The Blurred Line: Narrative and Truth in Three Colombian *Crónicas*

by

Leanne Marie Rempel

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Spanish and Latin American Studies

Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies
University of Alberta

Abstract

The *crónica* has been an important literary and cultural component in Latin America for years. Published in newspapers or magazines, these short works details true events while employing literary elements usually reserved for fiction. Today, many scholars still debate the elements of the genre as it sits in an uncomfortable grey area between literature and journalism. In recent years, many *crónicas* have taken up themes around drug wars and narcoculture, making this grey area even more vexed, as the authors deal with personal and national tragedies. Presenting controversial and marginalized themes from a personal perspective, the *crónica* establishes a raw connection between the writer and the audience. This thesis strives to determine how specific narrative elements construct intimacy of the story, specifically in *crónicas* of violence in Colombia. A secondary goal is to determine how intimacy strives to affect the perception of truthfulness. Does a more intimate story seem closer to the truth, or does the subjectivity limit this possibility? While this thesis cannot propel the genre into only one realm of either literature or journalism, by analyzing narrative elements in the well known *crónicas* "El pueblo que sobrevivió a una masacre amenizada con gaitas" by Alberto Salcedo Ramos, "Relato de un secuestrado" by Álvaro Sierra and *Noticia de un secuestro* by Gabriel García Márquez, this thesis helps us understand how intimacy and perception of truthfulness are constructed in a series of texts about a very real problem.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I'd like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Russell Cobb. For the past two years he has been there for me with new ideas, advice, and laughs. This thesis would not have been completed without his insight and dedication!

I'd like to acknowledge all of the awesome people in the department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies who have encouraged me and helped me grow as a student, instructor, and leader.

Thank you to Mathieu LeBlanc who gave me so much confidence as an instructor & scholar and encouraged me to pursue a thesis, because he knew that the work would pay off and I would be proud—I am!

Special thanks to my closest colleagues and friends (and fluffy teammates!) Amelia, Richard, Lori, Sofia, Sarah, Axel, Jay, Jérémie, and Houssem for doing grad school with me. I'm forever thankful for all of the coffee dates, writing workshops, and adventures!

And lastly, thank you to my family, who has supported me unconditionally to chase after my dreams and to be the best person that I can be.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

The Blurred Line: Narrative and Truth in Three Colombian *Crónicas*

Introduction

The *crónica* has been an important literary and cultural component in Latin America for centuries. Today, many scholars still debate the elements of the genre as it sits in an uncomfortable grey area between literature, memoir, and journalism. Many scholars trace the origin of the genre back to the colonial period when settlers were tasked with recording events from the New World to report back to the Spanish crown. Often these letters were exaggerated and flowered to barely reflect the reality at all.

There has never been a fixed definition for the genre, due to the non-conventional and marginalized nature of the works. Most scholars agree that the *crónica* is unique because of the raw connection that the writer makes with the audience, but surprisingly there has been little research on the point-of-view and other specific elements of narration in *crónicas* written. The body of literature focusing on the genre as a whole is immense as scholars legitimize its place in the academic world, using its prominence in culture as a basis. Recently, collections of *crónicas* have been published as anthologies, with inclusions of critiques on the genre along with samples of *crónicas* published all over the continent, but still there is room for analysis on the *crónicas* themselves. For the widespread attention that the *crónica* has been receiving in recent years, it is astounding to see the gaps in research on the narrative elements and construction of truthfulness in the stories. Can we even map out the finicky area between literature and journalism if we do not explore the narratives in detail? In fiction works, the narrative elements are picked apart and examined, but many specific *crónicas* never receive this analysis in academia.

This thesis strives to add content to the gap in analyzing the narrative of the *crónica*. By specifically questioning the narrator (voice, tone, and point-of-view) in three prominent Colombian writers' violence-themed *crónicas*, this work will reveal how deliberate writer choices purposefully fashion an intimate point-of-view to bolster the reader's perception of truthfulness. The *crónicas* to be examined are "El pueblo que sobrevivió a una masacre amenizada con gaitas" [*The Town that Survived a Massacre Livened Up by Bagpipes*] by Alberto Salcedo Ramos, "Relato de un secuestrado" [*Story of a Kidnapped (Man)*] by Álvaro Sierra, and *Noticia de un secuestro [News of a Kidnapping]* by Gabriel García Márquez. The first two *crónicas* by Salcedo Ramos and Sierra were originally published in a Colombian lifestyle magazine and newspaper respectively, and both found their way to be published in a 2012 anthology of the Latin American *Crónica*.[1] The third story challenges the definition of a *crónica*, especially in length and manner of publication. Written by one of Latin America's most famous writers, Gabriel García Márquez, the work is the collaboration of various testimonies, newspaper facts, and interviews to craft a full-length non-fiction novel detailing one of Colombia's most infamous kidnappings. This work is included because the narrative reads like a *crónica* and the unique narrator adds to the discussion on intimacy and truthfulness.

Chapter 1 of the thesis will survey the history of the *crónica* in Latin America. To understand the present day *crónica* and its narrative elements, it's necessary to step back and see where the genre has its roots. Much debate surrounds the origin of the modern day works, but scholars generally identify either an influence from the colonial times or later in the mid-nineteenth century as the establishment of the form of these texts. This chapter will then

[1] Darío Jaramillo Agudelo, *Antología de crónica latinoamericana actual*. Madrid: Alfaguara, 2012.

present descriptions of the *crónica* into the 21st century as it stands as a liminal genre, resting on the cusp between journalism and literature, and outline some of the gaps in the literature surrounding the genre.

Chapter 2 contextualizes the *crónicas* to be analyzed in this thesis by surveying a recent history of Colombia to understand the prevalence of violence in the country. Specifically considering the 20th century, Colombia suffered continuous decades of political and narco-violence that created an atmosphere of fear. The violence became so customary that while tragic, it became normal. The body of texts representing this violence is so vast, but this chapter explains the choice to analyze three representative *crónicas.*

The second part of the chapter will explore the narrator in depth and offers context of the *crónica* theme. The information of the story is of little substance without the specific features used to deliver this information. Taking a deeper look into different formulations of narrators, this chapter introduces various choices that accompany it: point-of-view, tone, and description of detail. All of these choices work towards establishing an intimacy in the story, which may or may not contribute to a perception of truthfulness.

Chapter 3 is a complete textual analysis of the three exemplary *crónicas*. Beginning with plot summaries and then going deeper with close readings of revealing passages, this chapter explores the narrative elements introduced in Chapter 2. Each *crónica* contains scenes of violence that are uniquely represented by each writer. This chapter also reveals how the truth is presented in the stories and how narrative details affect this. Conducting close readings of representations of violence, the chapter reveals how different revelations affect the intimacy with readers.

Chapter 1: The *Crónica* as a Genre in Latin America

El reportaje es una fotografía de la realidad, mientras la crónica, una pintura.
Reporting is a photo of reality while the *crónica* is a painting.
-Orlando Gamboa

For decades, the *crónica* has been an innovative literary movement in Latin American culture, giving marginalized groups and obscure stories an amplified voice. These texts have been published widely in newspapers and magazines, making literature more accessible than the traditional publishing industry, which, in Latin America, caters mainly to elites. Periodicals, since the beginning of nation states in Latin America, have been the dominant mode for disseminating literature.[2] Many *cronistas* began writing as journalists first and were able to experiment with the genre with publications in newspapers.

In a 1982 speech in Oslo, while accepting the presentation of the Nobel Prize for literature, Gabriel García Márquez reminded the world that Latin America's history was first written and told by *cronistas*—not by historians. In this speech García Márquez was referring to Antonio Pigafetta, who accompanied Magallanes on his trip around the world. Pigafetta left an accurate *crónica* that read as an adventure of the imagination.[3]

The *crónica*, loosely translated to the English as chronicle, comes from the Greek *chronos,* meaning time. The genre dates back to the third and fourth centuries, reaching popularity during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Europe.[4] During this time period, the *crónica* was a type of historical writing, detailing facts in chronological order. But the *crónica* today is deeply rooted in journalism rather than history, revealed by the fact that most of the texts are published in magazines or newspapers. For this thesis, the focus lies in the

[2] See Angel Rama, *La ciudad letrada,* 1a ed. (Hanover, N.H.: Ediciones del norte, 1984).
[3] Gabriel García Márquez, "La soledad de America Latina," *Nobel Media,* Accessed June 5, 2017, http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1982/marquez-lecture-sp.html
[4] Esperança Bielsa, *The Latin American Urban Crónica*, (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), 31.

history of the genre specifically in Latin America, where it has gained cultural importance. Some scholars trace the roots back to the colonization of Spanish America, while others see the modern genre as forming much later. To reach an understanding of where the genre stands today, marginalized by many historians as a subjective genre and by literary theorists as a popular and commonplace form of writing, we must go back and trace its development in the region.

The *Crónica de India*

For some scholars, the roots of the *crónica* in Latin America can be traced back to the Spanish conquest of the New World.[5] During the 16th and 17th centuries, colonizers needed to communicate new information from their new territories back to Spain. Often, priests who came to convert the Indigenous peoples to Catholicism were required to report to the Spanish King the details of conversions.[6] Other important leaders in the New World were also called upon to report important events occurring in the colonized lands. These reports were expected to be true accounts of the events that the *crónistas* were experiencing in the new settlements, but it's easy to understand the subjective nature of these reports from their inception. The writers knew what the Crown wanted to hear, and oftentimes embellished their stories to reflect the desires of the King.[7]

Crónica de India also encompasses the Indian and *mestizo* writers who wrote down their experiences with the Colonizers. One of the most famous texts is *Nueva crónica y buen*

[5] See: Walter Mignolo, "Cartas, crónicas y relaciones del descubrimiento y la conquista," Historia de la literature hispanoamericana, (1982): 57-116; Angel Rama, *La ciudad letrada;* Puerta, Andrés. "El periodismo narrativo o una manera de dejar huella de una sociedad de una sociedad en una época." *Anagramas* 9, no. 18 (2011): 47-60.
[6] Andrés Puerta, "El periodismo narrativo, 58.
[7] Walter Mignolo, "Cartas, crónicas y relaciones del descubrimiento y la conquista," 49.

gobierno (written between 1584 and 1612, but only published in 1938) by Felipe Guamán Pomon de Ayala, a letter addressed to the Emperor written in Spanish with a strong influence of Quechua language. He explains the horrors of the Colonial system and details (sometimes with drawings) the events and abuses of the Spaniards. Another well-known *crónica* is *Comentarios Reales* by *mestizo* Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, which was written in two parts in 1609 and 1617, telling the history of Inca civilization and details of the conquest from his point of view. These *crónicas* reveal a rare and critical viewpoint of colonialism, from the eyes of the colonized.

The wide range of *crónicas* that make up the *crónica de India* in the Colonial period shows the diverse influence of these historical texts. At this time, the motivation of the *crónica* was for informational and communicative purposes and the literary or narrative elements were not of any concern. The lack of care or necessity did not stop the writers from employing literary techniques, making these texts great cultural reflections. The elements of the original New Spanish *crónicas* have little in common with the *crónica* today; therefore some scholars do not draw a connection between the two. Instead, they argue that the roots of the modern *crónica* begin later, with the *crónica modernista.*

The *Crónica* of Independence

After independence from Spain, various new modern nations formed, and writers were keen on writing about life in their new republics. Due to a colonial ban on works of fiction,

writers explored the genres of history, (auto)biography, and travelogues to create texts.[8] These other genres also included the *crónica*, in which writers such as Domingo Faustino Sarmiento and Andrés Bello bolstered new ideas of civilization and independence.

Andrés Bello, the Venezuelan writer who became one of Chile's most important cultural figures, advocated for a "self-consciously personal (even self-interested) narrative over the pretense of objectivity."[9] This gives insight into the value of a personal story from a prominent figure. For a *cronista,* this must be true—their work must be valued equally or above the work of an objective outside source on the events. The reader must believe that a personal account gives value to an event and adds to the narrative of history.

One of the most famous creative non-fiction works of this time is Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's *Facundo: Or, Civilization and Barbarism*. This book detailed Argentina through a metropolitan lens, looking beyond at *gauchos* who roamed the countryside, only caring about their livestock and fighting. They represent the primitive, barbaric forces that resist the European influence. In the story, as Kimberly Ball explains, "civilization is identified with northern Europe, North America, cities, Unitarians, Paz, and Rivadavia," while barbarism is represented by "Latin America, Spain, Asia, the Middle East, the countryside, Federalists, Facundo, and Rosas."[10] The associations represent the feelings of many during the time of new nations forming. The dichotomy between civilization and barbarism was also a critique on Argentina's dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas, who ruled twice between 1829 to 1832 and

[8] Beatriz González S., "Narrativa de la 'estabilización' colonial: Peregrinación de Bartolomé Lorenzo (1586) de José de Acosta, Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez(1690) de Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora," Ideologies and Literature, new series, 2, 1 (Spring, 1987): 75

[9] Bello was living in London when he received an offer to be posted in Santiago working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He became and important legislator and writer in Chile.; Doris Summer, *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 8.

[10] Kimberly Ball, "*Facundo* by Domingo F. Sarmiento," in Joyce Moss, and Lorraine Valestuk, *Latin American Literature and Its Times,"* (Detroit: Gale Group, 1999), 173.

1835 to 1852.[11] The openness of the writer to enter into the political realm and wear his opinion on his sleeve is representative of writers at the time, and is closely related to the writers of *crónicas*.

The *crónica modernista*

For some critics, like Carlos Monsavais and Susana Rotker, the genre of the *crónica* today can only be traced back about a century and a half to *modernismo* in Latin America. Not to be confused with the Modernism movement, the Spanish American Modernists were a well-known group of writers in the mid 19th century, influenced by the European movements of Parnassianism and Symbolism.[12] They are popularly known for their journalism and poetry, but for many prominent writers, like Cuban José Martí and Nicaraguan Rubén Darío, the *crónica* was the genre of choice for self-expression.[13] Some were journalist by trade, but the *modernistas* did not only write to earn a living; they wrote to publish their voice. Well-known *modernismo* scholar Aníbal González-Pérez claims that, "the chronicles became literary laboratories for the Modernists, places where they tried out new styles and ideas and made these known to other writers."[14] Many of the portfolios for these writers were formed in large part by *crónicas*. Utilizing their positions as famed writers and journalists, they had a platform to experiment with new writing styles.

As one of the leaders of the movement (not by his own claim), José Martí worked for the Argentine newspaper *La Nación* and covered the Pan-American summit in 1889. He

[11] Kathleen Ross, "Translator's Introduction," in Domingo F. Sarmiento, *Facundo, Civilization and Barbarism,* Trans. Kathleen Ross, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), 18.
[12] Esperança Bielsa, *The Latin American Urban Crónica*, 36.
[13] Susana Rotker, *The American Chronicles of José Marti: Journalism and Modernity In Spanish America,* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2000).
[14] Aníbal González-Pérez, *Journalism and the Development of Spanish American Narrative,* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 84.

wrote more than four hundred *crónicas* about politics, life, and culture in the United States for his South American audience. Unlike other *modernistas*, Martí did not evade the very real struggles of the time. He brought problematic issues into the limelight and was the first writer to make the genre explicitly political. His *crónicas* were "the most poetic, elegant and progressive forms of literature to be written in Spanish in centuries."[15] These *crónicas* worked towards uniting Latin America as he critiqued the idea of the United States as a hegemon. Martí continued writing for various newspapers through his career, and even founded his own revolutionary publication called *Patria* in New York, where he was able to continue publishing *crónicas*, articles, and editorials.[16] By no means was José Martí the only influential *cronista* in Latin America during *modernismo,* but he definitely paved the way to combining journalism and literature as one entity, and can therefore be considered the grandfather of the modern day *crónica.*

While Martí was the forerunner with a controversially politicized *crónica*, many other *modernistas* focused on the literary aspects of the narrative and strayed away from politically fuelled topics. Some of the other notable *cronistas* include Ruben Darío, José Enrique Rodó, and Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera. These writers "developed in their crónicas a decorative and frivolous discourse, chock-full of vivid metaphors and cultural allusions, with which they implicitly defied the informative and utilitarian demands of journalism."[17] Using the newspaper as a platform to reach their audience, the *modernistas* strived to challenge the traditional form of journalism. With the narrative devices present in the narratives of daily life

[15] Pablo Calvi, "José Martí and the Chronicles That Created Modern Latin America" in *Global Literary Journalism,* ed. Richard Lance Keebler and John Tulloch, (New York, New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc, 2012), 308.
[16] Ibid*.,* 312.
[17] Aníbal González, *A Companion to Spanish American Modernismo,* (Woodbridge, UK: Tamesis, 2007), 24.

on the streets in Latin America, these writers became *cronistas* and helped establish the literary prestige of the genre.

It wasn't until later in the 1900's that this group of writers was given the credit they deserved long ago, as being at the forefront of the genre.[18] Today, you cannot find a description of the *crónica* without the inclusion of the *modernistas*. Their influence on the modern day *crónica* is unmistakeable.

Crónica, The Boom, and the Revolution

After the highly ornate, non-political wave of *modernismo* passed, Latin America experienced a surge of Nationalism. It's beyond the scope of this thesis to account for all of the different manifestations of nationalism, but suffice to say that each country had its nationalist *cronistas*, such as Brazil's Gilberto Freire, Cuba's Fernando Ortiz, and Mexico's José Vasconcelos. During the 1930s and 1940s, these ideas of strong nationalism such as *cubanidad* and *mexicanidad* were bolstered through the writing of these *cronistas*.

Things change dramatically with the literary Boom and the Cuban Revolution. These two forces, according to José Donoso, changed the landscape of literature across the continent. Firstly, this literature was commercially viable and writers could live off of their writing. Secondly, this movement moved beyond national identities and reached an international realm.[19] For these two reasons, the literary boom in the 1960s changed literature forever.

---

[18] Aníbal González-Pérez, "Modernismo, *Journalism, and the Ethics of Writing: Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera'a 'La hija del aire'"* in *The Contemporary Mexican Chronicle*, Ed. Ignacio Corona and Beth E. Jörgensen, (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 175.
[19] José Donoso, *Historia personal del "boom".* 1a ed. (Santiago, Chile: Alfaguara, 1998), 28-32.

Parallel Histories: New Journalism and the 20th Century *Crónica*

The worldwide influence of the Cuban Revolution and the Cold War in the middle of the century created turmoil across Latin America. During this period illiteracy declined rapidly, aided by Paulo Freire's pedagogy crusade and the Cuban Government organization Casa de las Américas. In one way or another, these events are behind the 1960s literary and intellectual boom.[20] The *modernistas* had left a strong legacy in *crónica* writing from the beginning of the 20th century, and writers were eager to carry on with the tradition. Leading this era was none other than Gabriel García Márquez, one of the most respected writers in the world. Writing *crónicas* in segments appearing in newspapers, García Márquez captured the attention of Colombians and Latin Americans with his elusive style and beautiful prose. The presence of his magical realism created scenery never imagined in periodicals before.

Meanwhile, the early 60s in North America saw the emergence of New Journalism. This movement began in the Sunday edition of newspapers, with writers exploring the addition of literary devices to their feature articles. Tom Wolfe, one of the renowned new journalists, codified the term in a 1973 *New York* magazine collection of articles titled "The New Journalism." He claimed that he was interested in the discovery that "it was possible in non-fiction, in journalism, to use any literary device, from the traditional dialogisms of the essay to stream-of-consciousness, and to use many different kinds simultaneously, or within a relatively short space . . . to excite the reader both intellectually and emotionally."[21] The addition of character build-up, dialogue, and other elements usually reserved for novels and

[20] Pablo Calvi, 66.
[21] Tom Wolfe, *The Birth of 'The New Journalism'; Eyewitness Report by Tom Wolfe*, The New York Magazine, February 14, 1972.

short fiction excited both writers and readers alike. As this movement gained attraction in the United States and beyond, some credit it with encouraging a return of the *crónica* in Latin America.[22] But for Argentines (and many Latin Americans), Rodolfo Walsh was the architect of New Journalism with his 1956 novel *Operation Massacre*.[23] The novel presented the José León Suárez massacre and detailed some of the brutal details of the military dictatorship. Written and published as a book, the narrative is a real masterpiece of investigative journalism that builds characters and scenery, all while maintaining its investigative roots as a true journalistic piece. The book was only translated to English in 2013, but has long been regarded as one of the first books of the genre.

New Journalism was different from the *crónica*, and it had a lot to do with the culture behind the works. The combination between journalism and literature was similar, but there was an outside influence that writers in North America had to succumb to: their editors.[24] Publishers had specific ideas for stories and would pass that information on to their writers. This lack of freedom in original idea of the story is unlike the *crónica*, where the writers choose the topics that they want to write about and then later would find a place for their work to appear. The motivation behind the text is significant, because while New Journalism covered political ideas, there was no ethical duty behind the story. The *crónica*, on the other hand, tackled political ideas with strong opinions, calling out injustice. This is an important distinction to make between New Journalism and the *crónica*.

The political uneasiness of the later 20th century gave writers many stories to tell. In the 1960s and 1970s, *crónicas* became increasingly more political, even becoming

---

[22] Esperança Bielsa, *The Latin American Urban Crónica*, 31.
[23] Andrés Puerta, "El periodismo narrative o una manera de dejar huella de una sociedad de una sociedad en una época," (*Anagramas* 9, no. 18, 2011): 58.
[24] Marc Weingarten, *The Gang That Wouldn't Write Straight: Wolfe, Thompson, Didion, Capote & the New Journalism Revolution.* 1st pbk. ed. (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2005), 38.

testimonies to ensure the truth was revealed. Following Walsh's investigative drive, a turning point in the genre was a *crónica* detailing the 1968 massacre in Mexico. Elena Poniatowska wrote a famous *crónica* detailing the event that the Mexican government tried to cover up. The *crónica La noche de Tlatelolco* (translated to the English as *Massacre in Mexico)* became internationally known for its ability to reveal the truth of that fateful night.[25] This time period was also subject to political unrest, as multiple U.S. sponsored military dictatorships challenged the freedom of writers to express themselves. During these decades of censorship and darkness, the *crónica* worked to call out injustice, but literary texts filled with critique were few. Because of the danger in publication, Antonio Castillo argues that there exists a generation gap between the great writers of the mid-century and the new generation of *cronistas* that appeared in the 1990s.[26] The new journalists emerging were those born during the time of political censorship—the children of Pinochet and other dictators.[27] They looked for mentors in the field, and found such in the likes of talented writers such as Gabriel García Márquez. Were these writers in the late 90s part of a new wave of *crónica?*

A New Wave of *Crónica*

The late 20th century saw a boom of writers who had grown up reading the famous *cronistas* of the mid-century and had been developing their skills from a young age. Some scholars argue that at the turn of the century there is even a "boom" in the genre—because popularity is still growing rapidly, despite the advances in technology and the need for instant

[25] Viviane Mahieux, "The Chronicle," *Oxford Bibliographies,* May 2013, http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199766581/obo-9780199766581-0092.xml#obo-9780199766581-0092-bibItem-0083.
[26] Antonio Castillo, "The New Latin American Journalistic *Crónica*, Emotions and Hidden Signs of Reality," (*Global Media Journal* 9, no. 2, 2015).
[27] Ibid.

information. *Cronistas* have found a way to compete with social media—they are genuine and overt in their criticism of modern society, and speak out for gay rights, indigenous equality, and against other social injustices. Several anthologies have been compiled with various critiques of the texts alongside *crónicas* from the last few decades.[28] Instead of a "boom," some call the *crónicas* from 1990s until the present day a "new wave" of *crónicas* that differ from those published in the 1960s and earlier. There is no doubt that the new writers are a new, fearless generation. Calling out corruption and bringing taboo subjects to light, these writers continue with the ethical calling that most *cronistas* feel. These *cronistas* have been mentored in places like García Márquez' *Fundación por el nuevo periodismo* (New Journalism Foundation), founded in 1994 in his hometown of Cartagena, Colombia. The goal of the foundation is to guide and support writers who want to combine the literary with journalism. Some of the most distinguished *cronistas* to have been mentored there include Leila Guerriero, Alberto Salcedo Ramos, Martín Caparrós, Julio Villanueva Chang, Christian Alarcón and Héctor Feliciano.[29] The *crónica* of the millennium faces different struggles than its predecessors. These writers are writing in a time of crisis for journalism with intense changes to the industry.[30] Luckily, the demand for the *crónica* is strong, and with the internet there are now more venues than ever to publish texts. Prominent newspapers across Latin America are proud to circulate the *crónica* and there are print magazines and online publications galore. For example, *Gatopardo* magazine is now one of the most prestigious places to have a *crónica* published, and claims itself to be the most influential magazine in Latin America. When it was established in 1999, it joined an already established group of

[28] See three anthologies: *Idea crónica. Literature de no ficción iberoamericana* (Cristoff, 2006), *La Argentina crónica. Historias reales de un país al límite* (Tomas, 2011), *Mejor que ficción. Crónicas ejemplares* Carrión, 2012), and *Antología de crónica latinoamerica actual* (Jaramillo Agudelo, 2012).
[29] Antonio Castillo, "The New Latin American Journalistic *Crónica...*"
[30] Jorge Tirzo, "Nueva? Crónica Latinoamericana," (Revista Mexicana De Comunicación 24 no. 134, 2013), 13.

publications that highlighted the work of *cronistas,* and was quick to demonstrate its ability to compete. In 2006, the magazine moved from its home in Colombia to settle in Mexico City, and now includes more coverage of Mexico, all while maintaining a Latin American perspective.

Cronistas of today continue to uphold the reputation of the genre and continue to stretch the limits of content and audience. Whether the times can be defined as a "new boom" or a natural continuation of the rich tradition the texts have is yet to be decided, but one thing's for sure: the *crónica* is here to stay.

Defining the Modern Day *Crónica*

> *¿Cómo empezar a definer un género en prosa que parece caracterizarse por su indefinición?*
> How do you begin to define a genre of prose that seems to be characterized by its lack of definition?
> -Aníbal González

It will come as no surprise that the genre today is still controversially defined. In his anthology, *Better than Fiction: Exemplary Crónicas,* Jorge Carrión identifies a debate in the way we define the *crónica*, citing that this is due to personal and open descriptions.[31] It seems like a rite of passage for critics of the *crónica* to each table their own definition of it. Considering the above quote from Aníbal González, scholars recognize the ambiguity in defining the *crónica.* It is a site for discussions about high and low culture, truth and fiction, political controversies, and the proper role of the narrator.

[31] Jorge Carrión, "Mejor que real" in *Mejor que ficción: Crónicas ejemplares,* (Barcelona, Spain: Anagrama, 2012)

Prominent Mexican *cronista* Juan Villoro wrote an eclectic description calling the *crónica* the platypus of prose. The reader is left with the mental image of the strange egg-laying mammal with a large duck-bill and webbed feet found only on the East coast of Australia. However strange the claim may be, there is no denying the carefulness and thoughtfulness that Villoro used to craft this description. The *crónica*, to him, is a complex genre that takes specific elements from across almost all literary genres. From the novel, he writes, "[the *crónica*] extracts a subjective condition, from journalism, the unchangeable facts; from the story, a dramatic feeling in short form… from an interview, the dialogues… from the autobiography, the memorable tone and the reworking of story in first person."[32] Finally, Villoro says that "la *crónica* es un animal cuyo equilibrio biológico depende de no ser como los siete animals distintos que podría ser,"[33] that the *crónica* is an animal whose biological balance depends on not being like the seven specific animals that it could be. This definition is convincing because it includes so many elements that *could* be present in the *crónica*. The inclusivity allows for many different texts to be included in the *crónica* without limiting them. It also highlights the uniqueness of the genre, which many *cronistas* are proud of. There are not many genres that form a bridge between polarized places, and the *crónica* has perfected its stance on the blurry line between truth and fiction, literature and journalism, and high and low culture. This inclusion brings pride to the writers. While Villoro's definition includes many of the elements of the texts, still there are other writers who prefer to focus on the most important aspects of the *crónica*, which are also contemplated.

Countless articles on the subject of the genre of the *crónica* validate the desire for scholars to place it in a literary field that deserves scholarly attention. Widespread

[32] Juan Villoro, "La crónica, ornitorrinco de la prosa," in *Antología de crónica latinoamericana actual*, ed. Darío Jaramillo Agudelo (Madrid, Spain: Alfaguara, 2012), 579.
[33] Villoro, 579.

interpretations and descriptions, though, tend to problematize the genre more than clarify it. Debates about the content of *crónicas* further reveal crucial differences of opinion about the nature of this hybrid beast.

There is no consensus among scholars: some claim that the works are nonfiction while others say that the texts are simply based on true events. Many would agree on basic elements of a *crónica*, but beyond that, the lack of a fixed structure creates discrepancies in the genre. For example, in her 2006 book *The Latin American Urban Crónica,* Esperança Bielsa prefaces her description of the *crónica* with a warning: "it is important to keep in mind and to firmly underline the fact that the *crónica* is a non-fixed and non-fixable genre, a genre in movement, which lives in a perpetual renewal of forms and contents."[34] This recognition allows her the freedom to work with her understanding of the *crónica* while admitting that even her analysis is on works that are non-fixed and non-fixable.

For some, the most important characteristic of the *crónica* is the inclusion of the voice of the *cronista*. The *crónica* has the expectation to inform, just as in traditional daily journalism, but the story should be told from the perspective of the writer, creating a subjective and vulnerable presentation of true events.[35] The subjectivity makes the *crónica* unlike regular journalism, where the goal is to be as objective as possible. It's important to note that journalism did not originate with the goal of being objective and without bias.

In the United States, the idea of objectivity wasn't formally established until the 1923 American Society of Newspaper Editors convention, when the group adopted the 'Canons of Journalism' that included 'Sincerity, Truthfulness, Accuracy' and 'Impartiality.' The latter

[34] Esperança Bielsa, *The Latin American urban crónica*, 37.
[35] Rafael Yanes Mesa, "La crónica, un género del periodismo literario equidistante entre la información y la interpretación," (*Espéculo: Revista De Estudios Literarios* 32, March 2006), 181.

included that 'News reports should be free from opinion or bias of any kind.'[36] Before this time, there was a slow movement towards ridding a newspaper of partisan alliance, but there was nothing explicitly stated. University textbooks also declared the writing without bias, and the idea became just that—the objectivity norm. The *crónica* in Latin America never subscribed to this norm, and until today, this marks one of the greatest differences between it and traditional journalism.

In Colombia, just like in the United States, the norm of objectivity was taught for years in formal education settings. In a 2016 article, Anuar Saad suggests that the paradigm of objectivity is worn-out, and that there is a shift towards what he calls an ethic and honest subjectivity.[37] This idea suggests that the *crónica* has had a modern effect on journalism.

Adding to the basic events of the story, the *crónica* should also include an explanation. In their *Manual de periodismo* (Journalism Manual), Vicente Leñero and Carlos Marín claim that the *crónica* should be "the narration of an event in the order in which it took place. It is characterized by the fact that it contains not only information but also the author's impressions."[38] These reactions draw the reader into the story, feeling what the writer feels. Without this vulnerable expression, the story maintains a strictly journalistic tone—and cannot be accepted as a *crónica*. The *crónica* doesn't pretend to free itself from facts, but instead makes them credible through simulation, recuperating them as if they were to happen with detailed intensity.[39] The writer's choice to focus on certain events and brush over others

[36] Paul A. Pratte, *Gods Within the Machine: A History of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1923-1993,* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995), 206 as cited in Michael Schudson, "The Objectivity Norm in American Journalism," *Journalism 2*, no. 2 (August 2011), 162.
[37] Anuar S. Saad, and Simanca Jaime de la Hoz, "La enseñanza del nuevo discurso periodístico en instituciones de educación superior," *Encuentros* 14 no. 2 (2016), 177.
[38] Vicente Leñero and Carlos Marín, *Manual de periodismo,* (Mexico City: Grijalbo, 1986), 43.
[39] Juan Villoro, "La crónica, ornitorrinco de la prosa," in *Antología de crónica latinoamericana actual*, ed. Darío Jaramillo Agudelo (Madrid, Spain: Alfaguara, 2012), 579. (Personal translation)

is a crucial literary element that drives the story. The reader relies on the impressions of the writer to *feel* the story.

The genre has a rich history throughout Latin America that dates back centuries and continues until today. It has always sat marginalized from traditional literary genres but has maintained its prominence. From the *crónica de India* in the fifteenth century to the *crónicas* of the millennium, these works have creatively exposed true narratives and advocated for the voiceless using intelligent literary devices.

Chapter 2: Contextualizing Colombian *Crónicas* and Analyzing Narrative Elements

La voz es el tipo de lenguaje que permite comunicar adecuadamente la historia al lector. El tono es el aire que se respire en la crónica.
The voice is the type of language that allows the story to be properly communicated with the reader. The tone is the air that is breathed in the *crónica*.
-Daniel Samper Pizano[40]

Contextualizing the Colombian *Crónica*

While the *crónica* is an important genre across the region of Latin America, there are a few countries that have developed their own identity in the field. Along with Argentina and Mexico, Colombia has always been at the forefront of *crónica* advancements. Some of the best writers in the region are Colombian, and their pride in the country's history makes their texts incredibly passionate and inviting. Understanding some historical elements of

[40] Daniel Samper Pizano, *Antología de grandes crónicas colombianas, 43.*

Colombia's history, especially in relation to political and narco-violence, gives context to the rich thematic topics covered in the Colombian *crónica.*

Colombia is a beautiful country with various landscapes, great cities, cultural spectacles, and much more. But this same country has unfortunately faced years of political and cultural violence, stemming from paramilitary and guerilla groups and more recently, the international narcotics business. In her book *Blood and Fire: la violencia in Antioquia, Colombia 1946-1953*, Mary Roldán discusses the extensive connection between Colombia and its violence:

> Colombia, after all, produces the bulk of the coca processed into cocaine and shipped to the world's largest consumer of drugs, the United States, and suffers the crime and corruption that result from this illicit trade. Colombia is also home to the oldest guerrilla insurgency in the Western Hemisphere; the country that accounted for half of the world's kidnappings in 2000; the place where paramilitaries inscribe bloody messages on the bodies of their largely peasant victims; a land the U.S. media likes to refer to as "twice the size of France"; a land over which the central state exerts little authority; and a formal democracy where a handful of elite families are thought to monopolize control of the media, politics, and the nation's (licit) economy.[41]

It would be too extensive and quite unnecessary to cover even all the contemporary history of the country, but to give context to the three *crónicas* that we will investigate in this paper, we will highlight some of the key events and trends that led to the particular development of the *crónica* in Colombia.

The beginning of the 1900s was a period known as "the New Age of Peace and Coffee," lasting for approximately 30 years. High American demand for Colombian mild roast coffee kept the country in a reasonable economic situation, while Colombian elites worked to modernize the country with railways, road construction, and air transportation.[42] In the 1930s though, like many other Latin American nations, Colombia turned to charismatic

[41] Mary Roldán, *Blood and Fire: La Violencia In Antioquia, Colombia, 1946-1953,* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 18.
[42] Michael LaRosa, and Mejía P. Germán. *Colombia: A Concise Contemporary History,* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012), 90.

representatives of the people—the populist leaders. Colombia's leader was a young lower-class lawyer, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán. He had been educated in Italy and was influenced by Benito Mussolini. He held a number of political roles, and chose to run for president in 1946. Unable to garner enough countrywide support in this first presidential election, the liberal party was split between him and their official candidate, Gabriel Turbay. After Gaitán lost the presidential race to the Conservative candidate, Mariano Ospina Pérez, the liberals lost legislative control after a sixteen-year rule. Gaitán was favoured to win the next presidential election in 1950, but was shockingly assassinated in Bogotá in 1948. This event dramatically altered the history of the country. The marginalized working class had their hopes and dreams in this man, and all of that disappeared with his death. The riot that followed, known internationally as "the *Bogotazo*"[43] damaged parts of Bogotá badly, with the working class in other cities also rioting, blaming the conservatives for muting their voices. The Liberals decided not to present a candidate for the 1950 election, and many Liberals looked to violence as the only way to have their voices heard.

Beginning with the election of 1946, the period of the next two decades is conventionally known as 'La Violencia,' or the Violence, with the conservative and liberal parties fighting a civil war, mostly in the countryside. Fighting occurred between the paramilitary groups aligned with the Colombian Liberal Party and the guerilla military groups of the Colombian Conservative Party.[44]

In the prologue to his *Anthology of Grand Colombian Crónicas Take II: 1949-2007*, Daniel Samper Pizano identifies a split between the historic *crónica* and the journalistic *crónica* at the end of the 1940s. With the end of the era of peace in the country, *cronistas*

[43] Michael LaRosa, and Mejía P. Germán, *Colombia: A Concise Contemporary History*, 92.
[44] Ibid., 96.

began filling a role of criticizing the corruption and abuses that occurred in the following decades.[45]

The beginning of the 1950s in Colombia brought government censorship, with General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla restricting the country's two largest newspapers: *El Tiempo* and *El Espectador.*[46] Writers then looked to magazine publications to publish texts that should have been in the papers. Another critical moment in 1948 occurred when Gabriel García Márquez began to work for the newspaper *El Universal*, and two other famous Colombian writers Álvaro Cepeda Samudio and Germán Vargas started writing for *El Nacional*. These three writers met up in 1950 with many other journalists, poets, painters, and writers for one of the first ever *crónica* seminars. This meeting brought together some of the greatest writers and artists in Colombia and was the starting point to a strong community of *cronistas*.

The violence lasted until at least 1958, when the Liberals and Conservatives created the National Front: an agreement to have a rotating government every four years between the two parties. Leaders knew that they had to create an agreement to calm down the violence. Over 250,000 people lost their lives during this period—most of them young, poor males.[47]

The late 1960s saw the calming of the *Violencia* period, but guerilla groups formed during the period weren't so quick to dissolve. In the 1970s, the groups were not very active, but during the 1980s, they successfully collected "taxes" from the oil industry and landowners, administered kidnappings, and turned to drug traffickers for extra income.[48] In

[45] Daniel Samper Pizano, *Antología de grandes crónicas colombianas, Tomo II, 1949 – 2007,* (Bogotá: Aguilar, 2007), 18.
[46] Ibid., 28.
[47] Michael LaRosa, and Mejía P. Germán, *Colombia: A Concise Contemporary History,* 99.
[48] W. John Green, "Guerrilla, Soldiers, Paramilitaries, Assassins, Narcos, and Gringos: The Unhappy Prospects for Peace and Democracy in Colombia," (Latin American Research Review 40, no. 2, 2005), 137.

response to the guerilla groups, drug traffickers and wealthy landowners formed their own paramilitary groups and aligned themselves with the Colombian military. In the twenty years following this period of violence, more than 350,000 people died and almost 2 million were internally displaced from their rural homes overtaken by violent groups.[49]

With continuing guerilla and paramilitary violence, the narco-violence only added to the instability. The 1990s continued with mass kidnappings and murders. "In the first two months of 1991 there had been twelve hundred murders—twenty a day—and a massacre every four days."[50] The statistics on violence make it clear and understandable why kidnapping and murders make up a large part of the *crónicas*. The end of the labeled *Violenca* era may not have encompassed the most brutal violence that the country had seen. Gabriel García Márquez claimed that, "among the many atrocities that had convulsed the country, narcoterrorism stood out as the most virulent and cruel."[51] When violence takes over like a plague in the country, it is near impossible to eradicate it from the culture. The *crónicas* from this time period narrated this horrid chapter in contemporary Colombian history, representing a phenomenon that has been turned into a national and international industry.[52] Writers (as well as other producers of entertainment) have discovered that there is a great audience for this content. Whether fiction or non-fiction, there is something compelling about violence that draws a person in, and the unfortunate truth is that the Colombian people have suffered this violence that is so easily contorted between truth and fiction. As we will see, this blurred line

[49] Ibid., 160.
[50] Ibid., 178.
[51] Gabriel García Márquez, *News of a Kidnapping.* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), 128.
[52] Robert L. Sims, "El Molino a secuestro: Narración, violencia y fictualidad en *Noticia de un secuestro* de García Márquez y ¡Secuestrados! La historia por dentro de Juan Vitta," (Revista de estudios Colombianos 19, 1999), 54.

between truth and fiction in the *crónica* is very vexed, as writers experiment with narrative elements to elicit intimacy and create a perception of truth.

Giving a Voice to the Voiceless?

Famous Argentine journalist and writer Martín Caparrós claims that the writer of the *crónica* has an ethical obligation—to be the voice for the voiceless.[53] Most *cronistas* are well-known writers already, and have a platform to present marginalized stories that they believe should be heard. But who are "the voiceless"? Most often, they are the poor, the marginalized, and the ones crying for justice. They aren't voiceless at all—their voices are just never heard. The ethics behind this purpose are problematic, but necessary to understand why many *cronistas* write about the events that they do.

Because of this ethical obligation that some writers may feel, it is not uncommon for a *cronista* to write about an event that he or she did not personally experience. Through interviews, facts, visits to event scenes and more, the *cronistas* are able to gather enough information to write a story on the topic. Sometimes, the assembling of information can cause doubts in the truthfulness of the *crónica*, but the writers try to maintain credibility by divulging all information and including clear communication on their source of knowledge. Sometimes, as we will see in our examples of *crónicas*, the lack of specific details can create doubts of credibility. Here we begin to see a key difference between the North American New Journalism and the *crónica*. While the former is experimental in terms of form, it is rather traditional in terms of content. Tom Wolfe, Joan Didion, and others reflected an exhaustion or

[53] Martín Caparrós, "Por la crónica," in Antología de crónica latinoamericana actual, ed. Darío Jaramillo Agudelo (Madrid, Spain: Alfaguara, 2012), 607.

even cynicism toward political commitments, while *crónica* authors often wear their commitments on their sleeve.

The ethical component of the *crónica* makes its place between literature and journalism and fiction and non-fiction that much more relevant. When representing a person or a group that does not have the platform that the *cronista* does, the details matter even more. The truth at stake is not only for the reputation of the writer, but of the subjects in the text.

On a related note, we can see how high the stakes are regarding truth and fiction in the controversy over Rigoberta Menchú's *testimonio*, *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y asi me nació la conciencia.*[54] Written as a testimony through a writer who translated Menchú's Quiche language to Spanish, the text purports to tell the unvarnished truth of her life as an indigenous woman in Guatemala. But, as many critics pointed out later, there was no objective truth, since Menchú's point-of-view was non-western, and she did not speak Spanish. Rigoberta Menchú's construction of truth depended on her point of view. In other words, the relationship between her as author of a story and the reader's faith was established on the basis that she would be telling true accounts. In a 1999 book, anthropologist David Stoll made claims that many of Menchú's tales were falsified to better tell a story that she wanted publicized. Some of the facts disputed were that she had not received any education, and that she was present at the brutal killing of her brother.[55] To find the exact truth is impossible, but the example brings up important questions and doubts about the subjectivity of non-fiction writing and the blurred lines between truth and fiction.

---

[54] Rigoberta Menchú, and Elisabeth Burgos-Debray, *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia.* 1a ed, Mexico: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1985.; Translated as *I, Rigoberta Menchu*

[55] Arturo Arias, and David Stoll, *The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy,* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

Narrative Elements

The *crónica* relies on intimacy between the reader and the story. The reader expects a text that will transcend time and space to transport them into the action of the story. For this to be possible, the *cronista* must employ various narrative devices that are traditionally reserved for fiction. Antonio Castillo believes that the authenticity of the story is portrayed through specific details. "The historic visibility of people and events – the reality – is achieved by the use of personal styles and indeed by the use of the first person – a personal approach that helps to narrow the gap between the writer and the reader. Narrowing the space between readers and writers is a key aspect of the new *crónica*."[56] Some *cronistas* choose to use different points-of-view as we will see, but there are other ways for the writer to make the story intimate. Narrowing the space is important in the new *crónica*, but it has been a fundamental characteristic of the *crónica* for years. Nonetheless, with the competing stories and information so easily and instantly available, the new *crónica* relies more than ever on a connection with the reader. The intimacy created with the reader may help create a stronger perception of truthfulness, as there appears to be more clarity despite the obvious subjectivity of a personal story. To further understand how the narrative elements construct intimacy and the effect this has on the perception of truth, let's break down the specifics and see some examples.

The Narrator and Point-of-View

The narrator is an important part in any story, and the *crónica* is no exception; in fact, it's a genre that expresses life itself, through different paths of narration.[57] The story can be told by an omniscient voice, explaining from a distance many perspectives of the tale. This

[56] Antonio Castillo, "The New Latin American Journalistic *Crónica*..."
[57] Andrés Puerta, "El periodismo narrativo," 56.

narrator gives insights on past and future events, and has the ability to jump in and out of characters' heads.[58] Sometimes, the narrator is the writer, divulging the story from his or her personal lens. And with others, the narrator is a specific character, presenting the narrative through their outlook.

The *crónica* comes from the imagination and interpretation of the writer, and the writer chooses the way he wishes to narrate the story. In his article "Por la *crónica*," Martin Caparrós writes that, "the *crónica* is a mix, in variable proportions, of looking and writing. To look is central for the *cronista*, to look profoundly. To look and to see have been confused, and now few know which is which. But between looking and seeing, there is a radical difference.[59] Many others have echoed this distinction that Caparrós makes. The *cronista* looks where many others have, and sees something different. Instead of the passive act of seeing something, to look is active and purposeful. For example, in the *crónica* "Un fin de semana con Pablo Escobar,"[60] journalist Juan José Hoyos visits Hacienda Nápoles, one of the drug lord's most famous residences, and tells a compelling story of his time there. Hoyos does not simply see his surroundings, but he looks at them in a way that he directly presents to the reader. For example, in the first scene of the *crónica*, Hoyos sees a tree filled with birds that look like they were plucked down on the branches in perfect formation. He does not just see the tree and the birds, but he looks intently and creates an image for the reader.

Caparrós also claims that a great *cronista* must "learn to look again at what we already know."[61] Going way back to Rodolfo Walsh's 1956 book on the massacre in Argentina, this is

[58] Sue Hertz, *Write Choices: Elements of Nonfiction Storytelling,* (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2016), 146.
[59] Martín Caparrós, "Por la crónica," in *Antología de crónica latinoamericana actual*, ed. Darío Jaramillo Agudelo, (Madrid, Spain: Alfaguara, 2012), 609.
[60] Juan José Hoyos, "Un fin de semana con Pablo Escobar," In *Antología de crónica latinoamericana actual,* edited by Darío Jaramillo Agudelo, (Madrid: Alfaguara, 2012).
[61] Caparrós, "Por la crónica," 610.

exactly what the writer does. The massacre had occurred and it was known. But for Walsh, this information was not enough. He returned to the event, found new sources, and literally looked for new information as he investigated the incident. Another example is the aforementioned *crónica* by Elena Poniatowska telling the brutal story of a massacre in Mexico. Many people saw the event as participants, but Poniatowska was the *cronista* who looked again and saw something that needed to be told to all. This ability for the writer to see something and look at it with intent and purpose is what makes the *crónica* different from other forms of journalism is this active involvement with the story.

The most obvious and most telling feature of the narrator is the point-of-view. Between first, second, and third person, and limited and omniscient, the point-of-view dictates *how* the reader sees the story. One may believe that for a *crónica* to establish and maintain an intimacy with the reader, first person is the chosen point-of-view, but surprisingly, many writers choose the more distant third person, sometimes employing interruptions of the second person to specifically address the reader.

The Tone

The tone of the narrator creates the feel of the *crónica*. Diction, figurative language and point-of-view all contribute to form the narrative tone. The tone is not to be confused with the writer's mood or emotion, but is instead more closely related to an attitude.

In traditional journalism, the tone is formal and reserved. There is an expected lack of personal opinion, and the structure should be clear and objective. As mentioned in the section on defining the modern-day *crónica* back in Chapter 1,[62] objectivity was not always an

[62] See Michael Schudson, "The Objectivity Norm in American Journalism," *Journalism 2*, no. 2 (August 2011), 152.

ambition for journalists, but the shift towards a non-biased publication forced this concept on writers. Certain parts of speech, such as the adjective, were to be avoided because they incited an opinion. For example, the weather could not be described as hot, because that is a subjective feeling. Instead, the temperature was 28 degrees Celsius, which is factual information that cannot be interpreted. The lack of creativity in traditional journalist directly contrasts the tone in the *crónica.* In the *crónica*, the tone is more casual and conversational, with additional commentary included as desired. Also, there exists no norm of a consistent tone throughout the story.

Let's look back at an example from "Un fin de semana con Pablo Escobar," (A Weekend with Pablo Escobar). Juan José Hoyos begins the text with a formal description of Escobar's *finca*—detailing the scenery before him. The text reads like the beginning of a García Márquez short story: "It was a Saturday in January in 1983 and it was hot. The air was humid from the breeze that came from the Magdalena River…"[63] The tone here is formal, but descriptive and subjective. Furthermore, whereas traditional journalism would lead with the most important event, Hoyos leads with a tone, a setting like a fiction writer.

The tone influences the intimacy of the story usually by developing a setting where the reader can completely see him or herself. Even though some of the description could be seen as subjective (and farther from the truth), the feeling of transcending time and space to enter into the story helps create a closeness that bolsters truthfulness instead of doubt.

---

[63] Juan José Hoyos, "Un fin de semana con Pablo Escobar," 51.

The Details

Cronistas are expected, like all journalists, to deliver the story clearly and concisely.[64] The information should be presented truthfully and events should be told completely. But the description of details in the story is left to the discretion of the writer, and based on the limitations of the chosen narrator. Sometimes, the narrator is limited and only divulges specific information that is known to them. Other times, the writer chooses to leave out details marking place or identity for the safety of the protagonists (remember these are true stories and they have effects on real people). There is a plethora of reasons that lie behind the writer's decision to divulge or conceal details of a story, but each of these decisions helps create the atmosphere of the *crónica.*

To better understand the difference between complete description and deficiency of details, let's look back at the *crónica* by Juan José Hoyos. When describing his view from the room where he sat to eat and chat with Escobar, he notes that there were "3 or 4 pool tables covered with green felt."[65] This description causes one to think—*is it overly honest that he wasn't sure about the number of tables? Or is there doubt in my mind because if he couldn't remember this, how many other specified details aren't certain?*

Hoyos goes on to describe a complete layout of the house, including a mention of where Escobar's personal bedroom was— "totally separated from the rest of the house, on the second floor, in the right wing."[66] It is not specified how Hoyos knows this information, but it is presented clearly and objectively, so the reader is encouraged to accept it as presented. Hoyos was there at the house, and he could have seen a hallway to the room and assumed, or

[64] Rafael Yanes Mesa, "La crónica, un género del periodismo literario equidistante entre la información y la interpretación," (*Espéculo: Revista De Estudios Literarios* 32, March 2006).
[65] Juan José Hoyos, "Un fin de semana con Pablo Escobar," 57.
[66] Ibid., 57.

he could have been told that the area was off limits. There are many possibilities, but the writer must decide what information he divulges, and if he specifies how the knowledge came to be known. The description of detail truly affects the intimacy and truth of the *crónica.* We will see further in the next chapter how the details affect the exemplary *crónicas.*

Chapter 3: The *Crónicas* and the Perception of Truth

The Latin American *crónica* is certainly a unique genre and scholars have wrestled with perfecting a definition that incorporates all of the aspects of these texts. As discussed already, most agree that the *crónica* fits in between literature and journalism, flexing and adapting with the times. This consensus disappears though when considering the specific elements. The fine line between truth and fiction will always be contested. Is the *crónica* non-fiction? Do the facts have to be fact-checked? Does the story have to be told in first person? Do the experiences have to be personally experienced, or can someone write on behalf of someone else? All of these questions divide scholars in the attempt to establish a concrete genre, balancing between two established fields. To consider all of these questions is beyond the scope of this thesis—instead, using historical context of the *crónica* and violence in Colombia, we will consider three *crónicas* as examples to examine one specific aspect: how the narrative elements create intimacy in the story, and how this affects perception of truth.

It would be impossible to give a thorough account of all *crónicas* of stories detailing Colombian violence, so I have chosen three representative texts that embody the major trends in the genre and will serve as exemplars. As identified in the table below, the three texts to be discussed are "El pueblo que sobrevivió a una masacre amenizada con gaitas," by Alberto

Salcedo Ramos, "Relato de un secuestrado," by Álvaro Sierra, and *Noticia de un secuestro* by Gabriel García Márquez. All of these *crónicas* tell intense stories of violence in Colombia: a massacre committed by the paramilitary group United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (Spanish abbreviation AUC), a kidnapping by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People's Army (Spanish abbreviation FARC), and another kidnapping, but this one committed by the Medellín Cartel (or specifically, a group of drug traffickers calling themselves the Extraditables). Unlike most *crónicas* that detail very personal accounts, these were all crafted by writers who did not personally witness the events of the story, but instead used interviews and conversations to either give a new perspective on the event, or recreate the event through detailed accounts.

	"El pueblo que sobrevivió a una masacre amenizada con gaitas"	"Relato de un secuestrado"	*Noticia de un secuestro*
Writer	Alberto Salcedo Ramos	Álvaro Sierra	Gabriel García Márquez
Year of event in *crónica*	2000	2000	1990
Year Published	2007	2001	1996
Place Published	*SoHo* Magazine	*El Tiempo* Newspaper	As a book
Point-of-view	First Person with Second Person interjections	Changing: Third Person Limited/ Omniscient, with First Person interjections	Third Person Limited/Omniscient

Table 1: A Comparison of *Crónicas*

The *Crónica* about a Massacre in El Salado

In the *crónica* "El pueblo que sobrevivió a una masacre amenizada con gaitas," famous Colombian writer Alberto Salcedo Ramos visits the coastal Colombian town of El Salado to witness first-hand the site of a brutal massacre committed by a paramilitary group on February 16-18, 2000. The media quietly covered the massacre, but not the way a brutality of this size should have been publicized. Recognizing this, Salcedo Ramos used his influential

voice to bring to the town the consideration it deserved. He acknowledges that if it weren't for the massacre, no one in the country would have ever heard of the little town of El Salado.

Salcedo Ramos is a well-known Colombian journalist and *cronista* who has published *crónicas* in many different magazines across Latin America and has won many international awards for journalism.[67] Using his established platform, Salcedo Ramos chose to draw attention to a town that had years earlier witnessed a terrible atrocity. As stated before, the massacre occurred in 2000, but the writer never explicitly states when he visited the town of El Salado. He mentions that some townspeople moved back to the town two years after the event, in 2002. These residents explain how they have adjusted to life back in the town, so one can assume that the story was written at least a few years after that. The *crónica* was published in the Colombian magazine *SoHo* in 2007. The magazine, although respected in the world of *crónica*, has been compared to the American magazines *Playboy* and *Maxim* for its explicit content and directness to the male population—including many racy photos and sexual material among the sections of Women, Lifestyle, Stories, and Entertainment. Despite the specific audience, many famous *crónicas* were first published in this magazine. In a 2012 anthology of Latin American *crónicas*, out of some 50 selected for the publication, 9 of the texts first came to life on the pages of *Soho.*[68] This number is quite significant, considering that the anthology is for all of Latin America, and *Soho* is just one of many magazines in one country of many. As mentioned in Chapter 1, there were many literary magazines that appeared in the 1980s in Colombia, and they were the perfect platform for *crónica* publications. Salcedo Ramos wrote this *crónica* for his neighbours and friends within Colombia, knowing that the magazine was the second-most read in the nation.

[67] Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial, "Me gusta leer," http://www.megustaleer.com.co/autor/alberto-salcedo-ramos/.
[68]Darío Jaramillo Agudelo, *Antología De Crónica Latinoamericana Actual*, (Madrid: Alfaguara, 2012).

The Plot

The *crónica* does not follow a typical storyline, but is certainly a line of events told in chronological order. What Salcedo Ramos does not do in his *crónica* is try to recreate the massacre itself. He instead tells a story of his visit to the town after the event and uses interviews to give context and details of what happened. The plot follows his journey from arrival to the town to his departure. The text begins without any formal introduction, but *in media res* in the action of the narrator's viewpoint from where he stands. Salcedo Ramos is in the town of El Salado, and has a local resident, José Manuel Montes, show him around. He begins in the field at the center of the town, also recognized as the center of massacre. From this location, the story moves to different places in the town to present distinct conversations with others. José connects him to townspeople that speak to him either about the massacre or about their current life after the brutality. The two men walk the sites where many people were tortured, violated, and murdered. José explains that for days the paramilitary group controlled the town, killing a few people for their pleasure, requiring older women to dance cumbia naked, and raping others. The *cronista* and his guide speak with relatives of victims—or at least the few that have chosen to return to the desolate town. Before the massacre, there were over 6,000 people living in the town, and now, there were less than 900.[69] Salcedo Ramos learns that when habitants could move back to the town, about two years after the massacre, they returned to a place that seemed foreign. Many business owners didn't return, and there wasn't even a priest available to open the church every Sunday. Though from the outside, it seems like the townspeople were back to living their normal lives, the acts of violence left them with irreparable wounds. After a few more interviews with locals about

[69] Alberto Salcedo Ramos, "El pueblo que sobrevivió a una masacre amenizada con gaitas," In *Antologia de crónica latinoamericana actual*, edited by Darío Jaramillo Aguelo, (Madrid: Alfaguara, 2012), 105.

their current lives, Salcedo Ramos decides to close his notebook and end his visit. He walks away, looking at the muddy streets, a scraggly dog, and a shack with bullet holes, thinking to himself that, "while the paramilitaries and guerillas are both groups of murderers, they aren't the only ones that have run over these poor people."[70] The *crónica* finishes here, but of course this is not the end of the story.

The Narrator and Point-of-View

Let's turn now to specific narrative elements: the narrator, point-of-view, tone, and details to see how they construct intimacy in the story. A *cronista* always has the choice of how to frame the story, and the extent that their voice will shine through the text. In this *crónica*, in already the first sentence of the text, Salcedo Ramos reveals his voice that will be present throughout the *crónica*. The narrator is Salcedo Ramos, and he is the narrator. Let's look at the opening sentence: It happens that the killers—I suddenly notice, while I walk in front of a tree where one of the seventy-six victims was hanged—taught us with lead the country we don't know through textbooks or tourism brochures."[71]

The *crónica* begins with the writer's introspection and realization of his surroundings. The interruption to the description in the first few words of the *crónica* establishes the idea that the following is a personal story. It helps to prove that even though (as the reader soon finds out) the writer did not witness any of the events of the massacre personally, he visited the scene of them and was able to make observations for himself. He does not aim to recreate the event, but tell his own experience with the town. While other *cronistas* may rely solely on interviews, Salcedo Ramos' choice to walk the places of the massacre and bring the reader

[70] Ibid., 110.
[71] Ibid., 101.

along with him on this experience builds credibility for the writer. This creates a stronger trustworthiness for the reader.

The first-person point-of-view launches the story into *crónica* territory quickly—for the view minimalizes space and instantly connects the writer to the story. The very first image that he creates in the story is personal and violent. Walking by a tree where one of the victims was hanged brings the reader to that very place. It is bluntly presented and the reader is given a raw connection to the story. The interruption in the first sentence is not an isolated incident. Throughout the *crónica*, Salcedo Ramos inserts his voice and impressions into the story without hesitation, creating a very casual and intimate read. Remembering that Salcedo Ramos is speaking to his Colombian neighbours, it becomes easier to grasp the directness and bluntness of his voice in the *crónica*. Multiple times in the story he asks specifically, "dígame usted," (you, tell me) and reaches out to those around him. The use of second-person in the text definitely closes the gap between the text and the reader. Even if the reader is not his specific audience, the direct message causes one to pause and think about the question. For example, in just the second sentence of the text, he asks a question: "Because, tell me, and excuse me if it's a bit cruel, if it weren't for this massacre, how many *bogotanos* or *patusos*[72] would know that in the Bolivar department, on the Caribbean Coast of Colombia, there is a town called El Salado?"[73]

This direct address to his audience is rare—but just as he states that his question may be raw, the forwardness of his writing also creates bluntness with the reader. This interjection also reveals the disconnect between the cosmopolitan capitol and the rural places that suffer from violence. By writing this *crónica*, the writer is holding the city-dwellers accountable for

[72] *Bogotanos* are residents from Bogotá, and *pastusos* are residents of Pasto, a city in the southwest of the country.
[73]Ibid., 101.

being aware of what goes on in rural areas in their own country. Salcedo Ramos continues to call out the reader with *usted*, minimalizing the distance between them, and continually confirms that he is writing the *crónica* to be a voice for the townspeople who do not have a voice. There is a never room for doubt as to why Salcedo Ramos writes the *crónica*. Choosing to work with the first and second person points-of-view, Salcedo Ramos creates a desirable intimacy and closeness between the writer, the text, and the reader.

The Tone

From the beginning of the *crónica*, the tone does not resemble either journalism or fiction. With the constant addition of opinion and impression, Salcedo Ramos presents the story as a work of creative non-fiction. There are formal sections that read like a short story, and others that relay facts just as a newspaper would. But the majority of the *crónica* relies on individual anecdotes, rhetorical questions, and personal analysis of the situation.

In his pursuit of creating a story about the effect that the massacre had on the residents and the town as a residential area, Salcedo Ramos chooses to interview various sources. He speaks with family members of victims and questions the quality of their lives since the massacre. He speaks to a young lady who he finds sitting on her porch—and details her story dreaming to be a teacher, but unable to obtain the education necessary. The writer presents her story as one representative of many people living in rural Colombia without the opportunity or means to pursue high education. He couldn't bear to tell the girl his thoughts on the situation, but he writes as the following: "That there is painted our country: We get distracted by the symbol and avoid the real problem, which is lack of opportunities for the

poor."[74] In the *crónica,* he never hesitates to insert his thoughts, and this candid tone contributes to the intimacy that the story has.

The Details

This *crónica* leaves no room for doubt or questioning of the source of information. Salcedo Ramos clearly identifies his sources and tries to make his observations as honest as possible. For example, he credits his guide José with a lot of information, but also specifies additional evidence. "Now, José Manuel Montes explained to me that the deaths on the field were only a part of the disaster. The country has learned later—thanks to the relatives of the victims, the confessions of the executioners, and the rich archive of the press—the details of the massacre."[75]

Here Salcedo Ramos could have easily written, "José Manuel Montes explains…" without the inclusion of "to me." It would have conveyed the same message, but as mentioned in the section on point-of-view, he makes the conscious choice to fully insert himself into the story. The writer also explains the source of the information clearly so that the reader understands the pursuit of truth in the story. Without the text between the hyphens, the reader is left to wonder *how* the country found out the details of the massacre.

Another aspect of the story that builds credibility and vulnerability is the use of complete names. Salcedo Ramos always uses the first and last name of the characters in the *crónica.* Because the text was published after the event had occurred, the writer felt confident in revealing his characters completely. At one point, he lists twelve specific residents and their Sunday routine. From Nubia Urueta boiling corn to Miguel Torres chopping wood with

[74] Ibid., 110.
[75] Ibid., 103.

an axe, Salcedo Ramos presents the characters as real people.[76] He notes that the rest of the residents are inside their houses doing domestic chores, or out tending to their crops. This indicates that he personally spoke to individual residents that he saw outside to learn about his or her identity. Ethically, Salcedo Ramos takes on the controversial role of being the voice to the voiceless, especially for the people in El Salado. The attention to detail in the *crónica* works with the point-of-view and tone to create a vivid and intimate story.

So what about the blurry line between truth and fiction? Salcedo Ramos gives more details than most *cronistas* about the source of his information. He fills his text with interjections of opinions, feelings, and necessary details. From the part of a writer, he could not have presented the story more clearly or bluntly. Again, in second-person, Salcedo Ramos addresses the reader:

> Terrorism, pay attention you, makes the few of us who are still alive look beyond our little worlds that we luckily live in. This is how we know each other, you and I. And here we go together, walking on foot the one hundred and fifty meters that separate the cemetery ground where the martyrs rest. While we advance, I say that maybe the worst part of the abuses is that they leave an unforgettable mark on the collective memory.[77]

Salcedo Ramos makes this story about the reader. As far an intimate *crónica*, he couldn't have done much better. But does the emotional pull and direct address to the reader affect the perception of truthfulness? Is a reader more willing to believe the story if the writer grabs for their conscious and calls them to react to the events? These questions now seem beyond the ability for a scholar to determine. The more blunt and concise a writer is, the more subjective the story becomes. Intimacy may work to pull on the emotions of a reader, but the direct relation to the perception of truthfulness is not so easily determined. Let's look at another text to see if in a different situation, the relationship can be resolved.

---

[76] Ibid., 105.
[77] Ibid., 104.

The *Crónica* about a Man who was Kidnapped by FARC

In the *crónica* "Relato de un secuestrado," Álvaro Sierra details the abduction, captivity, negotiation, and release of a Colombian man by the paramilitary group FARC. He never reveals the name of the kidnapped, and simply refers to him as "nuestro secuestrado" or *the victim.*[78] The story is published not long after the kidnapping occurs, so Sierra purposefully hides his identity to protect the man and his family. At the end of the *crónica,* Sierra reveals that he had sat with the man for over sixteen hours in his house while he recounted details of the story. He also received details from the family of the man, which made the text more of a complete *crónica* instead of being limited to only the point-of-view of the victim, which would be closer to a testimony.

Álvaro Sierra is a renowned Colombian journalist and writer and has been the Editor in Chief for the magazine *Semana* since 2011. He worked before as an independent journalist and travelled to different countries, mostly to cover armed and political conflict.[79] This specific *crónica* was published in the most widely read Colombian newspaper, *El Tiempo* in four separate segments between April 29th and May 2nd, 2001. The Newspaper has an average of 1.1 million readers daily.[80]

The Plot

As mentioned above, this *crónica* was originally published as four separate segments, but in the anthology where it was republished in 2012, the text reads as one complete story.

[78] The phrase literally translates to "our kidnapped man," but because he is never named or identified, we will call him the victim.
[79] World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers, "Alvaro Sierra," Accessed June 5, 2017, http://www.wan-ifra.org/es/events/speakers/alvaro-sierra
[80] Redacción El Tiempo, "Estudio revela que El Tiempo cuenta con más lectores diarios" Accessed June 5, 2017, http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-11783445.

The *crónica* begins with part one: the abduction. From a third-person limited point of view, the narrator describes how the victim first saw his captors and knew that he was at their mercy. The family of this man had been taking precautions and safeguards for their safety, but unfortunately he became one of almost 4,000 people kidnapped in the year 2000.[81] This section describes when the man was put in a vehicle by his captors and then transferred into FARC territory. He knew that he was under FARC control because he had seen Romaña, the infamous leader, at the start.

The second part of the *crónica* is captivity. This section begins with his family receiving a phone call, only after he had been in captivity for three months. This part shows the conditions of the place where he is being held, and gives insight to the young, naïve guerillas that work as guards. The hope of freedom came with the arrival of a horse, which the captives learned meant that either someone was to be relocated for a longer duration (14-16 months), or that the person was being brought to freedom. At the end of the section, the family rejects the possibility of paying one million dollars, but the negotiations have started. This part ends at the fifth month mark of captivity.

The third section is negotiation. The FARC had lowered the demand to only 600 million pesos.[82] They had brought the victim on a three-day horseback ride to be able to speak on the phone. Putting a gun to his head, he was told to convince his family to send the money. After the phone call he was sent back to the camp to be with the others. The hostages were moved an eight-hour trek away to a new location and were each tied to a single tree. The victim sent letters home to his family when a few people were released. In the letters he told

[81] Álvaro Sierra, "Relato de un secuestrado," In *Antologia de crónica latinoamericana actual,* ed. Darío Jaramillo Agudelo, (Madrid: Alfaguara, 2012), 438.
[82] In 2001, the Colombian Peso to United States Dollar exchange rate was approximately 2,000 COL= $1USD, so the amount demanded is equivalent to $300,000 USD.

them to bring the negotiations to the limit and not to pay more than necessary, as he was feeling strong and equipped to survive captivity.

The fourth and final segment of the *crónica* is titled as the release of the victim. He was not aware of the status of the negotiations and was unaware if his release would be soon, or still a long time away. In the next two weeks, five friends were released. He was taken again to speak with his mother for a minute, and he was told that he would be released in three days. During the day, he spent time watching TV with the guards while negotiators from FARC came in and out all day and kept notes on all of the detainees. In notebooks, they had written a starting amount and minimal amount for each hostage, with extra information added with every communication with the relatives. The negotiators demanded that someone come meet them with the money—and the person could not be a relative. The exchange was successful and the kidnapped was officially free again.

The *crónica* finishes with unfortunate news. The kidnapped told Sierra, with a slight tremor, "The only thing that I fear is that they kidnap me again. I don't know if I could resist it again."[83] Sierra then writes, "When this story was completely written, my telephone rang. It was his brother. FARC had called again."[84]

The last sentence in the story reflects the reality during this time. One could take all the precautions in the world, but the paramilitaries, guerillas, and cartels have ways of instilling real fear into all of the people.

The Narrator and Point-of-View

The *crónica* begins with a third person limited point-of-view from the perspective of the kidnapped man. He recognizes the leader of the guerilla group and knows that he is about

[83] Álvaro Sierra, "Relato de un secuestrado," 438.
[84] Ibid., 438.

to be kidnapped. The second segment shifts to the family's perspective as they receive the first phone call from FARC to negotiate a ransom payment. In the third segment, the point-of-view is from the FARC, but not soon after, the narrator become omniscient and reveals all details from different perspectives.

The third-person point-of-view from the limited perspective of the victim details how he felt in custody. "When he saw Romaña, he was numb from the cold of a hypnotizing walk of ten-hour days between marshes and rain as they hiked up to the wasteland [where they were to be held]."[85] For the whole first section, the narrator is limited to the thoughts and feelings of the victims, and the reader is drawn into the suspense of the story. Knowing only what the victim knows creates a different story than an omniscient narrator, which we see later in the *crónica.*

The second segment begins with "when his family received the first phone call, he [the victim] had been in custody for three months and had understood the basic rules of the negotiation…"[86] Right away, we see that the narrator is now on the outside and the inside, knowing about the phone call and the feelings of the victim. This omniscient narrator continues to relate the situation in captivity, with direct quotes from the victim himself. "One begins to look for an answer to 'why me?' Then comes the phase which many cannot get through: one remembers all of the bad things that they have done in their life and remorse gnaws away at them."[87] The victim reveals his feelings directly, not watering down the pain and difficulty of being kidnapped.

The third section narrator dives more into the heads of the family. When a family member is kidnapped, the whole family struggles through the process. The brothers and

[85] Ibid., 427.
[86] Ibid., 429.
[87] Ibid., 430.

parents struggled most through the negotiation, never knowing the limits of "the game." This perspective shows the reader rare insight to a kidnapping. Usually seen from the kidnapper or victim point-of-view, it is easy to forget the hardships that the relatives face, debating when to give in or how much longer to stay strong.

The shifting narrator allows Sierra to tell a complete story and provide information that he would not have been able to with limiting himself to one narrator. Though he rarely inserts his voice into the *crónica*, Salcedo Ramos works to create intimacy by letting the reader enter the world of the story without interruption. Carefully flowing through points-of-view, the reader does not lack information from any side of the story, and is able to feel a connection from knowing the feelings of various characters.

The Tone

The tone of the *crónica* shifts between formal and casual quite fluidly. While some scene descriptions read like a newspaper, most of the text reads like a short story, with adjectives galore, and a strong build of character and scenery. There are many quotations framed with the text "me dijo"—that he or she told me. This specification is the only interruption of the writer that we see throughout the *crónica*.

For example, Sierra writes, "for the family, as one of the brothers told me, 'if the kidnapping was the first hit, the first call was the second: they demanded one million dollars.'"[88] This description keeps Sierra in the story and would not be seen in a typical newspaper article or in a work of fiction. The casual tone is unique to the *crónica* because it would not be accepted in another genre.

[88] Ibid., 429.

The Details

When considering the details, just as with the tone, the *crónica* reads closer to a work of fiction than periodical. Much like a short story, the text includes long paragraphs of description. For example, the second segment includes a complete picture of the victim's daily routine. The schedule revolves around meal times: between 7:30 and 8:00 was breakfast, and between 11:30 and 12:00 was lunch. At 3:00pm was group therapy—a collective prayer for all those in captivity. The information is factual and precise, but unlike a newspaper, the descriptions are subjective and leave room for the reader's imagination.

This *crónica* is much different than the *crónica* of the massacre. This story is not about the writer, Sierra, but about the victim. Sierra never tries to remove himself completely from the story, but he does not want to be the focus. There is no hiding that the work was created through a long interview, but still the writer chooses to distance himself from the text and let the narrator do the talking. This *crónica* may not seem as intimately blunt as the other, but with all of the character and scenery buildup and the plot of a complete story with a beginning and end, this *crónica* contains a different kind of intimacy. Whereas in the other, we were visiting El Salado with Salcedo Ramos, here we are alone as a reader transplanted into the scene of the story.

Still here, no conclusion can be drawn about the perception of truthfulness. For one reader, the first *crónica* may seem the closest to the truth because the writer was so blunt. For another, the subjectivity in Salcedo Ramos' text could cause doubt and Sierra may have more credibility because he is relaying the information and stepping back from the text. Both *crónicas* have room for belief and more room for doubt. Does adding factual sources and

various sources contribute to a perception of truthfulness? Let's look at a text that relies heavily on multiple sources to create a complete work.

The *Crónica* about the Medellín Cartel Kidnappings

The most famous of the *crónicas* we will look at is the book *Noticia de un secuestro* by Gabriel García Márquez, published in 1996 about the 1990 mass kidnappings by Pablo Escobar of the Medellín Cartel. The book was translated and published in English as *News of a Kidnapping* in 1997. In the acknowledgements of the book, García Márquez tells how one of the victims, Maruja Pachón, and her husband Alberto Villamizar, approached him in 1993 and asked if he would write a book about her abduction and captivity, and his tireless effort to secure her release. García Márquez began writing but realized that he couldn't write a story of her kidnapping without detailing events of the nine others that were also abducted. He contacted as many as he could to create a complete story, with everyone having their own identity, and the writing process turned into a three-year journey. García Márquez also acknowledged the help of journalist Luzángela Arteaga for searching for facts, and his cousin and private secretary Margarita Márquez for transcribing and verifying the information with confidentiality.

I believe that the initial approach of Maruja Pachón and her husband would have led to a shorter story, and the book may have been more appropriately labeled a *crónica*, but with the sheer number of protagonists involved, the book's length at almost 300 pages was inevitable. García Márquez wanted to write a beautiful work of literature as well as a true account of the kidnappings, and to do so he needed space to build characters and scenes, and

create imagery to bring the reader into the Colombian countryside to witness the story with him and the characters.

The Plot

The book consists of 11 chapters that rotate points-of-view. Briefly, I will outline the main events of each chapter for a better understanding of quoted text later. The first chapter details the abduction of Maruja Pachón and her sister-in-law and personal assistant, Beatriz. The second, how the first family members found out about the kidnappings. This chapter also introduces others who were kidnapped, including Diana Turbay, the director for a television news program and the daughter of former president Julio César Turbay. Along with her, four members of her news team were captured, along with a journalist from Germany. Nineteen days later, Marina Montoya was abducted from her restaurant, probably "in retaliation for the government's failure to comply with the agreements reached by her brother Germán Montoya and the Extraditables."[89] Four hours after Marina Montoya was abducted, two vehicles stopped the car of Francisco Santos, or Pacho, the editor-in-chief at the Newspaper *El Tiempo.* These are the 10 "bargaining chips" that the drug lords used to negotiate with the government.

Chapter three begins with the conditions of captivity from Maruja's point-of-view. Her and Beatriz were being held in Bogotá in a small house and were under constant watch. The chapter also tells the conditions of Pacho Santos, being held in the same city, and of Diana Turbay and her crew, who were being held in Medellín. Chapter four returns to an outside perspective, moving through different victims' families and their attempts to

[89] Gabriel García Márquez, *News of a Kidnapping,* 31.; the Extraditables was an organization formed in the 1980s by influential Colombian drug lords with the motto "better a grave in Colombia than a prison in the United States."

negotiate. President César Gaviria also attempted to negotiate with the cartel for a release, using protection from extradition a reward for coming forward.

Chapter five moves back towards the captives, and explains that conditions for Maruja and Beatriz had relaxed, but they learned that they would not be getting released in December like they had originally hoped for. In November, one of Diana's crew members, Juan Vitta, was released because of poor health. Two weeks later, the German journalist Hero Buss was released. The only other female in Diana's crew, Azucena Liévano, was released in December, along with Orlando Acecedo, the cameraman. The situation for Maruja, Beatriz, and Marina improved when a doctor came to see them and ordered a better diet and more exercise. They were allowed to go outside in the courtyard to walk daily. At the end of the chapter, guards took Marina away from the house with Maruja and Beatriz. With the narrator only viewing from the inside of the captives' house, the story turns to the outside.

Chapter six begins with the revelation of the first death, kind of—Marina Montoya's body was found dumped north of Bogotá, but she was not identified and buried in a common grave. Indirectly related to the main story, three powerful cartel members, the Ochoa brothers, turned themselves in to serve prison time. Two of Escobar's *compañeros* had been killed, and everyone knew that there would be a reaction. The chapter splits and moves to inside the house of Diana and her other cameraman Richard Becerra, who had been permitted to be held in the same house. Helicopters were above head as police had discovered their location, and in the raid, Diana was shot in the spine. She was airlifted by helicopter but died from loss of blood. At this time Marina Montoya's body was found and identified by her son. News of the two deaths did not make the government or President Gaviria very popular.

Chapter seven returns to the house of Maruja and Beatriz, who have been blocked off from the outside world and hadn't heard about the deaths. One of their guards revealed news that neither wanted to hear: that Diana was dead. Beatriz was the next to be released. She was driven to a neighbourhood in Bogotá and given money to take a taxi home. Maruja and Pacho Santos were the only ones left in captivity. In the eighth chapter, Maruja's husband Alberto travels to Medellín with hopes of speaking to *the* Pablo Escobar to negotiate the release of his wife. He went to visit the Ochoa brothers, who after turning themselves in, had been placed in a maximum-security prison. Alberto travelled back and forth between Bogotá and Medellín talking to the Ochoa brothers and writing letters to Pablo Escobar to encourage him to turn himself in. Escobar had no trust in the government and would not consider that option.

Chapter nine discloses more information of Alberto and Maruja's history together. The chapter is mainly descriptive and also shows the changing dynamics of life in captivity while political turmoil is on the outside. In chapter ten, both Alberto and a famous priest work together to convince Escobar to surrender. Through many written letters and hidden meetings, Escobar finally announces that he will turn himself in.

The eleventh chapter signals the release of both Maruja and Pacho. With Escobar's surrender imminent, both of the hostages were to be freed at last. In the epilogue of the book, Escobar turns himself in under many circumstances defined by him. His time in prison is short, and upon an announcement to transfer him to a different prison, Escobar escapes. Living on the run, he couldn't resist calling his son on the phone. The phone call was tapped and Pablo Escobar was shot and killed in a house in a Medellín neighbourhood. Maruja became the Education Minister two years after her release, and her husband Alberto did not have a job and had no desire to pursue one again.

The book has so many complex story lines that sometimes the plot is difficult to follow. A friend read the book and complained—"it's not enough like a novel and too much like a newspaper." The elements of the text that make it fit into the *crónica* realm is just that. The writer has a strong respect for the truth and uses all resources available to tell this non-fiction story.

The Narrator and Point-of-View

As Robert Sims explains in his analysis on various novels of kidnappings, there are three different options to tell the story. The first is from the exterior, with an extradiegetic narrator that narrates from outside the universe of the text. This narrator is common in fiction works and also in newspapers, when the goal is to maintain objectivity. The second option is from the interior, which is used for an autobiography or a testimony. The third option is a double perspective from the interior and exterior—the hybrid option seen in fiction and journalism. The third option is what García Márquez employs in this text.[90] The whole book is told in the third person point-of-view, but chapters alternate between a viewpoint from within, with details from a kidnapped person, and an outside perspective, with information from family members and newspapers. The narrator from the outside is omniscient and adds details from different sources to fill in every detail. García Márquez works to close the gap between the past and the present by alternating between these two perspectives.[91]

Elzbieta Sklodowska has described this hybrid text as *testimonio noticiero*, or news testimony. In this type of testimony, an editor or writer compiles a group of oral testimonies

[90] Robert L. Sims, "El Molino a secuestro," 56.
[91] Ibid., 54.

while working to diminish his voice in the story.[92] García Márquez uses his platform and network as a writer to compile various testimonial sources along with factual information.

Much like Álvaro Sierra and his *crónica*, García Márquez did not experience any of the events personally, but compiles the words and experiences of others. This distance from the story allows García Márquez to add information from other sources to create a true work of journalism as well as literature, maintaining a credible objectivity in the book.

As mentioned above, the narrator is two-fold and alternates with the chapters. At times, the narrator witnesses the story from the outside, presenting a collection of knowledge from the victims' families, the government, and news sources. This narrator is omniscient on the outside, and reveals every possible detail of the events occurring outside captivity. In the chapters told from the inside, the narrator has a limited viewpoint, from a character such as Maruja or another hostage. This versatility in the narrator creates an omniscient reader—by combining the two narrators, there is no information left unknown.

Defining the exact point-of-view is more problematic than imagined. For example, in a chapter that follows the inside situation of the kidnapped, the narrator reveals, "they had once been the only people who knew she was alive, and now they were the only people not to know she was dead."[93] This omniscient revelation does not come from the perspective of the kidnapped ladies, but instead reveals an all-knowing view. But in another chapter from the inside, the narrator maintains the view of limited knowledge: "what distressed the women most was not being able to compare this information with news from outside."[94]

---

[92] Elzbieta Sklodowska, *Testimonio hispanoamericano: Historia, teoría, poética,* (New York: Peter Lang, 1992), 12.
[93] Gabriel García Márquez, *News of a Kidnapping,* (New York: Vintage, 2011), 154.
[94] Ibid., 162.

The Tone

Compared to the other two *crónicas* that we have looked at, in this text García Márquez maintains a tone that is similar to that of his fiction works. If a reader were unaware that the work were non-fiction, it could be accepted as a novel of fiction.

The tone throughout the book changes to reflect the different points-of-view. In a chapter told from captivity, the narrator is limited, and the tone of the story reflects the immobility of the characters. From the exterior, the tone reflects the frenzy that occurs between the families, the government, and the kidnappers.

Maruja asks about the death of Marina Montoya—specifically if Marina knew that she was going to die. The "Doctor"[95] told her that she didn't know.

> "'They told her they were taking her to another house,' he said with the urgency of someone who wants to be believed. 'They told her to get out of the car, and she kept walking and they shot her in the back of the head. She couldn't have known anything.' The image of Marina with her hood on backward stumbling blindly toward an imaginary house would pursue Maruja through many sleepless nights."[96]

In this passage, the narrator expresses the pain and emotion that Maruja felt while in captivity. She had nowhere to go, and was stuck in the house with only her thoughts to keep her company. The narrator does not reveal how Maruja reacted visibly to hearing this news, but only how she felt inside. The tone here reveals the difficulty that one faces while in captivity.

Sometimes, the tone reflected a critical viewpoint that was common in the mid-20th century *crónica*. "The people of Medellín knew that not all the Extraditables' denunciations of murder and abuse by the police were unfounded, because they witnessed them on the streets, though in most cases there was no official acknowledgement that they had occurred.

---

[95] The doctor who was on call for any medical issues with the captives.
[96] Gabriel García Márquez, *News of a Kidnapping,* 204.

National and international human rights organizations protested, and the government had no credible response."[97] This section reveals the writer's belief that the text should be used to criticize political wrongdoings and social injustices.

He continues to familiarize the story with his fellow Colombians. "Perhaps the most Colombian aspect of the situation was the astonishing capacity of the people of Medellín to accustom themselves to everything, good and bad, with a resiliency that may be the cruelest form courage can take."[98] Here, the tone is more casual and familiar, working to bring in the audience of his Colombian neighbours.

The Details

Being a full-length book, there are many opportunities to expand on details. Still, García Márquez must choose which elements to magnify, and which events should simply be stated and left to stand alone just as they are presented.

In moments of intimacy between characters, García Márquez chooses to expand. For example:

> On the first Sunday of their captivity she [Diana] came into his [Juan Vitta] room in tears and asked if he didn't hate her for not having listened to him. Juan Vitta replied with absolute honesty. Yes he had hated her with all his soul when they were told they were in the hands of the Extraditables, but he had come to accept captivity as a fate that could not be avoided. His initial rancor had also turned into guilt over his inability to talk her out of it.

These feelings and actions between the victims are details that a newspaper could never reveal. They also seem too raw to be described in a short story. Here, real intimacy between the characters invites the reader to feel close to the situation.

In other instances, García Márquez brushes over events without more than a few sentences. For example, "the Extraditables had considered Cartagena an untouchable

[97] Ibid., 179.
[98] Ibid., 180.

sanctuary until September 28, 1989, when an explosion shook the foundations of the Hotel Hilton, blowing out windows and killing two physicians at a convention in session on another floor."[99] This matter-of-factly presented information drastically changed the way that the drug traffickers conducted their business, and the event affected the lives of the kidnapped. But García Márquez decides that no more details are necessary to get across the point of the drastic change.

The details in the text help wind the reader into the story. Possibly more important than the use of detail is the reader. There are two types of readers that experience this text: the Colombian and the rest of the world. For the reader from outside Colombia, the text is representative of the violence that has plagued the country. It contributes to the growing body of literature on narcoculture. For the Colombian, the story reveals few new details that the newspaper and various interviews could not have known.[100] These two different readers reveal that the construction of intimacy in a story is strongly dependent on the reader. For one reader, the text reinforces stereotypes of the events that occur in the country, while for another, the new details can change perspective on an event that was already known as reality.

In an interview, García Márquez was asked, "do the journalist and the novelist have different responsibilities in balancing truth versus the imagination?" He responded, "In journalism just one fact that is false prejudices the entire work. In contrast, in fiction one single fact that is true gives legitimacy to the entire work. That's the only difference, and it lies in the commitment of the writer."[101] He doesn't specify where the work of the *cronistas* lies, but knowing him as a writer, he will be faithful to the truth when presenting a story as a

[99] Ibid., 201.
[100] Robert L. Sims, "El Molino a secuestro," 57.
[101] Gabriel García Márquez, interviewed by Peter H. Stone, "Gabriel García Márquez, The Art of Fiction No. 69" *The Paris Review* 82, Winter 1981.

crónica or non-fiction text. This perspective reveals the thin line between truth and fiction, and reiterates the power that the writer has in deceiving or constructing truth in a text.

Much like the first two *crónicas,* we can see how García Márquez creates intimacy in the text through narrative elements. He remains the most distant of the three writers, but plays with the narrators to create closeness with the reader. The world that he creates chapter after chapter sucks a reader in to follow along with the story. This intimacy is unlike the familiarity that Salcedo Ramos has with his text, or the nearness that Sierra establishes while interjecting with quotes from his interview. The intimacy here relies more on the reader to relate to the text and to imagine themselves transplanted into the story. If the reader has an imagination for that, then the text succeeds in creating intimacy. If not, this text lacks the closeness that the other *crónicas* construct.

Conclusion

After reviewing in depth three exemplary *crónicas*, we can see how specific narrative elements work to construct intimacy in the *crónica.* Just as Juan Rulfo says, "the fundamental characteristic of the journalistic *crónica* is to create images that will concede readers the ability to evoke reality."[102] The narrative choices work together to invite the reader into the story—a story so vivid and picturesque that it seems like reality itself.

The *crónica* will always be a difficult genre to define, and most of the *cronistas* accept that. The writers themselves find themselves perched between two worlds, and take the role of traversing the two very seriously. Encompassing the necessary elements from both journalism and literature into the text ensures that the *crónica* maintains its unique structure. The chosen

[102] Juan Rulfo, *Retales*, (Mexico D.F.: Editorial Terracota, 2006).

stories detail the voice of the voiceless in the context of Colombian violence. With so many narratives appearing from the point of view of the kidnappers, of the killers, of those perpetuating the violence, these *crónicas* fill a void in the story. Allowing the voice of the victim to be heard in such a vulnerable way changes the entire narrative.

These *crónicas* are merely a small portion of the texts that struggle to demand attention to the victims of violence. Their experiences are not rare, and these stories represent wider claims of truth. As seen in Chapter 2, Colombia has struggled with violence for decades. By writing personal stories (in the case of Salcedo Ramos) or attempting to recreate a story of an event from the perspective of the victim (Sierra and García Márquez), these writers use their platforms as a platform for calling out injustice and letting victims be heard.

It is essential to continue the conversation on the fine line between truth and fiction in the *crónica*, and more analysis is necessary to prove which narrative elements can help the genre maintain its ties to the objectivity and truth reflected in journalism. These stories are so widely read that their influence is immediate and colossal. By focusing on narrative elements, one begins to understand the importance of the genre in touching the reader and changing the narrative of cultural trends.

Intimacy in the *crónica* may not be a telling feature of perception of truthfulness, but it does prove the writer's desire to construct it. Through a chosen point-of-view, a designated tone, and the perfect amount of details, a writer can mold text into a beautiful intimate story that will forever be a *crónica.* The perception of truth in this construction of intimacy is unique to each reader, but as long as one feels close to the text, the *cronista* has remained faithful to the genre and successfully conveyed the story.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Salcedo Ramos, Alberto. "El pueblo que sobrevivió a una masacre amenizada con gaitas." In *Antologia de crónica latinoamericana actual,* edited by Darío Jaramillo Agudelo, 101-110. Madrid: Alfaguara, 2012.

Sierra, Álvaro. "Relato de un secuestrado." In *Antologia de crónica latinoamericana actual,* edited by Darío Jaramillo Agudelo, 426-238. Madrid: Alfaguara, 2012.

García Márquez, Gabriel. *Noticia de un secuestro.* New York: Vintage Español, 2011.

Secondary Sources

Arias, Arturo, and David Stoll. *The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

Aren, Fernanda, Fernanda Cano, and Teresita Vernino. "La *Crónica* no ficciónal: La mirada del cronista y el narrador." Question 1, no. 51. (2016): 12-28.

Bacca, Ramón Illán. *Crónicas casi históricas*. Barranquilla, Colombia: Universidad del Norte, 2007.

Ball, Kimberly. "*Facundo* by Domingo F. Sarmiento." in Joyce Moss, and Lorraine Valestuk, *Latin American Literature and Its Times.*" Detroit: Gale Group, (1999): 171-180.

Bielsa, Esperança. *The Latin American Urban Crónica*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006.

Birke, Dorothee, and Tilmann Köppe. *Author and Narrator: Transdisciplinary Contributions to a Narratological Debate.* Berlin, Germany: De Gruyter, 2015.

Calvi, Pablo. "José Martí and the Chronicles That Created Modern Latin America" in *Global Literary Journalism,* edited by Richard Lance Keebler and John Tulloch, 299-316. New York, New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2012.

Caparrós, Martín. "Por la *crónica*," in *Antología de crónica latinoamericana actual*, ed. Darío Jaramillo Agudelo. Madrid, Spain: Alfaguara, 2012.

Carrión, J. "Mejor que real" in *Mejor que ficción: Crónicas ejemplares.* Barcelona, Spain: Anagrama, 2012.

Castillo, Antonio. "The New Latin American Journalistic *Crónica*, Emotions and Hidden Signs of Reality," *Global Media Journal* 9, no. 2, 2015.

Currie, Gregory. *Narratives and Narrators: A Philosophy of Stories.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Darrigrandi, Claudia. "Crónica latinoamericana: algunos apuntes sobre su estudio." *Cuadernos de literature 17,* no. 34 (July 2013): 122-143.

Donoso, José. *Historia personal del "boom"* 1a ed. Santiago, Chile: Alfaguara, 1998.

Eason, David L. "The New Journalism and the Image-World: Two Modes of Organizing Experience," Critical Studies in Mass Communication 1, no. 1, March 1984.

Egan, Linda. *Carlos Monsiváis: cultura y crónica en el México contemporáneo.* Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2004.

García Galindo, Juan Antonio and Antonio Cuartero Naranjo. "La *crónica* en el periodismo narrativo en español." Revista Famecos 23, no 4, 2016.

García Márquez, Gabriel. "La soledad de America Latina." *Nobel Media.* Accessed June 5, 2017, http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1982/marquez-lecture-sp.html

García Niño, Arturo E. "La narconarrativa: Un subgénero literario fronterizo Y binacional." Razón Y Palabra 18, no. 84, 2013.

González, Aníbal. *Journalism and the Development of Spanish American Narrative.* Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

—. *La crónica modernista hispanoamericana.* Madrid: José Porrúa Turanzas, 1983.

—. "Modernismo, *Journalism, and the Ethics of Writing: Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera'a 'La hija del aire'"* in *The Contemporary Mexican Chronicle*. Edited by Ignacio Corona and Beth E. Jörgensen, 157-79. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2002.

García Márquez, Gabriel."Gabriel García Márquez, The Art of Fiction No. 69." By Peter H. Stone. *The Paris Review* 82, Winter, 1981.

Green, W. John. "Guerrilla, Soldiers, Paramilitaries, Assassins, Narcos, and Gringos: The Unhappy Prospects for Peace and Democracy in Colombia," 137-48. Latin American Research Review 40, no. 2, 2005.

Hertz, Sue. *Write Choices: Elements of Nonfiction Storytelling.* Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2016.

Jaramillo Agudelo, Darío. *Antología de crónica latinoamericana actual*. Madrid: Alfaguara, 2012.

LaRosa, Michael, and Germán Mejía P. *Colombia: A Concise Contemporary History.* Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012.

Leñero, Vicente and Carlos Marín. *Manual de periodismo.* Mexico City: Grijalbo, 1986.

Mahieux, Viviane. "The Chronicle." *Oxford Bibliographies.* May 2013. http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199766581/obo-9780199766581-0092.xml#obo-9780199766581-0092-bibItem-0083.

—. *Urban Chroniclers in Modern Latin America: The Shared Intimacy of Everyday Life.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011.

Martí Pérez, José. *Crónicas sociales*. Barcelona, Spain: Linkgua Ediciones, 2008.

Mignolo, Walter. "Cartas, crónicas y relaciones del descubrimiento y la conquista." Historia de la literature hispanoamericana, (1982): 57-116.

Menchú, Rigoberta and Elisabeth Burgos-Debray. *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia.* 1a ed, Mexico: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1985.

Palacios, Marco. *Between Legitimacy and Violence: A History of Colombia, 1875-2002.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

Piñeda Franco, Adela. "The Spanish American *Crónica* Modernista, Temporality, and Material Culture: Modernismo's Unstoppable Presses." Hispanic Review 82, no. 4 (2014): 514-516.

Pratte, Paul A. *Gods Within the Machine: A History of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1923-1993.* Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995.

Puerta, Andrés. "El periodismo narrative o una manera de dejar huella de una sociedad de una sociedad en una época." *Anagramas* 9, no. 18 (2011): 47-60.

Rama, Angel. *La ciudad letrada.* 1a ed. Hanover, NH: Ediciones del Norte, 1984.

Rama, Angel, and David L Frye. *Writing across Cultures: Narrative Transculturation In Latin America.*Durham: Duke University Press, 2012.

Redacción El Tiempo, "Estudio revela que El Tiempo cuenta con más lectores diarios" Accessed June 5, 2017, http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-11783445.

Roberts, William and Fiona Giles. "Analyzing Literary Journalism." Literary Journalism Studies 6 no. 2 (2014): 100-117.

Roldán, Mary. *Blood and Fire: La Violencia In Antioquia, Colombia, 1946-1953*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

Ross, Kathleen. "Translator's Introduction," in Domingo F. Sarmiento, *Facundo, Civilization and Barbarism,* Trans. Kathleen Ross. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press (2003), 17-26.

Rulfo, J. *Retales*. Mexico D.F.: Editorial Terracota, 2009.

Saad, Anuar S. and Simanca Jaime de la Hoz. "La enseñanza del nuevo discurso periodístico en instituciones de educación superior." *Encuentros* 14 no. 2 (2016): 175-190.

Salcedo Ramos, Alberto. "Para escribir *crónicas* hay que tener algo de kamikaze." Revista Mexicana De Comunicacion 24 no. 134 (2013): 17-18.

Schudson, Michael. "The Objectivity Norm in American Journalism." *Journalism 2*, no. 2 (August 2011): 149-170.

Sims, Robert L. "El Molino a secuestro: Narración, violencia y fictualidad en *Noticia de un secuestro* de García Márquez y ¡Secuestrados! La historia por dentro de Juan Vitta." Revista de estudios Colombianos 19 (1999): 54-68.

Sklodowska, Elzbieta. *Testimonio hispanoamericano: Historia, teoría, poética.* New York: Peter Lang, 1992.

Summer, Doris. *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

Tirzo, Jorge. "Nueva? *Crónica* Latinoamericana." Revista Mexicana De Comunicación 24 no. 134 (2013): 12-16.

Tomas, Maximiliano. *La Argentina Crónica. Historias reales de un país al límite.* Buenos Aires, Argentina: Planeta, 2011.

Villoro, Juan. "La *crónica*, ornitorrinco de la prosa." In *Antología de crónica latinoamericana actual,* ed. Darío Jaramillo Agudelo. Madrid, Spain: Alfaguara, 2012.

Weingarten, Marc. *The Gang That Wouldn't Write Straight: Wolfe, Thompson, Didion, Capote & the New Journalism Revolution.* 1st pbk. ed. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2005.

Wolfe, Tom. *The Birth of 'The New Journalism'; Eyewitness Report by Tom Wolfe*. The New York Magazine. February 14, 1972.

World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers. "Alvaro Sierra." Accessed June 5, 2017, http://www.wan-ifra.org/es/events/speakers/alvaro-sierra.

Yanes Mesa, Rafael. “La *crónica*, un género del periodismo literario equidistante entre la información y la interpretación.” *Espéculo: Revista De Estudios Literarios* 32, (March 2006).