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Visión Electrónica *Más que un estado sólido*

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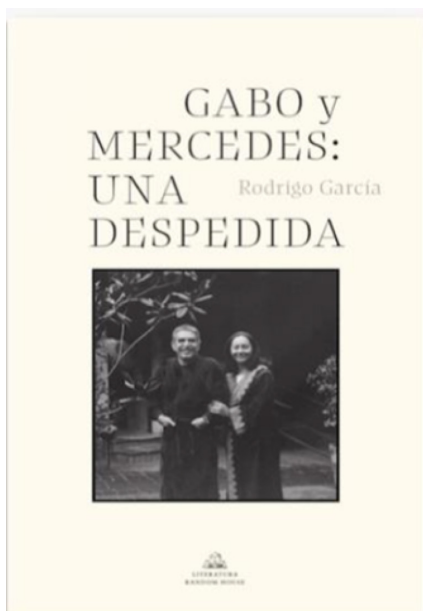


VISIÓN ELECTRÓNICA

A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL VISION

Rodrigo García, Gabo and Mercedes: A Farewell. Bogotá: Alfaguara. Random House Literature. 2021, 104 pages.

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The book recounts the last and endless agonizing days in the life of Gabriel García Márquez, his gradual loss of memory, and the moments when his death was imminent, described with love and pain by his son Rodrigo. The book also includes the last days in the life of Mercedes Barcha, García Márquez's wife of more than fifty years.

I am not exaggerating if I say that it is a book about death. Rodrigo testifies: "Writing about the death of a

loved one must be almost as old as writing itself, and yet, when I set out to do it, I instantly get a lump in my throat" [1, p. 16].

Rodrigo García studied Medieval History, but professionally he was oriented towards cinema and television; and, as a fate inspired by fairies, he was baptized by the priest Camilo Torres. While the different conjectures about the person who baptized him emerge about Rodrigo's future, García Márquez-funnily enough-predicted him a destiny as a policeman in Magangué. The place where Mercedes Barcha, Rodrigo's mother, was born.

The book is divided into two sections. The first comprises the author's moving narrative in about one hundred pages. The second consists of about twenty photographs entitled *Los recuerdos en Imágenes* (Memories in Images). Likewise, it is important to note in the treatment of the themes the relevance of the epigraphs chosen from *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *The General in his Labyrinth*, *Love in the Time of Cholera* and *The Autumn of the Patriarch*.

The epigraphs

When in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* the parchments of Melquiades are known, the abyss is total. In them is written in advance everything that was going to happen in Macondo. The parchments are defined in

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One Hundred Years of Solitude as: “The history of the family written by Melquiades, even in its most trivial details a hundred years in advance”. In the epigraphs, chosen by Rodrigo from his father’s writings, they are also previewing how the Caribbean numen’s life would end.

The Story

To describe comparatively the author of *The Colonel Has No One to Write to Him* with memory and without memory for his own son, is not a cause for envy. Observing the father, and writing about him, where he no longer recognizes his children, or his own wife is painful and makes a strong impression. Rodrigo says: “A few months ago a friend of mine asked me how my father was doing with his memory loss. I tell her that he lives strictly in the present, unburdened by the past, free of expectations about the future...” - concludes the friend - “So, he does not know that he is mortal... How lucky he is” [1, p. 16-17].

However, in the early stages of memory impairment García Márquez had moments of lucidity and returned to his good humor and above all to the “mamadera de gallo”, very typical of the Caribbean tradition. Sometimes he was heard: “I am losing my memory, but luckily I forget that I am losing it...” [1, p.19]. Indeed, the breakdown of memory destroys all conscious expressions of the individual, but García Márquez appears unalterable in his Caribbean essence, in his being. As Rodrigo says: “It seems that his sense of humor has survived dementia” [1, p.26].

With a highly polished pen, and with cinematic images apparently dictated from the underworld by the father or Melquiades, Rodrigo writes a beautiful book. Evoking classical writers such as Plato or Virgil, without giving it the title of Books, there is a numbering in each piece of narrative that constitutes as a whole a

thematic integrality. This is not a contrived lyric, much less improvised, but well thought out.

The photographic collection

As for the photographic collection, which numbers twenty, my opinion is very brief: they are beautiful. On the subject of the photographs, it is better that the specialists speak for themselves. I am impressed by the one titled, Gabo sleeping Tuesday’s siesta under a Colombian ruana. (Mexico City 2013). The photo is not by a novice, as it includes many elements; all revolving around the calm figure of Gabriel García Márquez. But what I want to highlight is the expression on the face of the author of *La hojarasca*. By the configuration of his physiognomy, it is a communicative dream. With whom did Gabriel García Márquez communicate in his dreams?

Considering all of the above and convinced that this review does not do justice to the importance of the book. I recommend reading the book and admiring the photographs. Convinced that the arts, and above all literature, are one of the joys of life, but above all a heart sensitive to the gigantic power of beauty is completely shielded against injustice and violence. Since art - as Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805), one of the most outstanding exponents of modern humanism, expresses it in his famous *Letters on the aesthetic education of mankind* - is the child of freedom since it obeys the imperative of the spirit and not material needs. (López, R).

Lists of opinion. Universidad Distrital August 17, 2021.

References

- [1] R. García, “Gabo and Mercedes: A Farewell”, Bogotá: Alfaguara. Random House Literature, 2021.