

Colombian readings of *Paradise Lost*: Gabriel García Márquez literary conversation with John Milton

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ABSTRACT

Englishman John Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost* has twenty European Spanish translations. Despite the high number of translations, three Latin American writers, one Mexican and two Colombians published three more versions. Our project seeks to discover what motivated the Colombian translators to publish more versions of *Paradise Lost*, as part of the influence of Milton's works in Colombian literature in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There is little information about Colombian readings of this epic poem: we do not yet know how Colombians read the epic poem and why. To get a better sense of Colombian reception of *Paradise Lost*, we analyzed primary and secondary sources through a bilingual (English and Spanish) literary and sociological approach. We focused on both Colombian translations, literary culture, and periodical press. Then, we studied the influence of Milton's poem in the works of the well-known Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez, Nobel Prize laureate in Literature (1982), by his participation in Colombian periodical press and literature. Aníbal Galindo's 1868 translation preserved the meaning of the original poem, and it was close to the literary culture of nineteenth century Colombia. In contrast, very little is written about Enrique Álvarez Bonilla's 1896 translation. While Colombian intellectuals of the periodical presses were influenced by English and French literature, they created the *costumbrismo*, which is the literary interpretation of everyday life and customs. We may be able to prove that García Márquez could have encountered John Milton's works because of his preference of *costumbrismo* rather than classic English literature.

KEYWORDS

John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Gabriel García Márquez, Aníbal Galindo, Enrique Álvarez Bonilla, nineteenth century Colombian literature, twentieth century Colombian literature, Colombian periodical press.

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