Challenges and Perspectives of Iberia and Beyond

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Edited by

Mark Gant, Deirdre Kelly, Siân Edwards and Susana Rocha Relvas

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

REPRESENTATIONS OF MAGICAL REALISM IN THE IBERO-AMERICAN CONTEXT. BIBLICAL REFERENCES AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ AND JOÃO DE MELO

MIRTA SANTOS FERNÁNDEZ

> Like a stream of underground water that flows through a labyrinthine network of passages, reality also branches out into countless paths that advance, intersecting, joining and separating, becoming entangled. And what we judge to be realis nothing but a mere abstraction of all this interweaving.
>
> —Haruki Murakami, *The city and its uncertain walls*

Introduction

Magical realism is a literary movement that originated in Latin America in the 1960s.Numerous critics agree that today, it is not just a literary phenomenon exclusive to the Latin-American subcontinent but has become "the literary language of the emerging postcolonial world" (Homi Bhabha 1990, cited by Hart and Ouyang2010). From this perspective, contemporary writers such as Haruki Murakami, Günter Grass, Salman Rushdie, Milan Kundera, José Saramago and João de Melo, among others, are considered, in their respective countries, exponents of this literary movement that reflects "a modified reality"(Roh1925) from which strange, marvellous, magical or mythical elements emerge, coexisting harmoniously with the real plane of action.In the alternate universes crafted by the authors of magical realism, episodes from the Bible are often reimagined, highlighting the significant influence that readings of this classic text have had on shaping their literary works.The Colombian

author, Gabriel García Márquez, and the Portuguese writer, João de Melo, both publicly acknowledged the influence of the Bible on their literary texts (Wahnón 2021; Paganini 1998).The aim of this chapter is to present the results of a comparative analysis ofGarcíaMárquez's*OneHundred Years of Solitude*(*Cienaños de soledad, 1967)* and de Melo's *My World Is Not of This Kingdom*(*O meu mundonão é destereino, 1987*),drawing on the Bible as a point of convergence of the fantastic worlds created by both writers in their most emblematic novels.

The geographical-cultural scope of the concept "magical realism"

The term "magical realism" was introduced into Hispano-American literary criticism by Arturo Uslar Pietri, inspired by a brief earlier study by Franz Roh.[2]In*Letters and Men ofVenezuela*,whichis based on the analysis of Venezuelan stories published in the 1930s and 1940s, Pietri states:

> Lo que vino a predominar en el cuento y a marcar su huella de una manera perdurable fue la consideración del hombre como misterio en medio de datos realistas. Una adivinación poética o una negación poética de la realidad. Lo que a falta de otra palabra podría llamarse un realismo mágico. (Uslar Pietri 1948, 162)[3]

In the article "MagicalRealism in Spanish-American Fiction" (Flores 1955),[4] which is considered the foundational study on the history of magical realism and which is the result of a lecture of the same name given by the author in 1954, this movement is defined as "the naturalisation of the real" and is linked to European authors (such as Marcel ProustandFranzKafka) and Latin-American ones (such as Jorge

[2]The German art critic Franz Roh (1890-1965) was the first to use the term "magical realism" (*magischer Realism*) in an essay to describe a new trend in pictorial art that evidenced a modified reality. The term, which had a great impact on the artistic field, entered the Spanish language thanks to Ortega y Gasset's translation of Roh's essay in 1927, in a text published in the *Revista de Occidente.*

[3] "What came to predominate in the story and to leave its mark in a lasting way was the consideration of man as a mystery in the midst of realistic data. A poetic divination or a poetic denial of reality. What for lack of another word could be called magical realism" (Uslar Pietri 1948, 162).

[4] This article was republished in 1995 in the book *Magical Realism. Theory, History, Community*, edited by Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris (Duke University Press).

Luis BorgesandJuan José Arreola). According to Anderson Imbert (1975, 2), in 1959, Flores replaced the term "magical realism" with "fantastic literature", since for him both concepts are synonymous, which explains the inclusion of the above-mentioned authors in his analysis.

For this reason, Luis Leal expresses his absolute disagreement with the theory expounded by Flores and presents an alternative to it in his article "Magical Realism in Spanish American Literature" (1967), coming closer to the formula "supernaturalisation of the real" (Chiampi1980, 25). Leal conceives magical realism as a movement and an attitude towards reality:

> El escritor mágicorrealista no crea mundos imaginarios en los que podamos refugiarnos para evitar la realidad cotidiana. En el realismo mágico, el escritor se enfrenta a la realidad y trata de desentrañarla, para descubrir lo que hay de misterioso en las cosas, en la vida, en las acciones humanas. (Leal 1967, 232-233)[5]

In his list of magical realist writers, Leal includes Latin-American authors such as Uslar Pietri, Miguel Ángel Asturias, Alejo Carpentier andJuanRulfo and excludes Europeans,as he argues that magical realism does not aim to create imaginary worlds, such as those created by Franz Kafka, for example, but rather "to penetrate deeply into reality to unravel the mysteries that are hidden in it" (Mena 1975, 397). Thus, Leal disassociates this movement from fantasy literature, as well as from psychological literature and surrealism.He relates it, instead, to the concept of "the marvellous real" proposed by Carpentier, and states that: "The existence of the *marvellous real* is what has given rise to the literature of magical realism" (Leal 1967, 233).

Indeed, the definition and theoretical formulation of magical realism, already complex operations, are further complicated by the emergence of the expression "the marvellous real" in 1948. Carpentier created and disseminated this concept for the first time inaCaracas newspaper *El Nacional*; this text, which was republished the following year in Mexico as the prologue to his novel *El reino de estemundo,*[6]was soon considered the

[5] "The magical realist writer does not create imaginary worlds in which we can take refuge to avoid everyday reality. In magical realism, the writer faces reality and tries to unravel it, to discover what is mysterious in things, in life, in human actions" (Leal 1967, 232-233).

[6]Carpentier republished the essay in 1964, in his book *Tientos y Diferencias*, under the title "De lo real maravilloso americano", which helped to dispel any doubts by placing the new movement in a specific geographical context: the American continent.

foundingmanifesto of a new Latin-American literature that wished to free itself from European tutelage:

> Carpentier believes (1) that there is a literature of the "marvellous", European in origin, which refers to supernatural events; (2) that the American reality is more "marvellous" than that literature, and, as a result, one must refer to "that which is marvellously real in America"; (3) that the "marvellously real" of America can be transposed to literature only on the condition that writers believe that, in truth, America is "really marvellous " (or "marvellously real"). (Anderson Imbert 1975, 3)

Thus, from the late 1940s onwards, the concept of "the marvellous real" began to circulate in scholarly circles, in parallel with that of "magical realism", which only reinforced the ambiguity of the term and, in addition, fuelled the debate about the existence and scope of the boundaries between both schools and fantastic literature:

> La confusión acerca de la naturaleza del realismo mágico radica, precisamente, en que lo que intuimos por realismo mágico se mueve dentro de términos tan nebulosos como lo fantástico, lo maravilloso, lo mágico, lo sobrenatural. Por consiguiente, la mayor dificultad con que tropezamos reside en la definición de los términos. (Mena 1975, 402)[7]

This discussion is especially pertinent when trying to extrapolate magical realism from its original framework (Hispanic America, mid-twentieth century) to other geographical settings and to the twenty-first century. It raises the following question, among others: is magical realism a worldwide phenomenon or should we speak, in each cultural context, of different manifestations of the fantastic? Obviously, answering this key question goes beyond the objectives of this work and would perhaps be a sterile task because, as Louis Vax (1965) points out, trying to define fantastic literature is a risky endeavourthat even great specialists have given up on, including the editors of*TheChecklistofFantastic Literature*, a fundamental work in this area. However, the theoretical propositions set forth by Tzvetan Todorov in his *Introduction to Fantastic Literature* (1972) contribute to defining the limits of the fantastic and therefore help to understand the consonances and dissonances between this genre and magical realism.

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[7] "The confusion about the nature of magical realism lies precisely in the fact that what we understand as magical realism moves within such nebulous terms as the fantastic, the marvellous, the magical, the supernatural. Consequently, the greatest difficulty we encounter lies in the definition of the terms" (Mena 1975, 402).

According to Todorov (1972), the fantastic requires the coexistence of a supernatural phenomenon and an element of doubt. This uncertainty, in the face of events that escape natural laws, affects the characters and the reader, but also the narrator, who, far from impassivity and omniscience, enters a territory of ambiguity that makes him question his own perceptions. Sometimes, however, the bewilderment fades away at the end of the story, when the narrator offers a rational explanation of what both the reader and the characters considered superhuman. Thus, the text moves from the atmosphere of the fantastic to that of the strange. Both have the supernatural element in common and differ in terms of the degree of knowledge of the narrator, who masks himself in the sphere of the bizarre, to surprise the reader at the end.

Todorov adds a third category to his taxonomy: "the marvellous". In this territory, the fantasticelements do not generate astonishment or surprise in the characters, the reader, or the narrator. The latter,from his omniscient perspective, adopts a prophetic and imperturbable tone. Although the narrative universe of the marvellous is built from a series of presuppositions that, of course, conflict with the laws of the natural world (as happens, for example, in fairy tales), the narrator and the narratee enterintoan atmosphere that "absorbs the supernatural, the strange and the surprising, within the normal flow of its natural laws" (Mena 1975, 405).Therefore, there is a high degree of correspondence between the concept of "magical realism" proposed by Franz Roh and the notion of"the marvellous" proposed by Carpentier and Todorov. For the latter, "the marvellous", as only one of the many ways of representing "the supernatural", is categorically opposed to both "the fantastic" and "the strange".

However, despite their tangential points, the terms "magical realism" and "marvellous realism" are not synonymous. "The marvellous" is only one of the fundamental elements of "magical realism," a component that *per se* is not enough to define it. Another ingredient that permeates magical realist writing is a thematic focus on American reality, with an emphasis on its myths and its primeval nature that, at a certain point in history, merged with the cosmogony and classical, Judeo-Christian myths that arrived from Europe, and which have subsequently transferred to literary discourse. This cultural fusion, together with the international impact that the work of traditionally magical realist writers—such as Juan Rulfo, Gabriel García Márquez and Carlos Fuentes—have had since the 1960s, has promoted a new methodological perspective that aims to investigate magical realism as a phenomenon of world literature, and not limited to the Hispanic-American subcontinent.

This is the approach of the present chapter,whichaims to find points of confluence between two authors (Gabriel García Márquez and João de Melo) and two magical realist works (*One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *My World Is NotofThis Kingdom*) from the Ibero-American space (Colombia and Portugal).The purpose of the analysis is to investigate the possible existence—within the literary phenomenon of world literature—of a sub-current of "Ibero-American magical realism", which would bring together the magical realist production of authors from the Hispanic world, but also from Portugal and Brazil, countries that have a partially shared cultural heritage.

João de Melo, born in 1949 on the island of São Miguel (Azores), was reluctant in his first interviews to acknowledge similarities between his work and the Hispano-American literature of the Boomof which Gabriel García Márquez was one of the main exponents. De Melo even went so far as to coin an alternative category to that of magical realism, which he called "the ethno-fantastic", in his attempt to differentiate between both geographical and cultural contexts. In his own words, "the ethno-fantastic"is based on two fundamental pillars that, in some way, particularised it: the Portuguese popular fantasy genre and the Catholic religion (Araújo Branco2008).However, over time, he ended up accepting and openly recognising, in interviews and in articles he wrote, the importance of Latin-American authors (and also the Bible) in shaping his style:

> A vertente latino-americana, o chamado "realismo mágico", [operou] uma influência muito forte em mim e também em muitos escritores da minha geração. […] O realismo mágico latino-americano foi apenas um impulso para a descoberta do nosso próprio realismo mágico português que é muito antigo, vem desde os românticos. Nos Açores, o realismo mágico tem uma aplicação muito particular. Na minha infância, uma avó contava sempre aquelas histórias de almas que voltavam do outro mundo para virem visitar os vivos, mortos que ressuscitavam na porta dos cemitérios. Todos esses milagres e prodígios associados à extrema religiosidade do açoriano e também aos fenômenos sísmicos e vulcânicos das ilhas, tudo isso moldou em mim um imaginário em literatura muito próximo do imaginário latino-americano. (Paganini 1998, n/p)[1]

[1] "A Latin-American perspective, called "magical realism", [had] a very strong influence on me and also on many writers of the last generation. […] Latin-American magical realism was just an impulse to discover our own Portuguese magical realism that is very old, seen from the romantics. In *Açores*, magical realism has a very particular application. In my childhood, I always have those stories of souls that return to the other world to visit the living, the dead that are

Ultimately, after some resistance, most likely due to anxiety about influence (Bloom 1997), João de Melo ends up admitting that his work falls within magical realism. This "confession" contributes to reinforcing the hypothesis that the tentacles of this literary movement are transnational and transcultural, but at the same time they share, in the Ibero-American scene, certain elements, such as the importance of local folklore, popular mythology and the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Biblical resonances in Ibero-American magical realism

One of the most important elements in the shared cultural legacy of the countries of the Ibero-American context is, in fact, the Judeo-Christian tradition, which arrived in America at the end of the fifteenth century and soon merged with the cosmogony, myths and beliefs of the native peoples. The confluence of both imaginaries, a direct consequence of the colonial past, gave rise to a mixed worldview that has nourished - for centuries and up to the present day - the ingenuity of a large group of Latin-American authors, creating bridges between literature, philosophical thought, mythology and religion.

In this fertile exchange, the Bible, an emblematic book of Judeo-Christian culture, stands as a fundamental text, which has been imitated, reinterpreted andcorrupted throughout the history of modern and contemporary Latin-American literature, according to the periods, schools or style, interests and convictions of the authors themselves, giving rise to imbrications, ambiguities, porosities, new readings and deconstructions. The impact that this work has hadon influencing thought, and even on the history of Latin America, cannot be denied:

> La Biblia, como estandarte, sigue conformando un manantial de historias, personajes y pensamiento teológico fecundo como corpus creativo y artístico de indudable trascendencia. Sorprende en sus formas de aplicación, en los sentidos que acoge y en la forma en que voces y estéticas tan desemejantes recurren a esta corriente religiosa y espiritual como modo de interrogar la propia realidad social y sus contextos culturales en el ámbito hispanoamericano. (Cervera Salinas & Saura-Clares 2024, 2)[2]

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resurrected in two cemeteries. All these miracles and prodigies associated with the extreme religiosity of the *Açorian* people and also the seismic and volcanic phenomena of the islands, all are moulded in my own imagination in literature very close to the Latin-American imagination" (Paganini 1998, n/p).

[2]"The Bible, as an emblem, continues to serve as a source of stories, characters and fertile theological thought as a creative and artistic corpus of undoubted

Regarding the influence of the biblical text on Ibero-American magical realism, the previous section referred to the extreme religiosity of the Azorean people as one of the essential ingredients of the "ethno-fantastic" character of the narrative of the Portuguese writer João de Melo.The novel *My World Is Not of This Kingdom*is a paradigmatic example of this writer's style, as it is replete with references to the Bible.An attentive reader may detect intertextualities between Melo's novel and *OneHundredYears of Solitude*, the most emblematic work of Gabriel García Márquez and of all magical realism. Indeed, the main point of intersection between the two novels is the predominant role of religion and the profusion of biblical references (from the Old and the New Testament).Other similarities are evident in both texts such asan emphasis on themesofisolation and progress, the prophetic and imperturbable tone of the narrator and the all-encompassing nature of the plot.

Indeed, religious and, more specifically, biblical motifs are a constant in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, to the extent that, as Wahnón (2021, 37) states, for many years it was common to refer to this novel as "a new Bible" or even "The Bible of Latin America". From a strictly hermeneutical point of view, the author Carlos Fuentes—a personal friend of the Colombian writer—was the first to notice this intertextual affinity.In an article published in the Mexican magazine *Siempre*in 1966, even before the novel's publication, Fuentes characterised it as "an almost biblical story" (Fuentes 1966).

For his part, Eligio García Márquez, the Colombian writer's brother, points out that García Márquez, while still immersed in the writing process, described his novel to his friend José Font Castro in the following terms: "I am writing the greatest novel of all time. It is something like the Bible" (E. García Márquez 2001, 609).Furthermore, like João de Melo, García Márquez often explicitly mentioned the biblical text when asked, in interviews, about the works that had most influenced his own narrative and literary formation. In his conversations with PlinioApuleyo Mendoza (1982),García Márquez again referred to the sacred text of the Judeo-Christian tradition, including it among "the most important novels that had been written since the beginning of humanity" (Apuleyo Mendoza 1982, 52). Likewise, a year later, in his memoirs, collected under the title *Living to Tell the Tale*(*Vivir para contarla*, 2002), in the chapter dedicated to his

significance. It surprises in its forms of application, in the meanings it embraces and in the way in which such disparate voices and aesthetics resort to this religious and spiritual creed as a means of questioning social reality itself and its cultural contexts in the Hispano-American area" (Cervera Salinas and Saura-Clares 2024, 2).

university years, he explains an unpublished biographical detail: his profound and unusual knowledge of the Bible, fostered by the influence of a classmate named Jorge Álvaro Espinosa who taught him to "navigate the Bible" to the point of making him learn "by heart the full names of Job's followers" (García Márquez 2002, 295).

Starting from the premise that "the book of books" was one of the main models for both *OneHundredYears of Solitude* and *My World Is NotofThis Kingdom*, as attested by the authors and also in accordance with the conclusions of the critics, the foundations are laid and the relevance of the comparative analysis presented below is justified. Since the biblical references are so profuse in both novels, it is logically unfeasible to mention and analysethemin their entirety, as undertaking such a task would imply far exceeding the objectives of this chapter, and, above all, the space available.Thus, following Ricardo Gullón's (1973) proposal for the study of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, this chapter focuses on references to the five great symbols or myths that give both novels their idiosyncratic biblical character, namely**:** Genesis, Exodus, Plagues,theGreatFlood, and the Apocalypse,in addition toan analysis of one of the several miracles**,**descriptions of whichenableintertextual parallels in both novels.

Genesis

Both works begin with the founding of a town—Macondo and Nossa Senhora Senhora do Rozário da Achadinha, respectively, places until then uninhabited by man—thereby alluding to the story of Creation contained in The Book of Genesis (the first book of the Hebrew Bible and the Christian Old Testament):

> Macondo era entonces una aldea de veinte casas de barro y cañabrava construidas a la orilla de un río de aguas diáfanas que se precipitaban por un lecho de piedras pulidas, blancas y enormes como huevos prehistóricos. El mundo era tan reciente, que muchas cosas carecían de nombre, y para mencionarlas había que señalarlas con el dedo.(García Márquez 2007, 9)[3]
> Naquele tempo, a freguesia de Nossa Senhora do Rozário não era mais do que uma caganita de mosca, à qual se apontasse um dedo acima do dorso quase sempre verdoso do oceano Atlântico […]. Era no tempo em que as

[3] "Macondo was then a village of twenty houses made of mud and cane built on the banks of a river with clear waters that rushed down a bed of polished stones, white and enormous like prehistoric eggs. The world was so recent that many things lacked names, and to mention them you had to point at them with your finger" (García Márquez 2007, 9).

> pedras tinham a configuração e o tamanho de ovos de dinossauro […] Tudo ali mantinha ainda o selo remoto e perpétuo da água, pois as próprias crateras vulcânicas […] apresentavam as arestas limadas pelo torno das grandes chuvas, datando todas elas do tempo do patriarca Noé […]. Quanto aos seres e às coisas, repousavam esquecidos dentro do útero da insónia, sem passado nem história, simples criaturas vigiadas até à nudez cadaverosa e fria da natureza e do mundo. (Melo 2015, 11-13)[4]

Gabriel García Márquez gives an Arcadian description of Macondo as a newly created world in which language did not even exist. This is an evident allusion to the Garden of Eden where, first God and then Adam were in charge of giving names to the things that were found there. The virginal character of this world is reinforced by the presence of the phrase "prehistoric eggs" to describe the large stoneson the riverbank.

By contrast, João de Melo's description is much less Edenic. In fact, it is even somewhat eschatological, but it also refers to the primeval condition of the place, with a direct mention of the patriarch Noah and an indirect one to the times of the universal flood. The phrase "dinosaureggs"is striking, because it is very similar to that used by García Márquez. This strengthens the links between the texts. However,as Gonçalves (2002) rightly points out, the gothic character of the description of the town ofNossa Senhora do Rozário and its people confusethose apparently initiatory times with those announced in the Apocalypse, as if beginning and end were indistinct in that fictional universe.

Also in the first chapter of Melo's novel, another passage clearly refers to Genesis:

> […] e assim percorreram os seis dias da criação do mundo. Ao sétimo, tal como o fizera Deus, lavaram o suor dos primeiros dias, comeram pão ázimo com peixes azuis e frutos das figueiras e foram à procura do corpo ardente das suas mulheres. Ao beber o néctar amoroso dessa noite, comeram a maçã do paraíso, amaram a serpente sem olhar, receberam a mordedura da sua saliva e não mais quiseram saber se tal veneno era

[4] "At that time, the parish of Nossa Senhora do Rozário was nothing more than an insignificant speck of fly excrement, which we could point out with a finger on the almost always green back of the Atlantic Ocean [...]. It was the era when the rocks had the shape and the size of dinosaur eggs [...] Everything there still retained the remote and perpetual seal of water, since the volcanic craters themselves [...] had their edges filed by the lathe of the great rains, and all dated from the time of the patriarch Noah [...]. As for human beings and things, they rested forgotten in the womb of insomnia, with no past or history, mere creatures watched over until the cadaverous and cold nakedness of nature and world" (Melo 2015, 11-13).

> também o vinho dos mortos. Apenas tinham a certeza de ser novamente filhos dos homens, capazes de crescer e se multiplicar como os dias. (Melo 2015, 16)[5]

The above fragment conveystwo episodes from the foundational book of the Bible: on the one hand, the creation of the world in seven days and, on the other, the original sin, through the allegory of the serpent and the apple, to whose temptation men succumb, thus making themselves deserving of divine punishment. Through deconstruction, Melosacrilegiously equates the behaviour of men with that of God in his version of Creation.

Exodus

In both novels,there are also references to Exodus, the second book of the Old Testament, which escribes the forty-year pilgrimage undertaken by the people of Israel in search of the land that Yahweh had promised them. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, a group of men, women and children led by José ArcadioBuendía leave Riohacha, their hometown, embarking on a wandering pilgrimage in search of a land that no one had promised them, unlike the disciples of Yahweh:

> Fue así como emprendieron la travesía de la sierra. Varios amigos de José Arcadio Buendía, jóvenes como él, embullados con la aventura, desmantelaron sus casas y cargaron con sus mujeres y sus hijos hacia la tierra que nadie les había prometido. […] Sin embargo, la noche en que acamparon junto al río, las huestes de su padre tenían un aspecto de náufragos sin escapatoria, pero su número había aumentado durante la travesía y todos estaban dispuestos (y lo consiguieron) a morirse de viejos. José Arcadio Buendía soñó esa noche que en aquel lugar se levantaba una ciudad ruidosa con casas de paredes de espejo. Preguntó qué ciudad era aquella, y le contestaron con un nombre que nunca había oído, que no tenía significado alguno, pero que tuvo en el sueño una resonancia sobrenatural: Macondo. Al día siguiente convenció a sus hombres de que nunca encontrarían el mar. Les ordenó derribar los árboles para hacer un claro

[5]"[…] and thus, they retraced the six days of the creation of the world. On the seventh day, as God did, they washed away the sweat of the first few days, ate unleavened bread with blue fish and the fruit of the fig tree, and went in search of the burning bodies of their women. While drinking the amorous nectar of that night, they ate the forbidden fruit, loved the snake without looking, received the reptile´s bite and did not care if that poison was also the wine of dead people. They were only sure that they were again sons of men, capable of growing and multiplying like the days" (Melo 2015, 16).

> junto al río, en el lugar más fresco de la orilla, y allí fundaron la aldea. (García Márquez 2007, 33-35)[6]

The above passage highlights the author's irony regarding God's silence, which can be interpreted as a deflection from the biblical text. However, the Buendía family's adventure is described as a "journey through the mountains", in a clear allusion to the Hebrew people's journey through the desert. Furthermore, before deciding to found the village in that place, the "patriarch" of the Buendía family had a dream, which again refers to a biblical episodealsocontainedin Genesis: the patriarch Jacob also heard in his dream a voice indicating that the place where he was lying down was "the appropriate one to establish the *House of God*" (Gullón 1973, 52).

Similarly, in Melo's novel, those who lived inNossa Senhora Senhora do Rozário—just like the first inhabitants of Macondo—had arrived from another place, from beyond the seas, as "nomads" and "castaways":

> Passara já mais de um século sobre o descobrimento da Ilha, quando a grande cratera vulcânica da região recebeu os primeiros nómadas do mar […]. Quando ali chegaram, não eram mais do que gente faminta, muito rasgada, que perdera a memória dos lugares, para logo se agradar daquela terra-nova de salvação a que eles chegavam agora como náufragos. Um dia, guiados pelo altivo capitão Diogo Deniz Faria de Paes, […] pisaram as terras do Pesqueiro, instalaram-se em tendas e furnas, formando em cunha contra os ventos, e ali fundaram a freguesia.(Melo 2015, 13)[7]

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[6]"This is how they set out to cross the mountains. Several friends of José Arcadio Buendía, young men like him, excited by the adventure, dismantled their houses and took their wives and children to the land that no one had promised them. […] However, the night they camped by the river, his father's troops looked like shipwrecked people with no way out, but their number had increased during the crossing, and they were all ready (and they succeeded) to die of old age. José Arcadio Buendía dreamed that night that in that place a noisy city was rising with houses with mirrored walls. He asked what that city was, and they answered with a name he had never heard, that had no meaning, but that had a supernatural resonance in the dream: Macondo. The next day he convinced his men that they would never find the sea. He ordered them to cut down the trees to make a clearing by the river, in the coolest place on the shore, and there they founded the village" (Garcia Marquez 2007, 33-35) .

[7] "More than a century had passed since the discovery of the island, when the great volcanic crater of the region welcomed the first sea nomads [...]. When they arrived there, they were merely hungry people, very rude, who had lost the memory of the places and felt an immediate attraction for this new land of salvation to which they now arrived as castaways. One day, guided by the pompous captain Diogo Deniz Faria de Paes, [...] they set foot for the first time on

Unlike the people of Macondo, they no longer remember where they came from, a circumstance that contributes to the porosity and temporal imprecision of Melo's novel. The inhabitants of the small Azorean village also arrived on that coast guided by a leader, Captain Diogo Deniz Faria de Paes, who was in the service of the King and who, unlike José Arcadio, died shortly after his arrival.

Both passages end with the founding of a town. However, in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the initiative comes from the "patriarch" José Arcadio Buendía, while inNossaSenhoradoRozário it is a collective decision: the nomadic wanderersare fascinated by that "new land of salvation".In the two novels, the parallelism established with the myths of the first two books of the Bible is not only thematic, but also structural; that is, both narratives follow the order established in the biblical text: first there is an allusion to the creation of the fictional space (Genesis) and immediately afterwards, to the journey and settlement of wanderers in the new territory (Exodus). This shared textual arrangement reinforces the intertextualitybetween the three works.

Plagues

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the biblical plagues are portrayedin the plot through the "plague of insomnia", which, as itworsens, brings with it the consequent and more serious "plague of forgetfulness":

> Una noche, por la época en que Rebeca se curó del vicio de comer tierra […], pasmada de terror, atribulada por la fatalidad de su destino, Visitación reconoció en esos ojos los síntomas de la enfermedad cuya amenaza los había obligado, a ella y a su hermano, a desterrarse para siempre de un reino milenario en el cual eran príncipes. Era la peste del insomnio. […] La india les explicó que lo más temible de la enfermedad del insomnio no era la imposibilidad de dormir, pues el cuerpo no sentía cansancio alguno, sino su inexorable evolución hacia una manifestación más crítica: el olvido. (García Márquez, 2007, 56)[8]

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the lands of Pesqueiro, settled in tents and *furnas* (caves), faced the winds and founded the parish there" (Melo 2015, 13).

[8]"One night, around the time that Rebecca was cured of her habit of eating dirt […], stunned with terror, afflicted by the fatality of her destiny, Visitaciónrecognised in those eyes the symptoms of the illness whose threat had forced her and her brother to banish themselves forever from an ancient kingdom in which they were princes. It was the plague of insomnia. […] The Indian woman explained to them that the most fearful thing about the illness of insomnia was not the inability to sleep, since the body did not feel any fatigue, but its inexorable

As suggested in the novel, the plague of insomnia is brought to Macondo by Rebeca, an orphan girl adopted by the Buendía family. The Indians who servein the house already know of this disease, and Visitación, the domestic servant, is the first to notice its onset and effects. Because of the plague of forgetfulness, the Macondo people are once again deprived of their natural capacity for oral language, thus the narrator describes this plague as more "critical" than that of insomnia.

In turn, in *My World is NotofThisKingdom*, João de Melo's description of the plagues is more faithful to the biblical account: a succession of calamitous eventswhich increase in intensity, culminating in the arrival of typhus and the plague that devastated the small community of Nossa Senhora do Rozário:

> Ora, nesse tempo, o Rozário não era mais do que um lugar da Bíblia onde a morte cumpria as suas profecias capitais. Veio, sabe-se lá de onde, uma arrasadora vaga de gafanhotos vermelhos, que mais parecia uma nuvem de fogo a derramar-se pelo ar. […] Depois dos gafanhotos, vieram os ciclos da fome, os terramotos da Quaresma e as epidemias da febre entre os animais. (Melo 2015, 35-36)[9]

The description of the biblical plagues in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is more poetic and, therefore, closer to the postulates of magical realism, whereas that of *My World Is Not of This Kingdom* isespecially crude and stark, as one would expect from the first premonitions of the Apocalypse, in the terms described by the apostle Saint John in the Bible. The fact that Melo includes an explicit reference to the sacred text of Judeo-Christian culture in the cited fragment clearly appeals to a shared religious tradition.

The Great Flood

Gabriel García Márquez and João de Melo allude to and rewritethe biblical episode of the universal flood in their narratives. In this task of reworking the myth, both writers employ exaggeration, most likely because hyperbole is a prototypical feature oftheir shared literary style: magical realism. Thus, while, according to the Bible, the universal flood lasts for

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evolution towards a more critical manifestation: oblivion" (García Márquez 2007, 56).

[9]"So, at that time, the parish of Rozário was merely a place in the Bible where death fulfilled its capital prophecies. There arrived, who knows from where, a devastating wave of red locusts, resembling a cloud of fire pouring through the air. […] After the locusts, the cyclical famines, the Lent earthquakes and the fever epidemics among animals came" (Melo 2015, 35-36).

forty days and forty nights, in Macondo, it lasts exactly four years, eleven months and two days:

> Llovió cuatro años, once meses y dos días. Hubo épocas de llovizna en que todo el mundo se puso sus ropas de pontifical y se compuso una cara de convaleciente para celebrar la escampada, pero pronto se acostumbraron a interpretar las pausas como anuncios de recrudecimiento. Se desempedraba el cielo en unas tempestades de estropicio, y el norte mandaba unos huracanes que desportillaron techos y derribaron paredes, y desenterraron de raíz las últimas cepas de las plantaciones. (García Márquez 2007, 357)[10]

On the other hand, in the fictional universe of *My World Is Not of This Kingdom*, the heavy rains ravage the inhabitants of the Azorean village for ninety-nine days, a duration that is undoubtedly hyperbolic, but which is closer to that of the biblical story:

> Estava-se, porém, no tempo da grandiosa e eterna chuva dos noventa e nove dias consecutivos, e a peste era ainda tão numerosa como os ratos. Os ratos que cresciam, se multiplicavam e se não viam porque tinham ficado adormecidos nos ninhos.(Melo 2015, 180)[11]

In both texts, the flood is accompanied by other signs of mass destruction: in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*,the persistent rain coincides with a hurricane-force wind and, in Melo's novel,withahumanpestilence, anotherbiblical plague.

There are also notable differences in the attitude of the locals towards the tragedy: the inhabitants of Macondo react with stoicism to the flood, which comes to cleanse the town of the "leaf litter", that is, of the feverish activity of the United Fruit Company, which dismantled its facilities just before the rain began, leaving the town abandoned and lonely. On the other hand, the residents of Nossa Senhora doRozário rebel against the persistence of the rain, which leads the priest, Father Governo, to perform

[10] "It rained for four years, eleven months and two days. There were periods of drizzle when everyone put on their pontifical clothes and put on a convalescent face to celebrate the clearing of the storm, but they soon got used to interpreting the pauses as signs of worsening. The sky was cleared of cobblestones in storms of havoc, and the north sent hurricanes that chipped roofs and knocked down wallsand uprooted the last vines of the plantations" (García Márquez 2007, 357).

[11]"We were, however, in the time of the magnificent and eternal rain that lasted for ninety-nine consecutive days, and the pestilence still was as profuse as the rats. The rats that grew up, multiplied and were not seen because they remained asleep in their nests" (Melo 2015, 180).

a primitive ritual to stop the flood, by collecting the tears of the faithful in the sacred chalice.However, the ritual not only fails to achieve the desired outcome, but also intensifies the wrath of God, making the threat of the dreaded Apocalypse even more real.

The Apocalypse

The end of times described by the apostle Saint John in the last book of the compendium of the Bible acquires great significancein the two novels, given their clear thematic and structural correspondence with the sacred text. However, both novels differ somewhat in their references to the Apocalypse.Gabriel García Márquez reserves the description of the destruction of Macondo for the final part of the last chapter of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, respecting the textual arrangementof the biblical story. This prophetic outcome manifests itself in the form of a light breeze, which gradually intensifies its power until it becomes a "terrifying whirlwind of dust and debris centrifuged by the wrath of the biblical hurricane" that ends up banishing Macondo and its inhabitants from the Earth and from the memory of humanity:

> Entonces empezó el viento, tibio, incipiente, lleno de voces del pasado, de murmullos de geranios antiguos, de suspiros de desengaños anteriores a las nostalgias más tenaces. […] Aureliano estaba tan absorto que no sintió tampoco la segunda arremetida del viento, cuya potencia ciclónica arrancó de los quicios las puertas y las ventanas, descuajó el techo de la galería oriental y desarraigó los cimientos. Sólo entonces descubrió que Amaranta Úrsula no era su hermana, sino su tía, y que Francis Drake había asaltado a Riohacha solamente para que ellos pudieran buscarse por los laberintos más intrincados de la sangre, hasta engendrar el animal mitológico que había de poner término a la estirpe. Macondo era ya un pavoroso remolino de polvo y escombros centrifugado por la cólera del huracán bíblico, cuando Aureliano saltó once páginas para no perder el tiempo en hechos demasiado conocidos, y empezó a descifrar el instante que estaba viviendo, descifrándolo a medida que lo vivía, profetizándose a sí mismo en el acto de descifrar la última página de los pergaminos, como si se estuviera viendo en un espejo hablado. Entonces dio otro salto para anticiparse a las predicciones y averiguar la fecha y las circunstancias de su muerte. Sin embargo, antes de llegar al verso final ya había comprendido que no saldría jamás de ese cuarto, pues estaba previsto que la ciudad de los espejos (o de los espejismos) sería arrasada por el viento y desterrada de la memoria de los hombres en el instante en que Aureliano Babilonia acabara de descifrar los pergaminos, y que todo lo escrito en ellos era irrepetible desde siempre y para siempre, porque las estirpes condenadas a cien años

> de soledad no tenían una segunda oportunidad sobre la tierra. (García Márquez 2007, 470-471)[12]

By contrast, in *My World Is NotofThis Kingdom*, references to the Apocalypse pervade the novel. From the first pages, the text foregrounds a universe that refers to the origins, or to the announcement of the end, constructing an overwhelming notion that between the beginning and the end there has always been nothing. As Gonçalves points out, "[…] perante esse universo criado, o leitor sente uma certa asfixia; depara-se com um mundo que não crê ser possível existir e oscila entre uma hipótese situada nas origens do tempo ou uma hipótese de finais dos tempos, de apocalipse anunciado"(Gonçalves 2002, 4).[13]The following passage of apocalyptic content serves as an example, which occurs when Father Governo attempts to carry out the ritual to stop the flood:

> O padre levantou a estola para esconjurar o raio maligno que dardejava os olhos dos pecadores, e eis señao quando esse raio tomou o aspeto de uma

[12]"Then the wind began, warm, incipient, full of voices from the past, of the murmur of ancient geraniums, of sighs of disappointments before the most tenacious nostalgia. […] Aureliano was so absorbed that he did not feel the second onslaught of the wind, whose cyclonic power tore the doors and windows from their hinges, ripped the roof off the eastern gallery and uprooted the foundations. Only then did he discover that Amaranta Úrsula was not his sister, but his aunt, and that Francis Drake had attacked Riohacha only so that they could search for each other through the most intricate labyrinths of blood, until they gave birth to the mythological animal that would put an end to the lineage. Macondo was already a terrifying whirlwind of dust and debris centrifuged by the wrath of the biblical hurricane, when Aureliano skipped eleven pages so as not to waste time on facts that were too well known, and began to decipher the moment he was living, deciphering it as he lived it, prophesying to himself in the act of deciphering the last page of the scrolls, as if he were seeing himself in a talking mirror. Then he made another leap to anticipate the predictions and find out the date and circumstances of his death. However, before reaching the final verse he had already understood that he would never leave that room, because it was foreseen that the city of mirrors (or mirages) would be swept away by the wind and banished from the memory of men the moment Aureliano Babilonia finished deciphering the scrolls, and that everything written on them was unrepeatable from always and forever, because the lineages condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second chance on earth" (García Márquez 2007, 470-471).

[13]"[…] while this universe is created, the reader feels a certain suffocation; he is faced with a world that does not believe it is possible to exist and oscillates between a hypothesis situated at the origins of time or a hypothesis of the end of time, of an announced apocalypse" (Gonçalves 2002, 4).

> boca metálica que trespassava o tecido e os peixes bordados na estola, e indo mergulhar no cálice sagrado pelas lágrimas de tantos olhos, bebeu o conteúdo ensanguentado e desapareceu de novo no firmamento. Que língua de fogo aquela, pensavam, viera mandada pelo Oculto sem outra linguagem para o sofrimento daquele povo? Era o sinal supremo da ira de Deus. (Melo 2015, 179)[14]

The miracle of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven

This comparative analysis, which focuseson the presence and confluence of biblical references in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and*MyWorld Is NotofThisKingdom*, concludes by examiningthe miracle of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven. This is a motif frequently evoked by iconographic tradition, and isone of the many miracles described in both novels.In Gabriel García Márquez's novel, the virgin woman who spontaneously ascends to the heavens is Remedios the Beauty, a being who, according to the narrator, "did not belong to this world". To return to her place of origin, she suddenly rose, thanks to "a delicate wind of light", when she was hanging clothes with her grandmother, her sister-in-law and her second aunt. She gradually fades away, hanging from the sheets, until she disappears from the sight of her relatives:

> Remedios, la bella, se quedó vagando por el desierto de la soledad, sin cruces a cuestas, madurándose en sus sueños sin pesadillas, en sus baños interminables, en sus comidas sin horarios, en sus hondos y prolongados silencios sin recuerdos, hasta una tarde de marzo en que Fernanda quiso doblar en el jardín sus sábanas de bramante, y pidió ayuda a las mujeres de la casa. Apenas habían empezado, cuando Amaranta advirtió que Remedios, la bella, estaba transparentada por una palidez intensa.
> —¿Te sientes mal? —le preguntó.
> Remedios, la bella, que tenía agarrada la sábana por el otro extremo, hizo una sonrisa de lástima.
> —Al contrario —dijo—, nunca me he sentido mejor.
> Acabó de decirlo, cuando Fernanda sintió que un delicado viento de luz le arrancó las sábanas de las manos y las desplegó en toda su amplitud.

[14]"The priest lifted the stole to exorcise the evil ray that was being thrown out by the eyes of the sinners, and then thatray took the form of a metallic mouth that pierced the cloth and the fish embroidered on the stole, and, plunging into the sacred chalice through the tears of so many eyes, drank its bloody contents and disappeared again into the firmament. What tongue of fire, they wondered, was that? Sent by the Hidden One who had no other language to face the suffering of that people? It was the supreme sign of the wrath of God" (Melo 2015, 179).

> Amaranta sintió un temblor misterioso en los encajes de sus pollerinas y trató de agarrarse de la sábana para no caer, en el instante en que Remedios, la bella, empezaba a elevarse. Úrsula, ya casi ciega, fue la única que tuvo serenidad para identificar la naturaleza de aquel viento irreparable, y dejó las sábanas a merced de la luz, viendo a Remedios, la bella, que le decía adiós con la mano, entre el deslumbrante aleteo de las sábanas que subían con ella, que abandonaban con ella el aire de los escarabajos y las dalias, y pasaban con ellaa través del aire donde terminaban las cuatro de la tarde, y se perdieron con ella para siempre en los altos aires donde no podían alcanzarla ni los más altos pájaros de la memoria. (García Márquez 2007, 271-272)[15]

According to Wahnón (2021), the taking of Remedios the Beauty is the most lyrical passage in the novel, which is why it is one of the most memorable.

In *My World Is NotofThis Kingdom*,a female character is also taken away in a supernatural manner. Sara, the wife of João-Maria, is buried under a fig tree after her death, despite not being a virgin. She also ascends to heaven, helped in this case by the leaves of the tree which, in the words of Father Governo, are nothing more than the wings of invisible angels who come down from heaven to take this "saint":

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[15] "Remedios the Beauty remained wandering through the desert of solitude, without any crosses to bear, maturing in her dreams without nightmares, in her endless baths, in her meals without schedules, in her deep and prolonged silences without memories, until one afternoon in March when Fernanda wanted to fold her twine sheets in the garden, and asked the women of the house for help. They had barely begun when Amaranta noticed that Remedios the Beauty was transparent with an intense paleness.

−Are you feeling sick? − he asked her.

Remedios the beauty, who was holding the sheet by the other end, smiled sadly.

−On the contrary, −she said−, I have never felt better.

She had just finished saying this when Fernanda felt a delicate wind of light tear the sheets from her hands and spread them out to their full width. Amaranta felt a mysterious tremor in the lace of her petticoats and tried to grab onto the sheet so as not to fall, at the moment when Remedios the Beauty began to rise. Úrsula, almost blind by now, was the only one who had the serenity to identify the nature of that irreparable wind, and she left the sheets at the mercy of the light, seeing Remedios the Beauty waving goodbye to her, amidst the dazzling fluttering of the sheets that rose with her, that left with her the air of beetles and dahlias, and passed with her through the air where four in the afternoon ended, and were lost with her forever in the high air where not even the highest birds of memory could reach her" (Garcia Marquez 2007, 271-272).

> Abraçavam-se todos, a chorar, de joelhos na terra em que Sara acabara de ser sepultada. Depois, sem que tal coisa fosse de esperar, viram que todas as folhas começavam a desprender-se dos galhos da figueira e acabaram por a despir por completo, varridas pelo ruido de um sopro em tudo igual ao do vento marítimo no Inverno. Alarmados, os olhos do padre encheram-se de copiosas lágrimas brancas, pois concluíra que ali estava ocorrendo o maior e talvez único milagre de amor da sua vida: é que, disse o padre, as folhas da figueira não eram mais do que asas de anjos invisíveis, mandados à terra para resgatar a alma daquela santa. (Melo 2015, 188-189)[16]

The intertextual relationship between the two episodes is more than evident, as is the primary source that inspired the two authors when recreating this miracle. Although the Marian dogma of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is not expressly found in the Bible, it is deeply rooted in Catholic tradition and, in fact, is directly alluded to in the fourth glorious mystery.The antagonistic but equally surprising reaction of the novels' characters who witness the "miracle" is significant. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Fernanda del Carpio is angry rather thansurprised because Remedios, her sister-in-law, has taken the best sheets in the house with her, so that for several weeks Fernanda fervently prays to Godto return them to her. By contrast, in *My World Is Not of This Kingdom*, rather than try to preserve the fig tree under which the miracle occurred, João-Maria and his progeny adopt a more pragmatic attitude: they saw it down and turn it into firewood for the bonfire.

Conclusions

Although the primary and secondary literature on magical realism is vast, it remains a controversial concept for critics, as there is still no theoretical formulation that unequivocally delimits the scope of this literary movement. As a result, it is often confused with "the marvellous real" and with fantastic literature. However, there is consensus regarding its geographicorigin and temporal context (the Hispano-American

[16] "They all embraced each other, crying, kneeling on the ground where they had just buried Sara. Then, suddenly, they saw that all the leaves were beginning to fall from the branches of the fig tree, leaving it completely bare, swept away by the sound of a breath that was in every way like the winter sea wind. Alarmed, the priest's eyes clouded with copious white tears, as he realized that the greatest and perhaps only miracle of love of his life was taking place: what is happening, said the priest, is that the leaves of the fig tree were nothing more than the wings of invisible angels, sent to Earth to rescue the soul of that saint woman" (Melo 2015, 188-189).

subcontinent in the 1960s of the twentieth century). Nevertheless, considering the lack of definition of the movement and the impact of the great exponents of Hispano-American magical realist literature (Rulfo, García Márquez, Fuentes, etc.) on contemporary writers from different geographic-cultural areas (Haruki Murakami, Milan Kundera, José Saramago, among others),this literary trend is currently being investigated from a new methodological perspective.It is now considered a phenomenon of world literature, rather than limited to the Hispano-American context.Notwithstandingthe apparent solidity of the theoretical proposal, no wide-ranging or comprehensive monographic study has heretofore been published focusing on magical realism as a literary movement of global scope.

The present research, which started with the worldwide impact of magical realism,aimed to find points of convergence between two authors (Gabriel García Márquez and João de Melo) and two magical realist works (*One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *My WorldIsNot of This Kingdom*) from the Ibero-American space (Colombia and Portugal). The main goal was to investigate the possible existence—within the global literary phenomenon—of a sub-current of "Ibero-American magical realism", which would bring together the magical realist production of authors from the Hispanic world, as well as from Portugal and Brazil, countries that share a partially common cultural heritage, in which the Judeo-Christian tradition occupies a prominent place.This analysis has demonstrated the existence of points of convergence between the two novels, a confluence that is revealed, primarily, in the significant profusion of biblical references present in both texts and that allude to popular events described in the sacred text, such asGenesis,theExodus,thePlagues,theGreat Flood,theApocalypse, and the miracle of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Gabriel García Márquez's narrative is more faithful to the original story in terms of the textual arrangement of the different episodes, since it strictly follows the order of the Bible, whereas João de Melo's references are more faithful to the content of the sacred text. Furthermore, Melo's references to the Bible are particularly explicit, stark and ironic, whereas García Márquez's are more idyllic, imaginative and lyrical, thus connecting in a less confrontational way with the collective imagery of magical realism.Finally,theexistence of an "Ibero-American" magical realism with shared featurescan be tentatively confirmed, although further comparative studies would strengthen this claim. Moreover, one can surmise that the common basis of this "Ibero-American" magical realism is local folklore and references to Judeo-Christian mythology, in which

supernatural phenomena—such as endless floods, inexplicable miracles or prophetic dreams—are relatively frequent and, therefore, permeate literature and philosophical thought from religion to popular culture.

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