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Truths That Hurt

Socialist Affects and Conviviality in the Literary Journalism of Gabriel García Márquez and Ryszard Kapuściński

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Truths That Hurt: Socialist Affects and Conviviality in the Literary Journalism of Gabriel García Márquez and Ryszard Kapuściński

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Abstract

This working paper deals with narrative journalistic texts by Gabriel García Márquez and Ryszard Kapuściński about their journeys to the Eastern Bloc and Latin America, respectively, during the first two decades of the Cold War. García Marquez's crónicas and Kapuściński's reportages deliver ideas on socialism(s) and engage in affective workings of a travel experience through representations of convivial socialist spaces. By elaborating a philological approach towards socialist affects, the paper concentrates on affective narrative attunements to lived historical moments and aims at comparing both authors as they raise social and political issues pertinent to the conjuncture of the Cold War. The convivial aspect refers here not only to living together with and knowledge production about the Other as represented in the text, but also to the methodological approach with intercultural sensitivity and transregional and transnational awareness of the aesthetic developments in the hybrid field of global literary journalism.

Keywords: affect | Cold War | literary journalism | socialism

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1. Introduction: Affective Attunements to Historical Moments

In the 1982 Nobel Prize lecture, Gabriel García Márquez reflected upon Latin American solitude, a concept that resonates with the idea of a certain (semi-)peripherality, seclusion, or even an island-like political and spiritual "solitude" in a world divided during the Cold War:[1]

> The interpretation of our reality through patterns not our own, serves only to make us ever more unknown, ever less free, ever more solitary […]. I do believe that those clear-sighted Europeans who struggle, here as well, for a more just and humane homeland, could help us far better if they reconsidered their way of seeing us. Solidarity with our dreams will not make us feel less alone, as long as it is not translated into concrete acts of legitimate support for all the peoples that assume the illusion of having a life of their own in the distribution of the world (García Márquez 1982).[2]

The reflection of the author of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* opens a space for a broader reflection on the "vicissitudes of our affective attachments to social and historical conjunctures" (Bivens 2018: 119). It recalls what Williams referred to as "practical consciousness of a present kind, in a living and interrelating continuity" (Williams 1977: 132). García Márquez's speech is affectively attuned to the present as a shared historical moment (Berlant 2011: 4; Bivens 2018: 121), as it seems impossible to speak of Latin America without speaking of its relationship to Europe, both complex and diverse regions bounded historically, culturally, and politically. Besides denouncing the political instability and structural violence in Latin America as the traumatic legacy of the European colonialism, the Colombian author comments on the here-and-now of "clear-sighted Europeans who struggle …for a more just and humane homeland" (García Márquez 2014: 212) in the present historical moment and appeals for solidarity with Latin America, rooted not in high hopes, but in concrete acts of mutual support, of togetherness, of recognizing the political legitimacy of social movements. At the time of this speech, Europe was divided by what was known as the Iron Curtain, with the Berlin Wall as its most emblematic landmark, and Poland enduring martial law. It happens that García Márquez actually came to know the Communist Bloc almost 30 years

1 The ground for the present comparatively- and affect-oriented working paper have been laid in my article about García Márquez's journey to the Eastern Bloc that was appeared in November 2022 in *Textos Híbridos*. The article focused on the production of space and the affinities with the New Journalism genre (Moszczynska 2022).

2 "*La interpretación de nuestra realidad con esquemas ajenos sólo contribuye a hacernos cada vez más desconocidos, cada vez menos libres, cada vez más solitarios. […] [C]reo que los europeos de espíritu clarificador, los que luchan también aquí por una patria grande más humana y más justa, podrían ayudarnos mejor si revisaran a fondo su manera de vernos. La solidaridad con nuestros sueños no nos hará sentir menos solos, mientras no se concrete con actos de respaldo legítimo a los pueblos que asuman la ilusión de tener una vida propia en el reparto del mundo*" (García Márquez 2014: 211–212).

earlier when he travelled to Poland in 1955 and documented it in a series of *crónicas* published first in the Caracas-based magazine *Momento* in 1957 and two years later in the Bogotá style magazine *Cromos,* and eventually gathered in the volume *De viaje por los países socialistas: 90 días en la "Cortina de Hierro"*.[3] His journey resulted in the text *Con los ojos abiertos sobre Polonia en ebullición* that accounts for his stay in Warsaw and Cracow, as well as the visit to the concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau. On December 29, 1981, the author of *Crónica de una muerte anunciada* revisited Poland in his opinion piece published in the Spanish *El País* "Polonia: verdades que duelen" [Poland: truths that hurt] that resonated indirectly with his Stockholm speech given one year earlier and confirmed the writer's 1955 letdown with "real socialism".

In this paper, I would like to deal with literary socialist affects and advance the understanding of global Cold War developments through regional specificities, the co-existence of multiple projects, movements, and actors involved within an entangled history (Werner and Zimmermann 2002) of the Latin American and East European Left. A closer look at García Márquez's *crónica* on communist Poland of 1955 will reveal the affective workings of particular social and socialist spaces present in the text. Thus, the idea of socialist affects will be elaborated based on the pioneering work of Raymond Williams.

Affects or feelings, how Raymond Williams would refer to them prior to the affective turn, pose a particular challenge to literature studies. How can literature, or more specifically text and narrative convey the workings of affecting and of being affected? "Is affect compatible with sequenced orderings of narrative prose, or even with the linguistic expressions of innovative poetry?" (Houen 2020: 2). The field of affect studies has been dominated by two antagonistic positions: the cognitivist and the non-cognitivist. Houen, however, develops an argument about literary affect challenging this binary about how "affect can become fused and transformed with language, cognition, bodily feeling, and the imagination" (Houen 2020: 16). My paper follows Houen's proposal and considers affects as part of the literary construction and the affective bearings of a text's genre, form, style, and overall aesthetic as part of literary analysis and criticism. I therefore propose to consider affect to be part of the aesthetic, social, and political dimension of the text that can be conveyed through literary devices.

Literature is a medium that has social significance as it creates those affective moments/elements of "practical consciousness" (Williams 1977: 132) granting it a certain collective value. Literary journalistic narratives have a particular capacity to produce the sense of presence and intensity due to their immediacy and appeal to life of ordinary individuals

3 The book had been reissued many times between 1978 and 1986, both as legal and unauthorized editions. In 2015, it was republished by Penguin Random House under the title *De viaje por Europa del Este*.

or to contemporary collective events and public personalities represented as integral parts of historical processes. It is easier to engage emotionally, to relive events that actually happened. Also, literary journalism being popular literature that would often be published in newspapers and other print media, becomes more accessible and offers more democratic ways of acquiring knowledge, also about universal existential issues such as life and death. The emotional contact established by the author/narrator with his subject opens space for understanding, which leads to immersion. Personal involvement is very common and as the journalist mediates his or her own emotions and experience, they become more tangible and authentic to the reader, permit his or her participation in the making of meaning, which in turn forms the fundament of the narrative pact particular to the genre of non-fiction.

Williams' structures of feeling/structures of experience promote an understanding of the workings of affects in the context of the literature as a cultural and social process. Thus, by introducing the idea of socialist affects, my aim is to relate literary expression, its "specific feelings, specific rhythms, specific kinds of sociality" (Williams 1977: 133), to the social, political, and economic historical conjuncture within which it is produced, here: the Cold War and the entangled history of the intellectual Left. Those affects are socialist because they are bound by a process of the production of meanings and ideas influenced by a particular system of convictions and beliefs: socialism. The actual consciousness of the narrative voices cannot be, however, simply reduced to ideology understood as product of doctrinaires or false consciousness opposed to scientific knowledge.[4]

As affects circulate between and among subjects and objects, which have the potential to affect and to be affected, the circulation can be elevated to a transregional level and complemented with Latin American texts of García Márquez's fellow writer and reporter, Ryszard Kapuściński, who in the late 1960s and 1970s undertook journeys to various Latin American countries as a correspondent for the Polish Press Agency, PAP, as well as a consultant for the Polish monthly magazine *Kontynenty*. In addition to the official dispatches, Kapuściński recorded his impressions and observations about Latin America, and transformed them into literary reportages and essays published in three books: *Why Karl von Spreti Died* (1970), *Christ with a Rifle on His Shoulder* (1975), and *The Soccer War* (1978).[5]

4 According to Willams, the concept of ideology had been also commonly used both by Marxists and non-Marxists in a more neutral sense of a system of beliefs of a particular class or group (Williams 1977: 69).

5 However, his first publication related to Latin America was the translation and the preface of Che Guevara's *The Bolivian Diary* published in Poland as early as 1969.

Kapuściński and García Márquez knew each other, yet they did not leave any textual evidence of their encounters.[6] It is therefore even more compelling to examine their socialist narratives – García Márquez's on Eastern Europe and Kapuściński's on Latin America – that reveal certain resonances as they raise social and political issues of conviviality. Conviviality is understood here as the intricate and multiform way of living together with difference (Heil 2022) pertinent to the socio-historical conjuncture of the Cold War. Such idea of living together is inscribed in socialism properly understood as: "the liberation of working people from exploitation" (Chomsky 1986: 49). The ideal socialist means therefore: "[…] to convert the means of production into the property of freely associated producers and thus the social property of people who have liberated themselves from exploitation by their master, as a fundamental step towards a broader realm of human freedom" (Chomsky 1986: 49). Costa's framing of an analytical perspective of conviviality (Costa 2019) proves a useful tool to take a look at the Cold War journalism of García Márquez and Kapuściński which documents the living experience of struggling people, negotiates representations in difference and inequality marked by foreignness of its documentarists and is explicitly attuned to socialist objectives and ideals.

The texts presented here can be classified as literary journalism and, more specifically, as travel sketches (*crónicas*) since they engage with border crossing and spaces of contact, or contact zones (Pratt 2008), between the subjective narrative Self of the reporter and the encountered Other. Those peripheral Cold War encounters are doubtlessly distinct from those narrated in the travel and exploration accounts connected to the European conquest and colonization of Latin America; however, they present quite a similar problematic of the construction of the Other and of the understanding of the Self. Oscillating between estrangement and domestication they are placed within the historical context of the socialist and anti-imperialist struggle accompanied by such events as Stalin's death, the Thaw, the Cuban Revolution, and the Third-Worldism Movement. Those Cold War events in the 1950s and 1960s shaped the writers' political position and consequently influenced the development of the genre: "[I]mportant historical transitions alter the way people write, because they alter people's experiences and the way people imagine, feel and think about the world they live in" (Pratt 2008: 4).

It may be said that the Cold War literary journalism of García Márquez and Kapuściński deals with forms of living together with difference amid a diplomatic, ideological, and military conflict. The difference applies here to both the clashing principles and dogmas

6 Kapuściński prefaced the 2000 Polish edition of García Márquez's volume of press feuilletons and *crónicas Notas de Prensa 1980-1984* (1992). The preface, however, does not mention any personal relation between the two writers. In 2002, the Colombian review *Cambio* published a text by Kapuściński, "La grandeza de un reportero", dedicated to Gabriel García Márquez.

of the capitalism and socialism, as well as to the divergences existing in the perception and practice of socialism within the Eastern Bloc and in the Eastern Bloc and Latin America. Both authors engage with the idea of difference/sameness as they search to penetrate and comprehend the space of the Other, to discern the situations of contemporary life, and captivate a shared historical moment.

As a genre and a discipline (Bak and Martinez 2018), literary journalism has been developing internationally throughout the 20th century. As John Bak observes: "Accepting literary journalism as a legitimate global form is not enough; we also need to exercise intercultural sensitivity to accompany our interdisciplinary awareness" (Bak 2011: 2). The objective is therefore to approach the texts with intercultural sensitivity, but also with transregional and transnational awareness of the aesthetic developments and epistemological premises in the field of literary journalism. Therefore, conviviality does not apply exclusively to the representation of (g)local situations. It can further be extended to the literary journalistic practice as a humanist critique of diverse totalitarianisms. In the particular case of the socialist literary journalism that manifests its compromise with anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggles, a convivial approach further involves recognizing the authors' commitment to the socialist project within a paradigm of the desire for the socialism that arguably never became concretized.

2. Literary Journalism in Poland and in Latin America: A Brief Characterization

The documentary narratives (Foster 1984; Chávez Díaz 2021)[7] — to use the umbrella term for various genres and forms of non-fiction texts — by the two authors can be classified as global literary journalism, while they stem from two linguistically, historically, culturally, and regionally conditioned traditions of literary journalistic genres: Latin American *crónica* and Polish *reportaż.* They are considered expressions of popular literature, so often neglected by literary theory and criticism.

According to Aleksandra Wiktorowska, *reportaż* / reportage was adopted by many Indo-European languages in the second half of the 19th century to describe a journalistic report of an event. It would then be subject to transformations and enriched

7 Foster talks about documentary or nonfiction narratives with regard to extended texts such as Rodolfo Walsh's *Operación Masacre* (1957), Elena Poniatowska's *La noche de Tlatelolco* (1971), Gabriel García Márquez's *Relato de un náufrago* (1955, 1970), Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood,* but also, for example, to Júlio Cortázar's *El libro de Manuel* (1973) that could hardly be considered literary journalism. The defining parameters used by Foster are a liberal and hybrid presence of literary strategies and documented facts, and "productive interfacing of a narrative explicitly framed by an author but attributable to historically 'real' individuals" (Foster 1984: 53). Chávez Díaz, on the other hand, analyses and classifies a variety of nonfiction genres such as *crónica*, *testimonio*, and *periodismo narrativo*/ literary journalism/ literary reportage as documentary narratives and consequently proposes a theory of documentary narratives.

with descriptive details, *dramatis personae* as well as individual impressions of the author (Wiktorowska 2018: 630). In the Polish context, it would be usually referred to as reportage or literary reportage and the turning point for its development and consolidation as a genre on its own took place in the interwar period. Polish reportage would find itself under the influence of realist prose and autobiographical writing, also closely linked to proletarian movements and used as a tool of struggle (Wiktorowska 2018: 634); similar to Germany and the Soviet Union. Polish literary reportage is a genre where the relation between reality and its representation is in constant negotiation. Moreover, a particular political force during the 1960s to 1980s in Poland would require the journalists to appeal to fiction and metaphor in order to avoid censorship. This is the climate in which Kapuściński wrote about the Central Asia Soviet republics, African liberation movements and civil wars, the communist Poland, and Latin American guerrilla struggle.

The scholars of the *reportaż* usually recognize the impossibility of defining the norms of the genre or to determine its structure in an unambiguous and single-functional way. Even its distinctive features such as "up-to-date sense and intention, its interventional purpose" (Rurawski 1992: 9–11) do not make up any completely unique characteristics of the genre, precisely due to its hybridity of literature and journalism and its broad spectrum of thematic, discursive, and poetic possibilities. What is considered a leading feature, yet hardly exclusive of *reportaż* either, is its subjective point of view that goes hand in hand with the compromise with representations of reality and the search for truth and justice (Lovell 1992: 25–26). The work of the master of Polish reportage is particularly versatile, representing an array of genres, dynamic approaches to his subjects, as well as the transforming literary awareness. Kapuściński's Latin American reportages, for example, could be well classified as *crónicas.*

Crónica is usually considered a uniquely Latin American genre. In this working paper, I refer to the *crónica* in the Hispano-American context only, because there are some substantial differences between it and the Brazilian *crônica*. Many contemporary practitioners trace the genre's origin back to the historiographical *crónica de Indias. Crónicas de Indias* is the name given to the vast heterogeneous collection of historical narratives of various forms written between 1492 and 1793 (Aguilar Guzmán 2019: 24), mainly from the perspective of the European colonizers during the conquest and colonization of the Americas. The contemporary Spanish American *crónica* has little to do in terms of intent or content with the narrative accounts of conquerors, priests, and monks. However, there have been attempts by Latin American intellectuals throughout the second half of the 20th century to establish continuity between them, in a sense of teleological fulfilment and supersession. To cite some pertinent examples, in 1982, at the already cited Nobel Prize for Literature speech ceremony, Gabriel García Márquez,

by drawing upon the writings by the Florentine navigator Antonio Pigafetta, implicitly positioned himself as a descendant of and an heir to the world explorers. Also, as a result of workshops organized by Fundación Gabriel García Márquez para el Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano,[8] a group called *Nuevos Cronistas de Indias* was created in 2008. The group unites journalists and writers from Latin America and Spain (Chávez Díaz 2021: 22). Nevertheless, the consensus among scholar is that *crónica* is a cultural practice rooted in the modernist poetry and epistemological rupture that emerged with the urban, industrialized, middle-class context of the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century (Rotker 1992: 15–20).

Although having different historical and political lineages, and discursive intentions (at least traditionally), *crónica* – that demonstrates a highly poetic function and was also "a tool for constructing national identities and educating citizens" (Chávez Díaz 2021: 20) at the beginning of the 20th century – and *reportaż* – primarily "expository and argumentative in nature" (Hartsock 2011: 23), share their commitment to both journalistic information and the aesthetic value, as well as some common discursive strategies and literary devices such as: intertextuality, subjectivity, metafictional narrator, irony, even grotesque, and the use of metaphor. Moreover, they share the same scepticism as far as objectivity and knowledge is concerned and operate in a unique way beyond the binary conception of fiction and reality. As Hartsock observes: "Therein lies part of the distinctive nature of a narra-descriptive journalism. It can never be entirely severed from its location at the unique intersection of one time and one place in space, or what could be viewed as a version of the Bakhtian chronotope" (Hartsock 2016: 150). Furthermore, they strive for an emotional effect as they usually engage with events and phenomena of current or recent compelling social and civilizational situations.

The examination of the narratives and cultural production of what can be referred to as the Global Cold War (Field et al. 2020) can effectively contribute to the discovery of potentially new entanglements, nuances, and intricacies of this historical process and its accompanying emotions on the global scale. The literary production is one of territories that would find themselves caught in between the conflicting narratives in force. And the conflict would become individual and internal. As Jean Franco observes, many Latin American left-oriented intellectuals would see themselves stuck between artistic autonomy and subordination to revolutionary warfare: "[…] the idealized austerity of the guerrilla and the idealized simplicity of the peasant could not be reconciled with the exuberance and excess of the aesthetic, nor with the status of the writer as hero" (Franco 2002: 3). They would search for "the third space between the Cold War extremes" (Franco 2006: 226). Despite this proclivity towards the socialist

8 Founded in 1994 in Cartagena de Indias with García Márquez as the president. The foundations changed its name from FNPI to Fundación Gabo in 2019.

ideal, however, the Soviet-inspired aesthetic never really found a fertile ground in Latin America, because "[I]t was poetry rather than the realist novel that narrated Latin America's fragmented history as an epic adventure with the poet, not the politician, as prophet" (Franco 2002: 4). With this in mind, the literature of the boom that not only coincided with the Cold War, but was its product (Franco 2002), cannot be interpreted exclusively as a marketing strategy of the West's reception of Latin American authors, but rather as an anti-colonial and anti-imperialist expression. In this context, García Márquez's first texts of the 1950s, mark his professionalization as a journalist and are prelude to his narrative mastery.

Due to strong national, religious, and cultural divergences in the Eastern Bloc, the conditions of the literary-political culture in the region were much more differentiated than in Latin America. Reading Kapuściński's homeland's so-called "lay left" writers provide an understanding of "the moral and intellectual dilemmas of Polish socialist and anti-Stalinist thought" (Tighe 1999: viii). The relationship of the country's intellectuals with the communist regime, that is, with the "half-hearted Polish variant of Stalinism, caught between Polish national aspirations and a version of socialism that was not its own" (Tighe 1999: 33) was often complex, ambiguous, and shifting as "[m]any believed that, in spite of Soviet power, an independent Polish socialism was a possibility, and that even if they were not able to shake off the power of Moscow they might still be able to turn communism into a force for good" (Tighe 1999: vii). Like Latin America where writers were public intellectuals playing a pedagogical role (Franco 2006: 227), a Polish writer had didactic and moral authority, responsible for the nation's spiritual and political condition (Alvarez 1965: 19–20). Both for Poland and for Latin American countries then, literature has played a central role in the local/regional political life.

3. "*Es difícil saber qué es lo que quieren los polacos*"

In 1955 the Bogotan *El Espectador* sent Gabriel García Márquez to the Geneva Summit: "*El motivo o pretexto de la aventura europea era la Conferencia de los Cuatro Grandes que entonces iba a reunirse en Ginebra. García Márquez fue asi el testigo del principio de la convivencia pacifica*" [The reason or pretext for the European adventure was the Conference of the Four Great Powers that was about to meet in Geneva. García Márquez thus became a witness to the beginning of peaceful coexistence.] (Gilard 1976: 159). During his European period, the author undertook two journeys to the Eastern Bloc. "*Con los ojos abiertos sobre Polonia en ebullición*" [With open eyes on tumultuous Poland] reports on the writer's stay in Poland in autumn of 1955 on the occasion of a cinematography congress in Warsaw (most probably the 1st International Congress of Cinema Technology). The references to Poland appear already in the previous *crónica*, "*La gente reacciona en Praga como en cualquier país capitalista*"

[People react in Prague like in any capitalist country] when the traveller crosses the border on the train heading from Prague to Warsaw. This narrative continuity suggests therefore that the visits to Czechoslovakia and to the People's Republic of Poland occurred subsequently.

"*En la cortina de hierro el paso de una frontera es un acontecimiento*" [In the Iron Curtain, crossing a border is an event] (García Márquez 2015: 59), even more so when it is made on the train, where encounters with local people, other foreign passengers, and the train staff, can almost guarantee an insightful and eventful journey. One of the issues raised by the narrator is the challenge of communicating with the people, which, however, does not stop him from speculating and "inventing" what his fellow travellers might mean, such as in this fragment:

> The old man told me about his life by drawing with his finger on the glass of the window. He lived in a very large house a few hours from the Polish border. The land is not collectivized in that region; production is individual, but the state provides machinery and buys the products. He invited me to his house for Christmas to eat the traditional Christmas day roast pork dinner. When he got off the train – at a poor and very clean station – he warned me through the window to be careful with my passport: the Poles chase after them to escape the country (García Márquez 2015: 58).[9]

Despite the language barrier, García Márquez is surprisingly capable of grasping quite a lot of details about the life of the Czech farmer. It seems almost like a fictionalized recount enriched by practical knowledge on the local cultivation of land. The prejudiced yet very real detail on the Polish pursue of foreign passports will reappear in the Polish *crónica,* corroborating thus its verisimilitudinous nature. The repetitiveness of certain observations, often having one observation confirmed further on in the text by another one or by a direct testimony of a local person, bestows authenticity to the report. When certain elements are presented as theorems, they become practical truths.

Further, there is a double inscription to the narrator's self-reflective presence, as he is not only the observer but also the observed, both in a sense of being invigilated by the authorities and the foreigner to the local people: "*Mi voz fue un acontecimiento en el vagón. Los libros se cerraron. No había el menor indicio de hostilidad sino una curiosidad un poco ansiosa en las miradas*" [My voice was a happening in the train

9 "*El viejo me contó su vida haciendo dibujos con el dedo en el vidrio de la ventanilla. Vivía en una casa muy grande a pocas horas de la frontera polaca. La tierra no está colectivizada en esa región, la producción es individual, pero el estado facilita la maquinaria y cómpralos productos. Me invitó a que fuera a su casa en Navidad para comernos el cerdito. Cuando descendió del tren – en una estación pobre y muy limpia – me advirtió por la ventanilla que tuviera cuidado con el pasaporte: los polacos los persiguen para fugarse del país.*" (All translations, unless stated otherwise, are provided by the author and editors for the convenience of the reader.)

wagon. The books closed. There was not the slightest sign of hostility, only a somewhat anxious curiosity in the looks.] (García Márquez 2015: 61). To his astonishment, his "Latin American-ness" provokes a response of solidarity and compassion among the fellow passengers. However, the situation is dynamic as it shifts from curiosity and sympathy to anxiety and even to perceived hostility. The narrator tries to understand the boundaries that the locals establish between "us" and "him", while at the same time his story is based on dualities, highlighting the encounter with the unknown.

The Polish episodes are abundant in open-ended scenes, when communication fails and the text leaves the readers on the precipice of understanding of the workings of the mind and the living together under real socialism. The narrative points to the limits of cognition, to how the text imitates life. It is 1955, that is, ten years since the end of the Second World War, and the ruined city of Warsaw, overseen by the Palace of Culture and Science, a building that is *"un accidente*" [an accident] (García Márquez 2015: 66), a ridiculous "*pastel de crema*" [cream pie] (García Márquez 2015: 62) of 36 floors gifted to the capital by the Soviet Union, which emanates a certain decadence and *tristesse*, with its grim and gray multitudes on the streets: "*Todo estaba perfectamente seco pero – no se por qué – me pareció que en Varsovia había estado lloviendo sin tregua durante muchos años*" [Everything was perfectly dry, but – I don't know why – it seemed to me that in Warsaw it had been raining incessantly for many years.] (García Márquez 2015: 62). This recurring descriptive-comparative and associative mode is also quite poetic and activates the affective structure of the text: "*Uno se da cuenta desde el primer momento de que la vida es dura, de que se ha sufrido mucho con las grandes catástrofes y de que hay un drama nacional de minúsculos problemas domésticos*" [From the very beginning, one realizes that life is tough, that there has been much suffering from major catastrophes, and that there is a national drama of tiny domestic problems.] (García Márquez 2015: 66). This national drama plays in the midst of institutionalized real socialism that reveals itself to be unfit to cater for people's needs and detached from the ideal that had been postulated by the power of the state. Exempted from the harsh and traumatic reality are the foreign spectators in their role as official visitors. García Márquez is part of a foreign delegation at the film congress and is accommodated in what is actually a luxury hotel and one of the most recognizable Warsaw historical landmarks, the iconic Bristol, built in 1901. The Bristol Hotel is where foreign guests would be usually hosted escorted by translator/proctors. The poorly disguised state that controls what the foreigners would see, hear, and experience is perceived by García Márquez on various occasions during his journey, but he actually approaches it with amusement and bravado, like when he manages to ditch the agents: "*Todo funcionaba con una perfección sospechosa. Rápidamente me cambié de ropa y abandoné el hotel con el propósito de conocer a Varsovia por mi cuenta y riesgo*" [Everything was running with a suspicious perfection. I quickly

changed clothes and left the hotel with the intention of exploring Warsaw on my own and at my own risk.] (García Márquez 2015: 63).[10]

In the cracks of the system, it is possible to see the real dimension of the people's democratic lives. The narrator studies the space of the Other through his class consciousness, referring to various strata of the Polish society devoid of bourgeoisie: workers, students, as well as the expropriated conservatives. The allure of the pre-war gentry is still present, also because Polish culture has traditionally been aristocratic, albeit with a "Western bias" (Alvarez 1965: 23). Now mostly bankrupt, the aristocracy is forced to cohabit spaces with the working class, who nevertheless lack a proper class consciousness and are looked down on by the conservatives: "*Los expropiados sonríen por debajo de la solapa y se atreven a decir a los extranjeros que en Polonia no prende la revolución porque los obreros tienen complejo de inferioridad*" [The expropriated smile surreptitiously and dare to tell foreigners that in Poland the revolution does not ignite because the workers have an inferiority complex.] (García Márquez 2015: 72). García Márquez's perception that the real socialism in Poland has not yet gained momentum is echoed in the commentaries on travellers from fellow Eastern Bloc nations: "*'Los polacos no son comunistas', me explicó [a Czech]. 'Ellos dicen que lo son pero van a misa todos los domingos'*" ["The Poles are not communists", explained [a Czech]. "They say they are, but they go to mass every Sunday".] (García Márquez 2015: 59), or: "*En Hungría, un comunista comentaba: 'Polonia no es una democracia popular. Es una colonia cultural de Francia y todo lo que hicieron fue sacudirse de la influencia soviética para volver a la influencia francesa'*" [In Hungary, a communist remarked: "Poland is not a people's democracy. It is a cultural colony of France, and all they did was shake off Soviet influence to return to French influence".] (García Márquez 2015: 74). It becomes clear that ideology, its systemic formation and institutions, can by no means reflect nor be applied to the convivial conditions, the real dimension of people's interactions and feelings – that is, the actual social, existential, and cultural dimension of living together, or the already mentioned practical consciousness: "what is actually being lived, and not only what it is thought is being lived" (Williams 1977: 131).

The narrator suggests that in Poland there is a unique class struggle inasmuch as it mixes the socialist ethos, on one hand, with the presence of Western (mostly leftist) culture and, on the other hand, with religion, both of which are rejected officially by the communist apparatus. He ironically compares Warsaw to Rome due to the common presence of priests and nuns on the streets and a statue of Christ adorned with electric lightbulbs overlooking one of the most lively streets of Warsaw: "[…] *imágenes*

10 A similar situation takes places upon García Márquez's visit to Budapest recorded in the *crónica* "*Yo visité Hungría*" [I visited Hungary]. He refers ironically to the disproportionately large group of supposed translators as guardian angels, a majority of who spoke only Hungarian (García Márquez 2015: 143).

religiosas enclavadas en una capital socialista" [religious images embedded in a socialist capital.] (García Márquez 2015: 67), *"¿Qué diablos pasó? Una cantidad de polacos son católicos y comunistas al mismo tiempo. Asisten el sábado a la reunión de la célula y el domingo a la misa mayor*" [What the hell happened? A bunch of the Poles are Catholics and communists at the same time. They attend the party meeting on Saturday and the main mass on Sunday.] (García Márquez 2015: 78). One of the reporter's translators in Cracow is Ana Kozlowski, a nurse and an active member of both Communist Youth and Catholic Action. Ana is the perfect impersonation of a particular postwar Polish experience that combines the communist and the catholic militancy:

> She thinks that under certain circumstances – the circumstances of Poland – both things lead to the same end. I asked her if she learned that theory in Marxism classes or in religion classes. "In neither", she replied with astonishing conviction."We are learning it from the Polish experience (García Márquez 2015: 78).[11]

Poland emerges as a country ruled by "*un principio de confusión*" [a principle of confusion] (García Márquez 2015: 79), or in Alvarez's words: "[a] shifting but utterly pervasive sense of trouble" (Alvarez 1965: 19), where the churches are open all day, Marxist theory mixes with the actual irrelevance of the class struggle in the Polish history (Tighe 1999: 319), and Jack London and Jean-Paul Sartre are among the most-read authors. The reading culture in Warsaw, tightly linked to the intensive student activity against censorship and oppression, is thriving and has something quite reverent to it: "[…] *los polacos leen libros, revistas, folletos de propaganda oficial, con una abstracción que tiene algo de religioso*" [The Poles read books, magazines, and official propaganda pamphlets with an abstraction that has something of a religious quality.] (García Márquez 2015: 66). The bookstores are modern, luxurious, clean and, most importantly, well frequented.

The author himself identifies rather nonchalantly with the working class, hence revealing not only his political stance, but also a Caribbean flair and lightheartedness. In an incidental and circumstantial situation, he demonstrates sympathy with the workers, not quite grasping, however, his somehow privileged position in the situation of a foreigner: "*Los choferes estaban vestidos como nos vestimos nosotros, los choferes de todo el mundo y yo me sentía en mi ambiente*" [The drivers were dressed like we dress, like drivers everywhere, and I felt at home.] (García Márquez 2015: 71). As García Márquez shows his ludic fascination for certain habits, behaviours, manners, etc., such

11 "*Piensa que en determinadas circunstancias – las circunstancias de Polonia – las dos cosas conducen al mismo fin. Le pregunté si esa teoría la había aprendido en las clases de marxismo o en las de religión. 'En ninguna de las dos', respondió ella con una asombrosa convicción. 'Lo estamos aprendiendo en la experiencia polaca'.*"

as kissing women on their hands, drinking hefty amounts of vodka ("*borrachera de cinco sentidos*" [intoxication of the five senses]), the unexpected encounters between Latin America and Poland show that the socialist fetishizing is actually mutual: the narrator is not only received as a real communist comrade, a Western foreigner wearing coveted nylon shirts and a wristwatch, but also as a Mexican bronco ready to fire his inexistent revolver like in a Hollywood film when provoked.

García Márquez's Polish episodes capture not only the crucial historical momentum of the "Thaw" in Poland, but also the aftermath of the Second World War and the Holocaust, when the capital is being slowly reconstructed, and public memory is only beginning to take shape. The narrator visits the ruins of the Warsaw ghetto and contemplates the vast emptiness: "*es ahora una plaza desierta y pelada, lisa como una mesa de carnicería. Así estaba el centro de la ciudad la mañana de la liberación. No sólo no había ciudad: no había ni siquiera polacos*" [It's now a deserted and barren square, smooth like a butcher's table. That's how the city centre was on the morning of the liberation. Not only was there no city, but there also weren't even any Poles.] (García Márquez 2015: 67). Made in just few words, the comparison of the ghetto district razed to the ground by the Nazis after the Uprising (1943) to a butcher's table evokes the gore of the Nazi crimes and at the same time conjures a landscape of absence and silence. While the narrator admires the reconstruction endeavour that he depicts in rather heroic terms, at no point does he mention the Polish Jews, not even in the context of Auschwitz-Birkenau. It is important to emphasize that García Márquez visits the concentration camp merely ten years after the liberation and eight years after the opening of the first permanent exhibition at the museum created there. In 1955, the concept of the museum was still a subject of a national debate in Poland, and it falls within a post-Holocaust period of "communal memory" (Roskies and Diamant 2012: 75–124), which in the Polish context can be summed up by the tensions between the Poles and the Jews, and the resulting challenges to the construction of the local memory of the Holocaust. It seems pertinent to recall that the European alliance of the socialists and communists in the struggle against fascism would disintegrate with Stalin's establishment of communist regimes in Eastern Europe. Poland, just like the rest of the Soviet Union's satellite countries, would find itself cordoned off from the Western world, with the sentiment of having been "betrayed" by the West (Tighe 2021: 99), while the official politics of memory would be imposed by Moscow (Roskies and Diamant 2012: 82):

> Under Communism, where the dead could not be divided, local pasts were driven underground. The suffering of all Soviet peoples was subsumed under the Great Patriotic War (1941–45). There were no Jewish victims, only generalized, formulaic victims of fascism. […] At first, the Polish Communist Party tolerated

> Holocaust realism, on the ground that realism liberated literature from the moral impasse of the prewar capitalist system. […] But as early as 1947, official Party spokesmen were calling on Polish literary production to liberate itself from war-related themes and to celebrate the future (Roskies and Diamant 2012: 88–89).

The narrator's visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau oscillates between apprehension and incredulity. The extent and the character of the war violence is so inconceivable that to talk about it, one is required to summon a literary and testimonial authority: "*Cuando uno ve esas cosas y sabe que tiene que contarlas por escrito comprende que tiene que pedirle permiso a Malaparte*" [When one sees those things and knows they must be recounted in writing, they understand they must ask Malaparte for permission.] (García Márquez 2015: 84). Only by recalling the experience recorded in the journalistic-literary accounts of war of the controversial author of *Kaputt* (1944), can the insanity of the Nazi terror be described. García Márquez refers to the atrocious scientism with grotesque irony, indulging himself in *licencia poetica*: "*Los encargados de los hornos la ocupaban jugando al poker como esperan las señoras jugando canasta a que se dore el pollo*" [The oven operators occupied themselves playing poker, just as ladies playing canasta wait for the chicken to brown.] (García Márquez 2015: 82). In such irreverent departures from the factuality of the Holocaust, the narrator goes as far as admitting having seen a bar of soap made of human fat elsewhere, while he insinuates its presence among other "such objects" in the exhibition of artifacts made of human remains in the Auschwitz-museum. An affective image surges in García Márquez's perception of "*la carnicería científica de los alemanes*" [the scientific butchery of the Germans] (García Márquez 2015: 81). He admits, "*[e]n los campos de concentración me rompía la cabeza sin poder entender a los alemanes*" [In the concentration camps, I racked my brain trying to understand the Germans but couldn't.] (García Márquez 2015: 83). The Holocaust shocks with the author's perception of the German, more specifically the GDR people, as he sees them rather as victims of the system and not perpetrators.[12]

Another episode in one of the exhibitions at the museum is when the Colombian author separates from the group thus staging a moment necessary in order to create a scene of an intimate dialogue with his guide. It is when Ana and the narrator look at the photo exhibition of the people murdered in the extermination camp:

> In front of one of the portraits was Ana Kozlowski. I observed the portrait: a person with a bald head, facing the camera with a stern look, neither clearly male nor female.
>
> "Is it a man or a woman?" I asked.

12 For the concept of a "good German" see Ó Dochartaigh and Schönfeld (2013).

> Ana didn't look at me. She gently pulled me towards the door.
>
> "A man", she replied. "It's my dad" (García Márquez 2015: 84–85).[13]

The dialogue ends abruptly, and the silence opens up a space for an affective attunement which, like an epiphany, destabilizes the discourse. The narrator has a hard time penetrating the socio-cultural atmosphere of the communist Poland: "*Es difícil saber qué es lo que quieren los polacos*" [It is difficult to know what the Poles want.] (García Márquez 2015: 76), but in the silence between Ana's response and the resumption of the narrative, Polish postwar and post-Holocaust confused and traumatic reality strikes him and starts to be graspable. As García Márquez is one of the first Latin American intellectual to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau, he becomes its witness and participates in a crucial historical moment when the Holocaust memory begins to shape.

In García Márquez's *crónicas* on the Eastern Bloc, the first-person narrator bears a resemblance to García Márquez himself, as indicated by little hints about his nationality, his birthplace (Aracataca), and his Caribbean flair. Further references to Spanish America – literature, music, and politics – are seldom but create unexpected links between the socialist countries and the Latin American context, in a form of antagonisms and correlations (Bonano 2017: 69). His observations are intuitive and his involvement adventurous. It becomes clear that the *crónicas* are addressed to the readers at home, on the other side of the Iron Curtain; the narrator recounts his experience from his travel, he is the archetypal storyteller "who has come from afar", "a traveling journeyman" (Benjamin 2006: 363). From the beginning the narrator reveals himself as a journalist and the protagonist of the events. Although there is no systematic investigation here, but rather an audacious, very personal, at times flaneuristic attitude, there is also conscious admitting of the epistemic and ethic stakes of the travel endeavor: "*Es un viaje peligroso para un periodista honesto; se corre el riesgo de formarse juicios superficiales, apresurados y fragmentarios, que los lectores podrían considerar como conclusiones definitivas*" [It is a dangerous journey for an honest journalist; there is a risk of forming superficial, hasty, and fragmented judgments that readers might regard as definitive conclusions.] (García Márquez 2015: 41). It is clear then, that the narrator's aim is to avoid superficiality and hastiness, however, he often uses specifications and abstractions out of which – and often for the sake of a punch line – he makes up general habits of the Polish people. He is equipped with biased

13 "*Frente a uno de los retratos estaba Ana Kozlowski. Yo observé el retrato: una persona asexuada, con la cabeza pelada, enfrentada a la cámara con una mirada severa.*
–¿Es hombre o mujer?, pregunté:
Ana no me miró. Me arrastró suavemente hacia la puerta.
–Hombre, respondió – Es mi papá."

ideas that he searches to confirm. This typifying, somehow anthropologic, attitude, is highly influenced by García Márquez's vision of socialism, but is also accompanied by humour and irony whose role is to liven up the stereotypes he creates. There are also moments of revelation that need to be perceived within the temporal-spatial frame of the mid-1950s. Between limited and intuitive perceptions, between repeating the official stance and actually listening to the individual people and leaving open any final conclusions, the text captures the disenchantment with communism, not only of the Polish people, but also of the narrator himself. There is no satisfactory answer to any of the questions he poses because the socialist reality is mad ("*un disparate*" [nonsense]) and in a ghastly and dull way.

What García Márquez captures perfectly, but, again, repeating what has been generally known, is also the anti-Sovietism of Polish people and their critique of the ruling party steered by Moscow. The attitudes of the people are of purely Marxist inspiration and that is what the text is trying to show, that there is a disparity between the "immediate living experience" (Williams 1977: 46), between "what is actually being lived" and "what it is thought is being lived" (Williams 1977: 131). What lurks therefore from between the lines is the "ideal", truthful socialism, detectable in the structures of feeling that organize the text and the represented socialist reality and reflect García Márquez's faith and confidence in the Cuban Revolution, which was part of an intellectual process that had led the author to adopt a revolutionary commitment (Bonano 2017: 70).

4. Ryszard Kapuściński's Socialist Reportage from Latin America

Ryszard Kapuściński, just like García Márquez's narrator of the *crónicas* from behind the Iron Curtain, is a journalist reporting the events on the other side of the globe back to his implicit readers at home. He himself would thematize the seductive restlessness of his profession:

> Yet I have not written a dictionary or a book because whenever I start, taking a deep breath and crossing myself as if getting ready to jump into deep water, a red light starts blinking on the map – the signal that at some point on this overcrowded, restless, and quarrelsome globe, something is again happening, the earth quivering, staggering, because this relentless current, this stream of events – it is so difficult to step out of it on to a calm shore – keeps rushing and hurtling by, pulling me under (Kapuściński 2013: High time continued).

Between 1967 and 1972, the Polish reporter and historian was a Polish Press Agency (PAP) correspondent in Latin America. Artur Domosławski recalls the circumstances of Kapuściński's departure for Santiago de Chile in November 1967:

> Kapuściński arrives in Latin America at a red-hot moment in the Cold War. […] This is the time and place where History is happening. A little while longer, and he might not have gone. “What are you still doing here?”, Roma Pańska, the éminence grise of the PAP, accosts him in a corridor at the agency’s headquarters. It is November 1967. "I’m getting ready to leave”. “Really, Rysiek! Don’t get ready, don’t wait, don’t delay, just get out of here at once or it’ll be too late!” “But…” “Grab your bags and vamoose this instant!” (Domosławski 2012: Chapter 21).

As García Márquez left Colombia tormented by the dictatorial regime of Rojas Pinilla, Kapuściński would leave just about time to witness the second wave of leftist political movement and the darkest time in Latin American 20th-century history. He arrives shortly after the execution of Che Guevara in Bolivia (October 9, 1967). The reality is much different in the late 1960s than in the first years of the Cuban Revolution: political violence has become a desired means of social transformation. Also, the circumstances of Kapuściński’s departure would differ significantly from 1955 when García Márquez visited Poland for the first time. As a Party member with close connections in the high ranks of the communist authorities, Kapuściński leaves in the midst of growing tensions within the Party and right on time before the apogee of the antisemitic propaganda of March 1968 on which he does not take a clear stance, however, as Domosławski points out, he does express his more realist attitude towards the nationalist climate cultivated by the Party in Poland and from then on takes a much critical look at socialist ideals (Domosławski 2012).

Kapuściński’s encounter with the Latin American Other begins in the Chilean capital in November 1967. It is quite contemplative and self-reflective, aiming at cognition and understanding:

> I spent a long time forcing my way through that underbrush, the exuberance, the façades and the repetitions, the ornamentation and the demagogy, before I reached the person, before I could feel at home among these people and recognise their dramas, their defeats, moods, romanticism, their honour and treason, their loneliness (Kapuściński 2013: High time I started).

The autodiegetic observer recounts his experience of attempting to permeate the pretentiously abundant facade in order to advance his research on local cultural artifacts. Here, the unknown mixes with the familiar. The text reveals a city full of flamboyant splendour, described as a “pathological and kitschy manifestation of Latin America” (Domosławski 2012: High time I started). Baroque is not just an architectural style, but a lifestyle and a state of mind, where “[f]act is mixed with fantasy […], truth with myth, realism with rhetoric” (Domosławski 2012: High time I started). It exposes

the enduring effects of the colonial Spanish Catholic rule while at the same time it covers its traumatic legacy. Although it never becomes an explicit clue, Kapuściński's remarks can be traced back to the historiography of Poland, that is, his own province of the West, and the success of the Counter-Reformation throughout the 16th-18th centuries that strengthened the triumph of Catholicism in Poland. Although the text refers to the observed reality, which is new to the narrator, it also latently evokes what is familiar to him, make him feel at home not only due to historical parallels, but also to a shared human experience of the struggle against authoritarianism and for a socialist ideal without dogmatism. What further echoes in the text divided into eight short parts – a prelude to the reportage of the Soccer War – is both anti-colonial and socialist consciousness, nevertheless, sensitive to the lived reality of individuals. We can see these layers in the short story of a Peruvian friend, Pedro Morote, a partisan and a reform activist who becomes an entrepreneur to cater to the tastes of upper-class clients, while his former ideals turn into a mere reminiscence preserved in the memory of the poet and fellow *guerillero* Javier Heraud.

Description, we may say, is the main method of Kapuściński's writing as well as it is also a metanarrative gesture as in: "Describe the soccer war" (Kapuściński 2013: High time I started), with which the author unveils himself as the narrative Self in search of the means to express his experience. The recurring structure of his reportages is a balance between description, either in the past historical tense or the present tense used to communicate general truths or habits, narration of the events lived by the narrator, and representation that is a dramatic enactment, often with dialogues or citations.

In the reportage "Christ with a Rifle on His Shoulder" published in 1975 as part of the homonymous volume,[14] Kapuściński accounts for events that take place between 1966 and 1970 in Bolivia, in view of the military coup of the socialist General Juan José Torres and the guerrilla movement of Teoponte. With a craft of a historian, Kapuściński sketches the socio-political tensions of the former four years, analysing and dramatizing the historical process that takes place in Bolivia. Kapuściński arrives in La Paz in 1970 and the first thing he sees are buildings of the University of San Andrés in La Paz. He creates an affective image by using a rhetorical figure of comparison between La Paz and Warsaw: "La Paz and its appearance is reminiscent of many buildings after the Warsaw Uprising" (Kapuściński 2014: Part II Chapter 1). The university is a battlefield among various political student groups:

> […] a fratricidal war, waged by some students against others, because not all young people are leftists. There are young people who have put themselves

14 All the citations from the reportage come from the Spanish edition of the book and have been translated to English by the author of this discussion paper.

> at the service of the oligarchy. Others belong to a myriad of ideological organisations of the most disparate ideological persuasions, which are at odds with each other; there are anarchists and Trotskyists, Maoists and independent Christian Democrats, social-fascists and revolutionary nationalists (Kapuściński 2014: Part II Chapter 1).

The students united against the dictatorship of the populist General Alfredo Ovando Candía are next to the miners the major force of resistance in the country – a fact that during the global Cold War would become true of many and not only Latin American countries, including Poland. The narrator observes astutely without citing any sources, but probably supporting his observations on general historical knowledge, the Bolivian press, and Bolivian testimonials of mostly dissident voices that permeate directly and indirectly the text: “There is no government capable of maintaining itself if the students manage to form an opposition alliance with the tin miners or with part of the army” (Kapuściński 2014: Part II Chapter 1).

At the university, the narrator attends a tribute to Teoponte, where he gets to know people involved in the guerrilla movement and the family members of those who died. This small village in the La Paz Department would become a symbol of guerrilla struggle inspired by Ernesto Che Guevara. After Che Guevara’s death in October 1967, radical leftists in Bolivia began to reorganize. Persecuted, many of them ended up imprisoned, dead, or forced to go into exile. In 1970 in Teoponte, a group of university students organized a new insurrection attempt. The supporters were mostly Bolivians, but Chileans, Argentines, and Peruvians participated too. The guerrilla uprising lasted from July 19 to November 1 and moved to the Altiplano of Bolivia – the plateau area of the Bolivian Andes. Most of the participants died from attacks by the military or from disease.

The narration switches from time to time from autodiegetic mode to a heterodiegetic and omniscient narrator in order to give a close-up to the events of Teoponte and the 1970 *coup d’état* in La Paz. The novel-like storytelling introduces the Paredo family as a cursed clan: “Rómulo Peredo was a tragic father, a Bolivian Job. He had six children. [...] Now the youngest of the family, Chato Peredo, avenged his siblings” (Kapuściński 2014: Chapter II Part 1). The only survivor, Chato Peredo, becomes a leader of a guerrilla group whose tragedy is retold by a survivor, Guillermo Veliz. Kapuściński makes use here of a particular literary genre that is *testimonio latinoamericano*, that mixes autobiography with biography, memoirs, diaries and confessions. Characterized by orality, the *testimonio*’s intention is to denounce violence, repression, the struggle for survival, etc. As Chávez Díaz points out: “Due to the fact that the narrator is often illiterate, or is not a professional writer, the process of writing a *testimonio* involves recording, transcription and editing by an intellectual, generally a well-known novelist

or experienced journalist" (Chávez Díaz 2021: 27). As a matter of fact, Veliz's testimony is a recording played during the tribute and the authorship is revealed only at the end, so the reader does not actually know who tells the story and the collective dimension of the struggle is emphasized (Seligmann-Silva 2002: 76). Kapuściński then also shows the same events from a different, more intimate perspective of one of the other *guerrilleros* who died in the jungle, Néstor Paz, by citing the letters written by him to his wife present during the ceremony. Both the recording and the letters function here as a testimony by giving voice to the direct witnesses of Teoponte: "As a consequence, the piece is lent a greater degree of revolutionary authenticity, and its author is himself turned into a co-conspirator" (Zubel 2019: 135).

The storytelling mode proceeds, taking on traces of a historical novel, where historical events are being exposed in detail and their major actors, such as the character of the general Ovando, become fictionalized. The night of the coup is dramatized as follows:

> Although his ministers insist that he stay, he is still in his thirties: No and no, he repeats. No and no. He wants peace, he wants to be ambassador in Madrid. Ovando is a neurasthenic, and especially on this crucial night his mood is depressed, he is in a defeatist mood that he cannot control (Kapuściński 2014: Part II Chapter 1).

Differently from García Márquez's rather subjective and judgmental tone, Kapuściński's narrator is maintaining his apparent objectivity by staying truthful to the facts. He does not judge the anonymous individuals, the witnesses, the historical figures, but tries to listen to all the sides, both *guerrilleros* and generals, and leaves the verdict to the reader. His compromise with the socialist struggle and the ethos of a Latin American fighter is evident in the subtle interplay between the text's elements and rhetoric: as he shows the humane face of the revolution, gives voice to the Other — here mostly the *guerrilleros* — for them to speak for themselves. Sometimes the narrative blurs the voice of the Other with the narrator's, deliberately obscuring the limits of fiction and fact. However, it is always the narrator's version of history as he has the authority of the witnessing subject.

On one of the walls of the room at the university where the ceremony for Teoponte takes place, the narrator notices a triptych: "On a wall in the back of the room hang a portrait of Che Guevara, a drawing of Christ with a rifle on his shoulder, and an enlarged photograph of the hero of Teoponte, Néstor Paz" (Kapuściński 2014: Part II Chapter 1). The triptych indicates the Polish reporter's contemplative engagement with the martyr myth as it creates an intertextual and medial intersection with the title of the volume, of the reportage itself as well as with both the Polish and the Spanish editions of the book. The cover of Spanish *Cristo con el fusil al hombro* illustrates a

bearded Latin American resistance fighter leaning on an automatic firearm with his face captured from a profile and gazing in an unknown direction. As explained in the preface that explains the photography, Kapuściński included a commentary to the Polish edition about the origins of the chosen title. According to Kapuściński, shortly after Che Guevara's death, the Argentine revolutionary painter Carlos Alonso created a painting that was reproduced in thousands of copies and posted on the streets throughout Latin America. It depicted a figure of Christ whose appearance and clothing reminded of a guerrilla fighter that could be Cuban, Bolivian, or Colombian. In the countries of military dictatorships, the police would tear the picture from the walls and imprison the person responsible for posting it. Alonso's painting became the symbol of the hero, the guerrilla fighter, so often associated with Che Guevara, whose death would motivate young rebels all over the Global South. Kapuściński evidently draws upon the myth of Che Guevara that was perpetrated by the fusion of his image with the Christ figure in countless artistic representations, that often saw Jesus Christ "in the context of armed struggle against the Roman occupiers" (Kunzle 2008: 97) and transform Che into an armed "secular Jesus", a "substitute for Jesus in a nonbelieving age" (Kunzle 2008: 98). However, it was not Che who served as a prototype for Alonso's painting, but the Colombian priest and *guerrillero* Camilo Torres, gunned down by government troops in 1966 (two years prior to Che Guevara's death). Moreover, neither Che nor Torres (as the Spanish preface suggests) is depicted on the cover of *Cristo con el fusil al hombre*: he is yet another revolutionary fighter, the Cuban Camilo Cienfuegos (Wiktorowska 2014: 141). This entanglement of mythical revolutionary figures reflects Kapuściński's perception of the collective dimension of the Latin American anti-imperialist struggle, to which the author adds the figure of Néstor Paz, a religion teacher and Bolivian communist guerrilla fighter who succumbed to starvation in Teoponte. The reportage resorts thus to the motif of death as a conscious sacrifice, which is a meaningful idea linked to revolutionary Christianity and, moreover, to Latin American liberation theology. Liberation theology developed within the Catholic Church in Latin America in the late 1960s and engages with the Marxist thought as it manifests liberation of oppressed people from inequality, poverty, and crime. Latin American liberation theology draws primarily from the Marxist analysis of the historical interpretation of society, yet it differs from the methods of liberation prescribed by Marxism (Haber 2009: 256). It is a particular movement that emphasizes the relation between Christian values and socialist ethos, and it is therefore possible to draw a comparison between it and the apparently idiosyncratic Polish combination of Catholicism and Marxism that shocked García Márquez on his trip to Poland in the 1950s.

One of the features of documentary narratives is interview. Both García Márquez and Kapuściński use this essentially journalistic form, explicitly as well as implicitly. Interview in a reportage or a *crónica* has a personal character and is usually presented

as a literary, that is, typical for a novel, dialogue – with questions and answers or as a simple exchange, a conversation – or a monologue, that is, a testimony of the person interviewed, where questions are implicit. This interview in its different variations contributes to the affective layer of the text. The role of such an intervention is to reveal the difference between the Self and the Other, to give voice to the Other – be they anonymized composites or real individuals with full names – but even more so to introduce information, a new perspective, to unveil the truth, to denounce oppression and inequality, and to give face to the events, to the experience.

Kapuściński's text exposes a variety of views and voices, it is his aspiration to grasp the totality of history in the making. As he talks to generals such as the retired Anastasio Villanueva, who ordered the shooting of striking peasants years before, he maintains the position of the listener and leaves the narrative in the "inconclusive present" (Bakhtin 1981: 26), "its openness, its potential for re-thinking and re-evaluating" (Bakhtin 1981: 18), typical for the novelistic genre. The open-ended structure of the reportage leaves space for history to be written and preserves the fluidity of experience.

In contrast to García Márquez, who concentrates above all on the experience of the Self, the spaces, and the scenery, Kapuściński focuses on the events, often recurring to reliable sources such as books and newspapers. However, Kapuściński's apparent objectivity does not impair the narrator's affective engagement in the storytelling. The text creates a nuanced image of revolutionary struggle in Latin America and reveals tensions within the plural project that is socialism. His "narrative strategy of the reporter-as-self-reflecting witness" (Zubel 2019: 134) opens a space for socialist consciousness defending thought against Western ideological bias. As Zubel observes: "[Kapuściński's] reportage sought to restore readers' capacity for critical interpretation of and engagement with the political and material realities of Latin America in an effort to advance the struggle for a more ethical and authentic form of anti-imperialist socialism in both the Third World and the Socialist Bloc" (Zubel 2019: 140).

The worldly living together during the Cold War that emerges from the reportages of the Polish journalist is bound by his critique of colonialism and imperialism, and reveals an understanding of the inequality that origins from the power relations between the (Global) North and the (Global) South, as in contrast to the prevailing division of the world into East and West during the Cold War:

> Based on his experiences working as a reporter in the Third World, Kapuściński soon draws the conclusion that viewing the world through the spectacles of the Cold War division into East and West, communism and capitalism, obscures rather than clarifies the picture. He finds the North-South perspective more important and more accurate – the division into the affluent world and the world

> of poverty and exclusion, and all the consequences of that division (Domosławski 2012: Chapter 25).

According to Kapuściński, one of the weaponized symptoms and consequences of social, economic, and political inequality are hunger and poverty. In *Cristo con el fusil…* he cites the rector of the Universidad de La Paz:

> In this country – he continues – life is worth nothing. Amidst this poverty, this eternal hunger, the boundary between life and death disappears". [...] In Europe, people die during a war; death then takes millions of lives, but it's the harvest of a season. Here, among us, it has taken another form, and although it also claims millions, it is fused with everyday life. We have become so accustomed that we don't even notice it, because it accompanies us always and everywhere; vulgar, ordinary, everyday—it seems to grow and lurk at every moment from within our lives (Kapuściński 2014: Part II Chapter 1).[15]

The subject of hunger was recurrent in Kapuściński's writing.[16] He perceived it in an immediate relation to politics. In a later *crónica*-like essay from 1974, for example, he would ask and try to answer the question whether the world is in danger of starvation and his analysis of the premises of the "green revolution" would point out its weakness: "For it is a technocratic attempt to fix a problem (hunger and poverty) when the problem must first be solved politically" (Kapuściński 2014: Part "Varia" Chapter 1).

Kapuściński's writing is a fusion of dramatic scenes/snapshots with dialogues, reports or more distanced event coverage, descriptions, static images of the past, and critical reflections. They all make up for what Zubel called "socialist internationalist reportage" (Zubel 2022: 195). His socialist reportage is "socialist", not only due to the author's membership in the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR), his genuine commitment to the socialist project of the Party, or the temporal-spatial framework of this writing activity, that is, the *Zeitgeist*. Its socialist aesthetic resonance is to be found directly in his texts written between the 1950s and 1970s. Kapuściński's reportages are for a collective consumer and their relation to the world is the condition its revolutionary creation (Tret'jakov 1972: 12). The language is accessible, the choice of wording is careful such as in referring to the revolutionaries as "guerrilla fighters" and not, as it

15 "*En este país – prosigue – la vida no vale nada. En medio de esta pobreza, de esta hambre eterna, desaparece la frontera entre la vida y la muerte. […] En Europa, la gente muere durante una guerra, la muerte se lleva entonces millones de vidas, pero se trata de la cosecha de una temporada. Aquí, entre nosotros, ha tomado otra forma, y aunque también se lleva millones, está fundida con la cotidianidad, nos hemos acostumbrado tanto que ni siquiera reparamos en ella, porque nos acompaña siempre y a todas partes; vulgar, ordinaria, cotidiana, parece crecer y acechar en todo momento desde el interior de nuestras vidas.*"

16 The subject of hunger has also been picked up recently by the Argentine journalist and author Martín Caparrós in his award-winning reportage *El Hambre* (2014).

would be common in the Western press, “terrorists”. The protagonists are the people of the revolution that appear as singular voices, but often have a collective dimension. The subject is the anti-imperialist struggle, the mechanisms of politics, and inequality. Kapuściński’s writing demonstrates that it is possible to talk about the revolutionary struggle and stay true to the art of storytelling. His style is chiefly realistic, but adorned with impressionistic descriptions and poetic metaphors, pushing the boundaries between reality and fiction.

5. Desiderata of Conviviality: Without Definite Conclusions

Both García Márquez and Kapuściński departed leaving behind unfinished writing projects:

> High time I started writing the next unwritten book... or rather its plan, or even disjointed fragments of a plan, because if it were a complete and finished work it would not fit into an existing book to which I have already added one non-existent book (Kapuściński 2013: High time I started).

As Domosławski points out, the Polish reporter left a few incomplete books. He had been talking about his Latin American *magnum opus* since the 1970s:

> It was going to be called *Fiesta* (he also considered the title *Flight of Birds*). On an A4 sheet of paper he wrote out the idea for the book: it would be the most essay-like of all his books to date. It would contain elements of reportage, but only to serve as a starting point for broader anthropological reflection. There would be three basic themes: the realities of the continent, the mix of cultures – the uniting of both Americas – and the "global context" (Domosławski 2012: Chapter 42).

The Colombian author, on the other hand, had a desire to write more about Poland, maybe even a book-length reportage. It would probably have been a text about the events of the winter of 1981, when martial law had been imposed. However, it seemed like the Polish weather conditions discouraged the writer, who by that time had lost the adventurous enthusiasm of his late twenties:

> Interviewer: Is there a story today that you would especially like to do?
>
> García Márquez: There are many, and several I have in fact written. I have written about Portugal, Cuba, Angola, and Vietnam. I would very much like to write about Poland. I think if I could describe exactly what is now going on, it would be a very important story. But it’s too cold now in Poland; I’m a journalist who likes his comforts (Stone 1981).

In this context, one can speak about an unfulfilled creative desire. Those unwritten texts constitute desiderata concerning the object of research and through their absence one can reflect about the vicissitudes of the socialist project. Through the prism of this absence, one may approach the idea of an aspiration. Aspiration that could be considered abstract – as is the case of real socialism – can, however, find its fundament in the people's desires and hopes, their affective engagement and attunement to the surrounding reality. Writing projects in question might be then considered abstract as it is not known exactly how in fact advanced the plans of both authors were with regard to their respective Latin American and Polish volumes. Those absent texts are an inherent part of the existing corpus that can be perceived as an inconclusive representation of reality. They make claims to the representation of the contemporary life, to existential condition, that is, of the living together during the Cold War: under real socialism and/or struggling for such.

When compared, Kapuściński's texts about Latin America are much more oriented to governments and power than the Eastern Bloc reports of García Márquez are. The former are definitely more explicitly political in their discussion of the social and civic developments in Latin America, whereas García Márquez's *crónicas* mix travel writing with cultural reportage and militant posture of the self-fashioning narrator. His Eastern Bloc texts are by no means devoid of the political – he is believed to have been a member of the Colombian Communist Party at that time (Gilard 2015: 24) – however it becomes clear that Kapuściński has much more developed political and historical knowledge about Latin America than the creator of Macondo has about Eastern Europe. Both make use of a gaze typical of traditional travel writing and take on the role of an advocate for experience and ideas unknown to cultural opinion in their respective homelands. Their texts focus on the encounter with the Other. The foreign gaze with regards to travel literature has been extensively researched, just to mention the pertinent in this context, "imperial eyes" (Pratt 2008) or "Eastern eyes" (Bracewell and Drace-Francis 2008) for that matter. Resistance to the abstraction to which the Other is often subject in the discourse is an important task both from an ethical as well as an aesthetic standpoint. For literary journalists it is important to proceed beyond essentialist "cultural mythification" (Hartsock 2016: 65) to get to the profundity of experience. Accusations of exoticization, even colonialist approach and racism have been raised by Kapuściński's critics, although mostly regarding his Africa texts. He has been criticized posthumously for not fulfilling the standards of legitimately authentic journalism and even of compromising the journalistic craft (Mackey 2010; Shotter 2022). Fictionalization or rather literalization is in Kapuściński's writings often a way of exaggeration to the advantage of the oppressed and the revolutionaries, in order to elicit empathy for human fate, especially the socialist human fate under the right-wing US-supported military regimes. In case of García Márquez, the narrator's

gaze expresses mostly curiousness towards the Other, but also exoticizes him/her, even romanticizes the difficulties of life under real socialism, as if the experienced hardships elevated people's humanity:

> The overall appearance is one of deep poverty. More striking than in East Germany and Hungary. But there is one fact in favour of the Poles: subjected to prolonged deprivation, devastated by war, and compounded by the demands of reconstruction and the mistakes of their rulers, they try to continue living with a certain nobility. They are patched up but not broken. They are poor to an indescribable extreme, but it is evident that they face poverty with a rebellion that is at least not apparent in East Germany. Within their old clothes and worn-out shoes, the Poles maintain a dignity that commands respect (García Márquez 2015: 67).[17]

García Márquez enters the journey with his convictions already formed: *"Es un tropical el que se planta con desenfado y humor ante la realidad humana del Viejo Mundo*" [One who stands with ease and humour before the human reality of the Old World could be called tropical] (Gilard 2015: 27). With a provocative, often dismissive and scoffing tone of this observations, he points out the absurdities of the system that he experiences and that are nevertheless revelatory of the historical conjuncture of the 1950s in Europe, that is, the conundrums of the forming collective post-Holocaust and post-war memory, as well as of the post-Stalinist socialisms.

As far as socialist affects are concerned, they arise in the moments of aesthetically mediated revelation, they flow together with the discourse, neither necessarily named nor cognitively acknowledged by the narrators. One can describe them as literary suspensions. They emerge from unmediated relatedness, where an effective empathy and transperipheral solidarity are realized in the experience of estrangement, but also where tensions, thresholds, blurring, and merging take place, especially there, that ultimately led to disappointment with Marxist-socialist ideals. There is also a common preoccupation with respect to the observable social inequalities and the unfinished project of socialism. It would seem from their accounts that the two regions find themselves in distinct historical momenta. Kapuściński has a clear vision that the liberation from any kind of colonialism and imperialism is an inalienable condition for a convivial life, that is, a life of social interactions marked by equal distribution of goods and resources and racial as well as class consciousness that enables the struggle against

17 "*El aspecto general es de una profunda pobreza. Más impresionante que en Alemania Oriental y en Hungría. Pero hay un hecho en favor de los polacos: sometidos a prolongadas privaciones, destrozados por la guerra, rematados por las exigencias de la reconstrucción y los errores de sus gobernantes, ellos tratan de seguir vivos con una cierta nobleza. Están remendados pero no rotos. Son pobres hasta un extremo imposible de describir, pero se ve que afrontan la pobreza con una rebeldía que no es por lo menos evidente en Alemania Oriental. Dentro de sus ropas viejas y sus zapatos gastados los polacos conservan una dignidad que infunde respeto.*"

poverty, violence, and all kinds of inequality: "*por una vida más digna y menos injusta*" [for a more dignified and less unjust life.] (Martínez 2014: 119). The Polish reporter sees the liberation movements that emerge throughout 20th-century Latin America as a complex historical process marked by specific local conjunctures and events. While the struggle itself has a significance, be it a purely moral one, Kapuściński is convinced of its historical rationale. His texts are open-ended, and he repeatedly voices a certain optimism, rightly so as the process has not been completed. In contrast, what García Márquez experiences in the Eastern Bloc is a socialist-utopian dream that never came true. There seems to be no more promise that could be fulfilled, nevertheless: "*García Márquez cree que el socialismo está creando un mundo nuevo, y cree en su porvenir. Cree que en la edificación del socialismo todo llega a tener un sentido y, tarde o temprano, las fallas se superarán*" [García Márquez believes that socialism is creating a new world, and he believes in its future. He believes that in the construction of socialism, everything comes to have meaning, and sooner or later, the shortcomings will be overcome.] (Gilard 2015: 35). It might be, however, that after all the socialist Shangri-La is not in the Eastern Europe, but back home in Latin America.

Both García Márquez and Kapuściński had to face the difference inscribed in the encounter with the Other under specific political and social circumstances marked by violence and inequalities: of post-war real socialism in Poland and of guerilla warfare against the undemocratic US-backed governments in Latin America, respectively. This paper attempts to approach those two apparently peripheral scenarios of the Cold War from an entangled perspective, by referring to the writing genre and the attitudes of the two great journalists towards socialist projects while away from home. The writers' lived experience of conviviality, as argued in this paper, is mediated through literary suspensions and aesthetic intensities structured by feelings that form part of the social, political, and cultural dimensions of the texts. Demonstrating that the idea of socialism must not be detached from the reality of social processes and of peoples' experience, the literary journalistic texts by García Márquez and Kapuściński grasp those processes in an elaborate way "as they are thought and felt" and with "realism of social sensibility" (Houen 2020: 11).

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