

Short Communication

## Magic realism in Kiran Desai's novel "Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard"

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Kiran Desai was born in 1971 and educated in India, England and the United States. She studied creative writing at Columbia University, where she was the recipient of a Woolrich fellowship. Her work has appeared in *The New Yorker* and Salman Rushdie's anthology *Mirrorwork: Fifty years of Indian Writing*. In 2006 Desai won the MAN Booker Prize for her novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. Kiran Desai depicts the contemporary society in terms of psychological and social realism with about to happen fact. Kiran Desai's debut novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* is based on magical realism. Kiran Desai is the daughter of Anita Desai, herself short-listed for the booker prize on three occasions. She was born in Chandigarh, and spent the early years of her life in Pune and Mumbai. She studied in the Cathedral and John Connon school. She left India at 14, and she and her mother then lived in England for a year, and then moved to the United States, where she studied creative writing at Bennington college, Hollins university and Columbia university. Desai resides in the United States, where she is a permanent resident. The aim to present this thesis is to analyze the term magic realism in Kiran Desai's novel and how subtly the novel runs embossing the fantasy and realism within it.

**Key words:** Magic realism, Kiran Desai, Guava Orchard and Hullabaloo.

### INTRODUCTION

The term magic realism derived from "Magischer Realismus" which is a phrase used by Franz Roh to describe the quasi-surrealistic and work of a group of German painters in the 1920s. Later this term has come in use to fictional prose which is described in the mixture of realistic and fantastic elements. In magic realism the realistic details and mysterious knowledge are knotted in the plot. Magic realism also comes up with fairy tales and myths (Guenther, 1995; Bowes, 2004).

This term is often applied by Latin Americans writers such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Salman Rushdie also known as magic realistic writer. One of the movies of 2001 named "Amelie" holds many elements of magic realism. The literary terminology that has been reflecting in the novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* is

'Bildungsroman' which is one of the terminology in which the protagonist re-counts the development of oneself from childhood to maturity to the point where the protagonist recognize his place in the existing world. Such was the case with the protagonist of *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998) in which Sampath Chawla, who was a very plain minded but highly imaginative Clerk of post-office, seems to be an absolute misfit in the competitive world (Kiran Desai 2009).

The story falls in a small town named Shahkot situated in India. In which the central character fails to relate him protagonist that has helped a common man to get empathized with the protagonist.

Sampath's father fails to understand his son having unique quality. When the protagonist was born the

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climatic condition of his village were not in favorable due to drought and when he took birth there were changes flew over the village and dropped packets of food for the community of Shahkot village. This was the reason that the village people found Sampath as a unique and blessed child for the village people. Sampath's eccentric mother and demanding father are not so sure about their baby becoming a great man.

According to his mother who finds him as an odd looking alien with a large brown birthmark on his face. When he grows up again one night comes where Sampath seemed in miserable condition. He could not sleep since it was so awkwardly hot and his father, grandmother and little sister, Pinky, are all fast asleep, snoring and panting and keeping him awake. His mother, whom he loves the most, is sound asleep and also making disturbing noises. Due to all this he goes on the roof for reprieve, but he cannot escape the heat and is unable to fall asleep even there also. His only salvation is the joy he feels when he sings about meeting the princess from the kingdom of Cooch Behar. Though he does not sleep and waits for the sunrise and as the sun rise he observes all the dirt and dust besides his house. His father Mr. Chawla exercises in the courtyard in the morning before work. He has an important position at a bank. He is noisy during his routine, attempting to gain the attention of his neighbors. Inside, he is demanding, shouting orders to his family to help prepare for work. Pinky and Amma run around, trying to keep up with his demands. He clangs metal buckets together while he showers and allows the water to run over the shower and out the door.

Although the house moves with its daily routine where father holds a prestigious position at bank and one can read that he seems to be very particular about things and desires for perfection even from other family members. Sampath is working as a clerk in the Post office. One day an unusual thing happens when the whole family of Sampath has left for marriage Sampath slips out and takes a bus to a far away orchard. He fastens from the bus to escape an old woman sitting next to him who keeps asking about his family and his job. He runs toward a large guava tree and climbs up to its top branches. Some people on the bus think they see a large monkey climbing in the tree. But at the same time Sampath feels the energy and beauty of the orchard and tree. He feels at home and when he bites into a fresh guava, he once again feels that wonderful energy and hopefulness from the fruit the one which he felt he has lost somewhere. The astounding feeling he derives from the fruit and setting make him feel more at ease and at home than he can ever remember. Here comes the change in Sampath's life or can say a turning point in Sampath's life. He decides to stay in the guava tree and from there he used to make prophecies for the village people who firmly believed in him. And his popularity dawns on Mr. Chawla that Sampath, with his growing fame as a pro-

phet, could make a lot of money for the family. The people are continuing to visit Sampath at the guava tree. The theme behind the novel seems satirical and folly literature where the protagonist due to lack of virtue reveals the vices of the society.

Amma and Kulfi are staying at the orchard, tending to the needs of Sampath. To bring Sampath greater comfort, they assemble a cot up in the tree and bring him a large umbrella to shield him from the rain and sun. Pinky climbs up the tree with food every day. Unfortunately, she drops a lot of the food so they rig a pulley contraption that will allow them to send food and other items up to Sampath. Amma heats tubs of hot water on a nearby fire and sends them up by pulley so Sampath can bathe. After a few days again there is change in his life when the army of Monkey's arrives and finds Sampath as one of the weird creature to accompany them but without unnecessary nuisance things settles down. Later as the story moves on due to several critical circumstances Sampath is growing more and more concerned about the orchard. He has decided he must escape, perhaps up to the mountains where there are no people. He looks with sadness at the monkeys, who are playful and happy and unaware of what is about to take place.

## INCIDENTS WHICH ARE CLOSE TO MAGIC REALISM

Sampath Chawla was born in a time of famine into a family not quite like other families, in a town not quite like other towns. After years of failure at school, failure at work, of spending his days dreaming in the tea stalls and singing to him in the public gardens, it does not seem as if Sampath is going to amount to much. No one believes his grandmother who had faith in her grandson where she was confident about Sampath's life to successful the other family members were not sure about it, until one day Sampath climbs a guava tree in search of peaceful contemplation and becomes unexpectedly famous as a holy man. In *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*, Kiran Desai tells a dryly hilarious and poignant story of life, love and family relationships, simultaneously capturing the vivid culture of the Indian subcontinent and the universal intricacies of human experience.

## CONCLUSION

Kiran Desai, the daughter of a distinguished novelist Anita Desai, who represents the voice of younger generation of Indian English writers that explores the technique of magic realism in her debut novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*. The story has been beautifully woven by Kiran Desai which can be a good example of oral literature where stories are passed from generation to generation as a folklore. It even tilts towards the

religious quest where the protagonist escapes from the materialistic world and moves towards the life of salvation. Like that of Lord Buddha who leaves the world in quest of enlightenment. Its theme can be compared with R.K. Narayan's *The Guide* where the protagonist Raju takes a voluntary retirement from the mundane world and leads a life of monk in an isolated place far from the village near a temple, and the village people misunderstands him as a learned and miracle man. This novel is about a clumsy protagonist Sampath Chawla (Narayan 1988, 1999). Being disgusted with the worldly life, he runs away from home to take refuge in the guava orchard, at the top of the guava tree. There he is mistaken to be as Baba. This is the event that follows a series of amusing, highly imaginative and full of fantasy. At the outset the novel seem simple, but on closer observation is a microcosm for humanity. It depicts the eternal struggle for personal space, the human tendency to make profits out of any situation and the eternal pursuit of happiness by all in their own different ways.

### Conflict of Interests

The author(s) have not declared any conflict of interests.

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