this cosmic weaving the crossing of each warp and weft reveals the state of existence of each being in the universe. Amaranta, weaving and unweaving her death shroud, is at a distinctly different crossing than the goddess Proserpina, who wove an intricate tapestry embroidering the concourse of atoms, the dwelling places of the gods, the suspended earth and the oceans, the lighter matter ascending and the heavier descending, and chaos becoming cosmos. She wove the universe.

The destiny of a united, whole Self in this universe would be to evolve from one crossing of the warp and weft onto the entire page, and from there to the whole book. Ibn Arabi, the thirteenth century Spanish Sufi, wrote in the *Meccan Revelations* that, "The Universe is a vast book; the characters of this book are all written, in principle, with the same ink and transcribed on to the eternal Table by the Divine Pen; all are transcribed simultaneously and inseparably. . ." And so, once Aureliano has translated the Sanskrit of the parchments to Spanish, which then had to be decoded using the private cipher of the Emperor Augustus for the even lines and the Lacedemonian military code for the odd lines, he experiences an epiphany and realizes *that Melquíades had not put the events in the order of man's conventional time, but had concentrated a century of daily episodes in such a way that they coexisted* in *one instant*.

[42] Each chapter of the *Koran* is also called a *Sutra*.

In the archetype of the sacred scripture the events of the universe are envisaged in the simultaneity of the timeless. Never having been more lucid in his life, and with Macondo in the cataclysm of *a fearful whirlwind of dust and rubble being spun about by the wrath of the biblical hurricane. . . he began to decipher the instant he was living, deciphering it as he lived it, prophesying himself in the act of deciphering the last pages of the parchments. . .* Aureliano the poet becomes a magical, mythical loom, weaving a tremendous and fascinating book of the universe. As the wine must taste of its own grapes,[43] Aureliano's lucid psyche is tasting itself. And some of the last words of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* have the taste of the enigmatic and paradoxical koans of Zen Buddhism. With Macondo annihilated by the wind and exiled from the memory of humankind, Márquez writes that everything written on the parchments of Melquíades *was unrepeatable since time immemorial and forever more*. . . And, whereas the uroboros is the original archetype of the collective unconscious, that state of annihilation where time is *immemorial and forever more* is the last.

[43] *Sonnets from the Portuguese 6*, Elizabeth Barrett Browning.