

**FRAGMENTED REALITIES AND IDENTITY CRISIS IN THE SELECT
NOVELS OF SALMAN RUSHDIE**

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Salman Rushdie is an essential British existing author and critic. He belongs to the faction of British authors with foreign derivation with British education. The two worlds, British and Indian, blend together in his writing and he is said to dwell in a ethnically conciliator position. He uses modern genres such as Science Fiction and Magical Realism and mixtures of genres and techniques which is archetypal of numerous post-modern authors. He has won quite a few important awards including “Booker Prize for Fiction” and “Booker of Bookers” and James Tait Black Memorial Prize.

In this paper I am going to deal with Salman Rushdie’s novels *Midnight’s Children* (1981) and *Shame* (1983). I am going to evaluate the problems of distinctiveness the characters of his novels face and how they are connected to the problems of Indian and Pakistani post colonial society. I am also going to look into the manner the author deals with history and the narrative techniques he uses which communicate with the techniques of the verbal literatures. I will also observe how much his writing corresponds with the Magical Realism of South America, especially Marquez’s *Hundred Years of Solitude*.

In his latest work is *Shalimar the Clown* (2005) he again returns to India and Pakistan and deals with the topics of India’s independence, the partition of India and Pakistan and the war between the two countries. His work describes his writing technique as Magical realism. I covet to look at the features frequent equally for Rushdie and for the Magical Realism of the South America and try to find some reasons Magical Realism appears in such outlying cultures as South American and Indian. We find similar technique in Rushdie’s *Shame* and *Midnight’s Children* where the providence of the characters mirrors the developments in Indian and Pakistani society.

In Rushdie’s books many characters countenance the problems of identity. There are for illustration characters of unlawful parentage or characters who do not discern who their parents are. In *Midnight’s Children* the two chief characters Saleem and Shiva, who are both born at the blow of the midnight when India gained independence, are swapped after their confinement by a nurse Mary Pereira who wants to astound a Marxist rebel Joseph D’Costa she is in love with. This way Saleem who is born to poor parents gets, thanks to the intercession of Mary Pereira, to raise up in a rich family and consequently gains a new providence and new prospects in life. The two boys contribute to some common characteristics but in most respects they are entire opposites.

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As a child Shiva is a leader of the children group where many boys are older than him, Saleem gets repeatedly bullied by other children and when Evie Burns ostracizes him from their multitude for annoying to meddle with her thoughts, he has to be avenged by his sister. Shiva is determined, callous and he makes admirable career when, as a son of a beggar, he becomes prime minister's Indira Gandhi's desired general. Saleem, on the other hand, is faltering, by no means actually figures out what to use his magical gift for and the entire way all the way through the book he is losing a little. He loses his magical gift, his parents, and the love of his sister, his memory and lastly his wife Parvati.

He is a philosophical kind of person who makes no endeavor to control his life aggressively; he just takes the disasters as they come. Then an additional substitute of a child is made when Saleem's wife Parvati runs away from her husband and conceives a child (Adam Sinai) with Shiva who then kicks her out. She returns to Saleem, who takes heed of Adam after Parvati's death. So Adam is a double-swapped child who by transaction returns to his original family and he is named after Saleem's grandfather who in reality is Adam's natal grand grandfather.

A related condition of complicated parenthood occurs in *Shame* where one of the three sisters Shakil gets pregnant, they pledge a kind of vow that they will not let the undisclosed out and the oath makes the bond amid them so strong, they develop into like one person. They all start too thick in their waists, experience the labor pains when giving the birth, breastfeed the child and heave him as if they were all his mothers. Omar Khayyam Shakil consequently by no means learns nor which one of the sisters is his mother neither who his father is. Twenty years later the same triple pregnancy occurs and Omar's brother Babar is born.

In the journey of their life the sisters' bond grows so fixed that they develop into practically impossible to tell apart and even they cannot tell themselves from each other. They become conscious of this when Omar Khayyam first tells them he wishes to abscond home and they initiate to wrangle what to do. There are other characters in Rushdie's books that entirely lose the conception of heir selves. The narrator of *Midnight's Children* Saleem suffers a distress and an absolute forgetfulness after the city he lives in is bombed and mainly of his family dies there. He forgets the whole thing about his previous life and he also loses his human skills and manners.

By that time he has previously lost his magical bequest of telepathy and has gained a superhuman intellect of smell as an alternative so is he sent to an exceptional army unit which uses dogs for penetrating for dissenter units in the mountains and where Saleem gains a position of one of these dogs. He becomes a man dog. So not merely does he lose his self, he also loses his humanity and becomes an animal. But not just any animal; he becomes a dog which is in Muslim culture considered an unclean animal.

There are various characters that have more people within themselves. For example Sufia Zinobia (*Shame*) a frenzied daughter of Bîlquis and Raza Hyder, is an assortment of exemplary characters of the beauty and the beast. She has the classical features of a beauty, which are nevertheless noticeable only when she sleeps since then she loses the blank appearance of a simpleton on her face. But there is a beast inside her which at earliest barely manifests itself when the child is ashamed by self-conscious and fever. After the beast makes Sufia Zinobia kill several hundred turkeys which are being raised secure by their house and which coerce Sufia

Zinobia's mother so mad she has to feel embarrassed for her, Sufia Zinobia tries to restrain the beast contained by by dying.

The doctors administer to keep her alive, conversely, and since that instant there is nothing to stop the beast. The beast increasingly takes control and Sufia Zinobia walks out of her home to bewitch and seduce young men and then slash their heads off. She is becoming less and less human and by the time she comes to her husband to kill him she does not converse and she no longer resembles a woman. The hero of *Midnight's Children* Saleem Sinai has a paranormal gift of telepathy which means that he can refrain to anyone's thoughts and commune with them. At some summit of the book he manages to get in touch with all the other children born at the midnight India gained independence who live speckled all over the country and they are having forums in Saleem's head.

They wrangle over what to do with their magical gifts and Saleem can accede to them in or out. He calls himself all-India radio. Some characters transform considerably through the itinerary of their live, generally due to some ordeal they suffer and the change of their personality is habitually demonstrated by a physical amend and often by a change of name. Aadam Aziz (*Midnight's Children*) loses his faith in God and this loss makes a hole in his chest. At first the hole is unseen and only he can feel it, but as he gets old, the hole becomes perceptible to everyone.

Saleem Sinai's sister is called the Brass monkey by everyone because of her copper hair. She is a mischievous child who sets the shoes on fire and fights with older kids. We by no means even learn her real name until she grows up, her hair darkens and she becomes Jamila singer – a religious activist, who by her popular shows supports a fundamental Islamic government and never shows her face in the public only performs at the back of the screen. As a child she is self-determining and irrepressible, as an adult woman she becomes straightforwardly manipulated so she does not see the crimes of the government she is sustaining.

While she is a child we can perceive some traces of fervor in her but we see her from a entirely diverse point of view and for that reason when she grows up she seems like a thoroughly different person. There are various other characters that amend drastically throughout the book and the method when one side of the character is exposed and then, many years later, we can see a character from the other side is used recurrently. In the interview with Sean French Rushdie talks about his characters varying significantly.

An assortment of transformations of the characters, whether they turn into incredible else, vividly change their personality, facade and their name, or they lose the conception of their selves can be implicit as a metaphor for the search of distinctiveness of the post-colonial world. It is also a mirror of the shocking and dramatic understanding with evacuation which has influenced Rushdie as well as the other Asian immigrants. It can also articulate several other things. For example the effect of embarrassment of a helpless person is described in the character Sufia Zinobia, which can allude to the situation of the emigrants again, because they recurrently face humiliation, but it can also be contained more in general as simply recounting the consequence of violence on its guiltless victims.

The concern of the containment of women is tackled this way principally in *Shame* where mainly female characters turn into deplorable creatures after they contract married. Bîlquis goes extreme because she does not supervise to have a son and takes retribution on her first born daughter Sufia Zinobia, who, as a result of this, turns into a beast which seduces young men and

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then tears their heads off. Her second daughter Naveed Hyder after having her 27 children and receiving pregnant again commits suicide because if not she has no abundance but having more and more children each year because her husband would not consent to her to do anything about it. What is familiar for all these situations is that they always illustrate the power relationships between the one in incriminate and its matter or an aggressor and its victim, which goes reverse to the relationship of the colonizer and the colonized.

Rushdie adopts this move toward of rewriting history both in *Midnight's Children* and in *Shame*, although he does it in a vaguely different way. In *Midnight's Children* the life of the foremost hero Saleem Sinai is paralleled with the developments in India; he is connected to her history. He is one of the children who were born at the midnight when India gained independence and all of them gained magical gifts; the more rapidly to the midnight they were born, the better their gifts were. Saleem, who was collectively with Shiva born accurately at the minute India was born, received a letter from the leading which read:

“You are the newest bearer of that ancient face of India which is also eternally young. We shall be watching over your life with the closest attention; a sense, the mirror of our own.” (*Midnight's Children*, p. 122).

This “*dark period*” is said to take consign in the winter 1975/76. When the ruler of the fictional India called Indira Gandhi finds out from her special astrologer about the hazardous prospective of the midnight's children, she imprisons them which can be paralleled to the real Indira Gandhi's imprisonments of her political opponents in 1975.

But they are very probable also a allegory of the circumstances and atmosphere in Indian society, because ever since the time India gained independence in 1947 there have been countless governments which were overthrown for being crooked, countless bloody political coups, Indira Gandhi relentlessly abrogated the constitutional rights, which must have caused the people animated about the independence lose expectation and conviction.

Rushdie again uses an analogous metaphor to portray the difference between his and the new cohort approach:

“We the children of the Independence, rushed wildly and too fast into our future; he [Aadam Sinai], Emergency-born, will be impossible to resist. Already, he is stronger, harder, and more resolute than I: when he sleeps, his eyeballs are immobile beneath their lids. Aadam Sinai, child of knees-and-nose, does not (as far as I can tell) surrender to dreams.” (*Midnight's Children*, p. 425).

The book is full of parallels such as these and the whole story can be understood as a metaphor of the development of the country – the children born at the midnight when India gained independence gained magical powers but they never manage to unite themselves nor figure out what they have been given the powers. Then they are captured by the premier, castrated and divested of their powers by her “doctors”. The castration has to be understood symbolically because at the time the “children” are castrated they are formerly around thirty so it is very liable that a lot of them have had some children and the fear of their offspring therefore does not elucidate this act. It is more a symbol of the lost hope.

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Shame works differently in this respect. The whole story pretends to be a fairy tale. The book begins:

“In a remote border town of Q., which when seen from the air resembles nothing so much as an ill-proportioned dumb-bell, there once and loving, sisters.” (Shame, p. 11).

The author does not state any date or place, only suggests that it has happened wherever far away long time ago. There are three sisters, which is a fairy tale pattern, and the author does not want to tell us their true names. The fact that their counterfeit names are so analogous is also significant. The finale of the book is also very fairy-tale like. After they poison Omar Khayyam, Raza Hyder and his wife, the sisters depart leaving the gate of their house open for the first time in many years, the people from the city ransack the house but they do not stumble on them anywhere. The sisters basically fade away. It is very implausible that they escaped and hid somewhere because they have by no means in their life left the house and all the sensible things such as shopping was arranged by their faithful servant, so they possibly would not be able to continue to exist in the real world.

In the whole book we do not find scores of dates and names, the whole story takes place in a illusory country of Peccavistan, which of line resembles Pakistan, and the only hint of time we have is the allusion to the fifteenth century which is with reference to to start in the book which is most liable an allusion to the Muslim calendar according to which it is the fifteenth century right at the moment.

On the further hand, some characters are noticeably alluding to some real historical figures. Iskander Harappa is possibly an allegory to Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Raza Hyder to general Zia – ul - Haq. Harappa’s government is fraudulent as well as Bhutto’s, he is overthrown by Raza Hyder and he is hanged at the end. Raza Hyder is an army general and he turns Peccavistan into a fundamentalist country, with public stoning to death and where they are fight on if they come into view on the street without a covered face, as well as Zia- ul-haq.

However, these two characters can also submit to the Pakistani leaders in general, because it seems that in Pakistan there is always a leader, more often than not a famous general who is related to one of the preceding leaders, this leader becomes defectively corrupt after a while, so he is overthrown in a bloody coup by another leader. Maulana Dawood, a ominous religious leader who after his death haunts as a ghost Raza Hyder and persuades him to enforce the stringent religious rules on the country, may be a comparable to Maulana Muhammad who founded a religious faction to stretch orthodox *Islam*.

As various others post colonial writers Rushdie expresses in his novels the problems of finding distinctiveness. This is done through his characters that recurrently face either loss of identity or a perplexity of identity. They do not know or put out of your mind that they are, substitute their personality with someone else or renovate into something unusual. This is a way to express the problems of identity Indian society has to compact with due to its colonization and decolonization and according to *The Empire Writes Back* this issue habitually appears in the literature of all former British colonies. Furthermore, they appear in Marquez’s *Hundred Years of Solitude* as well which only confirms the theory because South America is a earlier colony.

Rushdie also attacks twin thinking and black and white oppositions by creating a pairs of characters who are sometimes parallels but sometimes they are oppositions, such as devil and

angel. Then he problematizes these oppositions for instance by making the devil not so evil and the angel not so good. Such assault aligned with the black and white thinking, fundamentalism and the violence which goes with it, is an imperative theme of all his novels.

Rushdie's novels, particularly the earlier ones, are always sturdily connected to the history of India and Pakistan though they are fictions. Conversely he uses diverse methods than western historical novel authors – he treats the facts limply, interprets them in his own way. The characters and events in his books are illusory but they are very often a translucent allegory of the real events and persons. This technique resembles the allegorical texts which emerge for example in the Czech literature of the times of its short of of freedom. Such texts also become visible in other national literatures of the times of occupation, although among the reasons.

CONCLUSION:

The struggle for truth is evidenced through the narrator's observable capriciousness and through the lack of power that the narrator has over what stories will lastly come forward. Rushdie's post-modern fragmented fantasy world is not an excess of belongings; it allows readers to visualize the alternating states of reality present in the text—and the world contiguous them. Through fantasy, Rushdie is able to discard normative views of how history has progressed, and is succeeding. Rushdie's fragmented narration is the only way he can at hand a consistent picture. It encapsulates the intricate uniqueness issues that are dealt with in his texts. His postmodern techniques allow him to query the confines of an historical past and its outcome on the current realities.

Rushdie does it is not the apprehension of censorship. This is a technique used in myths which are a part of oral literature. A justification for this power is that myths coherent human experience in a impassable form and the authors which are not a part of the concern need this dense form because they do not have many economical resources and because they often have to address uneducated consultation. It also allows them to allude to the nation's oldest traditions. Rushdie also uses other features of oral literature, such as creating tremendous characters, dividing books in cycles, anticipations, parallels and repetition, use of frame stories and embedded stories.

He is sometimes decidedly antagonistic and he always establishes the relationship with the reader by addressing him, pretending the narrator is telling the story to a big name and illumination his motives for telling the story the way he is telling it. These features of oral literature also come into sight in Marquez and both Marquez and Rushdie acknowledge doing it on purpose. The reasons for this may be that the oral culture is the culture these authors grew up in so, obviously, they are influenced by it. The use of oral narrative techniques also provides them with a technique to rebel beside the literature of the occupiers which was forced upon them as an artistic mean.

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