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AMALGAMATION OF FOLKLORE AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN GIRISH KARNAD'S
HAYAVADANA AND SALMAN RUSHDIE'S MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

Folklore is the expressive body of culture shared by a particular group of people which encompasses the traditions common to that culture, sub-culture or group, including both tangible material culture and intangible oral traditions such as tales, proverbs, and jokes, customary lore, the forms and rituals of celebrations such as weddings, dances, the traditional beliefs, popular myths, customs, stories of a community or beliefs relating to a particular place, or group of people. Each one of these, either in isolation or combination, is considered a folklore artifact. It also encompasses the transmission of these artifacts from one region to another or from one generation to the next. These traditions are transmitted along informally from one individual to another either through verbal instruction, imitation, repetition or demonstration. This informal knowledge is used to confirm and reinforce the identity of the group. According to William Bascom, an American folklorist, anthropologist and museum director, in the human society folklore performs five basic functions such as – amusement, validating culture, education, maintaining conformity to the accepted patterns of behavior and instrument of social and political change. Besides, folklore, even though it is considered to be a domain of social sciences, has a close proximity with literature. In most of the societies, we found the elements of oneness in folklore and literature. During the ancient and the medieval period most of the literary elements were based on artifacts of folklore and in those periods oral literatures were converted and preserved in written form. Literary writers imported many of these folklore artifacts in literature and they tried to add local colour, design and traditional metaphors in their composition. Oral traditions in the form of myths, legends, folktales, folk songs, riddles, proverbs and idioms, either in original or in changed forms are abundantly used in literature. The present papers attempts to trace out some of these elements in fusion form which are utilized in literature to analyze contemporary issues like identity crisis, existential dilemma, longing for fulfillment, sense of estrangement etc. It also attempts to figure out the educative values of folklore in discussing and understanding the complex human nature.

Key words: Culture, folklore, tradition, identity, literature, contemporary issues.

INTRODUCTION

Folklore is the expressive body of culture shared by a particular group of people which encompasses the traditions common to that culture, sub-culture or group. They include both tangible material culture and intangible oral traditions such as tales, proverbs, and jokes, customary lore, the forms and rituals of celebrations such as weddings, dances, the traditional beliefs, popular myths, customs, stories of a community or beliefs relating to a particular place, or group of people. Each one of these, either in isolation or combination, is considered a folklore artifact. It also encompasses the transmission of these artifacts from one region to another or from one generation to the next. These traditions are transmitted along informally from one individual to another either through verbal instruction, imitation, repetition or demonstration. This informal knowledge is used to confirm and reinforce the identity of the group.

A. Taylor, an eminent American folklorist, has defined folklore as the material that is handed on by tradition either by word of mouth or by custom and practice. It may be folk songs, folktales, riddles, proverbs or other materials preserved in words. While elaborating folklore M. Islam says that folklore is the outcome of the human mind imbued with creative feelings. Since ancient time two faculties of human mind have been responsible for the creation, preservation and transmission of folklore. These are creative idea and urge of aesthetic and artistic impulse. The lore or traditional learning was inspired by these two to help creation of folklore (M. Islam, 1985:13). Oxford University dictionary has looked upon culture as the intellectual side of civilization. Edward Taylor defines culture as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by men as member of society. If culture is the product of the intellectual faculty of man, folklore is the result of his creativity and impulsive love for beauty and knowledge. There is a strong intimate undercurrent between folklore and culture. Man nourishes culture through folklore. Folklore is, therefore, a product of culture, a component part of culture. Since folklore finds its expression through culture, the study of

folklore cannot be fruitful and perfect without the study of its culture. In culture one finds one's intellect and sense of refinement released and in folklore creative ideas are expressed and shaped and one's aesthetic impulse takes a form.

It was William Thoms who coined the term folklore in 1846 in English to replace popular antiquities and popular literature. The manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs and so on were part of folklore as viewed by Thoms. Going into the literary meaning of folklore, we identify *folk* and *lore* as two distinct aspects. The *folk* identifies with the specific community whether it is tribal or non-tribal and *lore* specifies the collective knowledge or wisdom on a particular subject. *Lore* is also often associated with myth. It has been stipulated by the scholars that folklore depends mainly on oral traditions and there are little margins for their recreation or change in developing society. However, when we look at the developing societies today we observed that although the basic genesis of folklore may not change but its manifestation and interpretations may see perceptible and imperceptible changes.

Folklore basically has three important characteristics: the body of knowledge, the mode of thought and mind of art which is drawn as reflections from culture. The process of diffusion, invention, acceptance or rejection and integration are as much the part of folklore as of the culture in totality. Just as culture presents the integrated growth and development with the change, similarly folklore entails the practices or traditions in terms of forms and functions or inter-relations with other aspects of culture, experiencing the growth and change which may be institutionalized over a period of time. Folklore also functions as a bridge between two cultures through its transmission from one culture to another. Geographical conditions, linguistic position and social interest based on commonality of livelihood influence the emergence and perpetuation of folklore. The elements of folklore are, therefore, not altered from an individual decision but they are transmitted to the next generation by a community interest of group identity. The community or the group may play an important role in perpetuation of the folklore but

this commonality of sharing emerges from individual creation, which is accepted by the group as a whole. There is a continuum in knowledge and a learning process of folklore for future generations. A community or group of people in a particular setting plays an important role in creation, transmission and sometimes transformation of some of the elements of folklore.

Folklore encompasses the customs, knowledge systems, games, beliefs, practices, literature, performing and non-performing arts, which include dance, music, theatre, drama, painting, sculpture, making of crafts with several materials, festivals, rituals etc. The process of transmission of knowledge through sustenance, reshaping, renewal, creation of variants contained in all the artifacts of folklore has been a continuous phenomenon since the human civilization appeared on this earth. Since transmission of folklore is a time sustained process we have to look into several theories of folklore given by various scholars. Modern scholars have embraced methodologies such as aesthetics and literary, comparative, nationalistic, anthropological, psychoanalytical and structural.

According to William Bascom, an American folklorist, anthropologist and museum director, in the human society folklore performs five basic functions such as – amusement, validating culture, education, maintaining conformity to the accepted patterns of behavior and instrument of social and political change. Vladimir Propp, a famous Russian folklorist says that problems of folklore are acquiring more and more importance nowadays. None of the discipline of humanities, be it ethnographic, historic, linguistic or the history of literature, can do without folklore. Besides, folklore, even though it is considered to be a domain of social sciences, has a close proximity with literature. In most of the societies, we found the elements of oneness in folklore and literature. During the ancient and the medieval period most of the literary elements were based on artifacts of folklore and in those periods oral literatures were converted and preserved in written form. Literary writers imported many of these folklore artifacts in literature and they tried to add local colour, design and traditional metaphors in

their composition. Oral traditions in the form of myths, legends, folktales, folk songs, riddles, proverbs and idioms, either in original or in changed forms are abundantly used in literature.

ELEMENTS OF FOLKLORE IN LITERATURE AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES:

Folk literature is a constituent of folk tales, which include myths, legends, fairy tales, animal fables, riddles, proverbs, ballads, chants, songs etc. This dimension of folklore exists in literate and non-literate societies. Folklore is the product of a special form of verbal art. Literature is also a verbal art, and for this reason a closer connection exists between folklore and literature. Literature and folklore overlap partially in their poetic genres. There are genres specific to literature and to folklore, and therefore both folklore and literature can be classified by genres. One of the most important differences between literature and folklore is that literary works invariably have authors. Folk literature, on the contrary, never has an author. If we go into the history of Indian classical literature, *Vedas* were also included in the category of folk literature because they were the knowledge transmitted from one generation to another through speaking and hearing. It was much later in history that *Vedas* were written down. All the elements of learning that are passed through speaking and hearing are part of the oral tradition belonging to folk literature, which is transmitted from generation to generation in a society. These oral traditions may be documented in writing as in the case of the *Vedas* or may continue to be passed on orally through narratives, without a written record. Hence, there is closely integrated relationship between the oral and written literature.

For many years it has been an accepted worldview that literature is transmitted through writing and folklore by oral transmission. Until now this dimension has been considered to be purely technical. However, it captures the innermost difference between the functioning of literature and folklore. The written words provide boundaries to the spoken words. Oral narration may undergo few unrecorded changes over a period of time without much notice, but a literary work, once it has been

published, no longer has it changed. It exists only when two agents are present: the author and the reader. The mediating link between them is a book, manuscript, or performance. A literary work is immutable, but the reader always changes. Aristotle was read by the ancient Greeks, the Arabs, and the Humanists, and we also read him, but all read and understand him differently. True readers always read creatively. A work of literature can bring them joy, inspire them, or fill them with indignation. They may wish to interfere in the heroes' fortune, reward or punish them, change their tragic fate to a happy one, or put a triumphant villain to death. But the readers, no matter how deeply they are aroused by a work of literature, are unable and not allowed to introduce any changes to suit their own personal tastes, whims and fancies or the views of their age.

Literature, which is born of folklore, soon abandons the mother that reared it. Literature is the product of another form of consciousness. This does not mean that literature is realized through individuals isolated from their environment. It means that the individual represent this environment and their people but do it in their own individual unique, personal way. In the power strata creative art continues to exist on the old basis, sometimes in interaction with the art of the ruling class. Characters in narrative folklore and literature are quite different. In literature they are unique individuals; they typify a period or social milieu, generalize the features of many people and reflect a great number of prototypes, but remains individuals. They have their own names and possess their own personalities. The following discussion may specify some domains of inter-textual context of folklore and literature.

MYTHICAL ELEMENTS, FOLKLORE AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN GIRISH KARNAD'S HAYAVADANA:

Generally a myth is a tale or narrative with a symbolic meaning. Human, non-human and super-human characters appear in myths. The presence of these super-human agencies endows myth with a numinous character. As these characters are transcendent, they raise awe and fear in us. Myths are considered to be pre-historical and therefore

they belong to no specific author. They have a social or collective authorship. The most remarkable characteristic of myth is its normative nature. It sets down rules which specifically apply to the moral realm.

Contemporary Indian drama in English translation has made bold innovations and fruitful experiments in terms of both thematic concerns and technical virtuosity. It has been increasingly turning to history, legend, myth and folklore, tapping their springs of vitality and vocal cords of popularity with splendid results. Girish Karnad, Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sirkar and Vijay Tendulkar have remained the most representative of the contemporary Indian drama not only in Kannada, Bengali, Marathi and Hindi respectively but also on the pan Indian level. Among the major Indian dramatists mentioned above, Girish Karnad has been regarded as the leading dramatist so far as the use of myth and history is concerned and his plays vividly represent this trend. In all his plays there are mythical, historical or legendary elements with modern approach.

In his play *Hayavadana*, Karnad reinforces the central problem of human existence in a world of tangled relationships. Originally, it was written in Kannada and later on translated into English. The dramatist skillfully uses the principles and theme of Indian mythology, folk tales and folk theatre conventions – use of masks, curtains, dolls, the story within a story, use of image of Kali, Ganesha, Rudra etc. to create an allegorical significance and a bizarre world of incomplete individuals, indifferent gods, dolls that speak and children who cannot, a world which appears to be indifferent to the desires and frustrations, joys and sorrows of human beings. The symbolic core of *Hayavadana* comprises the philosophic crisis of estrangement between mind and body. Like its predecessor *Tughlaq*, *Hayavadana* too is thoroughly modern in outlook and spirit. Karnad here goes back in time to make a very relevant social commentary. Here the only inspiration is not history but mythology and folklore. Here he explores all the modern concerns through the lens of the eternal emotion of love. Through folktale and myth Karnad gives us an insight into the issues of modern life in entirely new ways. Hence,

Hayavadana is traditional yet modern. Vanashree Tripathy feels that “Karnad’s confabulation of the classics with the folktales of the transposed heads and the story of a half-man, half-horse, playfully dilutes the prototypical themes (*Shakuntalam* and *Mrichhakatikam*), where the ideal balance between duty and passion is restored. *Hayavadana*, in exploring the realm of love: erotic man-woman, male bonding, parent-child, offers us insight into the desires, hopes, fulfillment and frustration it breeds”.

The plot of *Hayavadana* is derived from Somdeva’s *Brihadkatha Saritsagar*, an ancient collection of stories in Sanskrit. The central episode in the play, the story of Devadatta, Padmini and Kapila is based on a tale from *Vetala Panchavimshika*, but Karnad borrowed it through Thomas Mann’s novel *Transposed Heads*, a mock-heroic transcription of the original Sanskrit tales. However, the sub-plot – horse-man’s search for completeness, is Karnad’s creative invention. *Hayavadana* is a play of the ‘mad dance of incompleteness’ and search of identity in a world of tangled relationships. Devadatta, the intellectual, and Kapila, the man of physicality, are intimate friends who represents two extreme opposites – one *Appolonian* and another *Dionysian* tendency. In the play, Devadatta marries Padmini and Padmini and Kapila are attracted to each other. The two friends kill themselves. In a highly comic scene, Padmini transposes their heads, giving Devadatta Kapila’s body and vice-versa. It results in a confusion of identities which reveals the ambiguous nature of human personality. When the situation gets complicated, they fight a duel and kill themselves again. Padmini performs *sati*. Through this plot Karnad delves deep into the traditional myths to spell out modern man’s anguish and dilemmas.

In *Hayavadana*, Karnad re-shapes an ancient Indian myth from *Vetala Panchavimsati* to point to man’s eternal quest for completeness, or self-realization. With its highly stylized action and mimicry, especially the scene at the temple of Kali and the sword fight between Devadatta and Kapila in the second act. Karnad invests the play with a significance, which brings out the emptiness of the incomplete human being. The play is a re-shaping of an ancient Indian myth from Thomas Mann’s

translation of the Sanskrit *Vetala Panchavimsati* which forms part of Kshemendra’s *Brihad Katha Manjari* and Somadeva’s *Kathasaritsagara* to the point of a man’s eternal quest for self-realization. The theme also reveals the Upanishad’s principle that visualizes the human body as a symbol of organic relationship of the parts to the whole. The issue of transposition of heads is the significant issue in this play. Karnad dramatically exposes the incompleteness of the human being by referring to some of the stylized actions.

Karnad employs his mythological tale to show modern man’s efforts towards achieving a sense of completeness, and a search of human identity in a world of tangled human relationship. The confusion of identities in the main plot of Devadatta-Padmini-Kapila story reveals ambiguous nature of human personality. After their heads are transposed Devadatta and Kapila do not retain their original selves. Thus, they lose themselves. Padmini, who after the exchange of heads, thinks that she has the best of both the worlds, slowly reaches disillusionment. The play seems to suggest that if perfection or completeness means fusion of two polarities, such completeness is not possible. The myth has been reinterpreted and has been used to present a very modern problem of tangled relationships in the contemporary society. It blends the modernist ideas of identity and completeness with folklore and myth effortlessly. *Hayavadana* presents a universal and very real emotional dynamics that lie close under the whimsical surface of the plot: friendship and jealousy, self-possession and self-doubt, and most importantly, love. *Hayavadana* is unique in the sense that it encompasses all the aspects of life and experience. All three spheres of existence – divine, human and animal encompassed and Karnad looks at the problems of each with a sympathetic and discerning eye.

In this play, the central figure is a woman, Padmini. Selfishness and sensuality find expression in her insatiable desire for both brain and body, which are symbolized by Devadatta and Kapila respectively. Married to Devadatta, Padmini craves for the ‘muscle’ and ‘body’ of Kapila. In the myth and in the play as well the craving is explicit; it runs

an undercurrent in Padmini's subconscious mind. The happenings in the Kali temple where she transposes the heads of Devadatta and Kapila, reveal her subconscious desire. Padmini's predicament is the predicament of a modern emancipated woman in our society who is torn between two polarities – a woman who loves her husband but at the same time is also attracted towards someone else for a different aspect of his personality. Padmini's act, though unintentional, is indicative of the incomplete human being's silent quest for completeness.

One of the significant skills of Karnad while dealing with myth is the transformation of religious myths into the non-religious ones. He transforms the religious myths to question as well as critique those myths. He makes certain changes in the names of the characters for he wanted the names not to be the reflection of the ancient myth entirely; he wanted the names to be generic. The presence of the goddess Kali presents the religious sentiment of the Indian society. It also focuses on the cultural and psychological interpretations of the goddess Kali to be the representative of a deity as well as a destroyer and preserver. In this play divine intervention unfolds the central theme, the incompleteness of the human beings and the same man's quest to achieve completion. Karnad develops various folk conventions like music, chorus, and the amalgamation of human and non-human worlds in order to permit a simultaneous presentation of alternative points of view. Interestingly, the main and the sub-plot of *Hayavadana* deal with the moral, psychological and philosophical aspect of the problem raising more important issues relating to the human existence.

Indian society is conservative and traditional and an individual is still governed by societal roles and norms that ensure a continuity and survival of its cultural norms. As Eric Fromm writes, "We are what we believe in and where we live in". Karnad makes use of myths, mythologies and folklore as his source of plays, not for the glorification of the chosen myths but to relate the myths to the present and the past beliefs found in these myths. Karnad provides us with a glimpse of

the past as well as its relevance to an understanding of the contemporary world.

FANTASY, MYTHOLOGY AND MAGIC REALISM IN SALMAN RUSHDIE'S *MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN*:

Fantasy is an inseparable element of folklore and magic realism. In fact, it has always been an important part of literature. Without fantasy, literature is unimaginable. The great epics like – *The Ramayana*, *The Mahabharata*, *The Odyssey*, *The Iliad*, *The Aeneid*, *Beowulf*, *Khamba-Thoibi Sheireng* etc. are all fantasies. Rushdie has used fantasy as a literary device in *Midnight's Children*. He has mixed and woven fantasy to the very fabric and texture of his novel. From the very beginning, the fantastic nature of the novel becomes evident when the narrator, Saleem Sinai, informs about his birth in the following words:

I was born in the city of Bombay...once upon a time. No that won't do, there is no getting away from the date, I was born in Doctor Narlikar's nursing home on August 15, 1947. And the time? The time matters, too. Well, then: at night. No its important to be more...On the stroke of midnight, as a matter of fact. Clock-hands, joined palms in respectful greetings as I came. Oh, spell it, spell it out: at the precise instant of India's arrival at independence, I trembled forth into the world. (*Midnight's Children*: 3).

With this fairytale type of narration, the narrator alerts the readers that fantasy awaits them ahead. Thus, Saleem and the new state of India become symbolic counter parts: both are born on 15th August, 1947 along with one thousand other children born in the first hour of independence. They turn out to have miraculous powers of transmutation, flight, prophecy, wizardry, etc. Every child born between midnight and 1.00 am is endowed with some special power. The closer to midnight their births are, the greater are their gifts. This is really something very much fantastic interwoven with the thematic structure of the novel. It has been presented elaborately by the novelist. Even the narrator is not certain about the mystery behind this phenomenon of magical gifts to the newly born midnight children. It has been one of the

best examples of co-mingling of extra-ordinary with the mundane which instantly puts the novel into the category of magic realism. The narrator also sites some more examples of other midnight children's gifts which are really noteworthy to get overall impact of fantasy. They are:

- i. A pair of twin sisters in Orissa possesses the ability of making everyone who sees them fall hopelessly and often suicidally in love with them.
- ii. A boy from Kerala has got the ability of stepping into mirrors and re-emerging through any reflective surface.
- iii. A Goanese girl can multiply fish, and a werewolf from the Nilgiri Hills, and then a boy in Vindhyas can increase or reduce his size at will.
- iv. From Kashmir, a blue eyed child can change his/her sex by immersing in water.
- v. Outside Calcutta, a sharp tongued girl whose words have the power of inflicting physical wound to others.
- vi. A boy can eat metals and a girl whose fingers are so green that she can grow prize aubergines in Thar desert.
- vii. A boy from Lucknow has mastered the lost art of alchemy, and a washerman's daughter from Madras, can fly higher than any bird simply by closing her eyes.
- viii. A Benarsi silversmith's son is bestowed with the gift of travelling in time and thus prophesying the future as well as clarifying the past.
- ix. Besides, to Shiva the midnight's hour had given the gift of war and to Saleem, the narrator, was bestowed the greatest talent of all- the ability to look into the hearts and minds of man.

Apart from these, there are also some midnight's children born in the last seconds of the hour. They are not gifted with anything noteworthy, instead they are little more than circus freaks and

unfortunates. The narrator throws light on this fact by the following statement:

Midnight has many children; the offspring of independence were not all human. Violence, corruption, poverty, generals, chaos, greed and pepper pots....(ibid: 291).

At the age of nine years, Saleem realizes about his telepathic powers – a miraculous gift of the midnight. When he complains his parents about hearing voices in his head, his father hits him in the ear. Thus, his 'stupid cracks' are literalized into physical cracks. Then after, Saleem begins to enjoy his special power secretly. To begin with, he cheats at school by reading the thoughts of his teachers and in that way he begins to score good marks. Gradually, he moves further and farther. Thus, here through the lens of magic realism and Saleem as his mouthpiece, the writer discloses the bitter reality of the nation. The narrator also shares unhappy information that all the one thousand midnight children do not survive. In fact, 420 out of them die on account of malnutrition, disease and misfortunes of everyday life. Here, the novelist points out that the number of death – 420 has been the number associated with fraud, deception, and trickery. After the death of 420 midnight's children, only 581 continue to exist with their miraculous gifts. Here again, the number of survived children – 581 has symbolic importance. It so happens that there is 581 seats in India's Lower House of Parliament, the Lok Sabha. These 581 remain as a parliament in Saleem's brain. Thus, Midnight Children's Conference takes on a symbolic importance. Saleem uses his magical power to organize this conference where all the midnight's children get connected to talk, discuss, quarrel in myriad languages. Saleem is the spokesperson of these children whom he unites in the parliament of his mind. The Midnight Children's Conference is a metaphor of heterogeneous Indian society, its very essence of multiplicity. In many ways, it reflects the issues faced by India in its early statehood concerning the cultural, linguistic, religious and political differences.

Myth is an idea or story that many people believe, but which is not true. The very concept of the Midnight's Children being born with miraculous

powers is a myth. The important characters in *Midnight's Children* – Saleem, Shiva and Parvati are all names derived from mythology. Sinai is associated with Mount Sinai, Lord Shiva is the Indian mythological God of destruction and Parvati, his wife. Saleem's sister, Zamila, is nicknamed 'Brass Monkey' which reminds us of Hanuman whose tail of setting fire to Lanka, the capital of Ravana. It finds a comic parallel in the brass monkey's habit of setting fire to shoes. Shiva is an example of mythological history and alter ego of Saleem. The reference to the alter ego also reminds us of the two brothers from the epic *Ramayana*, Ravana and Vibhishana, who stand opposite in the war in which Rama kills Ravana. Here Saleem's intention of linking Shiva not only with God but also with epic hero is evident. Unlike Lord Shiva who destroys evils, *Midnight Children's* Shiva destroys good and he is determined to destroy Saleem. Rushdie uses the word *Kali Yuga* to refer to the present era as an epoch of evil. The motif of betrayal constantly appears in the novel. Amina, Pia, Leela Sabarmathi, Parvati, Vanita and Indira Gandhi are guilty of betrayal. All these failures are seen in relation to the epic *Ramayana*, which exalts the virtues of loyalty.

Another reference to mythology can be found in the text where Saleem gets lost in the Sunderbans in Bangladesh and becomes Buddha. This lost period in Saleem's case can be considered enlightenment. The jungle can also refer to the Muslim paradise. From another perspective, Saleem's sojourn in the Sunderbans jungle is like the period of exile of Pandavas in the Mahabharata. Shiva's trials to trace out Saleem resemble the efforts of Kauravas to search the Pandavas before the allotted time and consign them to a further period of exile.

Rushdie has also made use of prophecies which are basically connected with the realm of mythology. Amina Sinai goes to a soothsayer named Ramram Seth to know about the future of her unborn son, Saleem. It is highly fantastic and confusing reflecting the novel's mode of writing. A similar prophesy is made by Saleem himself for his own son, who is not his son, in what can also be seen as optimistic foretelling of the fate of the 'New

India' born out of the emergency, personified by Adam Sinai:

We, the children of independence, rushed wildly and too fast into our future; he, Emergency-born, will be already more cautious, biding his time; but when he acts, he will be impossible to resist. Already he is stronger, harder and more resolute than I; when he sleeps, his eyeballs are immobile beneath their lids. Adam Sinai, child of knees and nose, does not surrender to dreams (ibid: 594).

The use of myth is persistent in the novel that Rushdie uses this technique in ironic and playful manner for recording his narrative in mythical terms that surfaces in his meta-fictional observations. Using Hindu myth as the most satisfactory mode of expressing ideas about the contemporary reality and the world, Rushdie has enriched realism. He has created the alternative version of reality to delineate all that is invisible, suppressed, unsaid and unofficial.

Midnight's Children is profusely loaded with the essential features of magic realism. A new trend of writing is initiated with publication of this novel. The novel is stuffed with the elements of sexual frankness, unconventional narrative technique, excellent blending of history, political allegory, fantasy, linguistic inventiveness, fusion of realism and fantasy and contemporary socio-political critique. The concept of fragmentation is also celebrated in the novel.

CONCLUSION

The main purpose of folklore is to convey a moral lesson or present useful information and everyday life lessons in an easy way for the common people to understand. Folktales sugarcoat the lessons of hard life in order to give the audience pointers about how they should deal with it. It is one of the best mediums to pass on living culture or traditions to future generations. Nowadays many forms of folk literature have been transformed into books and manuscripts, which we see in the forms of novels, histories, dramas, stories, lyric poems and sermons. Folk literature is not merely a carrier of

cultural values; rather it is also an expression of self-reflection. It serves as a platform to hold high moral ground without any relevance to the present day reality. Instead, writers use it as a commentary or satire on current political and social reality. In the modern academic world, folklores and folktales are studied to understand ancient literature and civilization and also the contemporary human issues.

The current renaissance of the study of folklore and literature, representing perhaps a desire to reinsert humanities into an increasingly social scientific approach to folkloristics, has produced a variety of papers and publications. But it has not as yet dealt overtly with the explicit reasons for the study per se, though some justification is surely implicit in motivating the various studies which have been made. Nonetheless, the question should be both raised and answered: why study folklore and literature? Both folklore and literature are parts of culture, produced or created by cultural beings. Their study expands our knowledge of its makers and possessors, their creative processes and strategies. The study of the two related cultural phenomena, in tandem or simultaneously, points out their shared roots in a cultural tradition which provides not only content, but style, structure and strategy, and forces us to look at the literary redactor and oral redactor as standing in similar relationships to the received cultural traditions. The comparison of the two – folklore as oral literature and written literature – raises, if not answers, some important questions about creativity, change, communication, thus suggesting the ultimate value of the study of folklore and literature.

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