

The Representation of Babu's Search for Self-Identity: A Reading of Numair Atif Choudhury's Babu Bangladesh



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**The Representation of Babu's Search for Self-Identity : A Reading of Numair Atif
Choudhury's Babu Bangladesh**

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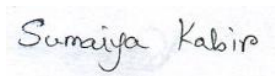
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October 2021

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I hereby declare that this thesis is the student's own work and effort. All sources of information incorporated here have been duly acknowledged. This thesis has been submitted with my approval.



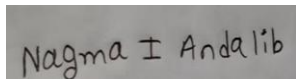
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DECLARATION

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.



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Dedication

To my respected supervisor and parents

Acknowledgements

I would like to take the blessings of almighty Allah for letting me be where I am today and providing all the means necessary to complete my dissertation.

I would like to provide my sincere gratitude to the authority of the Department of English and Humanities that provided me with the opportunity to conduct this research. I am thankful to a number of individuals who have contributed in many ways towards the completion of this thesis.

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Table of Contents

Certificate of Approval -----	3
Declaration -----	4
Acknowledgements-----	5
Abstract-----	7
Chapter 1: Introduction-----	8
Chapter 2: Literature Review-----	10
Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Data Analysis-----	15
Chapter 4: Conclusion-----	27
Works Cited-----	28

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to reflect Babu's search for self-identity which is represented in Numair Atif Choudhury's fictional novel *Babu Bangladesh*. By analyzing the novel *Babu Bangladesh*, this study examines how Choudhury shows the public and private question in Babu's journey by using magic realism, duality, landscape scenarios in the Postmodern context. It also attempts to find how Babu's life is parallel with the rise of the national history of Bangladesh.

Contrary to the fact that Babu played the role of a politician and adventurer, dualism is reflected in his search for an individual identity in both Bangladeshi context in case of his search for his own identity as well.

This reading of Choudhury's novel *Babu Bangladesh* respectively questions how Choudhury shows the public and private quest in Babu's journey. *Babu Bangladesh* can be compared to the famous theory of Franz Roh by using Magic realism to differentiate between reality and imagination. *Babu Bangladesh* can be compared with the writings of Haruki Murakami, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, V.S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie.

Chapter one- Introduction

Babu Bangladesh is a fictional biographical novel written by Numair Atif Choudhury in which the story of Babu and his search of his self-identity is reflected in both public and private spheres. It is reflected through his journey shows the connection with the national history of Bangladesh as well. The plotline involves the story of Babu who goes through a metaphysical experience in search of an individual identity for himself that reflects the journey of the national history of Bangladesh from both before and after Bangladesh was born as an independent country after the Liberation War.

The major rationale behind selecting this fictional novel is the search for Babu's self-identity shows the parallel narrative from the context of Bangladesh which is rare because not much work has been done earlier on this modern ideas but Choudhury tries to show the search for self-identity of the protagonist named Babu in the Bangladeshi context which was not done before because the previous works were done on Latin American context works not on Bangladeshi context is found rarely. The self-exploration of the protagonist by using magical elements in a Bangladeshi context type of research are mostly done less or rarely done earlier so that creates an opportunity to explore more into Babu's quest for his self-identity.

The main arguments that arise with this fictional novel named *Babu Bangladesh* aligns with the national history of Bangladesh, moreover the dual dimension is connected both in the public spheres because the novel was written from the Bangladeshi context moreover in the private sphere because the novel was written from Choudhury's protagonist Babu's perspective as well. The author merges the public and the private spheres is reflected in the title itself because the title itself shows that Babu Bangladesh is the search for self-identity both for the protagonist as

well the newborn country itself so it can be assumed that Babu represents the self-identity of the protagonist and Bangladesh represents the national history which leaded the country as a Liberal country itself. Nowadays Anglophone literature is increasing day by day so a lot of Bengali writers are getting interested in this kind of literature which happened in case of Numair Atif Choudhury as well because he got attention after writing this only one fictional biographical novel *Babu Bangladesh* which got attention because it was written in a Bangladeshi context, its complexity, use of magic realism duality in the search for an individual identity. This particular novel is a mystery because Babu is a politician but the national history of Bangladesh is a parallel to Babu's life, moreover the rise of the nation named Bangladesh is marged in the novel through the protagonist Babu.

The main aim of this study is to explore the search for the an identity of Babu in the novel which is connected to the political history of Bangladesh marges the tools. The way to carry out this research is to do a close reading of the novel *Babu Bangladesh* because not much works are done earlier in this novel so some primary sources related to this novel can help this research grow. The study will be based on primary sources, moreover the research will be analysed by doing a close reading of Babu's search for self-identity by both public and private spheres.

By a close reading, I want to explore moreover examine whether Numair Atif Choudhury manages to show the search of the Babu in both the public sphere or in the Bangladeshi context and in the private sphere which is Babu's own search of his self-identity. So the research questions are 1. I want to explore how Numair Atif Choudhury manages to show the public and private quest in Babu's journey? By addressing this research question, the present study attempts to explore Babu's search for self -identity in both public and private spheres.

2. How Babu's journey reflected the use of magic realism to represent his search for his own identity?
3. Is Bangladesh a parallel narrative of Babu?
4. How does Choudhury manage to reflect dualism through the protagonist in the novel even after *Babu Bangladesh* itself being an enigma?

Chapter two- Literature Review

Matthew. C. Strecher in his particular article *Magical Realism and the Search for Identity in the Fiction of Murakami Haruki* examines the techniques of magic realism which are used to challenge and explore the concept of self-identity in Japan Murakami's writings. It argues the steady identity in the decay of self-identity in the generations born immediately after the second world war moreover after that. This source is connected with Choudhury's novel *Babu Bangladesh* because it helps to understand that previous researches were done in order on Murakami's works related with magic realism based on the search of an individual identity but the basic difference is that magical realism in Murakami's work was based on Japan related to self-identity only but in *Babu Bangladesh*, Choudhury wrote the novel in the Bangladeshi context in order to reflect the national history of Bangladesh which was both before and after the independence along with the search of Babu's self-identity moreover earlier works were based on magic realism but the contextual difference is present in *Babu Bangladesh* where the author tried to look for the self-identity of Babu whose name itself hints towards the fact that his search of self-identity reflected the history of Bangladesh along with his own identity as well but in a form of a journey.

According to Strecher's journal article, Murakami's use of magic realism and works differs from Choudhury so Choudhury's works can be compared with Nasreen Jahan, Syed Waliullah, Akhtaruzzaman Elias as well but Choudhury's *Babu Bangladesh* is different because earlier works were based on magic realism moreover the Bangladeshi writers such as Akhtaruzzaman Elias, Nasreen Jahan, Syed Waliullah worked on the rural contexts of Bangladesh but did not focused on a particular nation and its Liberation achievement history rather they focused on the rural life and the state of the rural people but *Babu Bangladesh* is based on the Bangladeshi context which helps in this study to add up new ideas.

In the particular journal article of Md. Abu Shahid Abdullah named *Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children: Connection between Magical Realism and Postcolonial Issues*, *Midnight's Children* is the parallel narrative to show the emergence of independent India by using magical realism. It narrates his life story and relates it to the national history of India. The magical realist technique to talk about the postcolonial people of India and different postcolonial issues moreover exposes the different social and political problems of a newly independent country like India where magic realism has been considered a regional option to protest against the Eurocentric categorization of the world. In addition, the use of magic realism and parallel narrative is used to reinterpret the colonial version of history in order to provide an alternative moreover a nativized version of India. Md. Abu Shahid Abdullah also tried to argue that magic realism was used to challenge political and social domination as well.

According to Abdullah's journal article, the use of parallel narrative is used to show the national history of India by the use of magic realism. It differs from Choudhury's *Babu Bangladesh* in terms of context because Salman Rushdie's writings reflected the Latin American context but Choudhury's novel was based on the Bangladeshi context reflected the nation's political and

national history both before and after Bangladesh flourished into a newborn independent country so it shows that earlier works based on search for self-identity, using parallel narrative and magic realism but the context was different from *Babu Bangladesh*. Choudhury used magic realism in his novel in the Bangladeshi context based novel even after being an anglophone writer shows the difference of his writings with Salman Rushdie because he wanted to challenge the political and social domination but by using magic realism but Choudhury wanted to show Babu's search for his own identity as an individual reflected the lifestyle, struggles of the Bangladeshi people and represented the political history of Bangladesh.

In Anjali Gera Roy's journal article named *Aja'ib Ghar'aib Tilismi Qisse and SalmanRushdie's Tilismi Realism*, Salman Rushdie's writings has been influenced by magic realism moreover compared with Gabriel Garcia Marquez. This article focuses on Tilismi which is a key element of dastan or quissa in which the use of magic realism has been used to trace a continuity between Rushdie's Postcolonial English belongs to Urdu translations of dastan or a narrative based story. For example, Hatim Tai. A new genre of Tilismi fictions such as "Fasana-E-Ajaib" (1831) and Devakinandan Khatri's Hindi- Urdu fiction "Chandrakanta " (1888).

According to Anjali Gera Roy's journal article, the use of Tilismi is marked which is a key element of magic realism but it is only based on the use of magical elements in a story which is connected to magic but usually dastan means stories and fables which contains morals but Choudhury tries to reflect the protagonist's journey for the search for an identity so he uses magic realism in order to reflect the journey along with the landscape scenarios of Bangladesh which contains the national history of Bangladesh but does not provide any kind of moral. Choudhury rather tried to show the search for identity in a form of a journey of Babu divided into five parts which are Building (the Shangsad Bhaban), Tree, Snake, Island and lastly Bird.

A student of Brac university named Salma Sultana has done a thesis on *How magic realism works in Magic Realism: Mingling of fantasy and reality, tragedy and comedy in Gabriel Marquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude and Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children* where she examines the attribution of magic realism which reflects the historical, cultural, ideological domination of the postcolonial regimes by the use of magic realism by two famous postcolonial writers Salman Rushdie and Gabriel Marquez to express the Postcolonial situation. This source is useful because it helps to differentiate between the reality and the use of magic realism which creates an imaginary world to reflect the problems and in order to show the condition or the journey of a country or an individual.

A student of Brac university Saraf Anjum has done her thesis on *A Postmodern Study of Politics, Language, Magic Realism and Oral Tradition in Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children and Haroun and the Sea of Stories* in which the paper will discuss on two of Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children* and *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* where a brief introduction about Postmodernism along with how its ideas clashes with Modernism's doctrines which also talk on how the notion of politics and history is deconstructed by Postmodernism. The thesis also shows the role memory plays while writing the historical narratives along with magic realism and oral tradition's role. Rushdie's alterations of the English language and how his style inspired new writers are discussed as well. The rest of the paper focuses on Rushdie delegitimizing politics, language and history along with his intentions for using magic realism and oral tradition. This source is useful because it helps to differentiate between the reality and the use of magic realism which shows the journey of a country through an individual.

In the thesis of Kamana Srikanth Venkataraman named *Parallel Narratives and Alternate Worlds in Murakami's Novels*, Harunaki Murakami's novels creates parallel narratives in terms

of thematic architecture, story structure and plot which shows parallel narratives both inner and outside the characters are consistently characterized by the study of opposites in action, consciousness and subconsciousness by the state of the human mind, illusion and memory related to human life and death. This thesis attempts to investigate the absorbing traumatic stress caused by these contrasts related to the alternate and parallel worlds through the use of parallel narratives of Murakami.

Venkataraman tries to show that Murakami's novels reflect parallel narratives related to human life and death but Choudhury used dual dimension both in public and private spheres to reflect the fiction related to the national history of Bangladesh is the parallel narrative of Babu's search for an identity itself differs from the earlier works done by Murakami because his works show duality related to human life and death but Choudhury uses parallel narrative in order to portray the state both before and after the independence of Bangladesh by using the protagonist in form of his journey by using dual dimension.

In M. Keith Booker's journal article named *Beauty and the Beast: Dualism as Despotism in the Fiction of Salman Rushdie* illustrates Rushdie's ability to evoke memories of childhood with a nostalgia that rivals a Proust moreover shows the use of images from popular culture in fictions. For example, "Snakes and Ladders" itself belongs to a central theme that provides importance to the structure of *Midnight's Children*. Ladders are considered good because they slide upwards to help the player win which is a positive connotation but ladders are considered bad because they slide downwards and due to that the player loses the game leads towards dualistic thinking. For example, Good VS Evil or Upwards VS Downwards.

According to Booker's journal article, the use of snake and ladders which contains connotations in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* are reflected in the particular article differs from

Choudhury's novel because in *Babu Bangladesh*, the title itself reflects a kind of mystery or enigma is a connotation itself because Babu is a name which started to be used from the colonial period. Babu has both positive and negative meanings. Babu name is used in India, Bengal mostly in a respectful manner but it is an umbrella term that signifies a government employee mainly. Babu, Baboo, Babuji means master, Saheb or sir which was used to call the British officers during the British Colonial period so it can be a dominant term and addressed as both a positive and negative term. In *Babu Bangladesh* the title itself is *Babu Bangladesh* contains a connotation because Babu was a politician and can be considered as good according to his thoughts of representing his country but can be evil as well because of being a politician. Babu was a parallel of Bangladesh because in the title there is Bangladesh as well reflects the national history of Bangladesh but in a form of a journey of the protagonist. *Babu Bangladesh* reflects dualism along with connotation because according to some people Babu can be both good and evil and the history of Bangladesh can both be glorious and at the same time full of violence as well so that makes it different from Rushdie's writings.

Chapter Three - Research Methodology

This paper will analyze Numair Atif Choudhury's novel named *Babu Bangladesh*. The research method will be based on qualitative research based on collecting primary sources from Jstor journal articles, websites and books. The particular text will be read through a Postmodern viewpoint. In order to analyze the novel, the researcher will use the characteristics of Postmodernist theory found in *Babu Bangladesh* to show Babu's search for his individual identity by the use of magic realism. The qualitative research method is used in the research because it can transform the research into an exploratory research. Moreover, it can achieve in-

depth understanding of an individual's thoughts. The particular novel on which the research will be conducted is a novel of an anglophone writer on which earlier researches were not done properly or rarely done so by the help of qualitative research by using secondary data, the researcher can compare the novel with the other writers and identify the Postcolonial elements to show the use of magic realism in the search of Babu's self- identity.

Choudhury's *Babu Bangladesh* can be compared with Salman Rushdie's *Shame* and *Midnight's Children* because both the novels show the use of magic realism and the search for self-identity through the protagonist who is a parallel of a particular country itself. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas* shows the search for an individual identity of Mr. Biswas so this kind of writings can be compared with *Babu Bangladesh*.

Data collection procedure

Multiple databases were used while selecting particular sources for this research. For example, Jstor, Google scholar and different newspaper articles such as The Daily Star were used in order to find the available list of journal articles that are peer-reviewed. Jstor was more used because of the necessary available sources. Sources were evaluated using a number of different criteria. Firstly, the particular selected sources were selected on the basis of relevance regarding the research questions. Secondly, the sources had to be primary sources which were peer reviewed and appropriate for the research purpose.

Use of magic realism for Babu's search for self-identity-

According to Kahlil Gibran, "A voice cannot carry the tongue and the lips that gave it wing. Alone it must seek the ether." (Choudhury 03) can be seen compared with bird section where

Choudhury tries to show the use of magic realism by providing the tongue wings. It can signify Babu's disappearance after reflecting the history of Bangladesh is a parallel to Babu itself and the state of politics which created chaos both before and after Bangladesh was born just like Babu who was in a dilemma since childhood due to own individual identity crisis. After entering politics, his enemies increased because he wanted to create his own identity just like Bangladesh which was dominated by the West Pakistan before the partition and then after the partition and Liberation War, people had faced an identity crisis. According to Havelock Ellis, "The art of dancing at the source of all the arts that express themselves first in the human person. The art of building, or architecture, is the beginning of all the arts that lie outside the person, and in the end they unite" (Choudhury 27) can be assumed that the writer referred this lines in the novel to show the use of magic realism in which the arts are expressing the inner feelings of Babu shows the attachment of Babu with the Building named Sangsad Bhaban. It indicates Babu's inner feelings to become a politician or the hint that he will be a politician or a strong connection with this building can be a way to fulfill the desires of Babu to obtain an individual identity. Actually it shows that a foreigner built the building where a country man could have done that. Due to nepotism it is not done shows the desire of Babu's identity which can be done by the help of power only is similar with the particular lines, "The image Garcia Marquez gives of his native environment contrasts with other conceptions commonly held by European or mainstream North American writers. If we believe what he says when he answers questions in his native country, there is no dividing line between what appears real and what more positivist thinkers would call the supernatural. Is this phenomenon exactly similar to what Jacques Stephen Alexis calls marvelous realism'? Should we then jump to the conclusion that this represents Garcia Marquez's own personal conception and say that what the 'West' calls his magic realism is just a

'realistic' representation of his compatriots' mental vision of their surroundings?" (Durix 115) because both the particular lines of two different texts reflect the use of magic realism created by the character itself by observing their surroundings and experiences to reflect their inner feelings and the exploration of the outer world. "On clearing his throat, Babu sputtered, 'Did you see that? Something jumped into the building, straight from the pool, into that window, that triangle window? (Choudhury 64) where Babu's attraction with the building was reflected showed his search for his identity which he felt that it was related with his future will create his own identity just like Bangladesh. That building is the place where the government and the parliament members take important decisions regarding the law related to Bangladesh as well. It affects the country and the people so the building can be assumed as the use of symbols but by using magic realism.

According to Hermann Hesse, "Trees are sanctuaries. Whoever knows how to speak to them, whoever knows how to listen to them, can learn the truth. They do not preach learning and precepts, they preach, undeterred by particulars, the ancient law of life" (Choudhury 139) shows Babu's silent identity crisis which was like the tree of Bangladesh. The tree was in danger because due to the protest, the West Pakistanis started "Operation Searchlight" to kill the East Pakistani people to control their struggle and protest in 1971. It shows the identity crisis of both Babu and Bangladesh. "And lastly, this is an apologue about-the birth of a nation, and our Babu" (Choudhury 146) shows that Babu is the parallel of Bangladesh itself because it talks of the birth of a nation and Babu can be compared together. Rushdie's works are considered to be magical realist because they contain allegorical representations of particular political significance. The protagonist of *Midnight's Children*, Saleem, is an allegorical history of India's first thirty years after independence. Saleem is born when India becomes independent. Saleem has got powers to

speak in his head like the other similarly gifted children born at the same moment with him.

They all represent an enormous promise for a democratic nation. In the end of the novel, when India was losing its optimism of the future, the children lost their god gifted powers. Saleem feels himself to be disintegrating while India itself is dividing into fractions.

Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* can be an allegory of the history of India but does not undermine the vivid presentation of the real including magic in the narrative. For Rushdie's narrator, turning back in time and telling his story along with the story of India is a magical act itself: 'I was heading abracadabra abracadabra into the heart of a nostalgia which would keep me alive long enough to write these pages' (Bowers 26) shows that Saleem was a parallel narrative of India similar with Babu because he was a parallel narrative of Bangladesh.

Use of Magical Elements to Reflect the Search for Self-identity

"By official reports, they chopped down the infamous flora in the early morning hours of 26th March" (Choudhury 148) shows that the tree can symbolize both the country's wise men and the army, police men who were killed on 26th March during the midnight. For example, in Rajarbagh police station, a lot of policemen were killed by the West Pakistanis in 1971. The obstacles of Bangladesh to obtain recognition like Babu who struggled in the snake part had a lot of enemies similar to this part shows that Bangladesh was a parallel of Babu. "After *Midnight's Children*, whose plot revolves around the fictional recreation of the independence of India and its relation to a set of imaginary characters, Rushdie published *Shame*, a novel which closely follows the recent evolution of Pakistan. The title of the fictional work suggests a grid of interpretation to account for major episodes in the history of contemporary Pakistan: *Shame*, in political matters, seems to frame the characters' actions. This notion refers to a code of honour

primarily enforced within the family structure” (Rushdie 117) is similar with *Babu Bangladesh* because both Rushdie and Choudhury’s novels are similar in a sense because they reflected the evolution of a particular country both before and after it gained independence.

Parallel Narrative of a Country Reflected Through the Protagonist Itself

“If they plan on cutting it down tonight as you say, they will destroy something crucial to our independence” (Choudhury 154) marks that the West Pakistanis were planning to cut down the tree shows the use of magic realism because the tree itself showed the general people, wise men, defense employees who were trying to protect East Pakistan and the scenarios during the Liberation War period was reflected in the form of a tree by showing the earlier state of Bangladesh before it got recognition like Babu who was just searching for his own identity. It shows both the use of magic realism and shows that Bangladesh was a parallel narrative of Babu. “In *Grimus* and in *Shame* the author comes back to the old Norse legend of the Ash Yggdrasil planted with one root in the pool of knowledge while the second is being consumed by fire and the third devoured by a beast. Ihl’s tree of knowledge with its precarious roots may be compared with the writer in his relationship to the native soil” (Rushdie 122) shows that both *Babu Bangladesh* and *Shame* contain symbols as they use magic realism to reflect that the country was a parallel of the protagonist.

According to Ross Perot, “The world of men is dreaming, it has gone mad in its sleep, and a snake is strangling it, but it can't wake up” (Choudhury 203) is similar with the particular lines of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Garcia Marquez refers to a society which is so new that language has not fully accounted for all the universe: “The world was so recent that many things lacked names” (Marquez 09) shows that both protagonists of Marquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and Choudhury’s *Babu Bangladesh* dreamt about a world which will be according to them and free from violence. It will contain their own self-identity just like Babu wanted to be Babu Bangladesh and the protagonist of *One Hundred years of Solitude* dreamt about Macondo through the dream. This shows the use of magic realism but in different ways because *Babu Bangladesh* was divided into five parts containing magical elements but *One Hundred Years of Solitude* had only one imaginative world disconnected from reality. For example, in *Babu Bangladesh*, the author divided the novel into five parts by using symbols containing magical elements such as Building, Tree, Snake, Island and Bird but in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Macondo was the only magical element containing magic.

“Me, I’m Babu, Babu.... Bangladesh” (Choudhury 210) gives the hint of the title being an enigma itself. The use of magic realism differs from *Midnight’s Children* in case of the content but the similar use of magical elements shows the search for an identity through the main protagonists. Rushdie is a preserver of historical memory in *Midnight’s Children*. Like Marquez and his involvement on the Colombian workers and common people, Rushdie writes in the memory of the essential events related with the independence of India but to the repressive period when Indira Gandhi curtailed individual rights by declaring a state of emergency. The miracles in *Midnight’s Children* do not concern memory as the other senses: after eavesdropping on his mother in her washing chest, young Saleem surprises her in the nude, a sight that affects

him that he suddenly becomes aware of changes in his perception. He begins to hear the voices of all the other Indian children born like him at the same time when his nation became independent (Durix 124). This shows that both Saleem is the parallel of India and Babu is the parallel of Bangladesh because Saleem was born during the country was becoming independent is similar with Choudhury's protagonist Babu because he was growing up and searching for his desires during the growth of Bangladesh. "How, in what terms, may the career of a single individual be said to impinge on the fate of a nation? " Saleem's stated quest is historical subjectivity. He poses the question of human identity existing in the tension between genealogy and history. How does one reconcile the admiration and the hostility that the Postcolonial subject finds in the personal divisions, the "cracks" and "fissures" resulting from occupation by a threatening and gifted other? Must the colonized emulate the colonizer for better and for worse?" (Durix 125)

"He was to be a wanderer ..., with no family except that which he was to attempt to create" (Naipaul 40) sums up the bulk of Mr. Biswas's life after the death of his father. He is randomly searching for his own identity and the identity of his family in the midst of his wife's family. Migration creates desire for home, which in turn produces the rewriting of home. Homesickness or homelessness, the rejection of home or longing for home become motivating factors in this rewriting. Home can only have meaning once one experiences a level of displacement from it" (Naipaul 113). For Mr. Biswas the house represents a search for emancipation from dependence. The novel paints a poignant picture of Mr. Biswas as he struggles to preserve his own identity in an alien environment and tries to forge an authentic selfhood. Besides focusing on his dark world, the novel introduces brief glimpses of ethnic and social history of the marginalized East Indian community in Trinidad. The narrative tries to maintain an equilibrium between Mr.

Biswas' inner self and the disinterested outer view can be compared with *Midnight's Children* and *Babu Bangladesh* because all the protagonists were in a search for self-identity but in different ways. For example, Saleem was searching for himself containing magical powers in *Midnight's Children* but in Choudhury's *Babu Bangladesh* is different. Babu was searching for himself through a metaphysical journey full of magical elements. In *A House for Mr. Biswas*, Mr. Biswas was searching for a home which he can consider as his own or contain his own name is related with the search for an identity due to facing identity crisis. Both *Midnight's Children* and *Babu Bangladesh* are connected with the growth of a country which is a parallel of the protagonists itself. On the other hand, *A House for Mr. Biswas* was different because the house was reflected as an element used to show the desires of an identity of Mr. Biswas makes it different from the other two novels. In *Midnight's Children*, Saleem's search for his identity makes him similar to Babu of *Babu Bangladesh* novel because both of the protagonists roaming around to gain an identity was a parallel narrative with their country as well.

Babu's search for an individual identity was more reflected in the Tree section of Choudhury's *Babu Bangladesh* but in Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, the protagonist contained magical powers that showed the use of magic realism. Both the protagonists faced identity crisis due to the political violence so they were in a search to achieve their own self-identity but their paths were different. For example, in *Babu Bangladesh*, Choudhury's protagonist Babu was a politician so he faced challenges and obstacles during his journey but in *Midnight's Children*, Saleem faced obstacles after coming to Bangladesh on behalf of the army and later on due to the election chaos.

“Not like a snake that swallows its own tail, these narratives may nourish me, but they will almost certainly consume me if I do not cease to probe. And in the arsenic green of Bangladesh,

who knows what shape truth may take?” (Choudhury 203) and “You have set me adrift, You’ve sunk me, These endless waters have no shore, Limitless, with no shores, the waters have no banks, O boatman, row with care my riven boat” (Choudhury 334) shows Babu surrounded with enemies and the use of magic realism is reflected because there is the indication of the water not reaching any shore which can be compared with Babu’s situation after entering the politics.

Babu’s taking over the lands illegally marks dualism because earlier Babu was innocent but in the island part he is surrounded with enemies and evil reality transforms him into a new human being marks his dualism. Babu’s obstacles after entering politics surrounded by enemies shows the hint that Babu might change indicates dualism which occurs in the Island section. Among the most decidedly magic sequences in Rushdie’s fiction is the Sundarbans section from *Midnight’s Children* depicts Saleem’s sojourn in the jungle during the 1971 War between Pakistan and Bangladesh. Eager to flee the atrocities of the war, Saleem leads his three fellow soldiers deep into the heart of the jungle, but once the “dream-forest” (Rushdie 363) has closed behind them, the soldiers find themselves in a magic realm no less dangerous than the fiercely fighting world outside. Thrown into a separate and magic universe that is impenetrable and “entirely other” (Durix 19) is similar with *Babu Bangladesh* because both the protagonists go through changes but Rushdie presented it in a form of memory loss whereas Choudhury’s protagonist had transformed after getting surrounded by his enemies. This made Babu realize about the bitter reality but Saleem realized his own intention after his memory got back.

Babu Bangladesh can be appraised from the postcolonial perspective because of the presence of the Postcolonial characteristics. Postcolonial writers often uphold nationalism in their works; moreover, their works are very patriotic because they write on behalf of their nations. They highlight and valorize their nation's cultural, political and social identity using adventures.

Hence, *Babu Bangladesh* is undoubtedly a postcolonial novel because the author has written on behalf of his country reflecting the history and state of both before and after Bangladesh was born. In *Babu Bangladesh*, the author used magic realism but at the same time shows the growth of Bangladesh as Babu himself grows up. So it can be assumed that Babu is a parallel of Bangladesh can be compared with Rushdie's *Shame* and *Midnight's Children* and Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas* because those novels reflected the search for an individual identity of the protagonists for which the protagonists faced dilemmas. Hence, their search for self-identity was reflected both in the private and public spheres.

The literature review section of the research provides the information of Murakami, Marquez and Rushdie's use of magic realism, dualism and the protagonist's search for self-identity. This can be considered as a parallel to a particular country which was becoming an independent country stating the condition of the politics of that country both before and after independence. This can be compared with the protagonist's inner mental condition which seeks an identity just like the protagonist.

The narrator's perspective towards Babu reflects Babu's dilemma in Choudhury's *Babu Bangladesh* and Babu's desires by dividing the novel into five parts. The narrator reflected Babu's life circle transforming into an adult from an infant. The first section of Choudhury's *Babu Bangladesh* "Building" shows Babu's want of being a politician since his childhood because of being attracted to the building. The second part is "Tree " which represents the landscapes during the time of the Liberation War when "Operation Searchlight" took place and the violent scenarios of 26th March, 1971. The third part is "Snake" when Babu entered politics assuming to gain a self-identity so his dreams were reflected in this particular part. The fourth

part is "Island" part where Babu got surrounded by his enemies due to the presence of nepotism showing his obstacles of gaining an identity. The last part is "Bird" where he disappears. So the narrator shows Babu's adventures from his childhood when Babu was a small child enjoying the fights of a mongoose and a snake. His exploitation of Tangail city reflected his want to be free and gain an identity. The narrator tried to show Babu's dualism when he became a politician because he used to be innocent as a child. When he entered politics, his innocence seemed to be lost due to the obstacles.

Babu and his search was reflected in an enigmatic way because Babu's name itself reflected dualism. Babu's search was explained by the narrator in a form of a journey where he faced ups and downs to gain an identity for himself. Bangladesh was parallel to Babu because both Babu and Bangladesh were transforming at the same time. Choudhury's novel shows the presence of both Postcolonial and Postmodern elements. For example, Choudhury writes about his nation reflecting the independence history of Bangladesh itself and through Babu.

Minimalism is used in the novel as a Postmodern element because Babu was an ordinary man who later on became Babu Bangladesh. The lack of chronology in the narration of events is marked in the novel because the timeline of the novel was moving randomly along with the presence of metafiction because the narrator was commenting on Babu's nature. Self-reflexivity is marked in the novel because Babu was remembering his memories during childhood. Kanu's suggestions inspired him to be a politician in order to create an identity for himself to become immortal by his works just like his parents who were mere students but contributed during the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971 marked self-reflexivity.

The narrator mainly reflected Babu's transformation or duality which was a parallel narrative of Bangladesh as well. The narrator reflected *Babu Bangladesh* as an enigma because in each part

of the novel, Babu's transformation was reflected along with the national history of Bangladesh both before and after independence.

Chapter Four-Conclusion

Numair Atif Choudhury's novel *Babu Bangladesh* is a fictional biographical novel where the story of Babu and the search of his self-identity is reflected in both public and private spheres through his journey. The novel shows Babu's connection with the national history of Bangladesh as well. It creates an opportunity to explore more into Babu's quest for his self-identity by marking the use of magic realism and dualism containing Postcolonial elements. The research is done by doing a close reading of the novel *Babu Bangladesh* because not much works are done earlier in this novel so some primary sources related to this novel helped this research grow. The study was based on primary sources, moreover analyzed by doing a close reading of Babu's search for self-identity. The research examines whether Numair Atif Choudhury manages to show the search of the Babu in both public and private spheres in the Bangladeshi context. The research also examines whether Numair Atif Choudhury manages to show Babu's own search of his self-identity by comparing Choudhury's use of magic realism with Salman Rushdie's Postmodern writings such as *Midnight's Children*, *Shame* and with Naipaul's novel named *A House for Mr. Biswas*. Choudhury's novel can be compared with the writing style of Murakami, Marquez and Rushdie. Choudhury tries to use magic realism through Babu who is the protagonist to show his search of an identity but in a form of a journey by using five magical elements which are Building, Tree, Snake, Island and Bird. Babu's dualism and Babu is a parallel narrative Bangladesh is reflected while conducting the research makes *Babu Bangladesh*

an anglophone writing that shows the protagonist's use of magic realism but in the Bangladeshi context in a form of a journey to reflect the parallel narrative and dualism as well.

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