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**MYSTICAL MINDS AND MIDNIGHT'S MYTHS: MAGICAL REALISM IN
RUSHDIE'S REALM**

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ABSTRACT

Magical realism in Indian Literature shapes the boundaries between reality and the mystical, creating narratives where the extraordinary is impeccably woven into the ordinary. Salman Rushdie's "Midnight's Children" stands as a seminal work in this genre, blending myth, history, and personal memory to construct a narrative that surpasses conventional storytelling. This paper explores the convoluted ways in which Rushdie employs magical realism to represent the historical and psychological landscape of postcolonial India. This study outlines the primary objectives and methodology, followed by a comprehensive literature review that situates "Midnight's Children" within the broader framework of magical realism. Through textual analysis, this paper examines how Rushdie mythologizes history, employing elements of the fantastic to challenge formal narratives and create a subjective, multi-layered vision of national identity. Additionally, it investigates the protagonist Saleem Sinai's telepathic (extrasensory) abilities as a metaphor for fragmented postcolonial consciousness. By applying theoretical perspectives on magical realism and mythmaking, this paper highlights how this novel serves as both a historical document and a mythic retelling of India's transition to independence, Liberation and union. The findings of this research suggest that Rushdie's employment of magical realism not only reinterprets historical events but also offers a new lens through which readers can understand the interplay of memory, identity, and nationhood. This study concludes by discussing the scope for further research, particularly in relation to the novel's influence on contemporary postcolonial literature.

KEYWORDS : Magical realism, Salman Rushdie, Midnight's Children, myth, postcolonial identity, history.

INTRODUCTION

Salman Rushdie's second novel, "Midnight's Children" (1981) stands as a monumental work in postcolonial literature, blending history, fantasy, and myth through the lens of magical realism.

Saleem Sinai, the protagonist of this novel narrates the events right from his childhood, youthhood and adulthood. He conveys the barriers, struggles and victories that happened in certain circumstances to Padma, a supervisor in the pickle factory who is supportive to Saleem enabled her ears to hear the ancient events from the mouth of Saleem Sinai. Here magical realism enables Rushdie to explore the intertwined realities of personal and national identity, colonial trauma, and historical revision. Through the mystical minds of its characters, the novel embodies a surreal yet politically charged portrayal of India's historical, contemporary, and future landscape. Attainment of Aesthetic sense occurs because there's a shift from the past to the present and vice versa. This paper seeks to examine the use of magical realism in Rushdie's "Midnight's Children", analysing its role in shaping the novel's narrative, literary fabrications, thematic concerns, and broader literary significance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Neil ten Kortenaar reads this novel as an Allegory of history and he shows that the hybridity of Rushdie's fictional India that is not created by different elements forming a whole but by the relationship among them. He reveals Rushdie's India to be more self-conscious than many communal identities based on language. It is an India haunted by a dark twin called Pakistan; a nation in the way England is a nation but imagined against England. Mistrusting the openness of Tagore's Hindu India, it is both cosmopolitan and a specific subjective location. Critics have pointed out that Rushdie's use of magical realism is not merely for stylistic flair but is deeply tied to the novel's political and philosophical underpinnings. Through the lens of magic and surrealism, Rushdie reflects on the instability and fragmentation of the post-colonial experience, where the nation's history is not linear but fractured and multifaceted. Since its publication, this novel has been widely acclaimed for its innovation and ambition. It won the Booker Prize in 1981 and the Booker of Bookers in 1993 and 2008, cementing Rushdie's reputation as one of the most significant writers in contemporary literature. The novel has been praised for its narrative complexity, humor, and depth of insight into the Indian experience. However, "Midnight's Children" has also been the subject of controversy, particularly regarding its portrayal of historical

events and political figures. Some critics have argued that the novel's blending of history and fiction challenges the notion of historical accuracy, while others contend that Rushdie's postmodern approach invites a more flexible understanding of history and storytelling stands as a monumental work of postcolonial literature. Through its innovative narrative techniques, rich historical context, and exploration of identity, it offers a powerful critique of the legacies of colonialism and the challenges of post-colonial nation-building. Its blend of magical realism and political commentary allows Rushdie to create a narrative that is as much about the personal as it is about the collective, making the novel an essential text for understanding the complexities of contemporary South Asian identity.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- a) How does Rushdie employ magical realism to blur the boundaries between myth, history and reality in "Midnight's Children"?
- b) What role does the mystical and supernatural play in shaping the identities of the characters, particularly Saleem Sinai?
- c) What are the connections between Rushdie's approach to magical realism and the broader Latin American tradition of the genre, particularly in comparison to authors like Gabriel Garcia Marquez?

DISCUSSIONS

Rushdie's distinctive style of writing, particularly in his masterpiece "Midnight's Children" fascinates every reader to look in what the author conveys through this novel. Rushdie is known for blending the fantastic with the real, creating worlds where the boundaries between the two are fluid and where myth and history entwine. The novel's protagonist, Saleem Sinai, possesses telepathic abilities, linking him to other children born at the moment of India's independence. This mystical connection functions as a metaphor for India's fragmented identity, where Saleem embodies the nation's collective consciousness. His constantly shifting memories mirror the fluidity of historical truth, raising questions about the reliability of narration in postcolonial contexts. Other characters, such as Parvati-the-Witch and Shiva, also exhibit mystical qualities, symbolizing the conflicting forces of tradition and modernity, fate and freewill. The paranormal midnight's children conference, where children of diverse backgrounds unite, reflects India's cultural pluralism yet foreshadows its inevitable divisions. Rushdie's magical realism emerges as a subversive tool that challenges linear history and colonial narratives. Salman Rushdie interweaves historical events with fantastical elements, presenting an alternative historiography.

Rushdie doesn't just include magical elements for the sake of fantasy; they serve a larger function in telling the story of post-colonial identity. By employing myth and magic, he suggests that history itself is as much a construct of imagination and storytelling as it is a series of factual events. This creates a space where the personal and the political can coexist, allowing readers to examine how individual lives are shaped by grand historical movements. Here myth becomes a tool for interpreting and even distorting reality. Magical realism allows for a multi-layered understanding of how the past and present collide, creating a tapestry of memory and imagination.

Saleem Sinai's fragmented and digressive storytelling reflects the chaotic nature of history through Non-Linear Narration. Unreliable narration takes place through his shift of memories and exaggerations challenge the notion of historical objectivity. Oral Tradition Influence is observed in the novel that mimics the storytelling techniques of Indian epics, blending myth and history. Intertextuality occurs in the mythological figures, and historical events that create a rich cultural tapestry.

Magical realism is a central literary device in this novel. This technique blends the fantastical with the mundane. Rushdie employs a stream of consciousness narrative style, which allows readers to enter the mind of the protagonist, Saleem, as his thoughts and memories unfold in a seemingly disordered and fragmented manner. Allegory take place where Saleem's life story mirrors the political history of India after independence—both are filled with triumphs, struggles, and complex transformations. The ups and downs of Saleem's personal journey reflect the country's own transition from British colonial rule to the challenges of building a new national identity. Symbolism, Irony, hyperbole and intertextuality are also employed in this novel. The novel has elements of the picaresque tradition, which involves a series of episodic adventures or experiences centered around a roguish or unconventional protagonist.

This novel exemplifies how magical realism serves as a vehicle for postcolonial critique, rewriting history through fantastical lens. The mystical minds of Saleem and other characters symbolize India's collective struggles, contradictions, and aspirations. Rushdie's narrations takes the readers to the past where one can think about the liberation came from hurdles and barriers. The novel's hybridity combines Eastern storytelling traditions with Western literary forms that cements its place in global magical realism.

CONCLUSION

Thus, Rushdie reshapes historical consciousness through magical realism. By intertwining myth, memory, and political critique, this novel challenges dominant historical narratives and offers an alternative lens to view India's past. The mystical minds of its characters serve as allegorical representations of national identity, while Rushdie's literary craftsmanship solidifies his place as a leading voice in contemporary world literature.

In this sense, the philosophical message conveyed through this novel is an invitation to embrace complexity, to understand that the world is not divided neatly into truth and illusion, real and imaginary. It considers the fluidity of identity, the non-linear nature of history, and the power of storytelling to redefine the past, shape the present, and imagine new futures.

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