

Wings of Imagination: Magic Realism in Borges' *The Circular Ruins* and Marquez's *A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings*.

Hafiz Haqnawaz

Lecturer English Department, University of Mekran, Panjgur
haqnawazkhaliq514@gmail

Nazia Naeem

Lecturer English Department, University of Mekran, Panjgur
nazianaem969@gmail.com

Muhammad Ilyass

Lecturer English Degree College Mekran, Panjgur
ilyaskarimilla@gmail.com

Abstract

Magic realism, a literary technique that blends magical elements with ordinary reality, gained prominence through the works of Latin American authors, particularly Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Jorge Luis Borges. Their ability to intertwine the fantastical with the mundane is evident in their iconic stories, such as The Circular Ruins by Borges and A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings by Marquez. In The Circular Ruins, Borges masterfully explores the concept of creation through the mysterious tale of a man dreaming a son into existence. Marquez's A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings presents the surreal arrival of a winged old man on a family's shore, blending the extraordinary with everyday life. These stories exemplify the core characteristics of magic realism—where the boundaries between reality and fantasy blur, often leaving readers pondering the underlying mysteries. Borges and Marquez's sophisticated use of language and intricate narrative structures highlight their command of this literary style. This paper examines these texts, drawing insights from secondary sources such as journal articles and online analyses to explore how both writers expertly fuse magical elements with the ordinary, offering readers a unique narrative experience.

Keywords: Magic realism, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Jorge Luis Borges, *The Circular Ruins*

A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings, Latin American fiction, Fantasy and reality, Narrative structure.

Introduction

The twentieth century was dominated by significant events like World War I, World War II, and the Cold War that brought a socio-economic and political change in the world order. The literature of the century got a shift from the traditional forms of literature in its themes, style, and techniques. Many writers around the world felt the need to create their works by using different approaches and techniques. Magical realism is one of the narrative techniques initially adopted by Latin American writers and artists. They created magical elements along with the threads of realism to depict the social, cultural, and political picture of the modern world differently.

Magic realism is a literary movement that refers to a writing style or technique that includes magical and supernatural events more realistically. It is against the traditional portrayal of reality in the works of literature. The term magic realism (magischer realismus) was first used in 1925 by German art critic Franz Roh in the art category (Zamora, 1995). He considered magical realism a way to explore the hidden mysteries in daily life (Bower, 2004). Later on, this term was introduced to Latin American writers and critics in 1949, and Alejo Carpentier brought the term to real

Maravilloso which means marvelous reality in the prologue of his *The Kingdom of this World* as a mixture of magical and realistic views of everyday life of Latin American culture that is expressed through art and literature. (Sims, 2013). Till the mid-20th century, the technique of magic realism was adopted by many great Latin American writers in their fictional works that include magical and strange happenings in the realist matter-of-fact descriptions and narratives (Sreeparvathy, 2019).

As a literary movement, magical realism gave international exposure to Latin American fiction. Many writers of Latin America, like Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortazar, Carlos Fuentes, and Garcia Marquez used the elements of magic and fantasy in their works. The new users of this technique have strengthened the relationship between the literature of Latin America and magic realism (Ziegler, 2008). Garcia Marquez one of the most prominent and Nobel prize-winning Latin American writers of the 20th century frequently adopts the technique of magic realism in an artistic way his his fictional works to address some meaningful themes. Similarly, Jorge Luis Borges, a well-known and influential writer of Latin America, produced successful short stories that are rich in magic realism. It is important to examine and compare the works of Marquez and Borges based on Magic realism to know how both writers have reflected the blend of magic and reality in their works respectively. It is also significant to examine the effect of Marquez and Borges on Latin American writers. It is worthwhile to analyze their works within the framework of magic realism.

This current study explores two short stories '*A very old man with enormous wings*' written by Garcia Marquez and *The Circular Ruin* by Jorge Luis Borges in the light of magic realism. It aims to investigate the treatment of magic and reality and compare their uses in these two stories. The study is significant as it enhances the understanding of the stories through a different technique called magic realism. It further gives extensive knowledge about the technique of magic realism through these short stories and further enhances the understanding of 20th-century Latin American literature.

The research method is qualitative, using an in-depth textual analysis method. The data is collected from various scholarly articles, books, and different interviews of the authors from YouTube channels, and sites to support the analysis of the two short stories. The mentioned short stories are selected because they both contain the features of magic realism respectively.

Objective

To explore and analyze how Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Jorge Luis Borges use magic realism in their stories to blend magical elements with everyday reality, focusing on how this technique impacts readers' perception of the narratives and reflects broader thematic concerns. This study aims to highlight how the unique narrative styles of both authors convey meaning through the fusion of fantastical and mundane elements.

Research Questions

1. How do Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Jorge Luis Borges employ magic realism in *A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings* and *The Circular Ruins*, respectively?
2. What thematic purposes does the blending of magical and ordinary elements serve in these works?

3. How does the narrative style used in magic realism by these authors affect the reader's interpretation of reality and fantasy?

Methodology

Sample and Population

The sample for this research includes the two aforementioned stories by Marquez and Borges. The population for contextual analysis includes:

1. Key secondary literature on magic realism as a genre.
2. Scholarly works focusing on Latin American literature and its key figures, particularly Borges and Marquez.

This study will employ a **qualitative content analysis** of the two primary texts:

1. *A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez
2. *The Circular Ruins* by Jorge Luis Borges.

Data Collection and Sources

1. **Primary Data:** Close reading and textual analysis of *A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings* and *The Circular Ruins*.
2. **Secondary Data:** Academic journal articles, online analyses, and critical essays on magic realism, Marquez, and Borges.

a. Data Analysis Techniques

3. **Thematic Analysis:** To identify and analyze recurring themes of creation, reality, and perception within both texts.
4. **Narrative Structure Analysis:** To assess how the narrative choices impact readers' experience of the magical realism elements.

Findings

1. Both Marquez and Borges use magic realism to offer unique interpretations of reality that challenge conventional boundaries of the ordinary and the extraordinary.
2. Magic realism in these stories serves to illustrate deep thematic inquiries, such as creation, identity, and human responses to the unknown.
3. Their narrative styles emphasize a complex, often ambiguous interplay between fantasy and reality, which engages readers and encourages them to question their perceptions of the real world.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Borges and Marquez skillfully use magic realism to question and expand the boundaries of reality in their works. Through unique narrative structures and thematic focus on the mystical, both authors allow readers a distinct narrative experience that encourages reflection on deeper, often existential themes. As such, Borges' and Marquez's contributions remain pivotal in understanding the capacity of magic realism to not only entertain but also to provoke contemplation on the nature of reality

Discussion

Magic Realism as a Literary Technique

Magic realism is known for its seamless blend of the real and the supernatural, which in Latin American literature offers a means to explore complex cultural and existential themes (Zamora & Faris, 1995). In both *The Circular Ruins* and *A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings*, this technique is used to create narratives that are simultaneously believable and surreal. As author Angel Flores explains, magic realism enables "a chimerical world that exists in reality" (Flores, 1955), and Borges and Marquez capitalize on this by infusing the mundane with elements that defy conventional logic.

Analysis of Borges' and Marquez's Approaches

1. *The Circular Ruins*: Borges' protagonist dreams a son into existence, a theme underscoring creation as both a divine and human act, reflecting existential questions of identity and reality (Sturrock, 1993).
2. *A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings*: Marquez's old man symbolizes the mystical within the ordinary, provoking reactions ranging from curiosity to exploitation from the villagers. This story exemplifies Marquez's focus on how ordinary people interact with the extraordinary.

Narrative Structures and Impact on Reader Interpretation

Borges' intricate narrative structure in *The Circular Ruins* creates a recursive, dream-like quality that challenges the reader's perception of reality, while Marquez's straightforward yet profound storytelling in *A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings* draws attention to human responses to the unfamiliar. Together, these techniques underscore the blurred boundary between the real and unreal, a hallmark of magic realism (Williamson, 2009).

Recommendations

1. **Further Exploration of Other Works in Magic Realism**
Researchers should expand the study of magic realism beyond Borges and Marquez to include other notable Latin American authors, such as Isabel Allende and Julio Cortázar.

Comparing these authors' approaches to blending the supernatural with the ordinary could offer broader insights into the diversity and evolution of the genre.

2. **Cross-Cultural Comparative Studies**
Conducting a cross-cultural comparison with non-Latin American authors, such as Haruki Murakami or Salman Rushdie, who also employ magic realism, can enrich understanding of how different cultural contexts influence the portrayal of magic realism. This comparative approach can reveal both universal and culturally specific aspects of the genre.
3. **Exploring Reader Reception and Interpretation**
Future studies could focus on how different audiences interpret the magical elements in these stories. Reader-response research could examine how diverse demographic and cultural backgrounds affect readers' perceptions of the narrative and whether they interpret the fantastical elements as metaphorical, symbolic, or literal.
4. **Interdisciplinary Analysis with Psychology or Philosophy**
An interdisciplinary approach that incorporates psychological or philosophical theories could add depth to the analysis of themes such as identity, reality, and creation. For instance, applying Jungian dream theory or existential philosophy could illuminate the subconscious motivations and existential questions in Borges' and Marquez's works.
5. **Digital Analysis of Narrative Techniques**
Researchers could employ digital humanities tools, like text mining and narrative analysis software, to analyze the language and structure of magic realism across multiple texts. This could provide insights into recurring patterns, word usage, and stylistic choices that characterize magic realism and distinguish it from other genres.
6. **Educational Implementation and Literary Pedagogy**
Considering the effectiveness of magic realism in engaging students, educators could incorporate Marquez

References

1. Bell, M. (2010). *García Márquez, Magical Realism and World Literature*. In P. Swanson (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Gabriel García Márquez*. Cambridge University Press. DOI: 10.1017/CCOL9780521867498.013
2. Borges, J. L. (2020). The circular ruins. In *Arguing About Knowledge* (pp. 437-440). Routledge.
3. Bowers, M. A. (2004). *Magical Realism*. New York: Rutledge [Cambridge University Press & Assessment Cambridge University Press & Assessment](#)
4. Cooper, J. (2022). *The Influence of Latin American Magic Realism on Global Literary Movements*. *World Literature Today*, 96(4), 34-41.
5. Figueroa, C. (2023). *The Function of the Supernatural in Marquez's Short Stories*. *Studies in Latin American Fiction*, 58(1), 102-118.
6. Higgins, E. (2021). *Magical Realism in the Post-Colonial Context: Insights from García Márquez and Borges*. *Comparative Literature Studies*, 59(3), 205-223.
7. Marquez, G. G. (1972). A very old man with enormous wings: A tale for children. *Leaf storm and other stories*.
8. Mena, J. (2023). *Exploring Realism through Borges' Labyrinths: A Comparative Study*. *Modern Fiction Studies*, 68(2), 91-109.

9. Monga, S. Blending Magic and Reality: A Study of Jorge Luis Borges' "The Circular Ruins".
10. Park, S. (2021). *Magical Realism and the Disruption of Identity in Borges' Fiction*. *Journal of Modern Latin American Literature*, 34(1), 45-60.
11. Sims, R. L. (1980). Theme, Narrative Bricolage and Myth in Garcia Marquez. *Journal of Spanish Studies: Twentieth Century*, 143-159.
12. Sreeparvathy, R. Magical Realism in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's 'Chronicle of a Death Foretold'.
13. Suárez, A. G. (2023). *Revisiting the Mythical in Borges' "The Circular Ruins"*. *Latin American Literary Review*, 51(2), 78-93.
14. Swanson, P. (2010). *The Critical Reception of García Márquez*. In *The Cambridge Companion to Gabriel García Márquez*. Cambridge University Press
15. Zamora, L. P. & Faris, W. B. (Eds.) (1995). *Magical realism: Theory, history, community*. Durham & London: Duke University Press.
16. Ziegler, R. M. (2008). Characteristics of magical realism genre of literature. Retrieved from <http://helium.com>
17. Wojda, D. (2023). *Bruno Schulz and the Magical Realism of Gabriel García Márquez in One Hundred Years of Solitude*. In *Unmasking Bruno Schulz*. Brill. [Brill Brill](#)
18. artínez, J. A. G. (2024). *Symbolic Elements and Their Connection to Magical Realism in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's Depiction of Latin American History*. *Journal of Research in Social Science and Humanities*, 3(7), 6-12. Retrieved from [Pioneer Publisher](#) Pioneer [Publisher](#)
19. Flores, A. (1955). *Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction*. *Hispania*, 38(2), 187-192.
20. Zamora, L. P., & Faris, W. B. (1995). *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
21. Sturrock, J. (1993). *The Word and the Mirror: Language and Representation in Borges*. Oxford University Press.
22. Williamson, E. (2009). *Borges: A Life*. Viking.
23. Faris, W. B. (2004). *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative*. Vanderbilt University Press.
24. Simpkins, S. (1988). "Sources of Magic Realism/Supplements to Realism in Contemporary Latin American Literature." *Contemporary Literature*, 29(4), 477-512.
25. Hart, S. (2004). *Gabriel Garcia Marquez: The Last Interview and Other Conversations*. Melville House.