

## *Original Paper*

# **Magic Realism in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Rushdie's *Midnight's Children***

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### ***Abstract***

*The aim of this paper is to examine a comparative study between Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* in the light of Magic Realism. It aims to examine Shakespeare's and Rushdie's treatment of Magic Realism during 16th century England and 20th century India, respectively. For this propose, it attempts to portray some important characters, like Prospero, Caliban, and Ariel in the play, *The Tempest* and the narrator, Saleem Sinai in the novel, *Midnight Children*. It aims to look at applying the theory of Magic Realism made by prominent critics and scholars. It also wants to focus on magic, supernatural, occult, imagination, reality, and mystery. Both Shakespeare's and Rushdie's literary texts are analyzed within the parameters of these issues. Finally, this paper presents the art of characterization, themes and situations, writing forms, similarities and differences in various phases of the two famous writers.*

### **1. Introduction**

Starting from the fundamental concept of magic realism as a narrative style, which seeks to realize the supernatural elements, this submission draws a comparative investigation between William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* in the light of magic realism. It aims to examine Shakespeare's and Rushdie's treatment of magic realism during 16th century England and 20th century India, respectively. For this propose, it attempts to portray some important magic realist characters, like Prospero, Caliban, and Ariel in the play, *The Tempest* and the story-teller, Saleem Sinai in the novel, *Midnight Children*. As far as the two texts written in the form of magic realism on a comparative level are very few in number, this potential research aims to overlap those gaps by making a comparative analysis between *The Tempest* and *Midnight's Children*.

The aim of this article is to highlight the elements of magic realism in both texts and how both Shakespeare and Rushdie are from different countries and varied history, struggled with untangling reality by trying to get behind the inexplicable in things, in life, in human acts in creating a mysterious relationship between man and his situations to be more realistic than a realist text. Moreover, this article aims at proposing to incorporate a wide variety of related, but diverse and even contradictory elements, centering on the subject of magic, supernatural, occult/magic power, imagination, reality, mystery, fantasy, and so forth. Both Shakespeare's and Rushdie's literary texts would be analyzed within the parameters of these issues. It examines the art of characterization, themes and situations, writing forms, similarities and differences in various phases of the authors.

## 2. Meaning and Definition of Magic Realism

*The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms* defines magic realism as a "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, 1985). Magic realism mixes and disrupts ordinary everyday reality with strange, impossible and miraculous episode and power in social life.

The term, "Magic Realism", is broadly descriptive rather than critically rigorous. Professor Matthew Strecher defines magic realism as "what happens when a highly detailed, realistic setting is invaded by something too strange to believe" (Bowers, 2005). A literary mode rather than a distinguishable genre, magic realism aims to seize the paradox of the opposite union. Magic realism differs from pure fantasy, because it is set in a normal, modern world with the perfect social picture.

Magic realist literary works, like fictions, novels and stories have a strong narrative drive, in which the reality merges with the unexpected in which the elements of dream, fairy story, or mythology are combined with the everyday reality in mosaic style of refraction and recurrence. In magic realism, the magic elements are embedded in the realistic atmosphere in order to go into the underlying meaning of real life. These magic elements are explicated like simple issues that are highlighted in a direct means which exposes the "real" and the "fantastic" to be accepted in the same stream of thoughts. It has been widely considered a literary and visual art genre; creative fields that exhibit less significant signs of magic realism, including film and music (D'haen, 1995, pp. 191-208).

## 3. Characteristics of Magic Realism

The extent to which characteristics are applied to magic realist texts is not same in literature. Every text is not indifferent and employs a smattering of qualities. Texts accurately portray what a literary minded man may realize from a magic realist text. In this regard, some important characteristics of magic realist texts may be mentioned as follows:

### 3.1 Hybridity

Magic realists incorporate some techniques that have been connected with hybridity. Magic realism is illustrated in the inharmonious arenas of such opposites as urban-rural and western-indigenous settings. The plots of magic realist writings involve issues of borders, mixing, and change. Authors establish such plots to reveal a crucial purpose of magic realism: a more deep and true reality than conventional realist techniques would explain (Zamora, 1995, pp. 1-11).

### 3.2 Fantastical Elements

Magic realism in literature is defined as “a kind of modern fiction in which fabulous and fantastical events are included in a narrative, which maintains the reliable tone of objective realistic report, designating a tendency of the modern novel to reach beyond the confines of realism and draw upon the energies of fable, folk-tale, and myth while maintaining a strong contemporary social relevance”. The fantastic attributes given to the characters in fiction, novel, levitation, flight, telepathy, telekinesis, etc., are among the means that magic realism adopts in order to encompass social, economic, and political realities of 20th century.

### 3.3 Sense of Mystery

Magic realist literature tends to measure an intensified level. Taking the seminal work of the style, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) by Gabriel García Márquez, the reader must let go of pre-existing bonds to conventional exposition, plot advancement, linear time structure, scientific reason, etc., to strive for a state of heightened awareness of real life or hidden meanings. Carpentier articulates this feeling as “to seize the mystery that breathes behind things”, and supports the claim by saying that a writer must heighten his senses to the point of limit state in order to realize all levels of reality, most importantly that of mystery.

### 3.4 Irony

The writer must have ironic distance from the magic world view for the realism not to be compromised. Simultaneously, the writer must strongly respect the magic, or the magic dissolves into simple folk-belief, or complete fantasy, split from the reality instead of synchronization.

### 3.5 Supernatural and Natural

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.

### 3.6 Meta-Fiction

This trait centers on the reader's role in literature. With its multiple realities and specific reference to the reader's world, magic realism explores the fiction has on reality, reality on fiction and the reader's role in between as it is well-suited for drawing attention to social or political formulae. Furthermore, it is the tool paramount in the execution of a related and major magic realist phenomenon, like a

discourse. This term defines two conditions first, where a fictitious reader enters the story within a story while reading it, making us self-conscious of our status as a reader and secondly, where the textual world enters into the reader's world. Good sense would negate this process, but magic is a flexible art that allows it.

### *3.7 Political Critique*

Magic realism contains an implicit criticism of society, particularly the elite. With regard to Latin America, the style breaks from the inarguable discourse of privileged centers of literature, which is a mode of eccentrics: geographical, social, and economic marginalization. Therefore, magic realism's alternative world works to correct the reality of established viewpoints. 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, 1995, pp. 1-11).

## **4. Theoretical Framework**

Magic Realism is the most important literary mode of postmodern era. It is a concept first conceived by critics and scholars in 1920s and 1930s contributed to the development of black consciousness and their suppression by the colonizers (Bowers, 2005). Magic Realism is sometimes referred as a mode of writing which incorporates the "fantastic" in the "mundane" emerging in 1960s in Latin American fiction as a reaction to the western realism.

According to Zamora and Faris, Magic Realism is originated as an antagonistic reaction to the European Rationale to demean the dignity of the colonized people (p.135). Alejo Carpentier who coins the term "Lo Real Maravilloso Americano" refers magic realism as, seemingly miraculous occurrences in Latin America, which is contrasted with the lack of magic and imagination in European Folklore. Carpentier opines:

The marvelous real that I defend and that is our own marvelous real is encountered in its raw state, latent and omnipresent, in all that is Latin American. Here the strange is commonplace, and always was commonplace (p. 104).

One of the main features of Magic Realism is the presence of a fantastical element which cannot be described according to our sense of the world, but the magic issues happen. The characters accept these issues without any questions. Another point is that the magic realist events exists in the gap between the two worlds, the real and the magic; these two worlds are often represented by the worlds of the dead and the living. Therefore, in the magic realist texts, the reader finds the appearance of the ghosts and the living in contact with them. This notion has a connection with another element: the use of legends and folklore. The purpose of using magic realism in writing prose differs from author to author. For the "decentralized" authors, including Rushdie, it serves as a device to present the opinions on the mainstream culture and politics. At the same time, it helps to demonstrate the distance between the

centre and the margin.

Magic Realism as a narrative technique holds subjective exaggeration, myth, history, time, ambiguous reality, and supernaturalism. These ideas are eventually taken as a method of reality of human existence; and its happenings in the fixed limits of past into present and present into future, which are contrasted with the action of the past into the present. Luis Leal, an internationally recognized scholar defines Magic Realism as “an attitude toward reality that can be expressed in popular or cultural forms, in elaborate or rustic styles in closed or open structures” (Simpkins, 1995, pp. 145-162). The renowned Latin American author and perfectionist of Magic Realism, Gabriel Garcia Marquez defines this famous term as follows:

A kind of premeditated literature that offers too static and exclusive a vision of reality. However good or bad they may be, they are books which finish on the last page. Disproportion is a part of our reality too. Our reality is in itself all out of proportion. In other words, the magic text is, paradoxically, more realistic than the realist text (Simpkins, 1995, p. 148).

An Indian born British writer, Salman Rushdie considers Magic Realism as, “a way of showing reality more truly with the marvelous aid of metaphor and as a development out of Surrealism that expresses a genuinely Third World Consciousness” (Merivale, 1995, p. 451). In the context of mid-twentieth century definitions of cultural identity and the development of postcolonial theory, Magic Realism takes the political character on and overtly in its challenge to the rationalistic assumptions of western culture and makes a categorical assertion of the difference of Latin America and postcolonial cultures (pp. 329-346).

### **5. Magic Realism in *The Tempest***

There is a large number of magic realism in the play, *The Tempest*. The supernatural plays a striking role throughout the play. In fact, the whole action of the play is governed by magic power. Every important event is a result of Prospero's exercise of magic power and occult. The storm is caused by his magic power, and the ship is wretched by same means. The passengers are rescued and then, scattered in different groups on the island. The ship is safely brought to the shore and sailors sent to sleep in the ship with the help of Prospero's magic power. Ferdinand and Miranda are brought together by the same manner. The conspiracy hatched by Antonio and Sebastian is defeated by the same magic power. A stage banquet appears and then, disappears suddenly. Ferdinand hears strange melodies and songs. Caliban's plot is defeated. The masque of June is arranged. Caliban is teased and tormented by the spirits, especially Ariel. All these are brought about by Prospero's magic power (Flagstad, 1986, pp. 205-233).

In Shakespeare's time, many superstitions and supernatural beliefs held sway during 16th century England. Belief in magic was very widespread. That is the reason why a large number of books on magic, enchantment, spell, and demonology existed in Shakespeare's times.

Two kinds of magicians were supposed to exist in those days. First, there were magicians who commanded the services of certain superior supernatural beings. Secondly, there were necromancers, wizards, and witches who were believed to have entered into some sorts of agreement with the devil for certain evil purposes. Prospero belongs to the first category. He commands elves, demons, and goblins through the medium of Ariel.

Shakespeare's *The Tempest* presents Caliban as the only magic realist hero, while Ariel as a magical protagonist. While the play dramatizes Caliban as a powerful and revolutionary subject, Ariel is seen as a passively obedient subject. In such analysis, Caliban is more powerful than Ariel since the former enjoys the function of magic realism, i.e., he is both realistic and imaginary hero. Ariel's existence, on the other hand, is restricted only to the imaginary realm. Ariel never comes to the realistic realm of the characters except to Prospero. His invisibility shows that he is excluded from reality and contact with other characters. Therefore, Ariel remains a silent and passive subject, who begs the mercy of his master, Prospero for freedom. Caliban, as a magic realist hero, exists in the magic and realistic realms. The play rejects consistent and static depiction of Caliban. At one time, he is perceived as the supernatural monster, while he is a real man. Such inconsistency of depiction is similar to what Faris calls the indeterminacy of magic realism. For example, Prospero, at the beginning of the play, deprives Caliban of humanity belongings. He insists on dehumanizing Caliban as an object (Vaughan, 1991).

Prospero demonizes Caliban as a devil and a born devil on whose nature can never stick. Caliban is perceived by Prospero as a tortoise. However, in the unconscious of Prospero, Caliban is a man. For example, he admits that his daughter, Miranda, has not seen any men except Caliban and Ferdinand. While meeting Caliban for the first time, Trinculo and Stefano show a state of indeterminacy about the precise nature of Caliban. For them, he is both a practical man and supernatural monster. Trinculo shows a clear hesitation and confusion about the real nature of Caliban, like a strange fish; not a fish, but an islander; a puppy-headed monster; and half a fish and half a monster. For Stefano, Caliban is one of the devil; a monster of the isle with four legs; a devil and no monster; a moon-calf; and a man-monster. Even Antonio, Prospero's usurping brother, confirms Trinculo's and Stefano's theory of Caliban's origin as a fish. Unlike Caliban, Ariel remains within the imaginary circle. He is excluded from the direct contact with humans except with Prospero (Evans, 2010, pp. 179-190).

In the play, *The Tempest*, there is no indeterminacy in deciding upon the nature of Ariel since his description reveals that he is a supernatural creature, but not a human being. Prospero regards Ariel as a brave spirit; and he is rescued by Prospero from the imprisonment of Sycorax and, in return, serves him obediently. Unlike Caliban, Ariel does not ask for dismantling the authority nor look for restoring his native land. Ariel dissociates himself from any human affiliations.

Ariel is under the control of Prospero's magic power/occult because he is not a magic realist hero like Caliban. His existence remains in the imaginary and magic perception and does not switch with the realistic realm the way we see in Caliban and magic realist protagonists. Each of Ariel and Caliban

looks differently for the concept of salvation from the magic power of Prospero. For Ariel, redemption from magic power is granted by Prospero with non-violent means. Ariel always begs his freedom from Prospero. However, he does not violate nor revolt against the authority of Prospero. Instead, he reminds Prospero of the services he grants to the continuity of Prospero's power and the complete obedience to the logic: "Remember I have done thee worthy service, Told thee no lies, made thee no mistakes, served without or grudge or grumblings" (1.2.248-50).

Ariel becomes a tool of Prospero's magic power since his services strengthen his power against the subjects. Ariel shows complete readiness to cooperate with his master:

All hail, great master, grave sir, hail. I come  
To answer thy best pleasure. Be't to fly,  
To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride  
On the curled clouds, to thy strong bidding task  
Ariel and all his quality (1.2.190-94).

Even though Ariel is given freedom by Prospero, it is still tainted with magic affiliations. Ariel endeavors to have his own redemption but not his native land's independence from power and domination. Ariel works against the native subjects' protest to Prospero's magic domination. Ariel, taking the master's side against Caliban, gives privilege to Prospero's legitimacy to rule the island. He obstructs Caliban's plot along with Trinculo and Stefano to dethrone and demean Prospero's magic rule. Ariel shows selfishness against his own native land and subjects because Ariel, as a magic rather than magic realist character, lacks the realistic attitude unlike Caliban. Resisting regime is a part of the realistic rather than imaginary realm. The combination of both magic and realism fosters magic realist protagonists' protest (Flagstad, 1986, pp. 205-233).

Caliban, as the only magic realist hero in the play, holds responsible for redeeming not only himself, but also his native land from Prospero's power and domination. The concept of freedom for Caliban is more comprehensive than Ariel since he endeavors to achieve independence for every element on his native land. For Caliban, freedom is a song to be chanted and celebrated. Caliban, playing the role of the savior, is fully aware of Prospero's comprehensive magic domination over the subjects and island. Unlike Ariel, Caliban, who is passionately loyal and attached to the natural resources of his native land, blames Prospero's confiscation of the natural riches of his native land:

And showed thee all the qualities o "th" isle,  
The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile—  
Cursed be I that did so! All the charms  
Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you;  
For I am all the subjects that you have,  
Which first was mine own king, and here you sty me  
In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me

The rest o “th” island (1.2.340-47).

As a magic realist hero, Caliban switches between fantasy and reality. For example, he refers to the magical part of the island:

Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments  
Will hum about mine ears, and sometime voices  
That if I then had waked after long sleep  
Will make me sleep again; and then in dreaming  
The clouds me thought would open and show riches  
Ready to drop upon me, that when I waked  
I cried to dream again (3.2.130-38).

Such magical description of the island enchants the listeners as it does with Stefano: “This will prove a brave kingdom to me, where I shall have my music for nothing” (3.2.139-40). Caliban, who is aware of Prospero’s perception as a supernaturally magic and animalistic character, makes use of the mixture of fantasy and reality as a means of protest. He adopts magic labels to advance his revenge. For example, he, while encouraging Stefano and Trinculo to revenge against Prospero, regards himself as a fool:

First to possess his books, for without them  
He’s but a sot as I am, nor hath not  
One spirit to command—they all do hate him  
As rootedly as I.  
Burn but his books (3.2.87-90).

Caliban is clever enough to behave as a soft and a king or as a magic and realistic character. In the magic realm, he is the animalistic monster, fish, and tortoise, while in the realistic part, he is a freedom fighter, savior, avenger and king. The battle between Caliban, the magic realist hero, and Prospero does not finish at the end of the play because Prospero does not release Caliban as he does with Ariel. Caliban feels self-confident that he is able to maintain his war of independence against Prospero. For him, independence is not given by Prospero’s will; rather it is acquired by protest. Therefore, he announces preparation and willingness to leave the hegemonic regime of Prospero. Caliban is able to shift between a soft and wise person the way he moves between fantasy and realism to restore freedom and independence of his native island (Vaughan, 1991).

Shakespeare’s treatment of magic realism has a certain definite dramatic purpose. The controlling influence of supernatural machinery reduces the element of suspense in the play, *The Tempest*. However, this machinery does not rob the human characters of individualities and wills. It is not because of Prospero’s magic power for which Ferdinand and Miranda fall in love with each other. His magic power brings them together. Similarly, it is not because of Prospero’s magic power that Antonio and Sebastian conspire against the life of Alonso. The conspiracy of the two men is due to their natural wickedness. In other words, many incidences are brought about by Prospero’s magic power and



domination, but their characters behave of their own accord on account of their own natural inclination. Even the repentance of Alonso is not brought about by magic. His repentance results from the course of events (Willis, 1989, pp. 277-289).

## 6. Magic Realism in *Midnight's Children*

Salman Rushdie focuses on magic realism in *Midnight's Children*. His use of magic realism as a narrative technique is intentional. Not only does he use magic realism, including the fantastic, the magical, and the strange as useful technical tools, but he transcends it to highlight the unreal and surreal dimensions of the Indian subcontinent. He brings a magic and refreshing view of the effects of magic power and domination (Brennan, 2006, p. 433). Magic realism is an art of creating surprises, giving people a new perspective on what would be usual and monotonous. Events are endowed with a sense of mystery by the way they are focused. For example, in the fiction, *Midnight's Children*, a crowd celebrating India's independence is called the monster in the streets (Merivale, 1995, pp. 329-346).

Salman Rushdie's writing, and in particular *Midnight's Children*, provides us with perfectly illustrative examples of how magic realism can work with historical postmodernism. In his essay, "Imaginary Homelands", Rushdie reflects the views of Jameson and Tonkin, saying that:

History is always ambiguous. Facts are hard to establish, and capable of being given many meanings. Reality is built on prejudices, misconceptions and ignorance as well as on our perceptiveness and knowledge (p. 25).

Rushdie reached this point of understanding through the process of novel, *Midnight's Children*. In this novel, he retraces the Bombay and India of his own childhood not as autobiography, but as cultural history. The history that he provides is not written in the historic books, but is one constructed around individuals and their involvement in the historical process (Mitra, 2008, pp. 54-60).

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. The novel explains how Adam's sensitive nose saves him from being killed in the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre:

As the fifty-one men march down the alleyway a tickle replaces the itch in my grandfather's nose [...]. Adam Aziz ceases to concentrate on the events around him as the tickle mounts to unbearable intensities. As Brigadier Dyer issues a command the sneeze hits my grandfather full in the face. "Yaaaakh-thoooo!" he sneezes and falls forward, losing his balance, following his nose and thereby saving his life (Rushdie, p. 41).

The sneeze provides a sense of humor and levity to the brutal attack, distracting the reader from the massacre itself. The novel, *Midnight's Children*, is a loose allegory for events in India both before and after the independence and partition of India, which took place at midnight on 15 August, 1947. In the

temporal sense, the novel is postcolonial as a main body of the narrative occurs after India becomes independent (Mitra, 2008, pp. 54-60).

In this novel, through the eyes of Saleem Sinai, individual experiences are reflected. Saleem was born at the very moment of India's independence; his life is interlinked with the political, national, and religious events of his time, which gives him a strong desire to restore his past identity to himself. 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. The use of magic realism not only makes the novel more appealing, but also exposes another level of importance in terms of the narrator himself as well as the Indian history as a whole (Merivale, 1995, pp. 329-346).

Saleem Sinai, the narrator of *Midnight's Children*, opens the novel by explaining that he was born at midnight on 15 August, 1947, at the exact moment India gained its independence from British rule. He imagines that his miraculously timed birth ties him to the fate of his country. He later discovers that all children were born in India between 12 a.m. and 1 a.m., are gifted with special powers. Saleem attempts to use the power to convene the midnight's children's conference. He acts as a telepathic conduit, bringing hundreds of geographically disparate children into contact while attempting to discover the meaning of their gifts. In particular, those children who were born closest to the stroke of midnight possess more powerful gifts than the others. Shiva of the Knees, Saleem's evil nemesis, and Parvati, called "Parvati-the-witch", are two of these children with notable gifts and roles in Saleem's narration.

Saleem has to contend with his personal trajectory. His family is active, as they begin a number of migrations and endure the numerous wars which plague the country. During this time, he also suffers from amnesia until he enters a quasi-mythological exile in the jungle of Sundarbans, where he is re-endowed with his memory. In doing so, he reconnects with his childhood friends. Saleem later becomes involved with the Emergency declared by Indira Gandhi and her son Sanjay's cleansing of the Jama Masjid slum. For a time being, Saleem is held as a political prisoner; these passages contain scathing criticisms of Indira Gandhi's overreach during the Emergency as well as what Rushdie seems to observe as a personal lust for power bordering on godhood. The Emergency signals the end of the potency of the midnight's children, and there is a little left for Saleem to do but pick up few pieces of his life; he may find and write the chronicle that encompasses both his personal history and that of his younger generation; a chronicle written for his son, who, like his father, is both chained and supernaturally endowed by history. Now, nearing his thirty first birthday, Saleem believes that his body is beginning to crack and fall apart. He fears that his death is imminent, he grows anxious to tell his life story. Padma, his loyal and loving companion, serves as his patient, and even skeptical listener (Mitra,

2008, pp. 54-60). The incorporation of the elements of magic realism gives beauty and meaning to the novel, *Midnight's Children*. Rushdie's treatment of magic realism as a narrative technique is very apt as he portrays the postcolonial life in his novel. The Magic realism can be observed as a device binding Indian culture of the past to the contemporary multicultural interface.

Rushdie uses "Fantasy" as a method of producing intensified images of reality. He 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. Obviously, Rushdie borrows the technique of storytelling from Indian folk-tales and the epics. But there is deliberate subversion of the purposes of folk-tales and epics. Contrary to the moral and didactic concern of the creators of folk-tales and epics, Rushdie appears to be amoral. Both folk-tales and epics make liberal attempt to entertain and to present a complicated vision of reality merging out of the apparent unrealistic and unbelievable, and chaotic happenings. The truth value of incidents and characters of a world that blends fantasy and reality is not the primary concern of either the story-teller, or the listener/reader (Merivale, 1995, pp. 329-346).

In Rushdie's novel, what is real, or what is unreal is often uncertain not only to the reader, but also to the narrator himself. In a vast country like India, with an immense variety of life-experiences and with constant mingling of "great" and "little" traditions that have their own visions of reality, facts often get fictionalized, truth often seems incredible. In *Midnight's Children*, through the mixing and juxtaposition of the realistic and fantastic, which are the features of magic realism, Rushdie makes an attempt to understand and interpret the multi-layered and complex reality of the socio-political life of the Indian subcontinent.

Rushdie's treatment of magic realism makes *Midnight's Children* the more appealing. It gives a fantastical element to the text. Fantasy is deliberately used so as to transcend the reality. Magic realism helps the author to speak the unspeakable. Various themes and elements of magic realism like the themes of multiplicity, displacement, migration, fragmentation and disintegration are metaphorically used in various incidents in the text. The elements of pity and fear, time and space, bawdy puns and funny anecdotes, eroticism, recurrence, all give an aesthetic art to this novel. In a magic realist text, a conflict between two oppositional systems and each of them works towards the creation of a fictional world from the other. These two oppositional systems are the world of fantasy and the world of reality and they can be seen to be present and competing for the reader's attention.

## 7. Similarities and Differences

Shakespeare's treatment of magic power-cum-reality in the play, *The Tempest* is to be separated from his use of magic art in certain other plays. The magic elements begins in this play act not of their own free will, but in obedience to the will of a human being. Moreover, supernatural beings represent not the principle of evil, but the principle of good. Prospero's magic realism is benevolent and beneficent.

This magic power is to be distinguished from the evil art of Sycorax who ruled over Ariel and other Spirits on the Island.

On the other hand, in the novel, *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie uses the narrative style of magic realism in which myth and fantasy are blended with real life. He uses the narrative technique of magic realism to blur the distinction between fantasy and reality. He gives an equal acceptance for the ordinary and the extraordinary. He uses lyrical and fantastic writing with an examination of the character of human existence and an implicit criticism of society, particularly the elite. Anyway, Rushdie can be considered as a writer who plays with the narrative technique of magic realism. He has achieved every right to be called one of the greatest magic realists ever.

Both Shakespeare and Rushdie would like to focus on the perfect picture of magic realism through creating the characters, like Prospero, Caliban, Ariel, and Saleem Sinai as impacted in the literary texts, *The Tempest* and *Midnight's Children*. They also would like to show the elements of magical realism, supernatural, fantasy, real and unreal, mystery, and imagination of 16th century England and 20th century Indian Subcontinent, respectively. These two texts bear the testimony of a perfect image of magic reality of the two authors' respective social system of the age. Prospero, with the help of magic power, has captured his islanders. On the other hand, Saleem Sinai has fostered a real picture of social, political, and a birth of a new nation through his magic power.

## 8. Conclusion

In conclusion, we may say that this paper has shed a light on the comparative study between Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* in the light of magic realism. Shakespeare's and Rushdie's treatment of magic realism during 16th century England and 20th century India have been analyzed superbly. It has portrayed the characters of Prospero, Caliban, and Ariel in *The Tempest* and Saleem Sinai in *Midnight Children*. It has applied the theory of Magic Realism in the light of critics and scholars. It has also focused on magic, supernatural, imagination, reality, mystery, and fantasy. Both Shakespeare's and Rushdie's literary texts are analyzed within the parameters of these elements.

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