A Synergy of Styles: Art and Artifact in gabriel García Márquez

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The second chapter, entitled 'Fiction as Fact', focusses on the 1981 short narrative Crónica de una muerte anunciada. Here Bodtorf Clark finds the 'inverted pyramid' structure of journalistic prose, where 'the beginning of the story tells the important information and does not tease the reader along toward an unknown conclusion' (40). This is indeed an important technique in Crónica, but the author does not go substantively beyond her own reference to Aníbal González's Journalism and the Development of the Spanish American Narrative, which discusses Crónica as a parody and a model of journalistic investigation. Finally, when Bodtorf Clark announces her intention to discuss the New Journalism's influence on Crónica's character development, use of local colour and dialogue, what ensues is ten pages of plot summary.

Another needlessly exhaustive plot summary is found in the third chapter, 'Fact as Fiction', which discusses García Márquez's Relato de un náufrago, published serially in 1955 and reprinted in 1971. Bodtorf Clark demonstrates how this factual, journalistic piece is re-told with fictional techniques: characterization, foreshadowing, symbolism, dialogue. Nevertheless, her discussion of Relato as 'testimonio' omits any reference to the concept of subalternity which dominates current discussions of the 'testimonio' genre. Although Bodtorf Clark repeatedly reminds us that Relato met with censorship under the Rojas Pinilla regime (to cover up a Navy commando operation), the situation of the ship-wrecked sailor interviewed by García Márquez is a confrontation with nature, not with political oppression.

Bodtorf Clark's book aims for symmetry: fiction as journalistic investigation, journalistic article as fiction. In her fourth chapter, she restates a critical commonplace, namely, that blurring boundaries between genres is a mark of postmodern writing. Given the focus of her arguments, I was disappointed by the lack of any discussion of Noticia de un secuestro, a journalistic piece which to my mind is one of García Márquez's failures, a failure to describe the vortex of drug-related violence in Colombia in terms other than those of the traditional elite. Bodtorf Clark's monograph reminds us of the interplay between García Márquez's talents as a journalist and as a fiction-writer, but it provides few theoretical or interpretive insights.

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