

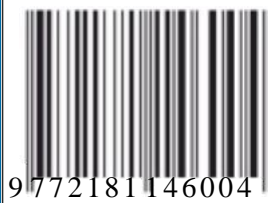
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MAGICAL REALISM AND MEMORY IN SALMAN RUSHDIE'S «VICTORY CITY»

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Abstract. *This article explores Salman Rushdie's Victory City as a prime example of magical realism that reclaims narrative control through memory, myth, and feminist resistance. Centering on Pampa Kampana—a prophetess, poet, and political figure—the novel transforms historical fragments into an alternative mythology that challenges patriarchal and colonial narratives. Through Pampa's voice, Rushdie reimagines Vijayanagara as Bisnaga, a city built not by conquest but by language, magic, and pluralistic ideals. The novel interrogates the construction of history and asserts the enduring power of storytelling in resisting oppression and preserving cultural memory.*

Keywords: *magical realism, memory, feminism, myth, storytelling, postcolonialism.*

МАГИЧЕСКИЙ РЕАЛИЗМ И ПАМЯТЬ В «ГОРОДЕ ПОБЕДЫ» САЛМАНА РУШДИ

Аннотация: *В этой статье рассматривается «Город Победы» Салмана Рушди как яркий пример магического реализма, который возвращает себе контроль над повествованием через память, миф и феминистское сопротивление. Сосредоточившись на Пампе Кампане — пророчице, поэтессе и политической фигуре — роман трансформирует исторические фрагменты в альтернативную мифологию, которая бросает вызов патриархальным и колониальным повествованиям. Через голос Пампы Рушди переосмысливает Виджаянагара как Биснагу, город, построенный не завоеванием, а языком, магией и плюралистическими идеалами. Роман подвергает сомнению конструкцию истории и утверждает непреходящую силу повествования в сопротивлении угнетению и сохранении культурной памяти.*

Ключевые слова: *Магический реализм, память, феминизм, миф, повествование, постколониализм.*

SALMAN RUSHDYNING "G'ALABA SHAHRI" DA SEHRLI REALIZM VA XOTIRA

Annotatsiya: *Ushbu maqola Salmon Rushdining G'alaba shahrini xotira, afsona va feministik qarshilik orqali hikoya nazoratini tiklaydigan sehrli realizmning eng yaxshi namunasi sifatida o'rganadi. Payg'ambar ayol, shoir va siyosiy arbob Pampa Kampanaga asoslangan roman tarixiy parchalarni patriarxal va mustamlakachilik rivoyatlariga qarshi muqobil mifologiyaga aylantiradi. Pampaning ovozi orqali Rushdie Vijayanagarani Bisnaga, fath orqali emas, balki til, sehr va plyuralistik ideallar asosida qurilgan shahar sifatida qayta tasavvur qiladi. Roman tarix qurilishini so'roq qiladi va zulmga qarshi turish va madaniy xotirani saqlashda hikoya qilishning mustahkam kuchini ta'kidlaydi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *sehrli realizm, xotira, feminizm, afsona, hikoya, postkolonializm.*

Salman Rushdie constructs a fictional empire through a combination of seeds and mythology as well as mnemonic retellings in his Victory City. The novel presents historical events through the perspective of an impassioned blind queen who transforms both reality and perception by using magic.

The first time I encountered Vijayanagara, it was not through a textbook or a travel brochure but through the surreal vision of Rushdie's Bisnaga. The enchanting origin of this city drew me in with its mystical foundation since a prophetess exists who will survive all kings and empires. Long before I had seen Hampi's ruins or read the Deccan's dusty chronicles, Rushdie had already built his city in my imagination. It was vibrant, contradictory, alive—and destined to fall.

Rushdie's *Victory City* (2023) unfolds as the long-buried manuscript of Pampa Kampana, a poet, queen, and seer blessed with divine magic and cursed with impossible vision. She lives for 247 years, founding and witnessing the rise and ruin of Bisnaga, a fictional analog to Vijayanagara. Her city is sown from seeds, her breath animating its citizens, her voice shaping its history [Amirthavarshini & Bhuvaneswari 2023, 2]. Through his transformation of a real historical kingdom into a dreamlike realm, Rushdie makes use of the power of magical realism which literature critics define as a method enabling authors to uncover historical injustices without limiting themselves to realistic presentation. [Yogalakshmi & Vijayalakshmi 2023, 292]



History expresses itself through Pampa Kampana who exceeds the role of a narrator. Through poetry, she employs the power of words to reinterpret how history will unfold for both a metropolis and its citizens although she survived maternal loss and sexual assault in her past. Through her literary work *Jayaparajaya* (Victory and Defeat) Pampa provides an alternative historical narrative that emphasizes gender perspectives together with memory and verbal expression [Chaudhuri 2023, 8]. Pampa brings to mind Rushdie's previous fictional character Padma in *Midnight's Children* but expands the literary power she possesses. The poet generates her historical reality instead of limiting herself to mere remembrance of history.

Through his writing, Rushdie deliberately recovers the narrative control that had been lost under patriarchal historical control. The novel depicts Pampa as both a representation of literary production and an agent of political agency. The narrative presents itself as an alternate historical collection beyond royal victories and military engagements by showing us how power structures interact within the deepest parts of an imperial structure. Ramlal Agarwal points out that Rushdie gives priority to «magic and not human endeavors» throughout his novel because he presents Victory City as an imagined place rather than one committed to historical accuracy. [Agarwal 2023, 1]

The magical elements within Victory City never fulfill the superficial function of decoration. Seeds bloom into civilization. A forest rules without kings. The blind queen carries into memory everything that society decides to overlook. Fantastic elements serve in Victory City as tools for dismantling established patriarchal and religious beliefs. The goddess Parvati empowers Pampa through her vessel to rebel against widow-burning and establish temples while fighting for gender equity before exile leads to complete blindness for her deviance [Ajeesh 2023, 3]. The darkness does not stop her for she maintains her commitment through writing verses that proclaim: «Words are the only victors» [Rushdie 2023, 315].

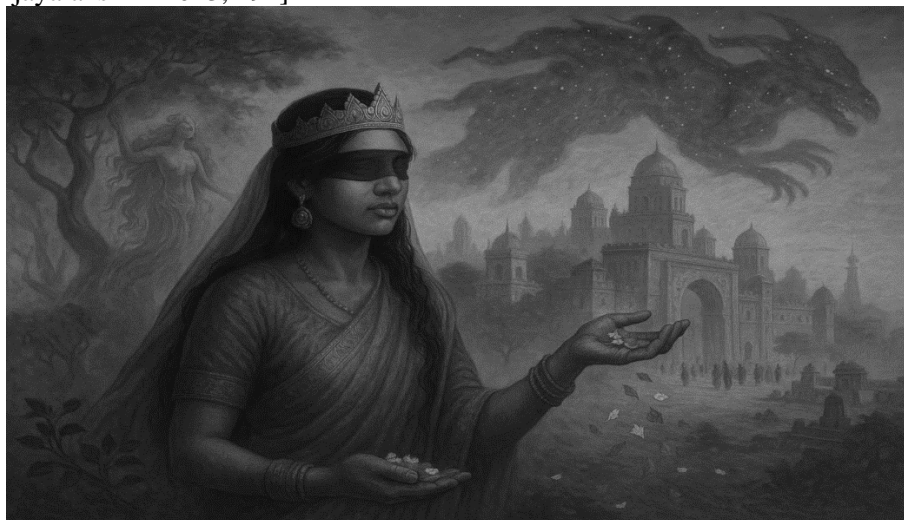
Pampa's defiance extends beyond her traditional costume of defiance. Through creative agency, Pampa delivers a counter-response to those oppressive powers that attempt to suppress her. Through the loss of physical eyesight, she develops visionary insight which allows her to see with clarity the purpose of her existence. Through the magical realism technique, Rushdie enhances Pampa's subjective reality into ancient mythical dimensions thus transforming her pain into higher transformative states. Through writing her memoir Pampa showcases how memory remains intact and the voice maintains its strength when one loses sight.

Within the novel, Rushdie establishes subtle arguments against the way national histories are constructed. The author uses Bisnaga as a fictional name for Vijayanagara along with a foreign pronunciation to challenge how history is authenticated. The text cautions us that diasporic memory shapes into distorted something mystical which still carries deep value. Through Pampa's relationships with Hukka, Bukka, and Domingo Nunes the novel demonstrates how different worldviews between indigenous and foreign cultures clash and how their mixed descendants represent postcolonial identity characteristically. [Ajeesh 2023, 2]

Internal opposition consistently rejects the concept of a pluralist utopian empire during its existence. The decline of Bisnaga results from internal conflicts between family members as well as their futile lust for power while enduring external invasions. Rushdie displays opposition to remembering the vanished times of excellence. The writing of stories becomes permanent while the nature of power proves to be temporary according to his narrative. The Bisnaga downfall exists outside traditional tragic conventions because it follows an endless universal pattern that plays between ascending and decaying forces. The last residue exists as a word-based architectural structure rather than physical constructs.

LITERARY CRITICISM

Various critics recognize *Victory City* as an epic structured for contemporary readers. The central character in *Victory City* represents both the Homeric and Indian mythological heroines. Pampa breaks away from typical heroic epics because her story does not involve military conquest or territorial expansion. She finds her power within her ability to think beyond boundaries which human males divine beings or traditional rules attempt to restrict her. Through her work, she functions as a historian who rebalances historical narratives by including suppressed voices in the building foundation. Rushdie utilizes the supposedly impossible elements to develop a moral perspective according to Yogalakshmi and Vijayalakshmi. [Yogalakshmi & Vijayalakshmi 2023, 294]



Rushdie uses gender and identity presentation in *Victory City* because it follows contemporary postcolonial literature which utilizes historical revision to subvert dominant cultural narratives. Through her narrative control Pampa fights against standard male perspectives of historical conquest. The enduring impact of Pampa remains focused on her strength to help others while ensuring lasting changes throughout history. Rushdie expresses a feminist approach to building empires by demonstrating how diversity and inclusivity should replace aggressive territorial tactics.

Within his literary work, Rushdie uses metafictional techniques that alert readers about stories being man-made constructions. The presentation as a discovered manuscript makes readers question historic authenticity while questioning the governmental influence on historical preservation. Rushdie communicates his essential point that recorded history functions as survivorship because readers need a clear understanding of the significance of self-awareness. Powers alone do not decide survival yet in the end the control of storytelling decides what gets preserved.

Victory City demonstrates its worldwide importance in all its aspects. Through his book at this moment of censorship battles and historical distortion Rushdie stresses that imagination represents a necessary building block rather than an optional privilege. Rushdie combines political narratives with philosophical myths together with a fantasy magic system to expose contemporary fights about factual accounts of cultural heritage and social recognition. *Victory City* makes itself a literary tribute through its cultural significance which extends past traditional novelistic boundaries.

The current post-truth reality shows how alternative facts have replaced complex understanding while this idea maintains significant relevance. The fantastical use of historical perspectives enables Rushdie to transform literature into a reparative system. The author goes beyond recounting historical events because he takes back control of these moments while dissecting official historical recollections and demanding his audience to study memory's political dimensions. The situation in India's current cultural and historical dialogues requires this approach because multiple ideologies attempt to determine the nation's historical narrative.

The story of Bisnaga made by Pampa Kampana serves as a metaphor for fortification-building projects for the transformative power of imagination in leading an ethical life. The text presents Pampa Kampana's progressive ideals while they face constant rejection yet it never shows her mission as a hopeless cause. Rushdie defends the courage to try to achieve justice despite all setbacks as better than choosing passive submission to oppressive rule. Pampa maintains her strength through the fire that consumes her imaginary city and the burning of her words allows her verses along with her visions and vital values to survive.

Through this interpretation, *Victory City* presents itself as an expression of sorrow for endangered democratic systems and suppressed vocal expressions. Through his character, Pampa Rushdie demonstrates his authorial commitment toward freedom of expression by crafting an enduring woman who defends herself

through narration as well as preserves her values to shape the upcoming generations. The centuries-long burial of the manuscript inside a clay pot signifies how a time might exist when the world refuses to accept the truth. The story perseveres even after the appropriate moment arrives.

Rushdie presents a world guided by stories rather than swords in his fictional creation. Despite Bisnaga's domestic conflicts and overseas attacks, the Pampa epic continues to survive by being sealed inside a clay vessel for numerous centuries before rediscovery. Storytelling exists as a life-sustaining practice to avoid being wiped out from existence. Rushdie demonstrates through storytelling the concept that narratives formulated by Said act as resistance and that imagination survives the end of empires. The city portrayed by Supriya Chaudhuri as Victory City functions as a space entirely built from words whose survival depends on language the way defeated people depend on it. [Chaudhuri 2023, 8]

Victory City distinguishes itself in modern literary discussion through its mixed literary structure. The text uses epic poetry to present postmodern metafiction apart from feminism when exploring mythology in a historical fantasy world. The text simultaneously analyzes while honoring the strength of storytelling methods. The text presents readers with a new way to perceive literary works by demonstrating their ability to fight against oppressive spiritual forces. Through Pampa's experiences, the novel depicts women's challenges along with memory transformation and cultural diversity's resilience.

The strength of Victory City in our current times results from its central commitment to pluralism because it resists letting dominant narratives originating from power control the cultural dialogue. Rushdie presents through his work three resistive elements against the observed cultural memory loss in the global world where myth functions as storytelling and fiction represents reality while poetry entails oppositional practices. Despite physical destruction, his writing demonstrates that human stories find refuge both within poetry and literary imagination and ceramic vessels.

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