Magical Realism in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. and Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Arts in English

The Department of English and Humanities

Brac University

September 2021

Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac

   University.

2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party,

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3. where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

4. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other

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6. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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and Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*" submitted by Humyra Tasnim ID: 17203012 of Summer,

2021 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of

Bachelor of Arts on

16-09-2021.

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Dedication

Dearest Baba and Mamoni who have always been there for me and motivated me from the very first day of my life.

This is for you.

Acknowledgement

First of all, all praise belongs to Allah, for whom I could complete my entire thesis very easily. So, I can never be grateful enough for that.

Then I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Mahruba Mowtushi, without whom I can not even imagine to completing my thesis. Thank you so much for being very helpful, sweet and nice to every step of this process, which gives me courage. I would also like to thank all of my faculties of Brac University from whom I have learnt so many things within these four years.

I would like to give special thanks to my friends who always have been supported me all of these years. Without them maybe I could not get my emotional support.

And finally, my parents, sister and my beloved husband; by whom I constantly getting support and courage. Thank you for always there for me, understand me when I needed. I love all of you to the moon and back.

Abstract

The term 'magical realism' is an amalgamation of oxymorons. The narrative mode allows you to discuss different perspectives on reality. The main object of this thesis is to do research study of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* through the lens of magic realism, with an and emphasis on how magical realism explores the effects of colonialism in 20th century Italy and India. Moreover, it examines how renowned critics and scholars have applied the concept of magic realism. It also intends to emphasize on the traits of magic realism such as supernatural, imagination, reality, and the unknown. For this study, the collection of data has been qualitative through literary, analytical and theoretical explorations of magic realism. This thesis will be discussed how magic realism reflects these two (*Midnights Children & Invisible Cities*) selective novels.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> "When people use the term magic realism, usually they only mean 'magic' and they do not hear 'realism' whereas the way in which magic realism actually works is for the magic to be rooted in the real. It's both things. It's not just a fairy tale moment. Its surrealism that arises out of the real."
>
> -Salman Rushdie

Magical realism is an artistic genre of fiction in which magical elements coexist with the practical and everyday elements in the 'real' world. It is basically approach to the adding lines between fantasy and reality. Apart from including magical elements, usually it is regarded as a quite different genre of fantasy writing. Since the notion of magical realism involves a certain degree of reality details and allows magical components to demonstrate a point about reality. Many people think that magical realist fiction is a particular kind of literary works that are not different from supernatural or gothic stories. Apart from supernatural or gothic this theory made its own position by Franz Roh in 1940s. By using the theory of magical realism, gives chance to the authors to express their opinion and different view of unreal things. The fundamental differences between magical realism and pure fantasy are, it is situated in a real, present world with accurate depictions of people and culture. Its goal is to realize the paradox of contrasting opposites; for example, it confronts binary oppositions such as life and death, as well as the past pre-colonial against the present post-industrial situation.

For describing a visual art of Europe, the term 'magic realism' first came into being in 1925 through the works of the art historian Franz Roh. It was a technique of representing and

responding to reality, as well as a visual representation of reality's secrets in the post-World War era. Roh positioned magical realism as a reaction to German Expressionism and its more abstract approach. It was South-American writers in the 1940s, however, who launched this movement in literature to use unusual and mystical elements to depict reality which has to show their culture was complex and dynamic. Around the time of 1940s, writers such as Alejo Carpentier and Miguel Angel in their novels *The Kingdom of the World* and *Men of Maize* respectively brought many indigenous aspects into their narratives, for instance, the cultural belief, folklore as well as geographical and political conflicts. The most interesting features of these early novels were their exploration of reality through non-real entities such as characters who morph into animals, the dead who come to life, or how time regresses and moves in a fluid motion. These features gradually became so well-known and well-received that it was in the novels of Garcia Marquez's that magical realism takes on a more prominent role in south American literature in the 1960s and '70s. later writers were influenced by this trend such Toni Morrison, Isabel Allende, Salman Rushdie, Italo Calvino and others.

Invisible Cities by Italo Calvino deals with magical worlds. On the other hand, *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie deals with fantasy, unreal, surreal aspects of Indian subcontinent. *Invisible Cities* is recognized as a post-colonial literary work similarly Calvino follows almost all of the characteristics of magical realism. He corresponds with certain things like fantastical, historical, symbolism and utopian theme in between fifty-five cities. The cities setting seems real but in real there are no existence of that kind of cities. The author uses some unrealistic components, but still represents a realistic way whereby, magical components become real such as when the dead become alive. This novel's first and last sections are narrated by an anonymous third person who describes the fictional narrative between the characters called

Kublai Khan and the Italian explorer Marco Polo. The theme, style, narration of this novel relates all of the traits of magic realism. On the other hand, in Rushdie's novel, he uses magical realism in a very excellent way. He connected fantasy with Indian usual life by creating a character who is involved in contemporary political and social disorder also hold the power of mythical hero. Midnight's children are considered as the magic realistic tools that emphasis on the unstoppable struggle in terms of identities. Saleem's appeal to the children of the midnight create an identity that falls between dualism of inherent in terms of social division.

1.2. Thesis Statement

This paper aims to investigate how magical realism as a literary technique is highlighted in both novels, enabling the Italian writer and Indian born Rushdie to portray their historical and cultural experiences in their fiction. Also, in which way these two authors from different continents, various countries and historical periods attempting to understand the incomprehensible things, in life, in human behaviors, in order to create a mysterious relationship between man and the conditions that is more authentic than a realist text. It also highlighted, the important elements of this genre for instance, fantasy, magic, power, imagination, mystery in the both novels. Both novels will be discussed and analyzed within the parameter of these elements.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Methodology

This research will be divided into three chapters so as to properly describe and organize the central idea of thesis topic. Chapter one comprises of the introduction, background information and thesis statement. Thereafter, chapter two will be included with literature review with the help of secondary resources.

Chapter three consists with description, definition, and characteristics of this theoretical framework. In the 1930s, when the works of South American novelists and short story writers were identified as part of a new trend dubbed "magical realism," the phrase "magical realism" was coined. It was a means to communicate the actual American attitude and establish an independent literary style, and it captures the irony of opposites coming together.

The fourth chapter will be the analytical part of the whole paper. It will be included with the theory (magic realism) which reflects the books. Also, how it goes with the selected texts in the support of my arguments. Finally, chapter five is the conclusion where the argument will be revisited proved.

2.2. Literature Review

The term "magic realism" refers to a writing style or technique that contains both magical and supernatural happenings that are told realistically and about their improbability. Using a combination of fact and fantasy, this term questions the nature of reality and create an attention to the act of creation. The techniques of magical realism are a platform, where the writers can express their imagination, opinion, criticism political view in a clear way. Since, W. B. Faris says, "magical realism combines realism and the fantastic in such a way that the magical elements grow organically out of the reality portrayed" (165). The term 'magical realism' was first applied to painting by Franz Roh in 1925 to define a return to a more realistic approach to

the following expressionism's abstraction (Magic realism Wikipedia). It seems very suitable for the term since it initially applied to painting and that would come to be known as a South American's continent-wide movement. "The magical realism seen in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* resembles the hybridity of painting, since the representation of painting and literature make use of entirely different conventions and value structures" (James & Mendleson, 170).

In magic realist writing, it can be found the presence of unnatural items that living in communication with them. The usage of legends and folklore is linked to this idea. Many indigenous elements, such as folklore and cultural beliefs, as well as a specific geographical and political settings, were utilized by these writers. James and Mendleson added that, "for all of us, it is a part of our identity in the same way that magical realism belongs to the identity of Latin Americans, but is shared with those who come to it later. Magic belongs to everyone, including those who are dismissive of it" (171).

To develop a Latin American manner of expression they were all determined rather than relying on European literary authority. As a result of this phenomena, a flood of 'magic realism' books has emerged from Latin America. In the book, *Concepts of Realism* Luc. Herman says:

> Magic realism is a literary mode that has received a verity of (overlapping) definitions. Due to the boom of Latin American fiction in the 1960s, for which the formulation was used as a cover term, it has become so popular as marketing level that it has turned into problematic or even dangerous critical tool. (122)

Though for the long-time magic realism stories have been limited to the South America but nowadays, Asia, Europe, Australia, Africa covers numerous texts from different cultural

traditions that are magical realist. Magical realist authors such as Salman Rushdie, Italo Calvino, and Toni Morrison work in this genre of fiction.

In magic realism, magical components are integrated in a realistic setting in order to have the actual meaning of real life. Sharon Sieber also explains magical realism by her own belief,

> Magical thinking is the underpinnings for magical realism and that magical realism is tied to the dream world in that it represents the site where the conscious and unconscious worlds meet. This is the very definition of magical 'place', and the magical realists have taken the mirror held up to nature one step further, in what I would call the mirror turned lamp turned projection. (172-173)

Therefore, magical realism depends on realism but only so that it can be justifiable as real to its limits. Also, it is related to realism which narrative mode is distinct from it. Since, the magical realism genre has a certain degree of reality facts, the magical aspects are used to establish a point about reality. Whereas, fantasy is way more segregation from reality. Many people think that magical realism is kind of literary works that are not different from supernatural or gothic stories. Apart from the genre supernatural or gothic this genre (magic realism) made its own position.

In the article, "Scheherazade's Children: Magical Realism in Postmodernist Fiction" (1998) full W. B. Faris describes magic realist characteristics and creates a checklist where she composes the requirements of magic realism one of them is hybridity: "Hybridity is more than illustrating conventional realist techniques but rather integrating in opposite worlds, reality with magic, dream with life, normal with abnormal and Western with indigenous" (Chaia, et al. 17).

'Fantastic elements' is another characteristic of magic realism. Ursula Kluwick states, "by far the most popular view is that natural and supernatural elements coexist in harmony, and this proposition has, in fact, become the standard explanation of the interaction of the realist and non-realist in magic realist literature" (13). In magic realism, supernatural entities are presented as natural and 'real'. unquestionable. "While the reader realizes that the rational and irrational are opposite and conflicting polarities, they are concerned because the supernatural is integrated with the norms of perception of the narrator and characters in the fictional world" (Hossain, 65). Therefore, the author feels to the need of community statements to express the fundamentals of identity "through the invention of new myths" (Aldea, 148). They employ their opinion and myth to provide a new perspective about certain events such as, historical, economic, social and other.

There are postcolonial texts where, there is many experiences of the colonial influence to modify those experiences through magic realism. She also added that, "indeed, we have seen that in postcolonial reading of magical realism the relation of the text to the historical, social, economic situation from which it is seen to be produced is stressed" (Aldea, 38). So, writers mix unrealistic circumstance with their literary work while addressing historical events, feelings and thoughts about British colonialism. For instance, Salman Rushdie's novel *The Midnight's Children* is one of them.

In *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie makes considerable use of magic realism. In an Indian setting, he combines fantasy and fiction. Saleem possesses the magical abilities of smell and telepathy, which are shared by all the 'midnight's children'. As a whole this gives readers an idea of psychological and mental conditions of postcolonial age. Magical realism has some unrealistic features and that can make them stand out by expressing longings in unusual ways. It is a powerful tool for deconstructing the world left by the colonists of Salman Rushdie. A. G Ananth

explains, "*Midnight's Children* recounts the transitional phase of British colonialism to Independent India. The whole story is evinced by numerous individuals who were gifted with magical powers" (80). Ursula Kluwick in his book *Exploring Magic Realism in Salman Rushdie's Fiction* gives opinion on how Rushdie wonderfully connects the characters with the historical moment/ of 1947: "*Midnight's Children* is most explicit in its use of historical information, but Rushdie's other novels are also rich in allusions to history. All of his texts are set in distinct historical periods, and engage intensively with historical developments and events" (43).

The narrator Saleem Sinai who was born at the time of India's independence and for that his life is very much interconnected with political, national and religious sectors of the very following time. This is what made him curious to put him back in his past identity. Md. Amir Hossain added that,

> Realism plays a dominant role in terms of describing the significant events. It goes as detailed as Sinai himself and his family members, especially the experiences of his grandfather, provides a unique perspective for the readers to view what happened during the period of Indian independence. Without the magic realism, the novel, *Midnight's Children* could have been ended up as another historical documentary. (72)

Rushdie's use of magical realism enhances the novel's appeal and reveals a new degree of significance in terms of overall history of India. In the novel, Saleem has to deal with his own personal circumstances. Also, he suffers from forgetfulness before he goes to the Sundarban jungle for a quasi-mythological exile. This Sundarban section is adding up to a part of novel where the theme of natural and extraordinary blend peacefully. Ursula Kluwick says, "indeed in

the case of the Sundarbans, Saleem explicitly emphasizes the jungle's autonomous existence and its lack of connection with the world-and reality-outside" (20).

Midnight's Children is beautiful and meaningful because it incorporates aspects of magical realism. Also, Rushdie's representation of postcolonial existence in his novel and his usage of magic realism as a storytelling method is quite accurate. He depicts the events leading up to and following India's independence using these magnified pictures of reality. "Rushdie's mingling of the fantastic and usual seems typical Indian as the characters involved in contemporary political and social disorders also possess the power of mythic heroes" (Manzoor & Walinir, 1). Bowers moreover states that, "Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* are presented by the narrators to be extraordinary events within a realist tale. A magical realist interpretation considers these two elements to be presented by the narrator to the reader as ordinary events in a realist story" (24).

Invisible Cities was definitely inspired by Calvino's ambition to write about ideal cities and optimal human relationships; as a result, the cities are not simply sad or joyous, utopian or dystopian or disconnected from social networks and ambitions, human wishes and will. The author creates a utopian[1] society to express his desire and inner aim to portray a quality life. Therefore, he works on different types of human desire, such as, Kublai Khan's desire to know more about the empire, Marco Polo's desire to know himself by travelling different places and the desire of self-known. This is why Calvino estates by Marco Polo's word, "I cannot force my operation beyond a certain limit: I would achieve cities too probable to be real" (Calvino, 69). Therefore, the book's framework is built around Marco Polo's communication with Kublai Khan. The discussion between these two primary characters is presented in the first body of text, while

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[1] Utopian Society is a community which is highly desirable and it has all the qualities of perfect living.

Marco Polo's magnificent descriptions of the towns are presented in the second. Even though the thread of their speech is hidden, their principles and perspectives are nonsensical, deceptive. Also, it is felt like everything hides something else, cities and dreams are formed of desires and fears. In this approach, the visitor creates a collection of imagined environments that aren't always utopian: cities that mirror concerns might also depict dismal ideas. I can relate here with the city Adelma: "perhaps Adelma is the city where you arrive dying and where each find again people he has known. This means I, too, am dead" (Calvino, 95). All of these images create fantasy and magical realism in this book.

CHAPTER 3

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Definition and Historical Context

Magic realism defers from pure fantasy because it has very normal setting like real world with real description of individual and society. Using a combination of fact and fantasy, this term questions the nature of reality and create an attention to the act of creation. The techniques of magical realism are a platform, where the writers can express their imagination, opinion, criticism political view in an explicit way. Since, full W. B. Faris says, "magical realism combines realism and the fantastic in such a way that the magical elements grow organically out of the reality portrayed" (165). In the world of fiction magic realist authors follow and apply different kind of rules while, still portraying them in a very realistic way. In this way, they persuade the reader to accept the story as a fact. Death people become alive, strangers become familiar, characters change into animals, magic become real, cities are also look different in

magical world, in their story. Therefore, if the character goes with the magic, readers will start to believe automatically. So, the magic and fantasy always have valid place in the story to accept and this cannot be questioned by the characters.

The term 'magical realism' first applied to painting and introduced by German art critic Franz Roh in 1925 to defining a return to a more realistic approach to the following expressionism's abstraction (Magic realism Wikipedia). It seems very suitable for the term since it initially applied to painting and that would come to be known as a Latin American's continent-wide movement. "The magical realism seen in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* resembles the hybridity of painting, since the representation of painting and literature make use of entirely different conventions and value structures" (James & Mendleson, 170). It is thought to have begun with the works of Spanish American authors such as Miguel Angel Asturias and Alejo Carpentier in 1940s, who published the book respectively *The Kingdom of this World* and *Men of Maize*. Many indigenous elements, such as folklore and cultural beliefs, as well as a specific geographical and political setting, were utilized by these writers. Edward James and Farah Mendleson added that, "for all of us, it is a part of our identity in the same way that magical realism belongs to the identity of Latin Americans, but is shared with those who come to it later. Magic belongs to everyone, including those who are dismissive of it" (171).

The development of the so-called "boom" phase of writing in Latin America in the 1950s and 1960s and that was sparked by writers like Alejo Carpentier and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. To develop a Latin American manner of expression they were all determined rather than Relying on European literary authority. As a result of this phenomena, a flood of 'magic realism' books has emerged from Latin America. In the book *Concepts of Realism* Luc. Herman says about magic realism: "magic realism is a literary mode that has received a verity of definitions. Due to the

boom of Latin American fiction in the 1960s, for which the formulation was used as a cover term, it has become so popular as marketing level that it has turned into problematic or even dangerous critical tool" (122).

Though for the long-time magic realism stories have been limited to the South America but nowadays, Asia, Europe, Australia, Africa covers numerous texts from different cultural tradition. Magic realist authors such as, Salman Rushdie, Italo Calvino, Toni Morrison applied this genre in their literary works.

3.2. Meaning

'Magic realism' or 'magical realism' is a term in which many people have clear idea and yet a few people have the clear idea of what it means and includes. Much of the confusion arise due to the amalgamation of criticism on 'magic realist' fiction and that on 'magic realist' literature and art. They both have many features in common but refers to subtle different characteristics and impact. This is a literary technique, not a distinct genre, that seeks to capture the paradox of opposite unity. Since, it is based in a realistic modern world with the ideal social picture, this is why this differs from pure fantasy.

There are so many scholars who defined magic realism in a very good way, *The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms* says that, "kind of modern fiction in which fabulous and fantastical elements are included in a narrative that maintains the reliable tone of objective, realistic report" (Chanady, 85). The elements of dream, fairy tale, folklore is merged with everyday reality in a general manner of refraction and frequency in the literary works of magical realism such as, stories, fiction, novel which have strong narrative way in which reality mixed up with the unpredicted. In magic realism, magical components are integrated in a realistic setting in

order to have the actual meaning of real life. Sharon Sieber also explains magical realism by her own belief,

> Magical thinking is the underpinnings for magical realism and that magical realism is tied to the dream world in that it represents the site where the conscious and unconscious worlds meet. This is the very definition of magical 'place', and the magical realists have taken the mirror held up to nature one step further, in what I would call the mirror turned lamp turned projection. (172-173)

Therefore, magical realism depends on realism but only so that it can be justifiable as real to its limits. Also, it is related to realism which narrative mode is distinct from it.

Magical realism is an artistic genre of fiction in which magical elements exist in the real or modern world. It is basically approach to the blurring lines between fantasy and reality. Apart from including magical elements, usually it is regarded as a quite different genre of fantasy. Since, the theory magical realism includes certain amount of reality details and let the magical elements to prove a point about reality. Whereas, fantasy is way more segregation from reality. Many people think that magical realism is kind literary works that are not different from supernatural or gothic stories but this theory made its own position in English literature.

3.3. Characteristics of Magic Realism

In magic realist text all the characteristics are applied in a different way. Every text is unique and have a variety of properties. These texts adequately depict in a way so that a literary minded individual might learn from a text. W. B. Faris describes, "Magical realism combines realism and the fantastic in such a way that the magical elements grow organically out of the reality portrayed" (169). It's difficult to define magic realism as it is to define as its traits. There

are no exact ideal traits that can define magical realism. Every author, magic realists have their own opinions and point of views about it.

In the article, "Scheherazade's Children: Magical Realism in Postmodernist Fiction" (1998) W. B Faris describes about magic realism characteristics and creates a checklist where she composes the requirements of magic realism. Also, he listed five primary and nine secondary characteristics of magic realism in her article. These are the major characteristics of magic realism:

3.3.1. Hybridity:

Magic realism writing involves with the issues of borders, blending and change. Also, it is about blending of various lines, which are reflected to the plots, periods, merge of genre, time and space. These elements were arranged by the authors to show significant themes of magical realism as well as deeper insights into the genuine reality of the realms. Some strategies that have been linked to hybridity are used by magic realists. "Hybridity is more than illustrating conventional realist techniques but rather integrating in opposite worlds, reality with magic, dream with life, normal with abnormal and Western with indigenous" (Chaia, et al. 17).

3.3.2. Fantastic Elements:

The significance of the fantastic elements in magic realism is very much connected with the critical interest of present time to the interaction between natural and supernatural elements in magic realist texts. Since, we know in literature, magic realism describes as a modern fiction with tremendous and fantastical elements included in the literary work, that maintains the objectives of realistic setting. Modern novels have the tendency to reach beyond the margins of reality also, try to give energies fable, myth, folk-tale. Ursula Kluwick states, "by far the most

popular view is that natural and supernatural elements coexist in harmony, and this proposition

has, in fact, become the standard explanation of the interaction of the realist and non-realist in

magic realist literature" (13).

3.3.3. Irony:

For the realism to be preserved, the author must maintain an ironic distance from the

magical worldview. Simultaneously, author should have the vigorous respect on magic,

otherwise instead of synchronization the magic will degrade into mere folklore or completely

fantasy. Moreover, postcolonial and irony cannot match within a page because these two are

totally opposite. It has the ability to separate a person from the standard beliefs of a social group

which, makes it very difficult to be considered a representation of that culture.

3.3.4. The Supernatural and The Natural:

The story setting would be an ordinary world with well-known historical and cultural

truth. The circumstances of a story are not always described by universal rules or conventional

reasoning. It serves as an everyday event not as a special or miracle. In this way, when the plot

unfolds the readers feel like they are in a puzzle or mage. Therefore, the readers mind always

remain busy by using the magical elements like metamorphose, allegory, personification and

others. In magic realism, the supernatural is not presented as questionable. "While the reader

realizes that the rational and irrational are opposite and conflicting polarities, they are concerned

because the supernatural is integrated with the norms of perception of the narrator and characters

in the fictional world" (Hossain, 65).

3.3.5. Time and Space:

Magic realism has the close connection with time, space and identity. These three themes are common in most postcolonial and postmodern texts. Postmodern perspective deal with the idea of space, especially when it is about fiction. On the other hand, post-colonial is about identity and space. In the literature of magic realism, the conventional chronological time order is altered. In the real world we see time does not act like the way we want. But in magic realist literary work time stay still, travels forward, loops back.

3.3.6. Political Critic:

Magic realism has an implied critique of society, particularly the ruling class. Latin American style departs from the undeniable speech which is privileged literary centered. This is kind of eccentrics such as geographical, social and economic marginalization. "Magic realist texts are subversive texts, revolutionary against socially dominant forces. Alternatively, the socially dominant may implement magic realism to disassociate themselves from the powerful discourse" (Zamora, 11).

3.4. Themes in Magic Realism

Author who believes in magic realism use the genre to address a variety of Latin American concerns. For example, it tries to combine the issues of identity, magic and myth and asking for reality. Therefore, these are the basic themes of magic realism:

3.4.1. Identity

In the face of external views of what this identity should be, magic realism seen as a useful and positive identity of Latin America, particularly in the section of Lantin American's myth and stories. When all it began it had the negative colonial impact on racial identity and that time in Latin America reality needed to stated. Therefore, the country author feels to the need of

community statements to express the fundamentals of Latin identity "through the invention of new myths" (Aldea, 148). They employ their opinion and myth to provide a new perspective about certain events such as, historical, economic, social and other.

3.4.2. Questioning of Reality

Magic realist authors tent to create such a plot where things remain within a real setting in an unreal way. "Therefore, readers point of view grow based on the contradictions and inconsistencies of what is true and unreal. Based on questioning what the audience understands about the world at large, as well as what happens inside the story" (Chaia, et al. 16). So, magic realism stays in both reality and fantasy of amalgamation.

3.4.3. Magic and Myth

In magic realism, magic and myth is one of a central element. As a method of writing, it is immensely appealing that the authors ability to incorporate the wonderous, fantastic elements by reconstructing the vision, spell and tales just into a new literary piece. The employment of this theme considered to be seen as a very unique, native and colonial identity of Latin America. "Gabriel García Márquez is the best example in reinventing his grandmother old myths to new ones by mixing it with the magic in his novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*" (Chaia, et al. 16).

3.5. Postcolonialism

Although postcolonialism is thought to be a solely Latin American phenomena. In general, to the postcolonial writers, magic realism evolved to recognized as a method, which provide them the opportunity to dominant Western world. Aldea says, "realism is generally seen as a type of narrative complicit with colonization" (39). There are so many postcolonial texts where, there is many experiences of the colonial influence to modify such experience in magic

realism. Post-colonial authors think that realism is culture representation of colonizer. She also added that, "indeed, we have seen that in postcolonial reading of magical realism the relation of the text to the historical, social, economic situation from which it is seen to be produced is stressed" (Aldea, 38). So, writers mixed up unrealistic print with their literary work while addressing historical events and feeling about colonialism such as in Salman Rushdie's *The Midnight's Children*.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

4.1. Magic Realism in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*

Salman Rushdie is one of the most eminent contemporary novelists to come out of India in the 1980s. Gradually he came to prominence as a most well know writer of twentieth century. This fame he gained is not only due the backlash that he received after publishing *The Satanic Verses* (1988) from Islamic Fundamentalists around the world, but especially in Iran, but also as a result of the portrayal of human life in works like *Midnight's Children* (1981) and *Shame* (1988). *Midnight's Children* is his second book and an allegory of modern India through the lives of 1,001 children born in August 15, 1947, on the first hour of the country's independence from Britain. The transition from British colonialism to national democracy and home rule in India, as well as the partition of British India, are the subjects of this book. In 1993, this novel won him the Booker Prize of Bookers honor in 2008. Moreover, *Midnight's Children* is the only Indian novel to appear on the list of the hundred best English-language novels published by the *New York Times* since its inception in 1923.

In *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie makes considerable use of magic realism techniques and literary devices by combining fantasy and fiction with historical facts. Saleem Sinai possesses the magical abilities of smell and telepathy which are shared by all other midnight's children. Magic realism has some unrealistic features and that can make them stand out by expressing longings in unusual ways. A.G. Ananth explains, "*Midnight's Children* recounts the transitional phase of British colonialism to Independent India. The whole story is evinced by numerous individuals who were gifted with magical powers" (80).

By endowing Saleem Sinai with the miraculous ability to read people's minds, Rushdie provides us a peek of the colonial political system and postcolonial suffering. By accessing his grandfather Aadam Aziz's head, Saleem Sinai relates his grandfather's narrative. As a result, Aadam Aziz's experiences become Saleem's, and we get to experience the same through Saleem. The narrator, Saleem Sinai, narrates his story to Padma, his wife, and the audience of his own volition. In this story, he tells the story of his forefather's personal history is intertwined with Indian history. "In a very simple way, the novel is the story of Saleem Sinai and at a subtle level the story is about his country India where Saleem plays an important role as an individual, which is a literary mechanism as well as a representative of Independence" (Ananth, 80). Saleem suggests that as his body breaks down, he will shatter into 630 million pieces, which is the population of India. Therefore, his story is made for his son, who is just like his father and bound by the history and endowed with superhuman abilities. Ursula Kluwick in his book *Exploring Magic Realism in Salman Rushdie's Fiction* gives opinion about how Rushdie wonderfully connects the characters with the historical information, "*Midnight's Children* is most explicit in its use of historical information, but Rushdie's other novels are also rich in allusions to history.

All of his texts are set in distinct historical periods, and engage intensively with historical developments and events" (43).

Rushdie uses magic realism as a powerful narrative tool/method. He is not only used magical realist elements for highlighting the unreal and surreal qualities of the Indian subcontinent, but he also includes the wonderful, mystical, and unusual features here. P. Merivale states, "Magic realism is giving people a new perspective in the regular also it is considered as the ultimate art of surprising to anyone. Events are endowed with a sense of mystery by the way they are focused. In the fiction, *Midnight's Children*, for instance, India's independence was celebrating by a crowd and that is called as the monster in the streets" (329-346). Salman Rushdie's works, particularly in the novel *Midnight's Children*, is an excellent instance of how magic realism and postmodernist may coexist.

Aadam's ties with his wife and children were strained throughout his worthless existence. They depart from him like pieces, just like his broken ego did. Md. Amir Hossain states, "there are many instances in *Midnight's Children* where Rushdie uses the framework of magic realism. Saleem Senai's gift of having an incredible sense of smell, allowing him to determine emotions and thoughts, stems from his grandfather Adam, who has possessed the same large nose and magic gift" (71). Therefore, *Midnight's Children* considers as a vague allegory of India both before and after in the time of Independence and division on August 15,1947. Since, we know that Saleem Sinai is the narrator and through the eye of him the individual ideas are reflected. He was born at the time of India's independence and for that his life is very much interconnected with political, national and religious sectors of the very following time. This is what made him curious to put him back in his past identity. Md. Amir Hossain added that,

When it comes to portraying major events, realism rules as supreme. It goes as detailed as Sinai himself and his family members, especially the experiences of his grandfather, provides a unique perspective for the readers to view what happened during the period of Indian independence. Without the magic realism, the novel, Midnight's Children could have been ended up as another historical documentary. (72)

Saleem's grandfather Aadam Aziz returns from Heidelberg to his native Kashmiri valley. Here the valley is shown as a very much alive and moving environment which is not only the backdrop of its residents changing life experiences, it only an artificial shelter.

> The world was new again. After a winter's gestation in its eggshell of ice, the valley had beaked its way out into the open, moist and yellow. The new grass bided its time underground; the mountains were retreating to their hill-station for the worm season. (In the winter, when the valley shrank under the ice, the mountains closed in and snarled like angry jaws around the city on the lake). (Rushdie,10)

This is kind of unusual presentation of mountain valley since it creates a blurry boundary between living and non-living condition. An important feature of magical realism is the blending of illusion and truth. Aziz's Kashmiri valley is an excellent example of the combination of reality and magic. By combining the real and the extraordinary, twisting time, and adding myth and folklore, Rushdie has incorporated magical realist elements. Ananth explains, "in a magical realist text, we find the conflict between the world of fantasy and the reality, and each world works for creating a fictional world from the other; in *Midnight's Children* through the magical,

the realistic creates its voice and makes its voice and makes it heard" (80). His style of magic realism is based on psychological world, moments of uncertainty, internal conflict and the narrator's inconsistent narrative, rather than the ideas of illusion and tradition of general.

Moreover, another character Tai who plays role as a boatman which has the appearance of magic realism. In this novel he claims that he is very much old that he has seen everything created. He claims that, he has "watched the mountains being born" also 'seen emperors die" (Rushdie, 13). Moreover, he said that he "saw that Isa, that Christ, when he came to Kashmir" (13). Rushdie wanted Tai to represent ancient and precolonial India, which is why he gave him such an unrealistic lifespan. Tai Bibi who also claims herself as 512 years old and has the ability to get prediction of human's bad breath problem, which is kind of unusual in real life. Furthermore, Saleem's mother has a fear of having baby because if the baby has the cauliflower in its head instead of brain. Saleem also has the ability of what? which he gained from his grandfather Aziz is to take the smell of emotions. For having this supernatural ability to smell, he is saved from death during the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. How? explain

In the novel, Saleem has to deal with his unique circumstances in life. Here he was able to remember things that he forgot. There he reconnects with his old friends. This Sundarban section is add up to a part of novel where the theme of natural and extraordinary blend peacefully. Ursula Kluwick says, "indeed in the case of the Sundarbans, Saleem explicitly emphasizes the jungle's autonomous existence and its lack of connection with the world-and reality-outside" (20). When the soldiers enter in the Sundarban Rushdie explains it as another world and it is so thick that history never found their way of entering.

> The jungle closed behind them like a tomb. And after hours of increasingly weary but
> also frenzied rowing through incomprehensibly labyrinthine salt-water channels

overpowered by the cathedral-arching tress, Ayooba Shaheed Farooq were hopelessly

lost;…it seems as if the possibility of ever leaving this place receded before them like the

lantern of a ghost. (360)

Basically, Sundarban portrays as a magical space where supernatural things are surprising us

every time. Saleem eventually gets engaged with Emergency declaration by Indira Gandhi and

her son Sanjay's cleaning activity Jama Masjid slum. Later Saleem jailed as a political prisoner

and this chapter contains Rushdie's appears to observe as a personal hunger for the power of

kingship.

Rushdie's usage of magic realism as a storytelling method is quite accurate. Saleem tells

his narrative using magical realism, which combines mythology, realism, fantastic elements, and

history, to communicate his story and convey his position as a postcolonial Indian citizen and for

him it is definitely the most efficient way. Rushdie uses fantasy to create more intense depictions

of reality. He depicts the events leading up to and following India's independence using these

magnified pictures of reality. "Rushdie's mingling of the fantastic and usual seems typical Indian

as the characters involved in contemporary political and social disorders also possess the power

of mythic heroes" (Manzoor & Walinir, 1). To share with people, Rushdie employs magical

realism to address postcolonial issues so that, individuals can build their own identities, beliefs,

histories, practices and traditions.

The story concentrates on Saleem's family and personal event; and thereby the Indian

historical, social, cultural, religious events uncover. By stressing personal and familial events,

the novel reduces the impact of historical events and places them in the background. The novel

depicts the British power's anarchy over India and Indians, Indians' sense of identity as a result of

freedom, and the long-awaited effects of independence. Hossain also thinks Rushdie uses

'fantasy' as a sharpen method to images reality. He added, uses this "intensified images of reality" in the novel, *Midnight's Children* to portray the happenings preceding and following India's independence, like political upheaval, popular upsurge, growing optimism, and chaotic developments" (73). The work also depicts how postcolonial people create their own historical events by rejecting colonial ones. They accomplish this by stressing personal and familial history and depicting these experiences with humor.

The difference between what is real and artificial in Rushdie's story is frequently unclear, this happens not only to the reader but also to the narrator himself. Bowers states that, "Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* are presented by the narrators to be extraordinary events within a realist tale. These two elements are presented to the reader as typical events in a realism novel, that is according to a magical realist interpretation" (24). This different interpretation occurs because of the ambivalence of the novel. Since, we see in the novel the conversation between Saleem and his friend Padma. Saleem says, she can 'believe or don't believe' the 'magic spells can occasionally succeed' (Rushdie, 381).

Midnight's Children is all the more intriguing because of Rushdie's handling of magical realism. The employment of fantasy is done on purpose in order to transcend reality. The author is aided in speaking the unsayable through magical realism. magic realism theme like fragmentation, plurality, displacement, immigration these are symbolically used throughout the entire novel. The author touches the criteria's such as, time and space, pity and terror, humorous anecdotes in a very aesthetic way to grab the readers attention and I think author can successfully doing it.

4.2. Magic Realism in Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*

Calvino spent the first two years (1923-1925) of his life in Cuba then moved to Italy where he spent his childhood and adolescence. At the age of 24, Calvino wrote his first novel *The Path to the Nest of Spiders*. Soon he became well-known as an adherent of neorealistic[2] fiction. Most of his later fiction, which ventured into the worlds of fable and fantasy, was inspired by Italian folk literature. Calvino continues to move away from a standard framework and towards a more artistic one with a fresh approach to his writing. For example, *Cosmicomics* published in 1965 was a collection of stories which is about the development of world. such revolutionary work of Calvino's drew a growing worldwide audience and increase critical attention.

In the last two decades of his life, Calvino's most aspiring novel was published. He organized *Invisible Cities* as a collection of prose poem rather than as a traditional novel. Calvino was the only modern writer that can be found in Italian literature at that time.

Invisible Cities was first published in Italian in 1972; it is translated into English in 1974. the book was a nominee for what at the 'Nebula award' in 1976 (*Invisible Cities* Wikipedia). This novel is unique and classifiable work which has the description of 55 cities all with women's names. The novel is narrated by Marco Polo to demonstrate the vast empire of Kublai Khan; however, these cities are essentially one city--Venice. The book contains a series of dialogues between full Marco Polo and Kublai Khan as if Marco Polo is telling the story of every city to Kublai Khan. Calvino's imaginative universe is depicted in fragmentary form in these

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[2] Any revival realism in fiction and novel where the lives of poor people is describes in a contemporary setting. "This term conducted by Cesare Pavese, Alberto Moravia and Elio Vittorini. Also, this was a very ruling trend of Italian fiction in the time of 1940s and 1950s" (Oxford Reference).

descriptions. This book has nine chapters and all start and end with dialogues between Marco Polo and Kublai Khan which gives this book a distinctive structure. The spectacular stories of the cities Marco Polo claimed to have visited are included, together with details of the city's residents, major imports and exports, and any interesting anecdotes Marco Polo had heard about the region.

Moreover, Calvino wrote this book in a very formalized structural way with the numbering and heading of the cities. It also broken down into eleven themes such as, Cities & desire, Cities & memory, Cities & signs, Cities & names, Trading cities, Cities & eyes, Hidden cities, Cities & the sky, Continuous Cities, Cities & the dead and Cities & the sky. A new city category is introduced in each chapter that follows. Each city is given exotic feminine names: Zaira, Fedora, Zenobia, Tamara, Adelma, Theodora, Anastasia, Zora, Isaura, Zoe, Eudoxia, Irene, etc. All these cities are imaginary and are illustrated by Marco Polo only for entertain Kublai Khan. According to, Indusoodan and Dr. S. Geetha, "since Marco Polo's temporal and geographical location is always in his fluid awareness, the fictional towns do not appear on any of the khan's maps, nor is it obvious whether they exist in the past, present, or future. A utopian, highly illusionary and imaginary world is produced in the descriptions of Polo by Calvino" (3).

Each vignette is short and devoid of individuals; instead, it depicts each place through intense poetic imageries. Calvino's imagination conjures up an astonishing diversity of cities, and it's difficult to do credit to them all. Almost any chapter, passages and lines in this book can be cited but a favorite one is this:

> with all this, I would not be telling you the city's true essence; for while the description of Anastasia awakens desires one at a time only to force you to stifle them, when you are in the heart of Anastasia one morning your desire waken all at once and surround you.

The city appears to you as a whole where no desire is lost and of which you are a part, and since it enjoys everything, you do not enjoy, you can do nothing but inhabit this desire and be content. Such is the power, sometimes called malignant, sometimes benign, that Anastasia, the treacherous city, possesses; if for eight hours a day you work as a cutter of agate, onyx, chrysoprase, your labor which gives form to desire takes from desire its form, and you believe you are enjoying Anastasia wholly when you are only its slave. (Calvino, 12)

The way Calvino portrays the cities is one of the most examples of imaginary and fantasy in magic realism.

Invisible Cities was definitely inspired by Calvino's ambition to write about ideal cities where everyone one believes in social works and they are happily independent. As a result, the cities are not simply sad or joyous, utopian or dystopian or disconnected from social networks and ambitions, human wishes and will repetitive. The author creates a utopian society to express his desire and inner aim to open up for several activities of existence. Therefore, he works on different types of human desire, such as, Kublai Khan's desire to know more about the empire, Marco Polo's desire to know himself by travelling different places and the desire of self-known. This is why Calvino estates by Marco Polo's word, "I cannot force my operation beyond a certain limit: I would achieve cities too probable to be real" (Calvino, 69).

Ana Isabel Correia Martin says that, "this is the same motivation for the emergence of magic realism in Latin America countries. Most utopias favor the state over the individual: property is frequently held in common, and the distinctive qualities of human existence, such as leisure, solitude, and right to freedom, are generally minimized" (140). Utopia is meant to represent a cohesive society rather than individual kinds of existences.

Therefore, the book's framework is built around Marco Polo's communication with Kublai Khan. The discussion between these two primary characters is presented in the first body of text, while Marco Polo's magnificent descriptions of the towns are presented in the second. Although these cities do not exist in real, the emperor criticizes his envoy of succumbing to sadness rather than reporting on the state of his empire's many regions. Since, we can see at a moment Marco Polo confesses about the cities that he describes:

> dawn had broken when he said, 'Sire, now I have told you about all the cities I know'.
>
> 'There is still one of which you never speak'.
>
> Marco Polo bowed his head.
>
> "Venice", The Khan said…
>
> And Polo said: 'Every time I describe a city, I am saying something about Venice'.
>
> 'When I ask you about other cities, I want to hear about them. And about Venice, when I ask you about Venice' (Calvino, 86)

Calvino in this book creates the images of invisibility because all of the cities have undivided and substantial existence, as he confesses that throughout the time he talked about only Venice. Therefore, ultimately, they are all alive only in the mind and only exist in an abstract realm. All of these cities create a network to reflect social linkages that are also disguised by trade. In this circumstance Isabela Correia Martin adds that:

> Marco Polo clarifies the rules of this game: from the number of imaginable cities, we must exclude those whose elements are assembled without any connecting thread or inner rule, a perspective that maintains the cohesion and coherence of the narration. Cities are

like dreams: everything imaginable can be dreamed, but even the most unexpected dream

is a desire or its reverse, a fear. (145)

It is felt like everything hides something else, cities and dreams are formed of desires and fears.

In this approach, the visitor creates a collection of imagined environments that aren't always

utopian: cities that mirror concerns might also depict dismal ideas. I can relate here with the city

Adelma: "perhaps Adelma is the city where you arrive dying and where each find again people

he has known. This means I, too, am dead" (Calvino, 95). All of these images create fantasy and

magical realism in this book.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Traditional storytelling is used in magic realism as a vital and effective strategy in

expressing thoughts or passing knowledge via writing. This is crucial because in local culture

storytelling was very important. *Midnight's Children* and *Invisible Cities* have created an

alternative version of a major historical events which exposes the fabrication of a story.

Therefore, Saleem tells his story using magical realism, which combines mythology,

realism, fantastic elements, and history and this is the best way to tell and express his perspective

as a postcolonial Indian citizen. The novel's key themes, including the creation and recounting of

history, identity, and stories, are derived from the organized hybridity of magical realism, and it

would be incredibly impossible to connect with these fundamental topics, as well as the

examination of post-colonial issues, except magical realism. since, people have the desire to construct their own identities, histories, beliefs, cultures, and tradition, and want to share them with others. This is why, *Midnight's Children* employs the approach of magical realism to overcome post-colonial difficulties.

On the other hand, *Invisible Cities* is a great literary piece of magical realism. Fantasy which is the best element of magic realism can be seen in this book. The major character of the book Polo tells the stories of different cities. By creating imaginary situations, he tells the whole stories of the cities which have no existence in real life. However, he describes how the ideal cities look like and should be. Basically, the author Calvino uses magical realism elements and creates such a story on purpose which is a suggestion of creating an ideal society for the Italian citizen. This postmodern novel is wonderfully giving us message to create ideal society. By applying the style of verse or prose poem and using magic realism elements this literary work is success to put the message to individuals.

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