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<https://doi.org/10.14483/issn.2248-4728>



VISIÓN ELECTRÓNICA

A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL VISION

**Orlando Oliveros: The memory machine. Stories and conversations about the life, work and legacy of Gabriel García Márquez. Cartagena de Indias, Colombia: Gabo Foundation. 2022, 218 pages.**

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La máquina de la memoria is a free digital book that can be downloaded from the official website of the Gabo Foundation or at the following link: [bit.ly/MaquinaDeGabo](https://bit.ly/MaquinaDeGabo). The title of the book that gives its name to the writing was inspired by the genius, foolproof, of the founding father of

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Cite this article as: R. López-González, A. Ramírez Valencia, “Orlando Oliveros: The memory machine. Stories and conversations about the life, work and legacy of Gabriel García Márquez. Cartagena de Indias, Colombia: Gabo Foundation. 2022, 218 pages”, *Visión Electrónica*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2022

Macondo: José Arcadio Buendía. Character of "One Hundred Years of Solitude". The reasons for inventing the machine were profoundly human. Let's see:

Who brought the plague of oblivion to Macondo was a Guajira Indian, called Visitación. She came to Macondo emigrating from her tribe and was picked up by the matron Ursula in order to help with the domestic chores. The Buendía-Iguaran family did not know the real reasons for Visitación's arrival in Macondo, she was plagued by the plague of insomnia; the most frightening part of the disease was not the insomnia itself, but its transformation into a more critical expression: forgetfulness. Thus, when the patient became accustomed to the waking state, childhood memories began to be erased from his memory, as well as his own name and the notion of all things.

Faced with this situation, the patriarch of Macondo decided, inspired by Melquiades' imagination, to invent something just in case the event of forgetfulness in Macondo happened again. In One Hundred Years of Solitude, the following is stated:

**José Arcadio Buendía then decided to build the memory machine he had once wished for to remember the marvelous inventions of the gypsies. The artifact was based on the possibility of reviewing every morning, from the beginning to the end, the totality of the knowledge obtained in life.**

Something similar to José Arcadio's machine had already been created by Jorge Luis Borges in the Aleph, according to him: "Our mind is porous to forgetfulness..." But let Borges' own imagination explain it: "... an Aleph is one of the points of space that contains all the points" ...continues the author of Historia universal de la infamia, "The diameter of the Aleph would be two or three centimeters, but the cosmic space was there, without decrease or size". Further on, Borges explains everything he saw inside the Aleph. In short, as in José Arcadio's machine, all the knowledge obtained in life could be seen in the Aleph.

Leaving for now the inquiries about the background of the creation of The Memory Machine. The book is divided into two sections; the first one: Telling Gabo, and the second one: Talking about Gabo. The first, as its name indicates, is an anecdotal account of García

Márquez's writings and life, in 11 articles; in *Cuando Getsemaní era una fiesta*. It relates the following:

**He had arrived in Cartagena from Barranquilla hugging the roof of a Postal Agency truck. The city, magnificent and stale on its historical buildings, was the second option in the Caribbean to continue his unsavory law career. In the first, Barranquilla, they had closed the Universidad del Atlántico for the same reasons that, in Bogotá, they had closed the Universidad Nacional: the violence that followed the Bogotazo.**

Getsemaní appeared in García Márquez's life as a place isolated from the convulsed Colombian politics; Getsemaní was, at that time, the only neighborhood in the historic center of Cartagena that was immune to the curfew. There, he met music; there he met Manuel Zapata Olivella. He had met Zapata Olivella at the National University, when García Márquez was a law student. From that meeting, in Cartagena, a deep friendship was born that led the author of *Los Funerales de la Mama Grande* to the recently created newspaper *El Universal*, where he managed to get a daily column. The almanac marked the middle of 1948.

Of the other ten (10) anecdotal articles on the life of Gabriel García Márquez, all are beautiful. I would also like to highlight the one entitled: *Rafael Escalona puts the sound, García Márquez the prose*.

The second part of the book, *Conversando sobre Gabo*, is organized in twelve (12) interviews. All of them are well formatted. I would like to comment: García Márquez, a poet who writes novels. Interview with Piedad Bonnett. To the question: Can the eagerness to transmit a specific ideological discourse detract from the quality of a literary work? Piedad answers:

**Totally. If you set out to make a 'thesis novel' that's what happens. That's the big 'but' of Carpentier, for example. He always wanted to be proving something. When rationality is exacerbated and literature is put at the service of an idea, no**

**matter how rich that literature may be, it ends up with a kind of weakness. The opposite case is García Márquez. He told the story of his father, his mother, his brothers, his uncles, his childhood, the magical world in which he was born and lived, but he did it with such an acute political sense and such a deep sense of the human that his works portray this country politically. He achieved all this with pure literary intuition, with the poet's gaze and not with the essayist's gaze. Carpentier, who also participated in the so-called 'magical realism', what he does is to put his stories at the service of an idea, and look how his work has aged, while García Márquez is still completely alive.**

Finally, I recommend the book. Not only to "gabophiles" interested in the eventful life and work of the author of the Twelve Pilgrim Tales. It is a well-written book. Without any pretension of passing to posterity. Besides, the life, but above all, the work of Gabriel García Márquez is an example of consecration, professionalism and intellectual honesty. Sometimes I think that the life of José Arcadio Buendía, founding father of Macondo, and inventor of The Memory Machine, is an autobiography of Gabo. I invite you not only to read The Machine... but also the work of the author of The Colonel Has No One Who Writes to Him. Yes, all his work. Picking up the recommendation of Leonardo Padura, one of the interviewees in this book, who believes in readers and their ability to transform themselves by reading. He affirms:

**(...) maybe a book does not change your life, but literature does change your life. Men who read are better than those who do not read. Reading is a way of getting to know humanity and of approaching the other, a way of understanding the thoughts of those who are not the same as us or of those who are.**