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The Use of 'Magical Realism' in Salman Rushdie's Novel Midnight Children : A Study

Dr. Prashantha Mandre

HOD & Assistant Professor, Department of English, LB & SBS College, Sagar

Abstract

A literary subgenre known as "magical realism" portrays the real world as having a hint of fantasy or magic. The fiction genre of realism includes magical realism. In a work of magical realism, supernatural aspects are seen as normal, yet the universe is nevertheless rooted. Magical realism novels and short stories blur the boundaries between truth and fantasy, much like fairy tales.

Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* challenges Magical Realism and colonial perspectives through hybrid language and mythological storytelling to represent India's turbulent birth and ongoing struggles with self-definition. By fusing fantastical elements (such as telepathic children) with India's postcolonial history, the magical becomes a lens through which to explore national identity, fragmented realities, and the complex relationship between the individual and history.

Salman Rushdie uses magical realism in *Midnight's Children* to combine historical events with mythical aspects, with a special emphasis on India's 1947 freedom. Characters that blend magic and reality, such as the psychic Saleem Sinai, are prime examples of this type. By depicting a fractured world that subverts dominant narratives, Rushdie employs this technique to illustrate the postcolonial fight for identity. By using myth and folklore to examine cultural identity and challenge colonial effects, the novel's magical realism helps to reconstruct India's past. The term "magic realism" in literature describes a blend of fantasy and reality, wherein magical and legendary aspects are incorporated into a story that is otherwise realistic. There are several instances of this in *Midnight's Children*, where Salman Rushdie used magical realism to emphasize both the charmed, mythological worldview that still permeates all facets of society and the realities of Indian political life during the early years of independence. Some critics have viewed Rushdie as a post-colonial writer who uses traditional indigenous storytelling techniques to reclaim tales that were long suppressed or ignored under the Raj in order to present a distinctively Indian viewpoint. The literary technique known as "magical realism" incorporates myth and imagination into ordinary life. The miraculous becomes every day and the ordinary becomes spectacular in the realm of magical realism.

Keywords: Magic Realism, Salman Rushdie, Post colonial, identity, Saleem Sinai, post-colonial, Supernatural and Indian tradition

In Salman Rushdie's 1981 novel *Midnight's Children*, magical realism serves as both a basic narrative technique and a stylistic device to undermine conventional, chronological history. Rushdie constructs a "hybrid" reality that represents the fractured identity of a postcolonial nation by fusing fanciful elements with the historical realities of post-independence India. The Confusion of Myth and History, By fusing the biography of his protagonist, Saleem Sinai, with the actual founding of India, Rushdie uses magical realism to subvert established colonial narratives. In Midnight's Children, Rushdie examines the

development of postcolonial India via the life of Saleem Sinai, whose identity is inextricably linked to the nation's fate.

Saleem's life is marked by the same upheavals and upheavals that shaped the nation's independence, division, and subsequent attempts at nation-building. In this book, the ability of Saleem and the other *"Midnight's Children*" to communicate telepathically is a magical realism that symbolizes the broken and hybrid identity of a nation attempting to balance its colonial history with its aspirations for the future. This dynamic is crucial to understanding the formation of identities in postcolonial countries, as Rushdie demonstrates.

Through the life of Saleem Sinai, whose identity is intrinsically tied to the destiny of the country, Rushdie explores the emergence of postcolonial India in *Midnight's Children*. The same upheavals and upheavals that influenced the country's independence, division, and later attempts at nation-building also characterize Saleem's life. The capacity of Saleem and the other "Midnight's Children" to speak telepathically is a magical realism in this book that represents the shattered and hybrid identity of a country trying to reconcile its colonial past with its hopes for the future. As Rushdie shows, this tension is essential to comprehending how identities are formed in postcolonial nations. Furthermore, Rushdie goes beyond the superficial spectacle of the extraordinary in his investigation of magical realism. It turns into a prism through which he explores the complex psychology of his characters. The *"Midnight's Children"* use their special skills as a means of examining their relationships, psychological conflicts, and the influence of their personal stories on the larger sociopolitical environment. Readers may relate to the characters on both a human and fantasy level because to this complex approach to character development, which enhances the reading experience.

As they turn the pages of *"Midnight's Children,"* readers are drawn into a story that goes beyond the bounds of conventional narrative. Rushdie invites readers to consider the bizarre aspects of post-colonial life by using magical realism as a metaphorical doorway. In addition to capturing the pulse of a country in transition, Rushdie's innovative novel leaves a lasting impression on the literary world and encourages a new generation of writers to embrace the captivating potential of magical realism and push the frontiers of storytelling.

In *"Midnight's Children,"* the combination of magical realism and narrative structure creates an enthralling dance that takes the book to previously unheard-of levels. What could have been a simple historical report is transformed into a captivating tapestry where the unusual and the ordinary live together thanks to Rushdie's purposeful decision to incorporate magical aspects into the story.

It is evident that Rushdie draws from mythology to combine "real" and "unreal" aspects, "remythologizing" India in the process, according to some reviewers. This is clear from the start of the book, which centers on India's independence. However, the children of midnight, who possess magical abilities, are immediately contrasted with this very real and political event. This is the reason this book is so appealing and captivating to read. Rushdie appears to remark on current political situations through fantastical flights that seem to be based on a variety of myths and legends.

The work of fiction *Midnight's Children* is metaphorical. It examines the dynamics of India's transition from colonialism to freedom more broadly using the 1,001 children born in the first hour of the country's independence from Great Britain. Many of the characters in the book, including Saleem Sinai, the narrator, possess magical abilities. He is shown to have telepathy, and later on in the book, he gains the capacity to detect emotions. Magical realist literature frequently uses metaphors, and *Midnight's Children*

undoubtedly makes extensive use of them. For instance, India's battle to establish a solid sense of national identity in the wake of colonialism can be compared to Saleem's struggle to comprehend his identity.
Saleem Sinai, the main character, turns out to be a crucial character whose path is inextricably linked to the destiny of the recently independent India. The discovery of Saleem's telepathic skills on the eve of India's independence acts as a turning point in the story, setting off a series of incidents that blend the political and the personal. The otherworldly and the actual historical setting come together to produce a fascinating and thought-provoking narrative dynamic.The narrative structure's use of magical realism is not random; rather, it has a significant function. The interdependence of people with the larger social and political environment is symbolized by Saleem's telepathic abilities.
One of these offspring of midnight with magical abilities is Parvati-the-witch. Despite being a true witch, she is unable to persuade Saleem to love her by the use of her abilities. Saleem has an affair with another character named Shiva once it becomes evident that she is not in love with Parvati. In this particular section of his narrative, Rushdie combines theology and magical realism because both characters play significant roles in Hinduism and Parvati is the name of Shiva's consort.
Magical realism, according to renowned literary historian and critic M. H. Abrams, is "a sharply etched realism in representing ordinary events and descriptive details together with fantastic and dreamlike elements, as well as with materials derived from myth and fairy tales." The main character of *Midnight's Children*, Saleem Sinai, is born at midnight on August 15, 1947, just when India gains its independence. He possesses magical abilities, as do all the other children born at that time, who give the novels its title. Saleem is telepathic and eventually learns to "smell" emotions.
His revelation coincides with an important historical turning point, symbolically connecting the protagonist's fate with the country's future. The impression that Saleem's exceptional experiences are closely linked to India's developing history is reinforced by this linkage, which is not only incidental but is threaded throughout the story. A rich and complex narrative texture is produced by the supernatural's interaction with actual happenings. Readers are drawn into a world where the lines between reality and fiction are blurred as Saleem struggles with the ramifications of his special skills and navigates the complexity of his own identity.
In the novel writer uses of magical realism serves as a potent means of exploring deep themes that are relevant to the intricate socio-political environment of post-colonial India. The work turns into a canvas on which Rushdie painstakingly depicts the themes of nationalism, identity, and the significant impact of historical forces on people's lives—all of which are enhanced by the captivating tapestry of magical elements. The novel's magical realism is linked with a fundamental theme: identity. The *"Midnight's Children*," who were born on the day of India's freedom, represent the variety of identities that make up the country. Saleem is a symbol of contemporary India. He writes *Midnight's Children*, his memoir, when he is thirty years old. Shiva is destined to be both India's most revered war hero and Saleem's adversary. Saleem is positioned at every major event that took place on the Indian subcontinent in the thirty years following independence in this multi-layered book. In 1981, Midnight's Children won the Booker McConnell Prize for fiction. It was selected as the best Booker Prize book in 25 years in 1993.
Furthermore, the captivating narrative dynamic created by the combination of magical realism and structure goes beyond Saleem's own experiences. Each of the *"Midnight's Children*," who were born with unique talents, adds to a collective story that reflects the richness and diversity of post-colonial Indian culture. Rushdie uses magical elements as a metaphorical lens to examine the complexities of identity, belonging, and the effects of historical forces on people. Essentially, the magical realism that permeates

the narrative structure of the book is an essential component that shapes "*Midnight's Children*" rather than a cosmetic decoration.

Their special abilities turn into symbolic representations of the diversity of Indian culture, which reflects the blending of customs, dialects, and faiths. Rushdie explores how people struggle with their unique identities in the setting of a country undergoing drastic change by delving into the complexity of identity creation through these fanciful components. Since the magical aspects are closely connected to the larger story of India's post-colonial journey, nationalism also emerges as a crucial theme. The telepathic bond between the *"Midnight's Children"* highlights the interdependence of personal fates with the nation's overall destiny and represents a common national consciousness. Readers are given a nuanced examination of nationalism via the prism of magical realism as the characters' hardships and victories serve as symbolic representations of the difficulties and goals of a recently independent India.

In Salman Rushdie's *"Midnight's Children,"* the use of magical realism goes beyond simple stylistic preference to become a significant tool for examining the complex psychology of the characters. The *"Midnight's Children,"* who were born on the day of India's independence, serve as live representations of the country's complexity and diversity. With careful consideration, Rushdie gives these people special abilities that go beyond the fantastical, acting as a mirror reflecting the complex identity of post-colonial India.

Colonial and post-colonial historical circumstances have a lasting impact on the characters in *"Midnight's Children."* In addition to giving historical events more metaphorical depth, magical realism enables Rushdie to explore the long-term effects of these forces on people's lives. The characters' exceptional skills serve as indicators of the revolutionary character of historical occurrences, demonstrating the close connection between the political and the personal. Through this investigation, Rushdie asks readers to consider how history continues to influence the present and how difficult it is to navigate one's own identity within a broader historical framework. The mystical aspects of the book heighten its metaphorical quality, producing a strange world that reflects the turbulent realities of post-colonial life.

Salman Rushdie has made a transformational as well as stylistic contribution to the magical realism genre. The book provides proof of the author's ability to stretch the bounds of narrative, questioning accepted conventions and enticing readers to interact with a story that is both emotionally and intellectually engaging. Rushdie has made a lasting impact on the particular field of post-colonial literature in addition to contributing to the larger literary world through this creative method.In summary, *"Midnight's Children"* is a literary trip that highlights the strength of imagination, the complexity of the human experience, and the delicate dance between reality and fantasy. It is more than just a book.

The work will continue to be a mainstay in the complex fabric of world literature because of Rushdie's skillful use of magical realism, which leaves an enduring legacy and encourages readers and other writers to explore the boundless possibilities of storytelling.

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