

Notes for *House of Asterion* & *One Hundred Years of Solitude* – The Concept of Solipsism as a Thematic Motif in Magical Realist Texts

Solipsism: The philosophical idea that only one's own mind is sure to exist. As an epistemological (TOK) position, solipsism holds that knowledge of anything outside one's own mind is unsure; the external world and other minds cannot be known and might not exist outside the mind. As a metaphysical position, solipsism goes further to the conclusion that the world and other minds do not exist (*Wikipedia*).

One Hundred Years of Solitude: The solipsistic theme in the novel is signified by the rampant incest that occurs within the Buendia family throughout the novel.

“Like magical realism, incest tends towards the fusion of differential categories, and as such constitutes a threat to social organization, since it weakens to vital distinction that underpins cultural order; the difference between self and other. In this sense, incest can be taken as a symbolic equivalent of the solipsism that underlies magical realism. For, when kinship differences are not properly marked, communication or constructive social intercourse are [sic] rendered ineffective” (Williamson, Edwin. *Magical Realism and the Theme of Incest in One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 47).

However, there exists many other elements of significance that help to develop solipsistic themes throughout the narrative, such as plot devices, metaphors, and characters. Consider these things as you study the novel.

House of Asterion: To what extent are solipsistic themes developed in Borges's short story? How are these solipsist themes developed through literary devices and techniques?