



MAGIC REALISM AS THE REDEEMER OF NARRATIVE BOUNDARIES IN SALMAN RUSHDIE'S *MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN*

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ABSTRACT



Magic Realism is visualizing the world in realistic manner adding magical element to it. It is some what magic plus realism. It is also called marvelous realism. Supernatural elements are given de space in framing the fiction. With the magic realism common day to day setting would assume something as out of place or alien scenario at the same time preserving its depiction of reality. Latin American Literature in the hands of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Jorge Luis Borges has been laden with the elements of magic realism. Marques's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *The Autumn of the Patriarch*, *Love in the Time of Cholera* stood apart in the annals of literary narrative genres as the fiction epitomized magic realism. Sir Ahmed Salman Rushdie who is well known as Salman Rushdie is a British Indian diaspora novelist and short story writer. He blends history with fiction and magic with realism. Displacements, Imaginary homelands, loss of identity are his major themes which are explored in his literary output. Among all of his works, *Midnight's Children* is a unique literary creation in which individual history is shown as blend with that of a nation's history. My paper would explore the vistas of magic realism canvassing the plot of the novel *Midnight's Children* in order to strengthen the reality by overcoming limitation of narration.

Keywords: *Magic, Realism, Magic-realism, narratives, history as his-story, ideology of a nation-ideas of an individual.*



Midnight's Children is written in 1981. The subject matter of the fiction is 'Transition'-the change from one historical era into another era, it is the history of a nation. The nation is India. India's passage from colonization to independence, independence to emergency era is interlinked to the individual's progression. The protagonist is Salim Sinai, the birth and personal life of Salim Sinai is knit along with the birth and progression of the nation. The history is shown not the history of someone who is sitting on a throne and ruling the milieu. Rushdie shows history as his-story, the individual story as important as written texts of a nation's history. In New historicist ideology the history is lost, or history can never be written but here Rushdie tries to trace the history with the help of his individual characters.

Salim is born at the exact moment when India got freedom, at the stroke of midnight hour, from imperial rule. Salim is welcome by free India. The plot moves in different geographical locations Kashmir, Agra, Bombay, Lahore, and Dhaka. Salim is born with some peculiar extra sensory perceptive abilities where magic realism is indulged with the plot to bring reader's attention to the reality through the meandering course of magic. Salim could arrange conferences with other children who were born at the same midnight hour. They discuss the individual and nation's histories rather in an ironic way. All the children like Shiva, the Parvathi who were born at the midnight hour of India's birth possess some extra sensory perceptions through which they can perform supernatural activities. These supernatural activities work as a criticism of politics, bureaucracy and hunger for power. One of the predominant element of magic realism present in the novel is Salim's nose which made him 'hand cuffed' to nation's history. He could hear the voices speaking to him. His life story is a tumultuous one, riches to rags, 'apple of the eye' to unwanted. Shiva is his nemesis, without any reason they play opponent roles. Salim's life is inseparable from the events which are happening around him. Rushdie wants to make the reader realize that individual is not immune to the effects of the incidents which are taking place around him or decision which are being taken at the helm of the power. Salim's exchange of his parentage at the time of his birth itself is unnatural, unforeseen but it

happens. The life has to take its own course along with the time. Salim-Shiva, Shiva-Salim 'who is who' plays an important role in the mystification of individual roles in relation to the identity of the puissant nation. The reality is hidden rather conniving but it can't be hidden. The perpetrators of the exchange plot Mary Pereira. Fantastic and mythical elements are amalgamates to fortify the effect of the strategy of magic realism, Shiva, Parvathi alliance, the vanishing basket, hearing the voices dissolving into elements, getting materialized from nowhere. In his Nobel Prize speech Gabriel Garcia Marquez said 'A reality not of paper, but one that lives within us and determines each instant of our countless daily deaths, and that nourishes a source of insatiable creativity full of sorrow and beauty'. The violence, the force of injustice, and the representation of these elements shall take course of creativity irrespective of their ugliness, their face shall be shown with the help of literary expression. The *Midnight's Children* tries to show the ugly face of emergency which unleashed a reign of terror on Indian soil. Brutal suppressive mechanism is imposed to calm the voice of the protest against the draconian injustice. Man turned god man worship is shown as god damned worship. Another element of magic realism involved in the description of boatman Tai and Dal Lake. Tai is as old as mountain. It is certainly an exaggeration, but he shows the past history in a nutshell. Tai topples down the myths of various religions.

Superstition also played important role in the novel as Mian Abdullah thinks the reason for the down fall of his fortunes are his buying peacock feathered fan at Agra railway station. Rushdie recounts the differences of Euro centric reality from Oriental realization. The floating of Shri Ramram seth's six inches into the air to tell Amina's future and the reverend mother's power to see into her daughter's sleep are the magical elements which intensify the major themes of erosion of individuality and dignity of individual conscience in post colonial societies. Magic realism in *Midnight's Children* is mingled with the histories of three nations representing the history not from the style of a text book or encyclopedia but from the angle of individuals who play their parts irrespective of their



significance. Individual is history, nation is the bundle of individual histories. This is pertinent when the history is seen through the eyes of common place citizens. The partition of Bangladesh, though its major event in a nation's history, it is shown from people's imagination, from their own perception. 'The basket of Invisibility' plays vital role in the life of the protagonist Salim Sinai when the triumphant parade of Indian army was taking procession in Dhaka, Parvathi ides Salim in the basket of invisibility, he gets choked to near asphyxiation but while being in the basket a 'realization' comes to him. He realizes the truth of life in which he recounts how he was mistreated and repealed off his dignity of life. He becomes able to take a firm decision regarding his future course of life. He decides to take destiny into his hands.

When the emergency is imposed in India the characters lose their potency. They become impotents, the magical element congruent with that of forced vasectomy in which millions of people suffered the consequences of forced family planning. Vitality of individual is shown on par with the vitality of the nation. Individual and a nation...they are irreplaceable from their own places informing each other's existence in noticeable terms.

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