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**“Chutnification of Indian history” in Salman Rushdie’s Novels
*Midnight’s Children, Shame and The Satanic Verses***

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Abstract: *Rushdie's recognition that all accounts are helpless to being re-composed, his emphasis on the "temporary idea of all facts" and his portrayal of "cuts" as "pieces of broken mirrors" likewise restore his manner towards postmodernism. His novel contains numerous abstract impacts, his combination of Indian oral custom and western novel classification and his inventive utilization of dialect. There is feedback on its "chutnification" of Indian history while some tested Rushdie's claim for radical development in dialect and style. The focal issues in every one of his books are simply the division of good and malice in oneself and the world, the philosophical hypothesis about confidence and the part of resolve in visionary experience. Rushdie utilizes a standard example and he investigates the philosophical hugeness of goals and ideas through a few sets of characters who are so personally associated that they truly or allegorically intertwine, and when they isolate each gone up against a piece of the personality of the other.*

Key words: *History, postmodernism, self-reflexivity, and allegorization.*

Of all Rushdie’s novels are characterized by an epic sweep of narration, a plethora of allusions, to real people, mythological and literary characters, and hilarious often ribald humor reminiscent of Rabelais and Trustram Shandy. Rushdie combines realism and fantasy, and like, South American novelists Gabriel Garcia, Marquez, and Jorge Luis Borges, he roundly satirizes the politics and society of the country in which each novel is set. He has also been compared to Gunter Grass. Among his Indian-English literary kin, one thinks of G.V.Desani and Raja Rao, both of whom experiment with Indianizing. English through syntax, translated idioms, and word coinage, and who adopt the Hindu epic form of narration which like a Russian doll set, reveals an almost endless cluster of stories within stories.

Several themes recur in Rushdie’s writing. He himself identifies the theme of emigration and the migrant self as his favorite leitmotif. The central issues in all his novels are the dichotomy of good and evil in oneself and the world, philosophical speculation about faith, and the role of mental power in visionary experience. Rushdie uses a standard pattern-he explores the philosophical significance of ideas and concepts through several pairs of characters who are so intimately connected that they literally or figuratively fuse and when they separate each takes on a part of the identity of the other. Rushdie’s satire is virulent, especially in *The Satanic Verses*. Here he satirizes Islamic fundamentalism-hence the uproar in the Muslim world that resulted in the Ayatollah’s fatwa.

The narrative strategy that Rushdie uses is to represent the entire story as sequences from the dreams and nightmares of Gibreel Farishta as he broods over possible movie productions. However, this narrative ploy did not gain him reprieve from the ire of fundamentalist Muslim readings. Examples of misreading and misconstrued translations that have fanned the flames of

fundamentalism abound. Since one of the traditional synonyms for the Koran is “versus” the adjective “satanic” in the title has been seen as qualifying the Koran rather than just the two apocryphal verses.

The *Midnight’s Children* is mainly an auto-biography of Saleem Sinai, but it is also the history of India during the period of the action. Rushdie links these in two ways: through events in Saleem’s life that are actually connected to contemporary events through himself or one of his circle of friends or family; and through having significant events in Saleem’s life coinciding with political events of historical importance. Rushdie has thus hit upon an ingenious literary device. The linking is not always effective, but nevertheless, the novel is eminently readable throughout.

Saleem Rushdie bent English, the ruler’s language only a few decades ago, to his will and made it serve his purpose. Rushdie’s books are considered as a fictional representation of the postmodernist celebration of fragmentation, multiplicity, and self – reflexivity. Rushdie’s perception that all narratives are susceptible to being rewritten, his insistence of the “provisional nature of all truths” and his narrativization of “slices” in the form of “fragments of broken mirror” also refurbish his disposition towards postmodernism. Critics have written about his multiple literary influences, his fusion of Indian oral tradition and western novel genre and his innovative use of language. Everybody in India, was not, however, amused by the book’s commercial success.

Some severely criticized its “chutnification” of Indian history while others challenged Rushdie’s claim for radical innovations in language and style. It was argued that Rushdie could not be considered as Indian author because of his outsider position and that the success of *The Midnight’s Children* was largely due to international publicity. But few people now deny its influence on younger writers for whom the book released a new spring of creativity and heralded a spirit of freedom. A whole generation of young, and largely male, authors (Amitav Ghosh, Allan Sealy, Shashi Tharoor, Mukul Kesavan, Rohinton Mistry, Vikram Seth, Vikram Chandra etc.) followed in his footsteps.

There are some reasons to consider Salman Rushdie as a major writer that the first one, Rushdie opened up the English language, and sent it soaring. To give just one aspect of this, earlier writers from the Asian and African wings of the empire used to include glossaries to explicate vernacular words and idioms; Rushdie’s immediate predecessors, such as Chinua Achebe, for example, explained their vernacular terms within the body of the text. Rushdie, on the other hand, has used Indian and Indianised terminology without explication and thus has expanded the frontiers of the English language.

Secondly, Rushdie opened up the linguistic arena started off as a “counterpoint” or counter voice within the imperial discourse soon because of a full-fledged counter-discourse. His *The Satanic Verses* had major breakthroughs in literary theory made by postcolonial critics. To name just a few of the critical volumes that have become an indispensable part of post colonial critical collection are Gauri Viswanathan’s *Mask’s of conquests* (1989), Aijaz Ahmad’s. In theory Javed Majeed’s *ungoverned Imaginings*, Partha Chatterji’s. The nation and its fragments are all in 1992 and Home Bhabha’s *location of culture* in 1994.

Thirdly, in the feminist discourse we often quote Adrienne Rich's words, "the personal is political". The reception of Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* has shown that one could well say "the religious is political"; religion and politics intersect at a personal and inescapable level in the Indian sub-continent and this is something that the west generally responds to in a rather Orientalist manner; there is a deep divide between the western nations have not quite comprehended. The controversy over *The Satanic Verses* has shown the strength of the pan-Islamic movement in today's world. The western nations have not quite grasped the import of the spread of this pan – Islamic movement and they had better do so if they have to function effectively in the political arena.

Fourth is "The - We they paradigm in Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*". In this concept, Rushdie is one of "us", a spokesperson for the colonized and the immigrant, as against one of "them", the Eurocentric imperialists. This persona is an Indian in India responding in Indian – English to the controversy surrounding the banning of *The Satanic Verses*, and this persona's view is that Rushdie has lost touch with political realities in India and with the religion of his fathers. Rushdie uses public politics and private relationships as a symbiotic and contrapuntal movement so that his novels embody the life of a community. Rushdie himself has been – rather impatient when anyone mentions the allegorical content of his fiction. In that same interview in Kunapipi, he said that Indians tend to take everything as allegory, and he dismisses that preoccupation as unworthy of comment. But, despite Rushdie's impatience with the charge of allegory, it is all too clear that his writings are developed around an allegory.

Rushdie's allegorization succeeds most of the time because of the open – endedness of his allegories. He uses historical real-life events but never lingers long on any specific allegorical parallels, and develops open-ended metaphors instead. The perforated sheet, which is significant image placed at the beginning of *The Midnight's Children*, is a metaphor that works at many levels. Rushdie's delineation of women is very sympathetic, and that he makes his women stronger than their men because he knows the strength of women. But one could argue with equal fervor that Rushdie is misogynistic. He uses various narrative strands interweave themes of mimicry, parody, magical-realism, fairytales, intrusive and unreliable narrators, histories and palimpsests.

Rushdie used many Hindi and Urdu words, and he has added no notes or glossary to explain them fully to western readers and he does not think it necessary to provide explanations. Rushdie rather thinks that the text of the novel should be self-explanatory and be absorbing in itself. Rushdie's English is an example of the hybrid discourses of a cosmopolitan writer. The English of Rushdie is decidedly postcolonial and postmodern. And his skill gives us glimpses into his conscious craftsmanship, which aims at decentring and hybridity. Occasionally, Rushdie resorts to deliberate misspellings of words. Examples are "unquestionabel" "straange" "existance" etc He also uses some incorrect words, from the grammatical viewpoint, such as "mens" "lifeliness" and "pieces of information". We also discover certain lapses of grammar, in the novel, such as in "Aug 15th 1947", and June 25th, 1975 " and no use of the article "the" before "Emergency".

Rushdie says that his novel is not about Islam, but about migration. But Islam is partly about migration and asylum. The Muslim calendar does not begin with the birth of Muhammed. It does not begin with the first revelation of the Q'uran-the day he became a prophet. The

Islamic calendar begins with the day Mohammed migrated from Mecca and Medina. The principle of asylum is celebrated in the concept of hijra. Rushdie makes his prophet Mahound say that there is no difference between writers and whores. It is true that some writers prostitute themselves. Rushdie himself has been accused of that, as he enriched himself at the expense of the dignity of others. Rushdie's "The Satanic Verses" is still being critical of that heritage(respect to Islam). But he could write a novel with respectful of Islam, and Westerners would not have amused less. Rushdie himself says in Shame:"...every story one chooses to tell is a kind of censorship, it prevents the telling of other tales".(Shame p,28)

Yet Rushdie makes fun of the hijra. He makes his poet Baal compose a valedictory ode after Mahound's departure from Jahiliya(Mecca): "What kind of idea does "submission (Islam) seem today? One full of fear an idea that runs away"(The Satanic Verses,p.126)

Of course, Rushdie did not know that within a few months of publishing those lines, he himself would go into hiding, and issue a Satanic Verses of apology from his hiding place.

Rushdie's references to Hindu's God and mythological legends are completely devoid of respects. The readers of the novel often confront with names such as Hanuman, Gautam, Krishna, Vishnu, Ramayan etc. Lord Krishna's indulgence in the romance with "Gopis" is mentioned in the novel without any fictional change. Rushdie characterizes Gibreel, who acts as a "Lord Ganesa" in films, is seen to be a man of easy virtue who had so many sexual partners that it was uncommon for him. Rushdie compares "Lord Krishna" in the novel with "Lord Buddha" who meditates up to the utmost human sufferings beneath "Bodhi-tree".

Rushdie's novel, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*(1999) refers also to fictitious character Pilloo Dudhwala embroiled in a certain "goat-scam". While the character itself drew enough similarity from the more recent fodder scam and Laloo Prasad Yadav, for the more enlightened in the audience, it went on also to name the Gandhi brothers as previous master scamsters. His latest book *Temple Bar Music Centre*(1999) also highlighted corruption in Indian politics, naming Sanjay Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi in the Maruti and Bofors scam.

Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* has erupted volcanic protests throughout the world mainly because he has used some insulting words for Mohammad's wives and Mohammad. The wives of Mohammed, while living in the harem, were shown to talk about money, fucking and sex. Their indulgence in sex is also abnormal. The young girls of the harem were sometimes referred sarcastically as "butter-flies". Some words and phrases, such as "butterflies""asking to be consumed" etc also ironically bear the double meanings. So Rushdie was condemned worldwide for misrepresenting Islam and the Koranic messages. In chapter six, the death of prophet is described and the last words put into his mouth are his thanks to the heathen goddess(i.e) Al-Lat.

This is offensive to an orthodox Muslim fundamentalist as would be a fictional account of Mahatma Gandhi's death, where it be suggested that, "get me ox soup". The reference to the prophet Mohammed, although named as "Mohound" and his wives as prostitutes were the greatest offensive act against Islam. Rushdie, however, denies the charges in an interview to "The Mail"(June 18, 1989) and says, "there are a lot of specific accusations against *The Satanic*

Verses, for instance, that I have called prophet's wives prostitutes which actually I have not. Another is that I have used the name "Mohound".

Thus, Rushdie has dealt much controversial matters and narrative techniques in his novels. So he could be treated as the controversial writer and also a major writer and ranked among the best contemporary writer of the world like Milan Kundera; Gracia Marquez, Gunter Grass, John Irving, V.S.Naipaul, Arundhati Roy and Vikram Seth.

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