



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. The title of the book that gives its name to the writing was inspired by the genius, foolproof, of the founding father of 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.

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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:

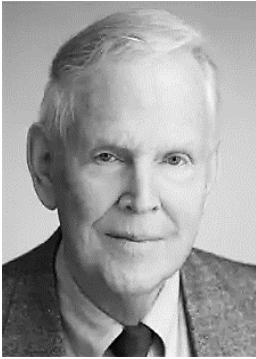
Totally. If you set out to make a 'thesis novel' that's what happens. That's the big 'but' of Carpentier, for example. He always wanted to be proving something. When rationality is exacerbated and literature is put at the service of an idea, no matter how rich that literature may be, it ends up with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

Historical Vision

William Frank Tinney or the optimal ordering method in electrical power systems



He was born on May 5, 1921, and passed away on April 14, 2019, in Portland, Oregon USA shortly before his 98th birthday.

In 1943, after studying electrical engineering at *Oregon State College*, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and became a radar officer with training at MIT and Harvard. He went on to earn a B.S. and M.S. degree from Stanford University.

His research interests were always oriented toward power grids.

It was in 1967 that, together with John W. Walker, he would publish *Direct Solutions of Sparse Network Equations by Optimally Ordered Triangular Factorization*, concluding that it eliminates both the need to resort to iterative methods of slow convergence to solve large network problems and the need to compromise with the size of the problem to obtain the benefits of direct solutions; He revolutionized the resolution of electric power networks through the newly explored sparsity of the network matrix; a subject that would inspire the world mathematical community in the theorization and formalization of matrix factorization and optimization schemes with Dispersed Matrices -in general not fully symmetric-, and symmetry as a particular case.

Added to the above paper are *Power Flow Solution by Newton's Method*, done together with Clifford Hart; and the one done with Hermann Dommel: *Optimal Power Flow Solutions*. The former became -and still is- the gold standard for power flow; and the latter, on *Optimal Power Flow (OPF)*, which concludes in a gradient optimization procedure by using penalty

functions to handle functional inequality constraints, and which would become one of the five most important papers on power system analysis in the 20th century to perform real-time monitoring and analysis of the power grid, according to the 2000 North American Energy Symposium.

Therefore, in the field of electric power, it was possible to solve models of large transmission networks quickly and accurately. Consequently, to develop innovations to adapt this technology to software tools installed in digital computers. Thus, computer programs for power flow, optimal power flow, state estimation, stability analysis, fault analysis, safety dispatch, network curtailment, and congestive market pricing -among many more- were, are, and will be relevant for a long time: the computational applications of power system networks developed in the last 50 years are based on its sparse network solution approach. Hence, it has had an incalculable effect on the planning, design, and reliable operation of the world's power grids, from the individual utility level to continental modeling.

Although Tinney's work had well-deserved accolades, such as the IEEE Power Engineering Medal, the U.S. Department of the Interior Gold Medal, Japan's Order of the Sacred Treasure, the IEEE Third Millennium Medal, or the Power & Energy Society's Charles Concordia Award in IEEE; perhaps his best legacy was to be essentially a modest, upstanding, diligent, generous, and enlightened man who with good humor could mentor and cooperate with others: the quintessential engineer.

Harold Vacca González

Editor