

who copied the signature” —are the same in both versions. Tossing her head, humming to herself, just as full of mischief, of life, Nora is no “sweeter” in the draft than she is in the play. As Ibsen, following his normal working routine, honed his draft to perfection, the final Nora, biting into macaroons, chiding her husband for his pettiness, and desperately talking up Dr. Rank, is not a new Nora but a more fully realized one. It was not Nora whom Ibsen worsened in the final version but, and notoriously so, Torvald. It is not true that Ibsen “deepened all the other roles [besides Nora]”; on the contrary, he simplified Torvald’s character so thoroughly that, in Koht’s words, “we can hardly take him seriously.” The final text of *A Doll House* is not less but more feminist than the draft, as Nora’s antagonist is consistently blackened; the most celebrated change from a draft to a fair copy in all of Ibsen’s works is the following: “You’re saved, Nora! You’re saved!” becomes “I’m saved, Nora! I’m saved!” And of the additions Ibsen made to strengthen Nora as a representative of women, I have the space to cite only one, the famous painful epiphany:

Torvald: Nobody gives up honor for love.

Nora: Hundreds of thousands of women have done it.

Rosenberg argues that when Ibsen presents Nora as “selfish, frivolous, seductive, unprincipled, and deceitful” he achieves art. But these adjectives, which are Torvald’s, constitute not only an inaccurate description of the loving and resourceful wife but a list of the characteristics of a stereotype, the femme fatale. Rosenberg adds, “Talk about principle! But do any great dramatic characters stick unwaveringly to principle?” Well, yes, some do, although Nora isn’t one of them; Antigone and Alceste come to mind at once. But principle is just what I *don’t* talk about in my essay; Nora, in fact, suspects principles, and at the end of the play she has learned how right she was. Rosenberg, like the critics I discuss in my essay, makes the question-begging claim that Nora cannot be taken seriously because she is flawed, an argument that can only qualify as silly; do Brand’s or Peer Gynt’s flaws keep us from considering those characters seriously? Like Nora’s husband, Rosenberg wants Nora to be a cunning, mysterious little “female.” He even suggests that Nora could have saved her marriage had she stayed home to “reform the husband she has so well managed” or, incomprehensibly, that she could have had Torvald “carted off to an asylum,” like Strindberg’s “clever wife” in *The Father*. The sexual dynamics of *The Father* are not as simple as Rosenberg thinks, and Strindberg makes Laura rather stupid. In any case, the asylum that has relevance to *A Doll House* is the one to which Nora’s original, Laura Petersen Keiler, was carted off by her husband.

While Torvald and Rosenberg like Nora to be dishonest, they also castigate her for not listening to her “woman’s conscience” and staying home with her chil-

dren. The notion that Nora should be at once her husband’s frivolous playmate and a competent mother of his children is Ibsen’s dramatization of the contradiction inherent in the notion of the “woman’s sphere,” in which woman is not deemed fit for the real world but held responsible for rearing children to live in it. Ibsen refuses to separate Nora as mother from Nora as wife because he is identifying the whole source of her oppression, the belief in a “female nature,” an immutable thing-in-itself whose proper sphere is domestic wifehood and whose essence is maternity. The “vision of service” that Rosenberg finds lacking in Nora is what she slams the door on.

The famous last stage direction is the final flourish in the play’s exposure of the foolishness of sequestering women from the world’s work. Here are not two Ibsens, the playwright versus the thinker, but, in Eric Bentley’s term, “the playwright as thinker.” Ibsen was never better. Upon finishing *A Doll House*, he wrote to his publisher, “I cannot remember any work of mine that gave me so much satisfaction during the working out of the details as this one has.” He remained the painstaking artist as he took the woman’s part.

JOAN TEMPLETON

Long Island University, Brooklyn Center

Charges and Countercharges

To the Editor:

I have heard now and then that academic debates have an intensity that is part of the territory, so to speak. Presumably that expectation enables us to toss off some of the cruder and more vulgar aspects of charge and countercharge.

Nonetheless, there are moments when the stretch is more than one can manage, as it is for me in the letter of Janet Adelman et al. concerning Richard Levin’s article on feminist thematics (104 [1989]: 77–79). Even a fairly healthy sense of humor fails one at the suggestion that a colleague should not be allowed to have a successful academic career or to have his thoughts see the light of day if he sees fit to raise questions concerning internal consistencies among certain (or is it any?) feminist theorists.

That Levin’s essay is dismissed as “tired, muddled, unsophisticated” is, I suppose, a small thing here, but it is hard to keep from rubbing one’s eyes when the signers see fit to describe their own work as nothing less than “energetic, cogent, sophisticated.” There is a certain symmetry to be sure; nonetheless, energy, cogency, and sophistication are not exactly the first qualities that leap to mind when one reads their letter, their assurances to the contrary notwithstanding.

I would hope that *PMLA* will somehow see its way

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

ELIZABETH COLEMAN
Bennington College

Interview with Gabriel García Márquez

To the Editor:

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

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

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

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

ELIZABETH JANE HINDS
University of Tulsa

Reply:

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

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

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

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

RAYMOND LESLIE WILLIAMS
University of Colorado, Boulder