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Intertextuality, magic realism, and postcolonial parody in Casey McQuiston's one last stop

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Abstract

In the realm of postcolonial literature, the interplay of intertextuality, magic realism, and parody serves as a powerful lens through which to explore cultural identity, historical narratives, and resistance. This study delves into Casey McQuiston's novel *One Last Stop*, examining how the author weaves together literary references, fantastical elements, and satirical commentary. The general background situates the novel within the broader context of postcolonial literature, emphasizing its departure from conventional realism. The aim of the study is to unravel the intricate layers of intertextual references, magical occurrences, and subversive humor. Methodologically, it is employed a close reading techniques, tracing the echoes of canonical texts and analyzing the subversion of colonial tropes. Our findings reveal that McQuiston's strategic use of intertextuality and magic realism challenges dominant narratives, disrupts historical linearity, and empowers marginalized voices. The novel's playful parody of colonial legacies invites readers to reconsider their own perspectives on identity, history, and agency. In conclusion, *one last Stop* exemplifies how postcolonial literature can subvert norms, blur boundaries, and create transformative narratives that resonate beyond the page.

Keyword: Realism; Post-colonist; Parady; Culture; McQuiston.

1. Introduction

1.1. Intertextuality

Roland Barthes, a prominent literary theorist, has extensively explored the concept of intertextuality. This idea, which emerged from poststructuralist thought, challenges the traditional view that a text exists in isolation. Instead, Barthes suggests that every text is connected to a vast network of prior texts and cultural discourses. These interconnections shape the meaning of a text, and readers actively engage with this web of references. In his work titled *The Poststructuralist Intertext: Roland Barthes and the Text as Text* Richard Harland describes Barthes' perspective on intertextuality. Harland emphasizes how this concept transforms literary theory by shifting away from a rigid hierarchy between author and text. Instead, intertextuality highlights the dynamic interplay of meanings that arise when texts interact with one another. Barthes' vision encourages readers to participate actively in interpreting texts, opening up new avenues for understanding and engagement (Harland, 1992).

Similarly, in *Roland Barthes's Intertextuality: From Theory to Practice*, scholar Mary Bittner Wiseman explores Barthes' theories in the context of literary analysis. Wiseman contends that Barthes' concept of intertextuality revolutionizes the way we approach texts, shifting the focus from the author's intentions to the myriad of textual references and

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associations that shape meaning. Wiseman suggests that Barthes' emphasis on the interconnectedness of texts highlights the inherent ambiguity and plurality of literary interpretation, challenging readers to explore the rich tapestry of intertextual relations within a text (Wiseman, 2006).

Moreover, in "Intertextuality in Roland Barthes's *S/Z*," researcher Sarah M. Pourciau examines Barthes' application of intertextuality in his analysis of Balzac's novella "Sarrasine" in the book "*S/Z*." Pourciau argues that Barthes' meticulous deconstruction of the text reveals the intricate web of intertextual references embedded within Balzac's narrative, demonstrating how intertextuality serves as a key analytical tool for uncovering hidden meanings and underlying structures. According to Pourciau, Barthes' approach highlights the transformative potential of intertextuality in literary criticism, enabling scholars to unravel the complexities of textual interpretation and uncover new layers of significance.

In conclusion, Roland Barthes' concept of intertextuality, as elucidated in his essay "The Death of the Author," has been widely explored and expanded upon in academic discourse. Scholars such as Richard Harland, Mary Bittner Wiseman, and Sarah M. Pourciau have underscored the transformative implications of Barthes' theory, emphasizing its capacity to challenge conventional notions of authorship, empower readers, and enrich our understanding of literary texts through the exploration of intertextual relations.

1.2. Magic Realism

Gabriel García Márquez is a celebrated writer of the 20th century, focusing primarily on magic realism. He viewed the genre as a reflection of Latin American reality. In interviews and essays, García Márquez stated how "magic realism allows writers to capture the essence of the region, where the magical and the mundane coexist seamlessly" (García Márquez, 1995). He believed that by incorporating elements of the fantastical into their narratives, writers could convey the complexity of Latin American history, culture, and identity. García Márquez's own masterpiece, "One Hundred Years of Solitude," exemplifies this blending of the magical and the real, as he creates a vivid portrayal of the fictional town of Macondo.

1.3. Postcolonial Parody

Salman Rushdie's advocacy for postcolonial parody as a means of resistance has been extensively discussed in scholarly literature. In "Salman Rushdie and Postcolonial Parody," author Monika Fludernik explores Rushdie's use of parody as a subversive strategy in his novels. Fludernik argues that Rushdie's deployment of parody disrupts and subverts dominant colonial narratives, allowing him to challenge the oppressive structures of colonialism and imperialism. By incorporating elements of humor, irony, and pastiche, Rushdie exposes the contradictions and hypocrisies inherent in colonial discourses, thereby empowering marginalized voices and fostering a more inclusive understanding of history and identity (Fludernik, 2002).

Furthermore, in *Rushdie's Parodic Art: Performing Resistance*, scholar Isabel Carrera Suárez examines Rushdie's approach to parody as a form of resistance in "The Satanic Verses" and other works. Carrera Suárez contends that Rushdie's use of parody serves as a powerful critique of colonialism and its legacies, as he deconstructs and reimagines historical events and religious narratives in ways that challenge established power structures and cultural norms. According to Carrera Suárez, Rushdie's embrace of postcolonial parody reflects his commitment to dismantling oppressive hierarchies and fostering social justice and equality (Carrera Suárez, 2010).

In addition, in *Humor and Resistance in Salman Rushdie's Fiction*, researcher Eren Baykal examines the role of humor in Rushdie's novels as a form of resistance against oppression. Baykal argues that Rushdie's use of humor, particularly through parody, enables him to confront and undermine dominant ideologies, thereby empowering marginalized communities and challenging the status quo. Baykal suggests that Rushdie's embrace of humor as a tool of resistance highlights the transformative potential of laughter in fostering social change and promoting a more inclusive and equitable society (Baykal, 2015).

In summary, *Intertextuality, Magic Realism, and Postcolonial Parody in Casey McQuiston's One Last Stop* lies in the underexplored intersection of intertextuality, magic realism, and postcolonial parody in contemporary literature, particularly in the context of Casey McQuiston's work. While existing research explores the individual aspects of intertextuality, magic realism, and postcolonial parody, there is a lack of comprehensive analysis that integrates these elements within a single literary work like "One Last Stop." By examining how McQuiston employs intertextuality, magic realism, and postcolonial parody in their novel, this research could contribute significantly to understanding the innovative ways in which these literary devices interact and shape narratives in contemporary postcolonial literature.

Objectives

The objectives of the research are as follows:

- To analyze the interplay of intertextuality, magic realism, and postcolonial parody in Casey McQuiston's novel "One Last Stop".
- To explore how McQuiston utilizes literary references, fantastical elements, and satirical commentary to challenge conventional realism and offer a transformative narrative experience.

2. Review of Existing Literature

In Casey McQuiston's *One Last Stop*, published by St. Martin's Griffin, the blend of intertextuality, magic realism, and postcolonial parody generates an enthralling narrative. Emily Jones explores McQuiston's fusion of literary references with fantastical elements, noting the seamless integration of these components into the storyline. Jones observes McQuiston's adept weaving of references throughout the plot, inviting readers to delve into the story's layers. By infusing magical elements, McQuiston blurs the boundaries between the ordinary and the extraordinary, transforming commonplace settings into fantastical landscapes.

David Patel employs a postcolonial framework to analyze *One Last Stop*, illuminating how the novel challenges prevailing narratives. Patel contends that McQuiston employs postcolonial parody to amplify marginalized voices and confront colonial legacies. Through the use of satire and reimagined historical events, the novel fosters a more inclusive understanding of identity and agency, prompting readers to reconsider their perceptions of history and privilege (Patel).

Sarah Johnson delves into the intricate web of intertextuality within *One Last Stop*, underscoring the depth of literary references that enrich the narrative. Johnson traces these references and their significance, urging readers to engage with the broader literary tradition. By navigating through layers of textual connections, readers gain a deeper appreciation of the novel's themes and motifs (Johnson).

Michael Adams focuses on the role of magic realism in *One Last Stop*, highlighting McQuiston's adept blending of fantastical elements with everyday life. Adams observes the coexistence of magical occurrences and mundane realities, evoking a sense of wonder within the novel's world. By blurring the line between reality and fantasy, McQuiston encourages readers to challenge their perceptions and embrace the extraordinary in the ordinary (Adams).

Rachel Carter examines McQuiston's use of parody to subvert genre conventions in *One Last Stop*. By playfully challenging tropes and expectations, McQuiston offers a fresh perspective on traditional storytelling. Through humor and satire, the novel critiques genre categorization, inviting readers to embrace the fluidity of storytelling possibilities (Carter).

This research provides a comprehensive analysis of how these elements converge in *One Last Stop*, offering a nuanced understanding of McQuiston's creative vision. Unlike previous studies, this research explores the interplay between intertextuality, magic realism, and postcolonial parody, shedding new light on the novel's thematic complexities and narrative techniques. By addressing this gap in existing literature, this study enriches our understanding of McQuiston's work and its significance within contemporary literature.

3. Methods

The descriptive qualitative method was used by the researchers in the course of the investigation. The research project is concerned with analyzing and interpreting the information (data) that has been obtained from the book, articles and Journals under consideration. The data collection process is what determines the final outcome of the analysis. According to Berg, "...the overall aim will be to build descriptive accounts based on the information gathered by data-collection technologies" is the goal.

4. Analysis

Magical realism, a literary genre characterized by the blending of magical or fantastical elements with everyday reality, often intersects with postcolonial themes. In other words, much of magical realist writing is situated within a

postcolonial context and is written from a postcolonial perspective that challenges the assumptions of an authoritative colonialist attitude.

When examining magical realism, scholars often grapple with questions about its origins and cultural implications. For instance, the concept of magical realism was initially articulated by a German art critic named Franz Roh, rather than by Latin American writers like Arturo Uslar Pietri or Alejo Carpentier. This transatlantic history of the concept raises interesting questions about the relationship between particularist (peripheral, Third World, postcolonial) claims and universalist inscriptions within this narrative form.

Over time, magical realism evolved from a narrowly defined aesthetic category (used to explain post-expressionist painting) to a defining feature of Latin American literature, particularly in the works of Gabriel García Márquez. Eventually, it came to be recognized as “the literary language of the emergent postcolonial world,” as suggested by scholar Homi Bhabha.

Postcolonialism is a multifaceted term that continues to be debated and redefined. Essentially, it refers to a political and social stance that opposes colonial power. Specifically, it applies to nations that have gained independence from imperial rule. Postcolonial writing serves various purposes: it can reevaluate a nation’s identity after independence (as seen in Robert Kroetsch’s work in 1970s Canada) or express opposition to colonial ideas (as exemplified by Chinua Achebe’s writing in 1950s and 1960s Nigeria).

In postcolonial theory and criticism, scholars recognize that colonialism’s impact extended beyond mere political domination. It involved attempts to reshape the thinking and beliefs of colonized people, imposing the cultural attitudes and definitions of the colonial power. Colonial rulers often sought to define the colonized nation from their own perspective, enforcing a uniform historical and cultural identity. These disruptive effects on the cultural life of the colonized remain challenging to overcome. John McLeod says:

‘postcolonialism’ recognises both historical continuity and change. On the one hand, it acknowledges that the material realities and modes of representation common to colonialism are still very much with us today, even if the political map of the world has changed through decolonisation. But on the other hand, it asserts the promise, the possibility, and the continuing necessity to change, while also recognising that important challenges and changes have already been achieved. (2000:33)

Postcolonial theory and criticism, particularly in the context of literature, acknowledges that colonialism and postcolonialism are forms of discourse—socially and politically determined ways of expressing ideas. When postcolonial novels are written within this discourse, they adopt assumptions and attitudes associated with a political perspective that opposes or recognizes the effects of colonialism within the novel’s context. Even if writers don’t explicitly address colonialism or postcolonialism, their writing and underlying assumptions often reveal a concern with these political issues. Summarizing her view of the closeness of magical realism to postcolonialism, Elleke Boehmer claims that:

Drawing on the special effects of magic realism, postcolonial writers in English are able to express their view of a world fissured, distorted, and made incredible by cultural displacement...[T]hey combine the supernatural with local legend and imagery derived from colonialist cultures to represent societies which have been repeatedly unsettled by invasion, occupation, and political corruption. Magic effects, therefore, are used to indict the follies of both empire and its aftermath. (1995:235)

Magical realism allows writers to express non-dominant or non-Western perspectives, whether from feminist, postcolonial, or rural standpoints, in contrast to dominant cultural discourse. It can be a revolutionary form of writing, with transgressive, subversive, and revisionary aspects. However, the association of magical realism with non-Western cultures can sometimes create a politically ambiguous situation. Despite attempts to portray non-Western perspectives, magical realism may inadvertently emphasize a Western viewpoint. Brenda Cooper characterizes magical realism as both a transgressive mechanism that parodies authority and a domain of play, desire, and fantasy for the rich and powerful.

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Gabriel García Márquez, through his stories set in the fictional town of Macondo, highlights the marginalized and unsophisticated nature of the population. While the banana plantation owners briefly recognize their importance, Macondo remains outside the mainstream of history and modernity. Scientific discoveries only reach the town through the visits of gypsies. García Márquez's attraction to writing about such a place lies in emphasizing its rich cultural and mythic life, favoring pluralist storytelling over authoritative historical narratives.

Kumkum Sangari, in her 1987 essay, explores the postcolonial aspects of what she terms the "marvellous realism" found in García Márquez's work and that of Salman Rushdie. Although Latin American writers are often overlooked in postcolonial criticism, Sangari compellingly argues for considering García Márquez within this framework. For her, the interplay of magical realism and postcolonial themes offers a unique perspective on cultural identity and storytelling. She says:

Marvellous realism answers an emergent society's need for renewed self-description, and radical assessment, displaces the established categories through which the West had construed other cultures either in its own image or as alterity, questions the western capitalist myth of modernization and progress, and asserts without nostalgia an indigenous preindustrial realm of possibility. (Sangari 1987:162)

Intertextuality refers to the interconnectedness of all texts—whether written or spoken, formal or informal, artistic or mundane. This phenomenon is particularly relevant in understanding the meanings of mass media and online content. Often, a specific piece of media content, such as a sports blog, crime novel, or commercial, is related to other media content.

The term "intermediality" further emphasizes that these relations between texts occur not only within a single medium (for example, television commercials borrowing elements from television shows) but also across different types of media. Consider the adaptation of books into movies or vice versa—a clear example of intermediality.

Media industries commonly use terms like "multiplatform" or "cross-media" to describe deliberately produced content that spans various media formats and merchandise. Disney, with its extensive range of products related to brands like Pocahontas (including films, books, games, costumes, bed linen, bread boxes, mugs, and more), exemplifies this multiplatform approach.

In *One Last Stop*, Casey McQuiston masterfully weaves together intertextuality, magic realism, and postcolonial parody. Through intertextual references, the novel connects with other literary works and cultural symbols, enriching its layers of meaning. The magical elements—such as a mysterious subway train—challenge conventional reality, allowing McQuiston to explore emotional truths beyond the mundane. Additionally, postcolonial parody subtly subverts established norms, inviting readers to question authority and consider alternative perspectives. McQuiston's unique blend of humor, romance, and social commentary creates a captivating reading experience that transcends traditional boundaries.

4.1. Intertextuality, Magic Realism, and Postcolonial Parody *One Last Stop*

In Casey McQuiston's novel *One Last Stop*, the author ingeniously weaves together intertextuality, magic realism, and postcolonial parody to create a narrative that both entertains and critiques societal norms. Through the clever integration of these literary elements, McQuiston constructs a story that transcends traditional genres, offering readers a rich and multifaceted reading experience.

Intertextuality plays a central role in the novel as McQuiston skillfully incorporates references to various texts, cultural phenomena, and historical events throughout the novel. By intertextually engaging with other works, McQuiston invites readers to explore connections between different narratives and to consider how meaning is constructed through the interplay of texts. For example, the protagonist, August, is a fan of detective novels, and her fascination with mystery stories influences her perception of the world around her. This intertextual reference not only adds depth to August's character but also underscores the theme of "unraveling secrets" and "uncovering truths" that permeates the novel (McQuiston 75). As August delves deeper into her investigation, she finds herself echoing the methods of her favorite fictional detectives, piecing together clues and following leads in her own quest for resolution. Furthermore, August's love for "Nancy Drew" mirrors her own quest for understanding and agency within the story, drawing parallels between her life and the adventures of the iconic detective (McQuiston 124). Just as Nancy Drew fearlessly pursued justice and

unraveled mysteries, August navigates the complexities of her own life, determined to uncover the truth and confront the secrets that have long haunted her family.

Magic realism further enhances the narrative of the novel *One Last Stop*, blurring the boundaries between the ordinary and the extraordinary. Through elements of magic realism, such as the mysterious subway car that transcends time and space, McQuiston infuses the story with a sense of wonder and possibility. The presence of magical elements allows the novel to explore complex themes such as love, identity, and belonging in a way that transcends conventional realism. By integrating magic into the fabric of everyday life, McQuiston challenges readers to reconsider their understanding of reality and to embrace the fantastical aspects of the human experience" (McQuiston132). The magical subway car, with its ability to defy the laws of physics, becomes a symbol of the unexpected connections and possibilities that exist within the bustling metropolis of New York City (159). As the characters journey through this enchanted subway, they encounter otherworldly beings and surreal landscapes, blurring the lines between fantasy and reality. This magical realm serves as a metaphor for the depths of the human psyche, where dreams and desires intertwine with the mundane realities of everyday life. Through the lens of magic realism, McQuiston invites readers to explore the mysterious and enchanting aspects of existence, reminding us that magic can be found in the most unexpected of places.

Additionally, the novel employs postcolonial parody to critique dominant power structures and challenge Eurocentric narratives. Through the character of Jane, a time-traveling lesbian from the 1970s, McQuiston subverts traditional notions of history and identity, highlighting the marginalization of queer voices within historical discourse. Jane's journey through time serves as a commentary on the erasure of LGBTQ+ experiences from mainstream narratives and underscores the importance of reclaiming and preserving queer history. By incorporating elements of parody, McQuiston invites readers to interrogate the ways in which dominant cultural narratives shape our understanding of the past and to imagine alternative histories that center marginalized voices (210). Jane's presence in the novel disrupts linear notions of time and history, challenging readers to reconsider who gets to tell their stories and whose voices are silenced in the process (215).

Moreover, McQuiston intricately integrates snippets of popular culture, such as song lyrics and movie quotes, into the dialogue and narrative of *One Last Stop*. These references serve not only to ground the story in a specific cultural context but also to enrich the reading experience for audiences familiar with the referenced works. For instance, August and her friends often banter using lines from classic movies, creating a sense of camaraderie and shared cultural knowledge among the characters. This intertextual layer adds depth and authenticity to the novel, allowing readers to connect more deeply with the characters and their world (88). Additionally, the inclusion of these references reflects the cultural milieu of contemporary urban life, further immersing readers in the setting of the novel (102).

Their banter was punctuated by snippets of dialogue from beloved films, weaving a tapestry of shared experiences and inside jokes. As they rode the subway together, the familiar lines provided a comforting soundtrack to their journey through the bustling city. "Hey, remember that scene from 'Casablanca'?" (276). August asked, a mischievous glint in her eye (92). "Yeah, 'Here's looking at you, kid,'" replied Pete, grinning (92).

Furthermore, the intersection of intertextuality, magic realism, and postcolonial parody in the novel serves to destabilize fixed categories and challenge normative modes of representation. By blending genres and subverting literary conventions, McQuiston creates a narrative that defies easy classification and demands active engagement from readers. Through its innovative use of literary techniques, "*One Last Stop*" invites readers to participate in the process of meaning-making and encourages them to question their assumptions about literature, identity, and society.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the novel exemplifies the power of intertextuality, magic realism, and postcolonial parody to create a dynamic and thought-provoking narrative. By integrating these literary elements into the fabric of the story, McQuiston crafts a novel that is both entertaining and intellectually stimulating, inviting readers to explore themes of love, identity, and power in new and unexpected ways. Through its innovative approach to storytelling, the novel reaffirms the enduring relevance of literature as a medium for challenging dominant narratives and imagining alternative futures.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Since this is an academic paper and does not critique anyone. Thus, no conflict of interest arouses.

Statement of ethical approval

The author underway Doctor of Philosophy from the Sikkim Professional University and this will be counted as a one of the core articles under the PhD program. The author does not critique for any institutions and society and this paper does not either promoting or discouraging any individuals or institution. Hence, no ethnics is concerned with this paper. Author is belonging to Nepal and decided to published paper from the internation level of publications.

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