
**Magical Realism Across Narratives: Contrasting
One Hundred Years of Solitude and *Midnight's Children***

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Abstract:

Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) and Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) are seminal works in magical realism, although they use quite different storytelling techniques in reaction to different political and cultural contexts. In order to provide light on their divergent methods, this comparative study looks at how both writers use magical realism to criticize colonial and postcolonial histories. Through a lyrical, cyclical story rooted in syncretic folklore, Marquez mythologizes the cycles of isolation and colonial exploitation in Latin America, using Macondo's rise and fall as a metaphor for the region's sad recurrence of isolation and violence. Rushdie, on the other hand, combines Hindu epics with postmodern sarcasm to undermine Nehruvian idealism and state tyranny, breaking linear chronology and embracing humorous excess to reflect India's post-independence identity difficulties. While Rushdie challenges colonial structures via hybridity and linguistic play, Marquez laments Latin America's involvement with macho and foreign dominance. Notwithstanding these distinctions, both books reinterpret magical realism as a worldwide kind of resistance that upends monolithic histories and gives voice to underrepresented groups. Their legacy consists of demonstrating how the fantastical may express pressing political realities and provide a prism through which to rethink memory, identity, and power in postcolonial settings.

Keywords: cultural hybridity, generational sagas, mythologizing history, magical realism, and narrative structure.

Introduction

Gabriel Garcia Marquez famously said, "My most important problem was destroying the line of demarcation that separates what seems real from what seems fantastic" (Garcia Marquez 57), perfectly capturing the spirit of magical realism, a genre in which the ordinary and the extraordinary live together. Originating from the mid-20th century Latin American Boom and based on Alejo Carpentier's idea of *lo real maravilloso* (the magnificent real) (Carpentier 86), this literary style flourishes in areas where myth, history, and identity converge. As postcolonial theorists like Homi Bhabha contend, magical realism is fundamentally a subversive instrument to reinvent neglected histories and challenge oppressive power systems rather than just being a kind of escape (Bhabha 112). Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) and Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) are two classic novels that perfectly capture this dichotomy. Despite their geographical and generational separation, both books use magical realism to examine the shattered effects of colonialism and the difficult process of creating a national identity. However, because of the different political, cultural, and historical contexts of South Asia and Latin America, their methods are quite different.

A literary revolt against colonial narratives and Western rationality gave rise to magical realism. Garcia Marquez blurs the lines between personal and social memory in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by weaving the development and collapse of the fictitious Colombian town of Macondo into a tapestry of indigenous myth, biblical allegory, and cyclical tragedy. To illustrate the novel's non-linear temporality, the Buendía family's repetitions depict a world in which "many years later, [Colonel Aureliano Buendía] would face the firing squad" (Garcia Marquez 12). In Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, Saleem Sinai, a narrator whose magical telepathy ties him to the destiny of the country, reimagines India's turbulent transition from independence to tyranny. Merging personal and national history, Saleem says, "I am the sum total of everything that went before me, of all I have been seen done, of everything done-to-me" (Rushdie 9). Using fanciful aspects to reveal the absurdity of power and the frailty of memory, both works turn the personal into the political.

This essay contends that while Rushdie and Garcia Marquez both believe that magical realism may be used to criticize history and culture, there are significant differences between their political ideologies, cultural settings, and artistic choices. Rushdie uses scathing sarcasm and fragmentation to undermine postcolonial India's notions of unity and development, while Garcia Marquez uses lyrical fatalism to lament the cycles of violence and isolation in Latin America. In order to dissect these differences, the study will first lay out the theoretical framework of magical realism, then look at the narrative strategies and thematic concerns of each book, and then compare and contrast their ideological and cultural bases. This research shows how magical realism changes to express the unique wounds and victories of postcolonial

societies by contrasting Saleem Sinai's noisy India with Macondo's gloomy seclusion.

Definitions and Theoretical Structure of Magical Realism

The genre of magical realism, which feeds on contradiction, challenges notions of reality by fusing the exceptional with the everyday. Although its roots are deeper, it began with the literary revival in Latin America in the middle of the 20th century. In his 1949 book *On the beautiful Real in America*, Cuban author Alejo Carpentier introduced the phrase *lo real maravilloso* (the beautiful real), stating that the history and geography of Latin America naturally conflate myth and reality. Carpentier believed that "the marvelous is found embedded within reality itself" in the Americas, in contrast to European surrealism, which "manufactures the marvelous" via abstraction (Carpentier 89). The German art critic Franz Roh had previously referred to post-expressionist work as *magischer Realismus* (magic realism) in 1925, and this distinction served as the basis for magical realism. But in order to express their cultural hybridity and postcolonial resistance, Latin American authors reinterpreted the phrase.

Three interconnected characteristics characterize the genre. In the first place, it blurs the line between reality and imagination by portraying magical occurrences as ordinary aspects of daily life. Characters in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* accept the phenomena without question: golden butterflies follow Mauricio Babilonia while he courted Meme Buendía. In a similar vein, the protagonist of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is a common freak who was born with a cucumber-growing nose. Magical realism "does not astonish, nor does it explain," as critic Angel Flores observes (Flores 114); the supernatural is ordinary rather than exoticized.

Second, magical realism reinterprets history via the use of myth, folklore, and communal memory. The recurring traumas of colonialism and civil conflict in Latin America are reflected in Garcia Marquez's Macondo, a village plagued by rain and sleeplessness. Rushdie, on the other hand, grafts Islamic oral traditions and Hindu epics onto postcolonial India. For example, he links Saleem Sinai to 1,001 other "*Midnight's Children*" via his telepathic abilities (Rushdie 148). These narratives prioritize what Homi Bhabha refers to as "the fragmented, contested time of cultural difference" (Bhabha 175), rejecting the linearity of Western history.

Third, to emphasize the conflict between the believable and the impossibly imaginable, the genre uses a tone of matter-of-factness. The narrator of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* remarks that "it was as if God had decided to put to the test every capacity for surprise and was keeping the inhabitants of Macondo in a permanent alternation between excitement and disappointment" (Garcia Marquez 203) when Remedios the Beauty ascends to heaven while folding laundry. Readers are forced to acknowledge the ridiculousness of both magic and reality due to the absence of narrative amazement.

Cultural Identity and Postcolonial Criticism

Postcolonial authors began using magical realism as a means of challenging Eurocentric narratives and recovering underrepresented histories. By emphasizing indigenous and Afro-Caribbean cosmologies, the genre resisted colonial erasure for Latin American writers such as Garcia Marquez. The alchemical creations and Sanskrit writings of the gypsy Melquíades represent a syncretic knowledge system that resists colonial dichotomies in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (Garcia Marquez 4). In a similar vein, Rushdie deconstructs British colonial notions of India as a "passive, timeless space" by using magical realism to show it as a clamor of voices and identities. Saleem's claim that "you'll have to swallow a world to understand me" (Rushdie 109) exemplifies the genre's ability to pluralize history.

The genre also examines the shortcomings of nationalism. The Buendía family's recurrent errors in Macondo, such as José Arcadio's fixation with alchemy and Colonel Aureliano's thirty-two failed uprisings, reflect the cycles of tyranny and revolution that followed Latin America's freedom. In contrast, Rushdie uses Saleem's body, which breaks under the strain of national crises, to parody India's postcolonial state: "cracks radiate from my body, a map of my future, the future of the nation" (Rushdie 245). Here, the brittleness of cultural identity in an increasingly globalized society is symbolized via magical realism.

The political potential of magical realism has been discussed by critics. Postcolonial academics like Brenda Cooper contend that it is fundamentally radical, "a weapon of the marginalized to destabilize dominant discourses," despite Franz Roh's original framing of it as apolitical, a "calm admiration of the magic of being" (Roh 23). The genre's mingling of traditions is consistent with Homi Bhabha's thesis of hybridity, which holds that postcolonial identities arise from cultural "third spaces" (Bhabha 55). On the other hand, detractors like Aijaz Ahmad warn against romanticizing magical realism as a "universal postcolonial idiom," contending that doing so runs the danger of simplification of a variety of conflicts (Ahmad 125).

The strength of magical realism ultimately resides in its dual nature as a portal into imagined possibilities and a mirror reflecting fractured realities. It is a genre ideally suited to negotiate the paradoxes of postcolonial life, as Rushdie and Garcia Marquez show.

A Hundred Years of Seclusion: Macondo's Magical Realism

One Hundred Years of Solitude (1967) by Gabriel Garcia Marquez was born at the intersection of the literary "Boom" movement of the 1960s and the postcolonial turmoil in Latin America. The continent struggled with neocolonial exploitation, dictatorships, and civil wars—like Colombia's La Violencia, a ten-year conflict that claimed the lives of nearly 200,000 civilians—after centuries of Spanish colonial authority. By fusing modernist methods with local mythology, Latin American authors like Garcia Marquez, Julio Cortázar, and Carlos Fuentes achieved

international recognition during the "Boom," a period of cultural rebirth. Garcia Marquez was born in Aracataca, Colombia, and was inspired by his hometown's degradation after the collapse of the banana trade and his grandparents' tales of eerie premonitions. Macondo, as he subsequently said, "is not so much a place as a state of mind" (Garcia Marquez, *Living to Tell the Tale* 23), a microcosm of the recurrent efforts towards self-destruction and growth in Latin America.

This historical contradiction is the foundation of the novel's magical realism. The establishment of Macondo, a utopian community "so recent that many things lacked names" (Garcia Marquez 1), mimics the postcolonial revival of Latin America, while its ultimate collapse reflects the region's disenchantment with corrupt governments and outside interference. For example, U.S. corporate imperialism in Colombia is clearly referenced in the United Fruit Company's exploitation of Macondo's banana fields, which led to the actual 1928 killing of striking workers (Bell-Villada 89). Through his use of storytelling tropes, Garcia Marquez grounds the exceptional in the everyday, blurring the lines between myth and reality.

Comparing Linear History with Cyclical Time

Time is presented as a "circular labyrinth" throughout the book, rejecting linear chronology (Garcia Marquez 349). Events reoccur over the generations: the Buendía family's incestuous connections result in offspring with pig tails, a curse predicted in the opening chapter, and Colonel Aureliano Buendía leads 32 unsuccessful revolutions, such as his father's futile attempt at alchemy. The recurring catastrophes in Latin America—revolutions that turn into dictatorships, development that leads to decay—are criticized by this cyclical pattern. "The Buendías are condemned to repeat history because they cannot learn from it," as critic Gene H. Bell-Villada observes (Bell-Villada 112).

Symbolic Components

Yellow Butterflies: Meme Buendía's boyfriend, Mauricio Babilonia, is followed by these fleeting insects, which stand for impermanence and yearning. They exemplify magical realism's blending of enchantment and commonplace, and their existence is accepted matter-of-factly.

The battle of Latin America to maintain identity in the face of cultural erasure is reflected in the *Insomnia Plague*, where residents of Macondo mark items to keep meaning when they lose their memory. They write, "This is the cow." "Every morning, she needs to be milked" (Garcia Marquez 46).

Ascension of Remedios the Beauty: In this scenario, which is told without much fanfare, Remedios rises to heaven while folding laundry: "It was as if the very air had lifted her" (Garcia Marquez 203). As men perish after her unachievable innocence, the incident challenges patriarchal fixations with purity.

Themes

The psychological and physical isolation of Macondo, a hamlet "lost in the

swamp of history" (Garcia Marquez 312), reflects the marginalization of Latin America. A wider cultural isolation is shown by the Buendías' incapacity to interact with outsiders (such as Rebeca's descent into insanity). However, Úrsula Iguarán, the matriarch who lives for 115 years and serves as the family's "living archive," is another example of how the book honors communal memory (Martin 78).

Devastation results from the presence of "outsiders": the U.S.-owned banana corporation depletes its resources and murders employees, while gypsies take advantage of Macondo with fictitious innovations. Originally waged for liberal causes, Colonel Aureliano's conflicts eventually turn into nihilism: "He fought simply to win" (Garcia Marquez 134). Garcia Marquez frames violence as a self-perpetuating scourge and denounces both domestic despotism and foreign interference.

The development of Macondo—from Edenic hamlet to industrial center to post-apocalyptic wasteland—reflects the complex connection between modernity and Latin America. Death and wealth are introduced by the railroad: "The plague of insomnia was brought by the train when it first arrived." It attracted foreign invaders the second time (Garcia Marquez 211). Technological "progress" turns into an exploitative Trojan horse.

The syncretic tradition of Latin America is inextricably linked to the magical realism of the book. Afro-Caribbean mysticism (Melquíades's resurrection), indigenous mythologies (such as the biblical deluge that sweeps Macondo away), and Catholic symbolism (Remedios's ascension) combine to create a distinctively local style. Garcia Marquez learned that "the wildest tales should be told with a straight face" from his grandmother, whose deadpan delivery of ghost stories served as the inspiration for his approach (Garcia Marquez, *Living to Tell the Tale* 35). The Eurocentric dichotomies of history/myth and rational/irrational are challenged by this cultural hybridity. "Macondo is Latin America's answer to the Enlightenment—a world where magic is not escapism but resistance," according to critic Lois Parkinson Zamora (Zamora and Faris 497).

Magical Realism in Postcolonial India: *Midnight's Children*

India's turbulent birth as a country is closely linked to Salman Rushdie's 1981 novel *Midnight's Children*. The protagonist Saleem Sinai, who was born on August 15, 1947, the day India gained its freedom, proclaims, "I had been mysteriously handcuffed to history" (Rushdie 9), encapsulating the main idea of the book: that personal and societal fates are interwoven. The story is plagued by the pain of Partition, the bloody split of British India into India and Pakistan, when millions of people were displaced and identities were shattered by communal violence. Rushdie, a writer from Bombay who was educated in Britain but grew up in a Muslim household, writes from a diasporic viewpoint, spanning what he refers to as "the broken mirror of two continents" (Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands* 10). His criticism of postcolonial nationalism, which combines sarcasm and nostalgia, is informed by

this dichotomy.

The Arabian Nights and other oral storytelling traditions in India are honored in the novel's framework. Knowing that storytelling is a survival tactic, Saleem, like Scheherazade, tells his beloved Padma about his life at a Bombay pickle factory: "If I falter, Padma will stop listening... and I will crash into the oblivion I fear" (Rushdie 259). Rejecting Western linearity, Rushdie's rambling, episodic style is reminiscent of the kathasaritsagara (ocean of stories) tradition, in which tales branch into tales. Rushdie "replaces colonial historiography with a subcontinental aesthetics of excess" (Kabir 63), regaining narrative power from imperialist frameworks, as critic Ananya Jahanara Kabir observes.

Storytelling Methods

"I am the sum total of everything that went before me, of all I have been seen done, of everything done-to-me," admits Saleem Sinai, an untrustworthy historian (Rushdie 9). His storytelling blends national myth with personal recollection, shattering timeframes. For example, he links his circumcision to the 1965 Indo-Pakistani War, his birth to India's independence, and his vasectomy to the Emergency of 1975. The idea of a single "truth" in postcolonial history is challenged by this fragmentation. This is known as historiographic metafiction, according to scholar Linda Hutcheon, who claims that "history is shown to be as constructed, as contingent, as provisional as fiction" (Hutcheon 121).

Magical Components as Allegories

Children of Midnight: The 1,001 children born on the day of India's independence have mystical powers connected to the country's culture. They are connected by Saleem's telepathy, which represents Nehru's idea of variety in oneness. But the state's repression of dissent is reflected in their final sterilization during Indira Gandhi's rule: "The children of midnight were also the children of the time: fathered by history" (Rushdie 148).

Cucumber-Growing Nose: Saleem's nose, which Rushdie 202 describes as "a monument to the unimportance of good looks," serves as a metaphor for the ridiculousness of racial hierarchies. This hideous facial deformity, which was brought on by a sneeze at his birth, parodies colonial notions of Indian "monstrosity."

Parvati-the-Witch's Basket: During the Emergency, Parvati, a street magician, uses magic to conceal Saleem in a wicker basket. The elimination of minority voices by authoritarianism is criticized by this act of tangible invisibility: "In the basket, I became what I had always been: a loose end" (Rushdie 415).

Multifaceted Personas and Postcolonial Nationalism

Saleem is a prime example of India's cultural hybridity; he was brought up in a Hindu household but is biologically Muslim, and he received an English education while having roots in Bombay's streets. Homi Bhabha's idea of cultural hybridity—the "third space" where identity is malleable and disputed—is reflected in his

statement, "I am a sort of radio" (Rushdie 166), which transmits the voices of 1,001 children (Bhabha 55). By highlighting the divisions between caste, religion, and language, Rushdie undermines the Nehruvian vision of a secular, cohesive India. Saleem's body breaking under the strain of national crises, the novel's well-known "cracking" metaphor, represents the brittleness of postcolonial identity: "I am literally disintegrating... I mean quite simply that I have begun to crack all over" (Rushdie 37).

Like his family's pickle plant, Saleem's story is an act of preservation: "Memory's truth, because memory has its own special kind." It chooses, removes, modifies, and produces illusions (Rushdie 211). The linearity of colonial historiography is rejected by his "chutnification of history" (Rushdie 459), which preserves the past in "spicy" bits. A parallel for state-enforced forgetfulness is the 1975 Emergency, when Indira Gandhi banned civil liberties: "The Widow's hand... squeezing the future from my guts" (Rushdie 410).

Political Power Satire

Indira Gandhi is made fun of by Rushdie as the Widow, a vampire who plans the sterilization of the *Midnight's Children*. The Emergency is portrayed as a surreal terror, complete with forced vasectomies, censorship, and slum demolitions, which Rushdie describes as "a time when the truth was what those in power said it was" (Imaginary Homelands 43). The ridiculousness of authoritarianism is emphasized by the novel's magical realism, such as when a government official maintains that "there are no political prisoners in India... only criminals" (Rushdie 388).

Cultural Particularities

India's plurality is deeply ingrained in the magical realism of the book. Christian themes (the three Marys in Saleem's life), Islamic Sufi mysticism (the "peepshow man" who foretells Saleem's destiny), and Hindu tales (Saleem as Ganesh, the elephant-headed remover of barriers) coexist without hierarchy. This syncretism is reflected in Rushdie's language, which combines Hindi-Urdu expressions like "chutney-fication" and "nafisi-pani" (romance) with English (Rushdie 459).

India's mosaic of traditions is embodied in the "chutnification of history," which preserves the past in "spicy" bits (Rushdie 459). Even magic is democratized: Imagine Parvati using magic to fight against oppression, while Singh, the socialist snake-charmer, entertains audiences with feats. Rushdie views magic as a tool of the subaltern, a "way of shouting out loud in a world determined to silence you," rather than as a means of escape (Rushdie, *Step Across This Line* 352).

Analysis by Comparison

Two classic pieces of postcolonial literature, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) by Gabriel Garcia Marquez and *Midnight's Children* (1981) by Salman Rushdie, use magical realism to examine national identity, history, and cultural memory. By fusing myth and history, following generational sagas to challenge

nationalist beliefs, and capturing the unique sociopolitical environments of South Asia and Latin America, both books undermine established narratives. Their differences in tone, organization, and subject matter, however, show how magical realism changes to confront various colonial legacies.

To question rigid myths of nationhood, Marquez and Rushdie blur the lines between myth and history. The establishment of Macondo in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is rife with legend: Melquíades' mysterious documents symbolise the cyclical and elusive character of historical truth, while José Arcadio Buendía's search for a "sea of glass" reflects the ridiculousness of colonial victories (Marquez 12–15). Likewise, Rushdie's main character, Saleem Sinai, was born on the same day of India's 1947 freedom and is "handcuffed to history" (Rushdie 9). By transforming the nation's birth into a communal myth via his telepathic link to 1,000 other "*Midnight's Children*," postcolonial optimism is framed as both painfully frail and wonderful. Both writers indicate that history is as much a creation of popular imagination as it is of empirical truth by enclosing real-life events—like the Thousand Days' War in Colombia or the Partition of India—in fanciful frames.

The Buendía and Sinai families' generational sagas are miniature representations of their respective countries. Paralleling the cycles of revolutionary promise and imperialist intrusion in Latin America, Marquez charts Macondo's transformation from a remote paradise to a location exploited by multinational banana firms. The isolation and recurrent incest of the Buendía family represent an area ensnared in its own toxic mythology (Marquez 345–46). Rushdie, on the other hand, weaves Saleem's family history into India's post-independence crises: his grandfather's role in the 1919 Amritsar Massacre and his own sterilization during the Emergency (1975–77) both criticize the shortcomings of state authoritarianism and Nehruvian secularism (Rushdie 450–52). While exposing the divisions within national identities, these sagas also highlight the inseparability of political and personal history.

Despite these commonalities, the books' tones are quite different. Marquez laments the lost potential of Latin America in his poetic, melancholic language. Characters like Colonel Aureliano Buendía, who leads 32 unsuccessful battles, represent the pointlessness of resistance, while Macondo's final destruction by a storm symbolizes a cyclical view of history as inevitable degradation (Marquez 127–30). Rushdie, on the other hand, uses wordplay and absurdity to mock political personalities with a sarcastic exuberance. Shiva's "knees of death" and Saleem's enormous nose, which gives him psychic abilities, parody the conceit of leaders like as Indira Gandhi, whose Emergency-era catchphrase, "India is Indira, and Indira is India," is made ridiculous by exaggeration (Rushdie 200–02). The chaotic hybridity of postcolonial India, where sorrow and comedy coexist, is reflected in Rushdie's humor.

The books are further distinguished by structural variations. Marquez uses a cyclical narrative style that reflects the recurring colonial and domestic conflict battles in Latin America. Temporal loops, like the four-year rainfall, and the repetition of names and fates—17 Aurelianos, all destined for isolation—indicate that history is an unavoidable maze (Marquez 220–25). But Rushdie welcomes fragmentation. India's postcolonial identity dilemma is reflected in Saleem's erratic narrative, which alternates between recollection, prophesy, and digression. The non-linear style of the book celebrates a clamor of voices and viewpoints, rejecting the linearity of Western history (Rushdie 37–40).

The books provide a political criticism of many topics that are influenced by their own cultural environments. Marquez criticizes American imperialism and Latin American machismo. While the slaughter of banana workers, which was removed from official records, denounces American corporate exploitation, the arrogance of the Buendía patriarchs—José Arcadio's fixation with alchemy and Aureliano's belligerence—allegorizes toxic masculinity and caudillo politics (Marquez 287–90). Rushdie focuses on postcolonial corruption: the dissolution of the "Midnight Children's Conference" represents India's failed socialist aspirations, while the sterilization of Saleem and the midnight children during the Emergency represents the state's violent repression of dissent (Rushdie 450–55).

Each novel's magical realism is set in a different cultural environment. The syncretic fusion of indigenous beliefs and Catholicism in Latin America is the source of Marquez's magic. In Macondo, the supernatural is assimilated into everyday life via the treatment of ghosts like Prudencio Aguilar and levitating priests like Father Nicanor (Marquez 45–48). A worldview in which the extraordinary and the commonplace coexist is reflected in this natural blending. However, Rushdie's "mythical realism" is based on epic myths like the Mahabharata and oral traditions from South Asia. Reclaiming narrative agency from colonial historiography, Saleem's "chutnification of history" and Parvati-the-witch's charms conjure a world where ancient myth meets contemporary turmoil (Rushdie 460–62).

The heritage of colonialism also influences the mystical aspects of each book. Remedios the Beauty's ascent to heaven becomes an act of rebellion against patriarchal authority, while the banana company's abuse is made surreal in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*—workers disappear into thin air, destroyed by corporate avarice (Marquez 290–95). According to Rushdie, colonialism shatters identity: Shiva's destructive force challenges colonial myths of inferiority, while Saleem's mixed British and Indian ancestry and the Pickle Factory's preservation of his tale symbolise the British "divide and rule" tactic (Rushdie 100–05).

In the end, Marquez and Rushdie both demolish nationalist and colonial beliefs via magical realism. However, their differences show how versatile the genre is: Rushdie celebrates India's plurality via splintered exuberance, while Marquez

laments Latin America's isolation through cyclical fatalism. Collectively, they demonstrate that magical realism is a flexible kind of postcolonial narrative that is as varied as the histories it aims to uncover.

Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* both reinterpreted magical realism as a worldwide literary movement that cuts beyond national borders to serve as a common tongue for postcolonial criticism. With its ghosts and time-defying rainstorms, Marquez's Macondo solidified Latin America's cultural identity on the international scene and demonstrated how the fantastical might viscerally and immediately convey historical tragedy. Rushdie, in turn, modified the genre to fit the mixed reality of South Asia by destroying colonial and nationalist mythology via sarcastic wordplay and Sanskrit epics. Collectively, they showed that magical realism was a radical storytelling form that could reveal the flaws in all big myths, whether they were political, religious, or imperial, rather than just a local oddity.

Later authors that use magical realism to address underrepresented histories are influenced by them. For example, Toni Morrison's 1987 novel *Beloved* uses Marquez's blending of the historical and the supernatural to address the lingering effects of slavery, turning the ghost of a slain child into a scathing allegory for America's suppressed history. Similar to Marquez, Rushdie, and other writers who reject Western realism's claim to objectivity in favor of the subjective truths of those obliterated by dominant histories, Haruki Murakami's *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* (1994) echoes Rushdie's fragmented storytelling, employing talking cats and surreal labyrinths to question Japan's collective amnesia about World War II.

The books' significance remains in the modern, globalized world as countries struggle with identity crises, cultural erasure, and neocolonialism. Narratives that expose the illusions of power are necessary in light of the emergence of authoritarian governments and corporate exploitation, which are reminiscent of Rushdie's Emergency-era sterilizations or Macondo's banana industry. For authors ranging from Ben Okri of Nigeria to Isabel Allende of Chile, magical realism is still an essential technique because of its ability to bend time and magnify voices that have been suppressed. In a time of migration and digital disembodiment, it flourishes by providing a vocabulary to express resilience and displacement. These books serve as a reminder that the fantastical is not an escape but rather a prism through which we might concentrate our attention on the underprivileged when reality itself becomes more and more unreal.

Conclusion

Through *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Midnight's Children*, Marquez and Rushdie transformed literature by demonstrating how magical realism might recover fragmented histories and demolish colonial myths. Their similar approaches—tracing generational sagas as national allegories, fusing myth and

history—highlight the genre's ability to subvert dominant narratives. However, their differences show how versatile it is: Rushdie's humorous fragmentation reflects India's postcolonial instability, while Marquez's lyrical sorrow laments the cyclical loneliness of Latin America.

Because it elevates underrepresented epistemologies, magical realism persists. It affirms oral traditions, collective memory, and the irrational as viable sources of knowledge by rejecting empirical realism and linear time. The genre asserts that reality is plural—a “question of perspective,” as Rushdie puts it—in a time of historical revisionism and computational determinism (Rushdie 100). It poses the question of which tales are considered “real” and which are consigned to myth.

Why is this important now? Despite tyranny rewriting history and globalization homogenizing cultures, magical realism continues to be a rebellious act of reclamation. Whose privacy is lost in the shuffle of modernity, it asks? Whose voices are lost in the din of empire at midnight? Although neither Marquez nor Rushdie provide simple solutions, their legacy is found in the question itself—an appeal to envision a society in which the voiceless inform the story.

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