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THE CONCEPT “NOSE AND KNEE” AS A SYMBOL OF MAGICAL ABILITIES OF MIDNIGHT’S CHILDREN IN SALMAN RUSHDIE’S NOVEL “MIDNIGHT’S CHILDREN”

Abstract

The article is devoted to the research of the concept “*Nose and Knee*” on the basis of Salman Rushdie’s novel “Midnight’s children” from the perspective of cognitive linguistics and literary studies. In the article the concept “*Nose and Knee*” is described as a symbol of magical abilities of midnight’s children, it has a close relationship to the characters of the novel. “*Nose and Knee*” just like “*Saleem and Shiva*” represents the sign of creation and destruction, victim and victor, union and negation, faith and humility – are inextricably related in the novel. The huge conflict between Saleem and Shiva reflects the ancient, mythological battle between the creative and destructive forces in the world. The hostility and anxiety between the two begin at the moment of their simultaneous births.

Keywords: nose and knee, midnight’s children, alterity, identity, magical abilities, cognitive linguistics

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САЛМАН РУШДИДІҢ «ТҮН ҚОЙНАУЫНДАҒЫ БАЛАЛАР» АТТЫ РОМАНЫНДАҒЫ «МҰРЫН МЕН ТІЗЕ» КОНЦЕПТІСІ ТҮН БАЛАЛАРЫНЫҢ СИҚЫРЛЫ ҚАБІЛЕТІНІҢ СИМВОЛЫ РЕТІНДЕ

Аңдатпа

Мақала қаламгер Салман Рушдидің «Түн қойнауындағы балалар» атты романында көрініс тапқан «Мұрын және Тізе» концептісін когнитивті лингвистика және әдебиеттану ғылымы тұрғысынан саралауға арналған. Мақалада «Мұрын және Тізе» концептісі түн балаларының сиқырлы қабілеттерінің символы ретінде берілген және бұл концепт өз кезегінде роман персонаждарымен тығыз байланысты болып келеді. «Мұрын мен Тізе» - «Салим мен Шиваның» бейнесі, ол роман желісінде өзара сабақтастықта көрінетін жарату мен қирату, құрбандық пен жеңімпаз, өзара келісім мен жоққа шығару, сенім мен кішіпейілділіктің негізгі белгілері болып табылады.

Салим мен Шива арасындағы үлкен тартыс ежелгі мифологияда көрініс тапқан әлемдегі шығармашылық иелері мен қиратушы күштердің арасындағы жойқын соғысты бейнелейді. Бас кейіпкерлердің арасындағы бұл қастандық пен ымырасыздық олар дүниеге келген сәтінен басталғандығы белгілі.

Түйін сөздер: мұрын мен тізе, түн балалары, өзгергіштік, бірегейлік, сиқырлы қабілеттер, когнитивті лингвистика

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КОНЦЕПТ «НОС И КОЛЕНА» КАК СИМВОЛ МАГИЧЕСКИХ СПОСОБНОСТЕЙ ДЕТЕЙ ПОЛУНОЧИ В РОМАНЕ САЛМАНА РУШДИ «ДЕТИ ПОЛУНОЧИ»

Аннотация

Статья посвящена исследованию концепта «Нос и Колена» на основе романа Салмана Рушди «Дети полуночи» с точки зрения когнитивной лингвистики и литературоведения. В статье концепт «Нос и Колена» описывается как символ магических способностей детей полуночи и этот концепт тесно связан с персонажами романа. «Нос и Колена» - как «Салим и Шива», представляет собой знак творения и разрушения, жертва и победитель, союз и отрицание, вера и смирение - неразрывно связаны в романе.

Большой конфликт между Салимом и Шивой отражает древнюю мифологическую битву между творческими и разрушительными силами в мире. Враждебность и беспокойство между ними начинаются в момент их одновременного рождения.

Ключевые слова: нос и колена, дети полуночи, изменчивость, идентичность, магические способности, когнитивная лингвистика

Introduction. Salman Rushdie's novel "Midnight's children" is one of the most outstanding novels of the XX century, which describes the transition of India from British colonialism to independence and this historical event is intertwined with magical abilities and mystery. The concept of "Nose and Knee" is used in various ways, and it has a strong relationship with the main heroes of the novel. The meaning of "Nose and Knee" has a wide significance in the novel than just a physical part of body. As we have understood from the novel that "Nose and Knee" represents the identity of an Indian family and Indian culture, too. Also, the author Salman Rushdie leads us to understand the novel through independence of India from the British colony and the identity crisis that Indian culture had at that period. While reading the novel "Midnight's Children", we can see that "Nose and Knee" identifies the personality of each person who inherited this big nose from generation to generation and the nose has itself "a great power" and can sense all unusual and important events. Rushdie defines the main protagonist Saleem Sinai as a "nose", having an enormous nose as his grandfather, and another character, who is Saleem's alter – ego Shiva characterizes the person who has an immense power over his knees.

Methodology. We have described the concept “*Nose and Knee*” as a symbol of mystical abilities of midnight’s children, and also have divided a symbol of mystical properties of midnight’s children into three sections:

- 1) *The correlation of identity and alterity;*
- 2) *Mystical predictions of midnight’s children;*
- 3) *The religious and mythological source of personages.*

First of all, let us try to understand the relation between identity and alterity in the novel “Midnight’s Children”. It is given on different levels: the relation between person and people, we can also say relation between one or the other, then relation between the human being and the non – humans and alterity between the one and the same person. Therefore, we are going to explain the correlation of identity and alterity in the novel “Midnight’s children”.

Results and Discussion. One of the defining characteristics of an identity in the novel is that Naseem, she is Aadam Aziz’s wife, she starts being as a clever and wise woman, and continues being as a Reverend Mother during the novel. She has an ancient spirit in herself and the most important thing for her is taking photos.. She realized that with the help of the photo we can create another person’s appearance, and this image cannot be genuine, on the contrary, people hide their truth and reality, which we realize it by these sentences: “*Naseem had become a prematurely old, wide woman, with two enormous moles like witch’s nipples on her face: and she lived within an invisible fortress of her own making, an ironclad citadel of traditions and certainties. Eventually, the photographer had tried to catch her unawares, but she seized his camera and broke it over his skull. Fortunately, he lived, but there are no photographs of me grandmother anywhere on earth. She was not one to be trapped in anyone’s little black box*” [1, p.47].

The most interesting point of the novel is that all characters change their names to other names in order to have different identities. In fact, our names have particular meanings in our lives. Our names are the symbols or signs of identity, they create different images in our minds. According to Chevalier’s Dictionary of Symbols “*the name of a thing is the sound produced by the actions of the moving forces that create it. The Name and Form (Nama and Rupa) are the essence and the substance of the individual because they determine it*” [2, p.353-355]. The main hero Saleem Sinai has several nicknames related to the appearance of his body in the novel, such as: Snotnose, Stainface, Sniffer, Baldy, or Piece-of-the-Moon. Only Saleem asks himself many questions about his identity. “*Even a little boy is faced with the problem of defining itself, and I’m bound to say that my early popularity had its problematic aspects, because I was bombarded with a confusing multiplicity of views on the subject, being a Blessed One to a guru under tap, a voyeur to Lila Sabarmati*” [1, p. 178].

Actually, Saleem’s name symbolizes the sign of the moon that he will always live under its sign. As we know, the moon identifies the protector of the magicians, a great power, and he is the protector of midnight’s children. He also has a great gift – “intuition”, he has the great ability to read magical and personal thoughts of people. His main developed gift is to communicate with everyone through telepathy. Thus, Saleem also gave up his identity, like his grandmother in order to find out a superior one within himself as representing himself like Buddha’s prototype. The most essential reason seems that Saleem and Buddha are different people and he manages to keep himself in one position or distance so that, through his identity, he thinks himself as the other one: “*So, apologizing for the melodrama, I must doggedly insist that I, he, had began again; that after years of yearning for importance, he (or I) had been cleansed of the whole business... that empties from history, the Buddha learned the arts of submission and did only what was required of him*” [1, p. 488].

Another way of looking at this description is to identify the mystical predictions of midnight’s children who were born on 15 August. Saleem Sinai is one of the one thousand and one children, the one that was born exactly at midnight, as his life had been predicted to his mother by seer Ramram a long time ago. The seer Ramram makes a prediction the birth of “*a nose and knees*”, which represent Saleem and Shiva. A nose and knees play a major role in symbolizing each boy’s special power. There are several instances to analyze their significant roles in the novel. When Amina Sinai was pregnant, she visited the seer Ramram, he describes Amina’s future child in this way: “*There will be two heads – but you shall see only one – there will be knees and a nose, a nose and knees*” [1, p.114]. *Amina was shocked, even she did not understand what the seer Ramram told her. But Ramram did not stop saying: “Newspaper praises him, two mothers raise him! Bicyclists love him, crowds will shove him! Sisters will weep him, cobra will creep him! Washing will hide him, voices will guide him! Friends will him – blood will betray him!” Amina Sinai asked some questions about his predictions, but Ramram did not listen to her and carried on: “Spittoons will brain him – doctors will drain him – jungle will claim him – wizards reclaim him” Soldiers will try him – tyrants will fry him...*” [1, p.115].

Saleem has double characteristics, and he represents the highest identity as physical individual but on the other hand, the top identity of the nation of India. Amina Sinai, Saleem's mother was offered a gift of a son in exchange of the gift of a life. Therefore, soothsayers said: *"A son...such a son! A son who will never be older than his motherland – neither older nor younger. There will be two heads – but you shall see only one – there will be knees and a nose, a nose and knees"* [1, p.14]. *"He will have sons without having sons! He will be old before he is old! And he will die...before he is dead"* [1, p.115]. These words claim that Saleem Sinai's future and at the same time, of his alter ego, Shiva, the other boy who was born at the same hour as Saleem, and the representative features of their identities: knees and nose.

As we have mentioned the time of Saleem's birth, we need to explain the symbolic meaning of it. Therefore, Chevalier Jean and Alain Gheerbrand state: *"the date of Saleem's birth is a metaphorical coincidence to the birth of the nation of India. But midnight is the primordial hour of absolute rest, when the spiritual sun is in power and opposed to the physical sun of the noon"* [2, p.94].

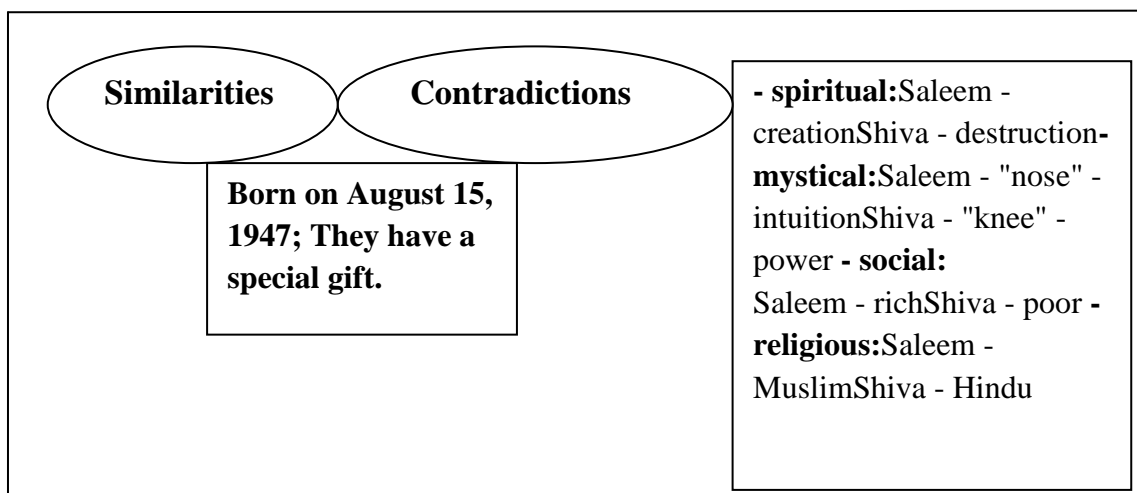
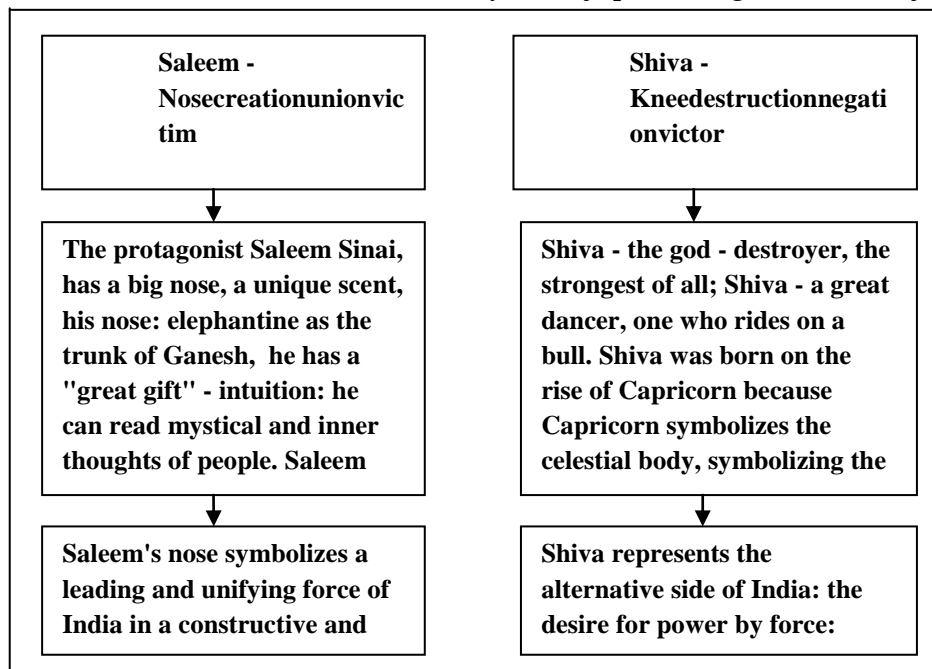
Saleem Sinai's fortune turns in such a way that his alter – ego Shiva appears once again in his life and destroys Saleem's life, at the end of the novel surprisingly Shiva's son becomes Saleem's son. Shiva is the archetype of Shiva, the god of destruction and renaissance, he is the greatest dancer, one who rides a bull, whom no force can resist and every time when Shiva appears, at that time Saleem's life changes. Here, we can say that Shiva seems *to be victor*, while Saleem is considered *to be victim* of the novel. Shiva and Saleem were both born under Capricorn rising, as astrologers have mentioned, Capricorn symbolizes the divine body with power over the knees and this power was given to Shiva. Saleem expresses his opinion about Shiva's behaviour in this line: *"To be honest: I did not like Shiva. I disliked the roughness of his tongue, the crudity of his ideas; and I was beginning to suspect him of a string of terrible crimes – although I found it impossible to find any evidence in his thoughts, because he, alone of the children of midnight, could close off from me any part of his thoughts he chose to keep to himself – which, in itself; increased my growing dislike and suspicion of the rat-faced fellow"* [1, p.314]. As other characters, Parvati-the-witch also loses her identity, and becomes Laylah at the end of the novel: *"she took a name which I chose for her out of the repository of my dreams, becoming Laylah, night, so that she too was caught up in the repetitive cycles of my history becoming an echo of all the other people who have been obliged to change their names...like my own mother Amina Sinai, Parvati-the-witch became a new person in order to have a child"* [1, p.580]. The most interesting fact is that Parvati has the mystical ability like other midnight's children and she has the power of the true adept, the illuminates, the genuine gifts of conjuration and sorcery, the art which required no artifice.

We come across with another sort of characteristic of identity, if names are conventional criteria, the body and its elements – physical characteristics, memory is related to the interior existence of a person. Derek Parfitt sustains that *"memory makes us conscious of our existence in time, as it creates a psychological connectedness"* [3, p.100-121]. For Saleem Sinai, memory is the main source of maintaining an identity, though not only a personal identity but also a national identity. He collects both the personal and historical memories and his daily lives out of them. Nevertheless, Saleem realized that *"we simply could not think our way out of our pasts"* [1, p.118], moreover, he creates his life again, especially his relatives' lives out of a memory he does not physically have, but which he discovered by the power of his mind. *"And memory – my new, all – knowing memory, which encompasses most of the lives of mother, father, grandfather, grandmother, and everyone else – answers: soft, squashy as corn flour pudding"* [1, p.88]. Saleem in his attempt of pickling history and maintaining memory present, he fell in the trap of his dream, he lost his personal name, in favour of other memories that altered his being to the point of dissolution. He admits himself that memory makes a nation and a person, he even learns to live experiences that do not belong to him, he reaches to live moments of the dead until he is reborn by Parvati's basket: *"Memories of invisibility: in the basket I learned what it was like, will be like, to be dead. I acquired characteristics of ghosts! Present but insubstantial; actual but without being or weight"* [1, p.532]. Saleem claims that India being a nation of forgetters he receives only-legend-like images and turns history into personal memory. According to Frances A. Yates's theory *"memory belongs to the same part of the soul as imagination does"* [4, p.174-175]. When telling us about Methwold, Saleem states strange statements such as: *"bit I, who never saw him once, find him impossible to forget"* [1, p.114]. The next thing is about *religious and mythological source of personages*. Here, we have recognized the mythological origin of characters from the novel. Firstly, Saleem Sinai knows the symbol of his name Sinai, which means the *"master magician"* and *"the son of the moon"*. The moon is the protector of the magicians, of the super – natural powers, since the protector of the children of midnight. Saleem as a Muslim has a connection to Islam. Secondly, *Shiva is the name of a Hindu god*, associated with Hinduism, according to his name and his gifts. Shiva's gifts of war, which echo the powers of the Hindu gods, depicted in Hindu mythology. Finally, *Parvati is the name of a Hindu*

goddess, remains associated with energies of the earth. Parvati-the-witch echoes this connection with her ability to combine the energies of the earth to allow for sorcery and conjuration. By a Hindu goddess, Parvati is connected to Shiva, because in Hindu mythology, *Parvati is a consort of Shiva*.

Here, the schemes of the concept “Nose and Knee” and similarities and contradictions of two main characters are given in the below:

Scheme 1 – “Nose and Knee” – as a symbol of special magical abilities of midnight’s children



Scheme 2 – Similarities and contradictions of two main characters: Saleem and Shiva

Conclusion.The conflict between Saleem and Shiva reflects the ancient, mythological battle between the creative and destructive forces in the world. The hostility and anxiety between the two begin at the moment of their simultaneous births. The reference to Shiva, the Hindu god of both destruction and procreation, reflects not only the anxiety between destruction and creation but also the inextricably bound nature of these two strong forces. Saleem, as a protagonist of *Midnight’s Children*, is responsible for creating the world. He symbolizes Brahma, the god of creation. Saleem creates a story, not his own life. By delivering Saleem into the hands of the Widow, Shiva is obliged for the destruction of the midnight’s children and also by being Adam’s father and hundreds of other children and he ensures the continuation of their legacy. The dialect of creation and destruction is revealed as a symbol of energy potential force of midnight’s children to undertake the mission of generations of postcolonial India. As a matter of fact, Saleem’s nose symbolizes *a leading and unifying force of India in a constructive and peaceful way*, he even describes his own nose in

this way: “My nose: elephantine as the trunk of Ganesh, it should, I thought, have been a superlative breather” [1, p.214] and on the contrary, Shiva represents the alternative side of India, the desire for power by force: separatism, destruction, self-destruction. In this respect, Shiva is suspected of killing human beings with his powerful and strong knees, while Saleem uses his nose to discover the most decrepit nations in the city. Knees and nose – just like Saleem and Shiva, creation and destruction, victim and victor, union and negation, faith and humility – are inextricably related.

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ҚАЗАҚ ПРОЗАСЫНДАҒЫ МИФТІҢ КӨРКЕМДІК ҚЫЗМЕТІ

Аңдатпа

Қазіргі қазақ прозасындағы мифтің әр түрлі мағынада қолдануы оқырманда қызығушылық туғызады. Бұл авторлардың әр түрлі әдеби бағытқа қатысын мифте берілген идеяларды көрсету үшін негізгі мифемдерді таңдауда қалай берілетінін анықтауға мүмкіндік береді. Мифтерді қолдана отырып, автор, бірнеше дәстүрмен диалогқа түседі, екіншіден белгілі мифологиялық сюжетті қайта түсіндіреді, өз образын жасайды, соның нәтижесінде баяндауды мифтендіру іске асады. Бас кейіпкердің мифологиялық дүниетанымы уақыт пен кеңістікке ерекше қабылдаумен сипатталады. Бұл ғылыми мақалада қазақ прозасындағы фольклорлық мифтердің қолданылу ерекшеліктеріне талдау жасалып, олардың көркемдік қызметі анықталады. Қазақ прозасында ХХ ғасырдың аяғында мифке деген қызығушылықтың жандана бастауының алғышарттары нақтыланады. Қазақ прозасындағы мифологиялық дәстүрлер жаңа әдеби тенденциялардың өзара байланысы қарастырылады. Шынайы өмірді тұрақты мифологиялық модельдер мен образдар арқылы берудегі мифтің көркемдік қызметі анықталады.

Түйін сөздер: Реминисценция, фольклор, ежелгі наным-сенімдер, мифопоэтика, мифтер, мифтік образдар, мифтік аңыз, әдеби көркемдік әдістер, мифологиялық құрылым

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ARTISTIC FUNCTION OF MYTH IS IN KAZAKH PROSE

Abstract

The use of the myth in modern Kazakh prose in different senses is of interest to the reader. This allows us to determine how the authors' attitudes towards different literary trends are conveyed in the choice of basic myths to reflect the ideas presented in the myth. Using myths, the author enters into a dialogue with several traditions, and secondly, reinterprets a well-known mythological plot, creates his own image, as a result of which the narrative becomes a myth. The protagonist's mythological worldview is characterized by