

# The Gift of Writers in Animating the Past to the Present as Tales of Remembrance: A Comparative Study of Salman Rushdie's *Victory City* and Amitav Ghosh's *Jungle Nama*

Yogalakshmi D<sup>1</sup> & Vijayalakshmi S<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Research Scholar, School of Social Sciences and Languages, Vellore Institute of Technology, Chennai, 600127, India

<sup>2</sup> Associate Professor (Sr), School of Social Sciences and Languages, Vellore Institute of Technology, Chennai, 600127, India

Correspondence: Dr. S. Vijayalakshmi, Associate Professor Senior in English, School of Social Sciences and Languages, Vellore Institute of Technology, Chennai, 600127, India.

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## Abstract

The research focuses on how fantasy is manifested as part of storytelling. Salman Rushdie's *Victory City* (2023) and Amitav Ghosh's *Jungle Nama* (2021) adopt ancient myths and histories that serve as remembrance tales. Both Rushdie and Ghosh evince a common interest in exploring social issues in their writings through an allegorical form. Rushdie's *Victory City* is about the history of the Vijayanagar Empire, one of the most distinguished empires of medieval India (14<sup>th</sup> century to 16<sup>th</sup> century). Rushdie submitted his final edits of *Victory City* before the attack in New York City (Chautauqua) for his controversial novel *The Satanic Verses*. In the month of August 2022, he was stabbed in public by a youngster. He tweets that there is no freedom for authors to express themselves through writing. So, the research focuses on how fantasy serves as a tool for authors to express their views. His *Victory City* made him overcome all the negative criticism that he had encountered during the attack. Ghosh's *Jungle Nama* also adopts the history of Sundarbans' Forest goddess, Bon Bibi. Ghosh through his narration blends the myth and history of Bon Bibi who have been worshipped for centuries by the people of Sundarbans. Blending the real and imaginary in both fictions greatly challenges the differentiation between authenticity and fantasy. The supernatural phenomena in these narratives transport the reader from reality as a kind of escapism. During this, the characters in the fiction recall the past events and visions of the future in their present, and these aspects are also explored in the analysis. *Victory City* and *Jungle Nama* encounter the experience of mysticism in their narration which embarks on a voyage of difficulties and hindrances in the unreal world. Both these speculative fiction explore the concepts of fantasy and mystery so the theory of Magical Realism is applied to the strange creatures, other worlds, evils, demons, and demi-gods that exist in the fanciful setting which is also discussed.

**Keywords:** Magical realism, history, supernatural, fantasy, myth

## 1. Introduction

So far, very little research has been conducted on Amitav Ghosh's *Jungle Nama* and Salman Rushdie's *Victory City*. Both of the novels are in the form of fantasy with imaginary characters. So, it highlights the never-ending openness of imagination. The histories are passed from one to the other in the form of stories. Stories play an important role in shaping and understanding the world. Through stories, the writers are given profound opportunities to bring revolutions and provide insights into the inadequacies that exist in society. *Victory City* and *Jungle Nama* serve as an allegorical representation of the social, political, and economic crisis which exists in the modern world.

The need to conduct the research is that the two novels, one by Rushdie and one by Ghosh, recall past histories and recreate them to the present times to relate them to the existing social issues including corruption, human rights violations, gender inequality, and poverty. The chosen novels also touch upon the moral values which are necessary for humans to live a peaceful life on Earth. The research explores the moral progress in society and motivates to bring positive changes to the above-mentioned issues.

## 2. Objectives

1. To compare Salman Rushdie's *Victory City* (2023) and Amitav Ghosh's *Jungle Nama* (2021) and to analyze the recreation of histories in these narratives.
2. To describe how Rushdie and Ghosh incorporate fantasy and myth in the select fiction through allegorical elements in their novels.

## 3. Research Questions

1. How fantasy facilitates the remembrance of histories and serves as a platform for the writers to relate it to issues faced in society at present times.
2. How do the select novels bring forth the morals through storytelling?

#### 4. Review of Literature

Scott Simon, host of the Weekend Edition on NPR quotes Rushdie's own words "What is the freedom of expression? Without the freedom to offend, it ceases to exist" (Yang, M., 2022, Aug 12). Rushdie opens up a question of whether writers truly have the freedom to write. According to him, the critical way of thinking, diverse perspectives, and societal progress will be attained when one has the freedom to express their thoughts and emotions freely, though they are unfamiliar. Writing serves as a tool to express one's ideas, and opinions but limiting it to certain boundaries becomes meaningless.

"It had been more than 30 years since the Iranian regime issued a death sentence against Rushdie for blaspheming Islam in his novel *The Satanic Verses*" (Qureshi, 2023). So, some of the challenging viewpoints may be subjected to bring negative responses for the writers. But fantasy is the gift of writers to express their varied viewpoints and multiple themes in the form of allegory and thereby recreate the histories for those living the present.

In "*Amitav Ghosh's cautionary tale, mixing magic and reality, asks us to rethink our relationship with nature as the clock ticks down*", "We don't really have characters here. Rather, we have ideologies or pressure groups. This builds into both the simplicity and complexity of the story, and the use of a format, which is deceptively fantasy-like" (Sinha, 2022). The fable throws light on multiple issues like biodiversity, pollution, corruption, capitalism, and anthropocentrism. It pictures the truth that the currently faced social issues in the form of an imaginary world with a fanciful setting.

The magic of realism in literature aims to project the real world through imagination and admits that it owes a repayment to the world itself by incorporating the real with fanciful settings and morals to balance the truth. It is also more acceptable and believable for the readers (Rajabi et al., 2020)

Many writers use the word "impossible". This is because fantasy breaks the laws of nature and reality by adding creativity and imagination which do not exist in the real world. The concept of 'impossible' is made possible by magic, and mythical creatures (Vijayan. A.V., 2016)

#### 5. Theoretical Framework

The theory of Magical Realism is incorporated into the study. It is undeniable that Rushdie's *Victory City* and Ghosh's *Jungle Nama* exhibit the core techniques of magical realism. The term "magical realism" was coined by the art critic Franz Roh in 1925 to describe the different types of art movements which flourished after World War I. In 1927, Massimo Bontempelli, an Italian poet applied it in his literature, and by the mid-1970s it was also introduced in Latin American novels. Alejo Carpentier greatly influenced Latin America Literature stating that "the task of the artist is not to create the marvelous through any technical means, but rather to perceive and bring forth the hidden cultural and historical marvels that have long been waiting to be discovered" (Lopez-Calvo, 2014). As Edward Bulwer-Lytton stated in 1839, "The Pen is mightier than the Sword" and George Orwell proved in his *Animal Farm* that words have a greater impact than violence. Through this concept, Orwell independently expressed the corruption in politics through magical realism. Likewise, the select novels also express their independence in relating to multiple themes, social issues, and dilemmas of characters. Magical realism blends reality with the elements of supernatural or magic, and it helps the writers to project the events which seem real. This technique helps to make the impossible things possible to make a unique narrative (Rajabi et al., 2020).

#### 6. Methodology

The Magical Realism theory is applied to compare Rushdie's *Victory City* and Ghosh's *Jungle Nama* through textual analysis in this study. The themes, symbolism, and plots are analyzed and discussed through a close reading of both texts.

#### 7. Discussion and Analysis

##### 7.1 Beginning

Rushdie's *Victory City* is divided into four parts namely birth, exile, glory, and fall. It is the tale of the blind poet Pampa who lived for more than two centuries and died when she was the age of 247 years and happened to witness her Bisnaga Empire's rise and fall. Her immortal poem, the *Jayaparajaya* meaning 'Victory and Defeat' written in Sanskrit consists of 24,000 verses and holds the secrets of the Bisnaga Empire. Her Bisnaga of the 14<sup>th</sup> century helps us to recollect the past histories of the great Vijayanagar Empire which had been ruled by four dynasties (Sangama, Saluva, Tuluva, Aravidu). Here Rushdie's *Victory City* is connected to Ghosh's *Jungle Nama* which recalls the history of Bon Bibi, the forest goddess, and the monstrous Dokkhin Rai who preyed on humans in the form of a Tiger. The people of Sundarbans worship her before going into the forest for wax, honey, and wood. The tale is narrated in verse form by Ghosh in a fanciful setting. Both of the novels exhibit the truth and values of life. The simplicity of life is explored in the construction of plot, theme, and setting through fictitious characters in the form of fantasy and myth.

##### 7.2 The Origin Story of Bisnaga

The Vijayanagar Empire emerged in South India during the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The empire encompassed a vast geographical area that includes present-day Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and parts of Kerala. Rushdie wrote his *Victory City* as a recollection of histories of the great Empire which lasted for centuries. In Rushdie's *Victory City*, the very name of the city has its own uniqueness. Initially, the city got its name 'Pampanagar' from Hukka but Pampa does not like the city to be in her name and so Hukka named it 'Vidyanagar' meaning the 'city of wisdom'. Finally, Hukka and Pampa chose the name 'Victory' for the city. But still, the name of the city is not decided until

the arrival of Domingo Nunes, one of the foreigners. He pronounced the 'v' almost like 'b'. He could not catch the correct pronunciation of the word, so he called the Vijayanagar: Victory City as 'Bisnaga'. Later, Pampa accepted the new name for the new city 'Bisnaga'.

### 7.3 The Magical Seeds

In the word magical realism, 'magic' refers to "the vagueness of life: in marvellous (making in action)". On the other hand, "magical realism 'magic' refers to any unexpected happening". (Shenbahapriya, 2019). In *Victory City*, the seeds play an integral role in the creation of Bisnaga. By the magic of Pampa, the ordinary seeds became magical seeds. The two brothers Hukka and Bukka came in search of Pampa to get some advice. The seeds which they brought to offer Pampa are a mixture of okra, beans, and snake gourds, all mixed together. Pampa calls them better than diamonds and hands back the sack to them saying, "Now these are the seeds of the future. Your city will grow from them" (Rushdie, 2023, p. 14). Hukka and Bukka were astonished when their miracle city started to grow: the majesty of the royal palace, the first great temple (Monkey Temple), and the sculpture of Hanuman Langurs by ringing bells, market, "Sprouting out from the shadow of the barren bouldered hills, . . . the elephant House with its eleven arches anticipated the coming of the tuskers and their dung" (Rushdie, 2023, p. 16). These seeds remain, "Whatever someone sows, that is what he will reap" ("Galatians-Chapter 6," n.d.). The mixture of seeds includes okra, beans, and snake gourds symbolizing life as a journey of joy, sorrow, triumph, disaster, learning, emotions, challenges, and obstacles. As Parvathi said, Pampa witnessed Bisnaga's Victory and Fall in her journey. Dhona from *Jungle* sows the seeds of selfishness, greed, and jealousy which affected him and also Dukhey, who went to help him. This goes well with the words of Parvathi from *Victory City* that life is full of a two-edged sword. Dhona's fake promises brought about Dukhey's loss of trust, financial and material loss as he was helpless in the Mangrove Jungle. He underwent a turmoil of fear by saying, "It's just as I'd thought, uncle's left me and set sail. Death awaits me now, that I'll be the end of this tale" (Ghosh, 2021, p. 52). This remains about a two-edged sword that Parvathi from *Victory City* said about life which is always filled with positive and negative consequences. The edges of sword could harm both sides, so it is far better to analyze before deciding. Dukhey took his wrong decision and fell into the boomy trap of Dhona.

### 7.4 The Jungle as a Place of Exile

In many of the ancient myths, the Jungle plays a significant role in the narration of fascinating stories. The description of the Jungle in both Rushdie's *Victory City* and Ghosh's *Jungle Nama* is filled with Magical realism. It reminds one about Rama's exile to Vanavasa in Ramayana and Pandava's exile in Mahabharata. Pampa galloped away from Bisnaga and crossed many forests and finally, she reached the most powerful enchanted forest of Aranyani, 'the Forest of Women'. It is a kingless forest because, "A crown, here was no more than an unnecessary hat. Here justice was not handed down from above, and only Nature ruled" (Rushdie, 2023, p. 124). "The goddess Aranyani is familiar in most of the Indian context while describing the forest. The word 'Aranyam' means forest and a neutral gender" (Harish, 2020). It exhibits the same characteristics as Bon Bibi from *Jungle of Sundarbans*, a goddess of the savior. Because both of them are the goddesses of the forest they are endowed with the power to create, destroy and protect. With the blessings of Aranyani, the chorus of birdsong greeted Pampa and others: "The yellow-throated bulbul, the jungle babbler, and the rufous treepie could be heard . . . the real world that was unreal" (Rushdie, 2023, p. 123). The voice of Aranyani is heard in different forms and Pampa calls it a 'Forest for Women' because the men will be transformed into women. This puts forth the question of whether Aranyani favours the females though she is neutral in gender. Grandmaster Li, the Chief Instructor of Wudang School who taught extraordinary skills to Pampa's daughter, and Haleya Kote a citizen of Vijayanagar remained in the forest not get any chance in their body when they reached *Arajakta* (the place without kings). This shows that their prayers and hopes for Aranyani saved them like Bon Bibi saved Dukhey when he prayed from the bottom of his heart.

### 7.5 Women's Resilience

Rushdie sketches Pampa as the most fascinating and enigmatic character in the narration of Bisnaga's Empire and he also says that her *Jayaparajaya* is a timeless reminder of Vijayanagar. Pampa Kampana was born to Radha Kampana and Arjun Kampana. And Pampa witnessed her mother's death due to the defeat of Kampila Maharaj of Bisnaga in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It was called a battle with no-name because "the battle that followed was a one-sided affair, so unimportant that nobody bothered to give it a name" (Rushdie, 2023, p. 4). Pampa was nine years old and was watching and observed that,

All the women she knew entered the fire and sat or stood or lay in the heart of the furnace spouting flames from their ears and mouths: the old woman who had seen everything and the young woman just starting out in life and the girl who hated her father the dead soldier and wife who was ashamed of her husband because he hadn't given up his life on the battlefield and the woman with the beautiful singing voice...walked forward to join the bonfire of the dead (Rushdie, 2023, p. 6).

All these made Pampa undergo a transformation. She never ate meat again because of the memory of her mother's burning flesh in her nostrils. She also shares her name Pampa with the river on whose banks this cruel bonfire happened. And 'Pampa' is one of the local names for the goddess Parvati. When one compares her to Dukhey's mother in Ghosh's *Jungle Nama*, it can be observed that both are thoughtful, inspiring, courageous, and resilient. Dukhey's mother loved her son and he is the center of the universe to her and she can't imagine a life without him. She was on the verge of dying when her son does not return from the Jungle. In the same way, Pampa also loved Bisnaga to the core like Dukhey's mother loved her son and so she could not tolerate seeing Bisnagas' fall and this ultimately led to her death. In her poem, she writes, "I Pampa Kampana, am the author of this book. I have lived to see an empire rise and fall" (Rushdie, 2023, p. 338). Dukhey's mother taught her son about ethics and values of life similar to the way, Pampa brought up her children teaching

them a set of morals. She gave her daughters the freedom to live on their own but on the other hand, she punished her sons by sending them into exile when they are disrespectful to other women. Both these women characters can be said to be “icons of resilience”.

#### 7.6 Eccentric Visions and Transformation

Pampa underwent some changes by the goddess Parvathi. The commoners begin to listen to the words pouring out of her mouth, “From blood and fire”, the goddess Parvathi spoke through Pampa’s mouth, “life and power will be born”. And

In this exact place a great city will rise, the wonder of the world, and its empire will last for more than two centuries... and you will fight to make sure that no more women are ever burned in this fashion, and that men start considering women in new ways, and you will live just long enough to witness both your success and failure, to see it all and tell its story, even though once you have finished telling it you will die immediately and nobody will remember you for four hundred and fifty years (Rushdie, 2023, p. 08).

During the transformation, Pampa begins to see some strange visions, including a cobra using its hood to shield a pregnant frog from the sun, and a rabbit turning and facing the dog that was hunting him and biting off its nose. All these magical visions challenge societal norms including gender equality, the abolition of Sati, and so on. These visions make Pampa understand that no more this will exist in society. Dukhey’s mother is portrayed as a widow who undergoes a transformation due to the influence of the goddess Bon Bibi. Dukhey’s mother is made to come alive after her death due to her son’s strong prayers to Bon Bibi. Later she lives her life to the fullest, being rich and healthy by the blessings of Bon Bibi.

#### 7.7 The Clay Pot

The Clay Pot from *Victory City* is used as a metaphor to denote the Earth, the place where we all come from. The pot is made up of earth’s sand and so it is considered the birthplace of that pot for its message to the future. Its round shape symbolizes the shape of the earth, the place where we came from the ‘dust’, According to Ecclesiastes 3:20 “All go to the same place. All came from the dust and all return to the dust” (“45 Bible verses about dust,” n. d). The neck of the pot symbolizes how the plant attains birth out from the earth, here the new life of the plant begins in the same way, the neck is considered as the birth path of the message to the future by narrating all the tales of Bisnaga to the universe.

#### 7.8 Magical Realism

In *Victory City*, the cows and parrots serve as messengers for Pampa during her exile to get to know about the status of Bisnaga in her absence. In *Jungle Nama*, Dokkhin Rai, a strange creature can transform into the form of a Tiger at any moment. In both texts, the human and non-human entities have equal roles to play. Through the supernatural power of Pampa, she explored the minds of Bisnaga’s citizens to know their thoughts and thinking processes. At the same, she explored the mind of King Deva Raya (Tuluva Dynasty) and whispers something into his ears,

The voice in his head told him so... He had listen to, and be guided by, what it-what he himself! - was telling him to do. The voice in his head told him to forget war and bigotry. . . The city has grown so large, there isn’t enough water for everyone to drink. Build a dam! . . . Water creates love more easily than victory. . . You must be a patron of the arts! Bring poets to the court, Kumara Vyasa for the Kannada language, Gunda Dimdima for Sanskrit, and the king of poets, Srinatha, for the Telugu tongue! -Yes, yes, poetry, poets. And romances! I can write those, and I will! – Bring mathematics also. Our people love mathematics! And bring shipbuilders, not just for warships, but for trading vessels, and royal barges in which you can visit the three hundred ports in the empire! And make sure that plenty of these new people, painters, poets, calculators, designers, are women, who deserve it no less than men! – Yes, yes! All this and more I will do. My thoughts are more brilliant than myself (Rushdie, 2023, p. 168-169).

Through her power, Pampa seeded the birth of art, literature, music, and so on. Even at the beginning of the tale, Pampa planted fictional histories in people by whispering the different stories in their ears and minds. Rushdie calls the whole city out of her fertile imagination. In the same way, there is evidence of the developments of the Vijayanagar Empire by King Krishnadevaraya Maharaj. “During the reign of Krishnadevaraya, a tank was built named as Timma Samudram, in the name of Saluva Timmarusayya. Krishnadevaraya built a dam and channel at Korragal and the Basavanna channel which are still in use” (Ratna, 2022). “The empire embraced all the major linguistic territories of south India and contributed to the zenith of progress in all the vernacular literatures and temples, with characteristic style of art and architecture of the time, were constructed in large numbers in all the regions, while a larger number of ancient temples of celebrity were enlarged in the medieval period” (Prasad, 2021). Under Krishnadevaraya’s rule, he contributed to art, literature, music, the construction of dams and temples, and so on.

#### 7.9 Web of Illusion

Jungle Nama refuses the plunder of forest resources as per the article, “Halt Deforestation By 2030: Are We on Track to Meet Global Pledge?”, “Some 145 countries affirmed their commitment to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 at the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow” (Chacko, 2022). Because of the character like Dhona’s greed for forest richness including wood, wax, honey, and valuable trees, and harm nature by destroying it which may lead to Climate Change and loss of Biodiversity. When Dhona entered the forest, the bloodthirsty Dokkhin Rai preys on humans “Spun a web of illusion; conjuring up visions, laden with temptation. With consummate ease he made honeycombs appear. .But the first hive he opened held a strange surprise.

There was nothing in the comb! No honey, no prize” (Ghosh, 2021, p. 32). Dhona believed it was real and grabbed nothing when he touched it. The illusion is the magic made by Dokkhin Rai to fool Dhona. Following the same pattern, the “Scammers” who thirst for money trick people with the AI-generated voice of their family members and friends. Many people lose their money through fake voices and images created by them by believing it is real. The recently published article from Times of India specifies, “India tops the list of victims and many have lost money in these types of scams as per McAfee report” (“About 83% Indians have lost money in AI voice scams: Report, 2023”).

#### 7.10 The Relevance of Kali Yuga: Unmasking the Dangers of Pretend Yogis

Both texts explore the concept of Kali Yuga. According to the predictions of Kaliyuga, truthfulness, mercy, and memory will diminish day by day because of the age of Kali. During the birth of Bisnaga,

Pampa Kampana had imbued its newborn citizens with a strong belief in the rule of law, and taught them to value the freedoms they would enjoy under the law’s umbrella. The umbrella became the most important fashion accessory in the city, a sign of status (equality of men and women), and a symbol of patriotic reverence for justice and order (Rushdie, 2023, p. 98-99).

It also had strong opposition to Sati, and diversity of culture, faiths, and races could be treated equally. There were Hindu, Muslim, Jain, Portuguese, Arab horse-traders, Romans, and Chinese. Later, Bisnaga was made to suffer at the hands of Vidyasagar, who refused to follow the old rules and brought massive changes by changing the name of all streets, and Bhagwat was sent to conquer Rachakonda, where people still follow the old culture (Hindu and Muslim) and Erapalli and Gundappa instructed to destroy the great fort at Rachakonda and to kill people who are against Vidyasagar by following old rules.

Vidyasagar a saint considered as “knowledge of ocean”, made Bhagwat replace the royal council with a governing body of saints, the Divine Ascendancy Senate or DAS, which is headed by Sayana, the brother of Vidyasagar. And the great city lost its purity of the new Orthodoxy created by Vidyasagar (rephrasing earlier laws). Rushdie sketches the themes of Kali and how saints contaminate the Vedas and their purity in the name of God. There is also a noticeable indication in the Hindustan Times article titled, “Asaram, Ram Rahim, Rampal: The 14 Fake Babas Put on By Boycott List”. The article shed light on the problems and challenges involved in the Pretend Yogis who have been accused of various crimes, financial scams, corruption, and sexual assault. They bring threats to the well-being of society. They exploit and manipulate vulnerable activities which are mentioned above through their power, position, and authority in the name of God. The funds collected for charitable purposes be used for personal gain. As stated in the article, they are also involved in activities like black money, non-taxable incomes, illegal wealth, and so on. The embezzlement of a sum of money by their religious institutions impacts the global economy. According to the predictions of Kali Yuga (Srimad Bhagavatam 12.3.38), “Uncultured men will accept charity on behalf of the Lord and will earn their livelihood by making a show of austerity and wearing a mendicant’s dress. Those who know nothing about religion will mount a high seat and presume to speak on religious principles” (“15 most amazing predictions for Kali Yuga from Bhagavata Purana,” 2021)

#### 7.11 Humanity over Money

Ghosh in his *Jungle Nama* shows how richness and wealth are considered more important than the lives of humans. Because Dhona’s eyes were blurred when Dokkhin Rai promised to offer him honey, wax, and wood as a substitute for Dukhey. He used Dukhey’s poverty, so Dhona left Dukhey alone in the forest to quench the bloodthirst of Dokkhin Rai, breaking all of his promises. This highlights the loss of humanity where Dukhey’s life is substituted for the “price of wealth and richness”. This reflects the real-life events that mirror human sacrifice for money and wealth. As reported in ‘India Today’ dated Oct 12, 2022, the article (“How the Police Cracked the ‘Human Sacrifice’ Case in Kerala,” 2022) reports that in Kerala a case was filed against a couple (Bhagaval Singh and Laila) for murdering two women for ‘Financial Prosperity’. The police stated that Bhagaval Singh approached Shafi (Black Magician) using a fake Facebook profile in the name of a woman ‘Sridevi’. Later, Bhagaval asked to connect with Shafi stating he would bring solutions for all the obstacles in life. Shafi suggested ‘Human Sacrifice’ as a solution to all their problems. So, the couple killed Rosily and ate flesh as Shafi directed. The couple complained that the ritual had not helped to solve their financial problem. So Shafi suggested sacrificing another woman to solve their problems in life, so the other lady Padmam was murdered. It is beyond belief that people still follow superstitious practices. The act of Human Sacrifice is considered an illegal practice condemned by the government and human rights organizations worldwide. In *Jungle Nama* Ghosh brings forth the inhumane activity where people perform in the name of superstitious belief for ‘financial gain’ and that should be condemned.

#### 7.12 Anti-Aging and Longevity

Rushdie’s *Victory City* and Ghosh’s *Jungle Nama* explore the concept of Anti-Aging and Longevity. Pampa Kampana from *Victory City* battles against her age, “People were growing old all around her while she remained unchanged” (Rushdie, 2023, p. 103). When her husband Bukka was sixty-six with his bad knees, she approached her fiftieth birthday and looked too young with beauty and her daughters looked like her older sisters, not like her children. Finally, she died in her 247 age i.e., lived for more than two centuries by witnessing her Bisnaga’s rise and fall. Haleya Kote, one of the citizens of Bisnaga witnessed Vidyasagar refusing to die as going against nature, “he’s like a living man in a body that’s no longer alive. He speaks through a dead mouth and gestures with dead hands” (Rushdie, 2023, p. 154). In Ghosh’s *Jungle Nama*, Dukhey’s mother fell aground without any movement when her son approached her. She was lifeless and numb; “Suddenly he recalled how to make words alchemic, it was she who’d taught him that bit of magic” (Ghosh, 2023, p. 68), the magic of Bon Bibi made his mother return alive. Both texts link the ongoing research about life-prolonging treatments and developments in clinical

intervention about life extensions.

On the other hand, Pampa's boon turns into a Curse and calls her eternal youth a kind of damnation, "I am a ghost in a body that refuses to age" (Rushdie, 2023, p. 173). This reminds one of the adage that "too much of anything is good for nothing" because she made to lose her loved ones (Domingoes, Hukka, Bukka) and saw their deaths in her vision of the future and experienced them before her very eyes. It brings forth the question of what could fulfill human desires and their quest in life. So, both novels explore the moral that one must learn to be satisfied with what one has.

### 7.13 Victory and Defeat

Victory and Defeat are inseparable from life. The paths of victory teach resilience, adaptability, and the power of perseverance. And it is a path filled with full of challenges that make ultimate triumph so gratifying. Here, Pampa witnessed her Bisnaga's rise and fall with the blessings of Goddess Parvathi. Her Jayaparajaya serves as a rich source that explores many philosophical concepts, ethics, and moral dilemmas. Pampa's victory is also a part of *Victory City*. She is made to face the threat of violence from her enemies but attained victories by overpowering adversaries through her resilience and devotion. Dukhey and his mother got their victory through the blessings of Goddess Bon Bibi for their loyalty and faith. Dukhey's will and prayer defeated Dokkhin Rai, Dhona's cunning.

## 8. Conclusion

Both the texts emphasize that leading a simple life brings happiness and an excessive desire for material wealth may lead to negative outcomes. It also stresses the aspects of avoiding unnecessary conflicts, focusing on living a joyful life, and recognizing that life is brief and that it is best to be satisfied with what we already have. The use of myth and fantasy is prevalent across all cultures to craft an enthralling and captivating narrative for all ages. By blending history with fictional elements, authors like Rushdie and Ghosh challenge our assumptions and provide a new perspective of the world around us. The themes explore the nuances of morality and the dilemma of making the right choices. Because the characters in the novels are faced with ethical dilemmas that blur the lines between right and wrong. Through these, the authors create thought-provoking narratives from past histories. Further, the research could be done from a feminist perspective. *Victory City* and *Jungle Nama* hold the strongest female characters who undergo struggles like violence, discrimination, and bias in legal systems in society.

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