

Blending the Ordinary and Extra Ordinary: Magic Realism in The God of Small Things and Hullabaloo in The Guava Orchard**Arshnoor Singh**

Assistant Professor Of English, Department Of English, G.H.G. KHALSA College Gurusar Sadhar Ludhiana

Article Received: 27/11/2025**Article Accepted:** 28/12/2025**Published Online:** 29/12/2025**DOI:**10.47311/IJOES.2025.7.12.479**Abstract:**

Magic Realism is the Literary Device which pacts between Reality and illusion in the literature. Magic Realism is the significant facet of this research paper. Magic Realism is the convergence of reality and fantasy in literary works. Alejo Carpentier (Cuba) a writer and literary theorist introduced term "lo real maravilloso" (the marvelous real) (Carpentier). Gabriel Garcia Marquez popularized Magic Realism in his works like "One hundred years of solitude". (Garcia Marquez)

In India Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Shashi Tharoor are the writers who often use Magic Realism in their works. This Paper Analyses how magical realism contrasts in illusion within the reality in the works of Arundhati Roy's 'The God Of Small Things' and in Kiran Desai's Work 'Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard'. "The God of small things" won booker prize in 1997 (Roy). In Roy's work 'The God of Small things' Blurring Of reality and Fantasy blends together. Magic Realism works in symbolic nature. The novel explores how small seemingly insignificant occurrences, decisions and experiences shape people's behavior in deeply significant ways. On the other hand in Kiran Desai's Work Magic Realism explores Myth and superstition interweaving with verity. "Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard" Desai's first Novel, won the Betty Trask Award in 1998. The novels illustrates how Indian English Literature depicts magic realism by juxtaposing ordinary into extraordinary. The experience of magic realism in both novels is quite fascinating. Franz Roh asserts that "We recognize the miraculous in the stillness of everyday objects" (Roh). Roy's work emphasizes on child like perspective the twins point of view of extra ordinary magical experiences. In Desai's work nature as a living presence the guava trees, fruits, orchard are described in comic ironic magic realism. However Magic Realism in the words of Luis Leal "Magic Realism is not about magic, it is about discovering the mysterious in the everyday" (Leal). Thus this research paper explores how the ordinary things blends into the extraordinary in the miraculous ways.

Keywords: Magical Realism, Mystery, Time, Nature, Belief.

Introduction:

“Magic Realism is a strategy for coping with a reality that resists rational explanation”(Faris). Magic Realism Explores phenomenal happenings in the habitual lives. Magic Realism is not the literary term which emphasizes only on supernatural things or the surreal acts as described in the fantasy and Imagination Genre. Magic realism differs from fantasy and imagination by tailoring humdrum days wondrous ones.

Amaryll Beatrice Chanady conveys “Magical Realism does not challenge the laws of reality instead it presents a reality in which the magical is an accepted part” (Chanady). On the other hand Wendy B.Faris “ Magic realism combines realism and the fantastic so that the marvelous seems to grow organically with the ordinary blurring the distinctions between them”(Faris). Arundhati Roy quotes “Things can change in a day”(Roy).Roy emphasizes how the natural lives of ordinary family turns into extraordinary. Roy turns silence atmosphere into living presences like she illustrates “The air was full of thoughts and things to say. But at times like these, only the small things are ever said. Big things lurk unsaid. However ordinary moments were charged with mythic emotion.

Magic Realism plays in Roy’s saying like “The sky was the color of old television, tuned to a dead channel”(Roy). The Surreal imagery, the nature world becomes animate and strange. Roy’s Magic realism jumps through fate, time and logic without warning. As Roy emphasizes “Anything can happen to anyone. Its best to be prepared”(Roy).

On the other side in Kiran Desai’s Novel Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard (1998) Magical Realism emerges from whimsical, dream like elements. The transformation of a bored post office clerk into a revered spiritual figure blurs reality and illusion which is a hallmark of magic realism. Kiran Desai makes her novel words present how the natural world participates in human spirituality, animals take on symbolic and almost human roles as she quotes “The monkeys sat around him, solemn and attentive as if they were disciples listening to their master’s sermon”(Desai).

Other ordinary events are described as cosmic disturbances blending mythic exaggeration with village gossip like “It was said that the wind itself had changed direction when he climbed the tree.” “The night air was filled with the murmuring of trees as if the whole orchard were whispering secrets”(Desai). The setting becomes alive, enchanted and aware nature as a conscious force. Another essence of magic realism include “No one could tell where truth ended and imagination began.”A self aware reflection on the novel’s own style is the essence of magic realism. Kiran Desai does not directly address magic realism’focuses on the line of simple events turning into specific events. To address these magic realism elements in the work of Arundhati Roy’s “The God of Small things” and Kiran Desai’s work “Hullabaloo The Guava Orchard”, this paper seeks to contribute different aspects of extraordinary magic elements.

The God of Small things and Magic Realism:

Arundhati Roy is not typically labelled as magic realist author, but in her work *The God of small things* (1997) she uses techniques and textures that overlap with magic realism. Roy's narration slips between literal reality and child's heightened imagination without clear borders. *The God of small things* is blurring of reality & fantasy. In the novel everyday events are infused with dreamlike surreal imagery. Twins Rahel and Estha's perception their surroundings often bend reality. Roy uniquely emphasizes on the history house's mystery. The house across the river becomes a shifting; almost mythical place-part ruin, part-memory, part ghost story. It exists both as a real location and as a repository of forbidden desires, political violence and family secrets.

On the other side in *Paradise Pickles and Preserves*, the pickle factory is portrayed as a mythical place of smells and memories, pickles seem to preserve emotions and moments. Roy illustrates *Paradise Pickles & Preserve's* objects, smells and landscapes with exaggerated sensuality, almost alive. Child like perspective of twins Rahul and estha's transformation ordinary moments into extraordinary magical experiences .

Roy's personification of the inanimate objects often behaves like sentient beings. Roy quotes "The sky was the color of television, turned into a dead channel like moods of nature mirroring emotions on a river" remembering things (Roy). Another Significant Magic Realism element is elasticity of time in the novel. Time is non linear, moving fluidly between past and present without clear transitions. Past events live vividly in the present and the future sometimes seeps in early. Roy's description of Sophie Mol's death is foreshadowed repeatedly before it actually occurs. The narrative slips in and out of time with death felt before it happens, and Sophie Mol's arrival foreshadowed with eerie inevitability. Roy functions time non-linearly like a memory or dream making reality feel elastic and uncanny. The vital magic realism element in Roy's novel is "Pappachi's Moth". The Moth is never literally seen, but it is a persistent presence in Mammachi's life fluttering inside her chest as a metaphor for her stifled anger and disappointments. Pappachi's moth gives an abstract feeling (grief), frustration a living almost super natural form turning emotion into a creature that haunts her. In contrast Velutha and Ammu's nights by the river and their love scenes dissolve into elements, imagery skin becomes water, heartbeat in sync with the rivers, night itself seems to protect them conversely. Estha's quietness and Rahel's perception through the twins's eyes, objects and words have been exaggerated for example windows can be "angry" sound can be "thick", people can grow or shrink insignificant, all illustrates creating a world that is both true and dreamlike.

Hullabaloo " The Guava Orchard" & Magic Realism:

The ordinary transformed into extraordinary mundane, an old man sitting in a tree is interpreted by villagers as holy renunciation. They start treating him as a holy man attributing mystical powers to his silence. Villagers flock to the orchard to seek blessings, miracles and

wisdom. Their faith transforms the orchard into a sacred, though nothing overtly supernatural occurs.

Kiran Desai depicts nature as a living presence. The guava trees fruits and the orchard itself are described with a lyrical almost enchanted quality. Nature becomes backdrop that intensifies, the magical aura, birds, rustling leaves and the fragrance of guava contribute to the mystical atmosphere unlike Gabriel Garcia Marquez's heavy, political magic realism, and Desai's magic realism is comic, ironic, lighter & more playful. There's irony in how ordinary eccentricity is mistaken showing both the power of a belief and absurdity of blind faith.

The orchard symbolizes escape spiritually and illusion. The perspective of father of Sampath is a retreat from reality. For the villagers it becomes a magical shrine. For the reader it embodies reality and illusion in the very essence of magic realism. Desai's imagination, belief and communal story telling is perceived as mystical by readers. As Desai's quotes - "The orchard soon filled with pilgrims, whispering of miracles and marvels where they had been only silence"(Desai). Desai's presentations of belief create magic in the novel. No supernatural event actually occurs, the magic exists because people believe. Villagers come with hopes of cures, blessings and spiritual answers. As Desai describes "What they saw not a tired old man, but a saint who had cast off the world like a worn-out garment"(Desai). This highlights how collective imagination transforms reality. Thus nature enchantment, mystical atmosphere, blind faith, comic-irony creates an aura of wonder. Desai also questions blind faith, illusion and the thin line between escape and enlightenment. This irony is central to her version of magic realism.

Conclusion:

The significant features of Magic realism, Magical elements treated as ordinary, a realistic setting, blending the ordinary and extra ordinary hybridity, metaphorical power, thick sensory imagery and meet ambiguity between reality and fantasy. These all magical realism features are portrayed in the Arundhati Roy's novel 'The God of small things' as well as Kiran Desai's Work "Hullabaloo the Guava Orchard". Roy's Magic Realism is not presented as a supernatural happenings, it is her realistic setting writing style which transforms reality into illusion. Though Roy's genre is mostly political and social but in her works, 'The God of small things' she gave touch of magic realism elements in many ways. Desai's, ordinary events of novel turns into extraordinary with magical realism elements. "In Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard, Booker Prize – winning author Kiran Desai Strategically employs metaphysical concepts and personification to elevate mundane incidents in the life of an ordinary man into extraordinary, quasi- supernatural experiences, shaped and intensified by collective belief, faith, and imagination."

Desai's writing style is comic and ironic which beautifully picturise natural scenarios and villagers mindset about myth and imagination. The description of belief that villagers

have upon the guava tree and Sampath whom they consider holy man creates magical theme in the novel.

Displaying all vital aspects of magic realism it could be said that Roy's 'The God of Small things' is a essence of magic realism in a deep manner of magic realism. Moreover Kiran Desai's 'Hullabaloo The Guava orchard' represents magic realist fiction which creates magic in the everyday events of ordinary men and her writing style brings their readers to read her work with curiosity to enjoy. Ordinary events transforms into Extraordinary through the Lens of magic realism.

References:

- Carpentier, Alejo. *The Kingdom of this World*. Translated by Harriet de Onis, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1957.
- Desai, Kiran. *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*. Grove Press, 1998.
- Faris, Wendy B. *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative*. Vanderbilt UP, 2004.
- Garica Marquez, Gabriel. *One hundred Years of Solitude*. Translated by Gregory Rabassa, Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2006.
- Leal, Luis. "Magical Realism in Spanish American Literature." *Hispania*, Vol.38, no.2, 1955, pp.187-92.
- Roh, Franz. "Magic Realism: Post-Expressionism." *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*, edited by Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris, Duke UP, 1995, pp-15-32.
- Roy, Arundhati. *The God of Small Things*. Random house, 1997.
- Rushdie, Salman. *Midnight's Children*. Jonathan Cape, 1981.
- Tharoor, Shashi. *The Great Indian Novel*. Viking, 1989.