

clear to continue to publish papers that raise questions—even troubling ones—about any point of view, even those that are fiercely held by large numbers of our colleagues.

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Interview with Gabriel García Márquez

To the Editor:

In his interview with Gabriel García Márquez (104 [1989]: 131–40), Raymond Leslie Williams allows into print only those portions of García Márquez's discussion of the visual arts that concern García Márquez's writing. Since Williams titles his piece "The Visual Arts, the Poetization of Space and Writing," it would seem appropriate to do just that. However, Williams lets pass in this interview (at least in the printed selections) a few of García Márquez's remarks that appear to stray from visual representation into the alien territory of computing; the result is that Williams lets slip through his fingers an opportunity to expand our collective definitions of the "visual," poetics, and the poetics of space.

García Márquez exhibits a fascination with the visual throughout this interview, revealing that visual detail often defines his narrative practice, even that a drawing or painting can provide the "solution for an entire novel" (132), as it did for *The Autumn of the Patriarch*. That García Márquez uses visual imaging to organize his writing is made clear when he says that detail is "always" something he *sees*: "It is always, always an image, with no exceptions" (132). What Williams fails to elaborate on is the strong visual orientation of computing, even though García Márquez moves directly from a discussion of images to comments about his practice of writing with a computer. In particular, García Márquez points out the difference between writing on a typewriter and writing with a computer; with the latter, he notes, "I make the last correction on the printed page, as if it were the book" (134).

It is here that García Márquez brings up implications for a poetics of space, as his comment suggests a treatment of drafts as physical objects—the actual "book." As Michael Joyce argues, theoretical discussion of word processing reveals both a conception of text as physical object existing in geographic space and a model of memory as spatial "map" that is actually manifested in physical marks on the page. Word processing, Joyce suggests, focuses that cognitive map by presenting images or text on a physical surface that is "inwardly elastic" (i.e., that allows additions and deletions) on a seemingly limitless plane or ground ("The Geography of the Word: The Textfile as Landscape," *Bulletin of Science and Technology Society* 7 [1987]: 484–92).

It would seem that García Márquez's notation that "[t]he computer has been such an important thing for me. It's been one of the world's great discoveries" (134) would suggest to Williams possibilities for a line of questions regarding computer drafting and its relation to visual representation in García Márquez's writing. And yet Williams simply does not respond to these remarks. It may only be through discussions with authors like García Márquez that we may come to understand the effects of computing on the writing process. That understanding is especially important, I believe, for works as visually oriented as those of García Márquez; the way we write—that is, the process—can be just as much a part of our poetics as are initial influences or finished products. To see such an opportunity for discussion pass unnoticed is quite disappointing.

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Reply:

García Márquez has mentioned what he considers the wonders of the computer in numerous interviews published in Spanish in the Hispanic world. Consistent with his statements in my interview, he has been fascinated with the practical, rather than theoretical, implications of writing with a word processor: his observations inevitably lead to the conclusion that he would have written far more and with greater ease if he had had access to a computer earlier in his career. In my conversation with him, he did speak more of the computer in that section of the interview that Hinds cites and claims that I failed to pursue appropriately. What he discussed, however, was more about how the mechanics have been simplified for him with the computer. Here is the remainder of what he said in that section of the interview, which did not appear in the version printed in *PMLA*:

The piece of theater has sixty-five pages. Every afternoon I print the sixty-five pages. I make the corrections and incorporate them into the sixty-five pages and print them again. Then I read it again. As a process of perfection, it's ideal. What was it like before? I had the sixty-five pages, I made the corrections, and I had to type the sixty-five pages by hand. Working all day, you needed two days to make a new version. Besides, you had to make new corrections. And many corrections weren't made because of the problem of typing all sixty-five pages again.

I chose not to include these sentences in the printed interview because the observations struck me as a little repetitive and uninteresting. They do reveal, however, where García Márquez's interests lie with respect to the computer.

As difficult as it may be for many of us academics of the 1980s to accept, García Márquez is really a professional storyteller, not a theoretician.

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