



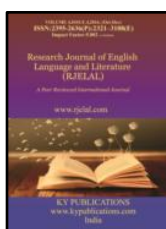
INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

2395-2636 (Print);2321-3108 (online)

INCOGNITO AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ELEMENTS IN TWO YEARS EIGHT MONTHS AND TWENTY EIGHT DAYS

Dr. WAHAJ UNNISA WARDA

Email: wahajunnisawarda@gmail.com



ABSTRACT

The novel by Salman Rushdie "Two Years Eight Months and Twenty Eight Days" is a story dating back to 1195, about a great philosopher Ibn Rushd a judge of Seville, Spain, who in reality was also known as Averroes, he was discredited, all his writings burnt and disgraced on account of his liberal ideas which were unacceptable to the new ruler. Ibn Rushd was sent into internal exile in a village of Lucena. The plight of the migrant is always present in this novel the process of self change becomes obvious especially the passage from fame to anonymity, which in reality is just biding time. Ibn Rushd gains productivity of his migrancy when he sees the sixteen year old girl at his door. The plurality of the migrant's experiences one of loss and the other of looking forward to the new future and possibilities. The many stories constitute Rushdie's version of history, plurality of meaning and leitmotifs create a loosely coherent whole, where the experiences can be described as his own.

Key Words- Migrant, migrants, exile, anonymity, plurality, leitmotifs

The novel "Two Years Eight Months And Twenty Eight Days" by Salman Rushdie is a story with historical and political influences on his narrative. Though Rushdie has described it as a more comical story than he had ever written before it shows that he is still looking for his cultural identity, and has no definite structure but chaos.

This story dates back to 1195, about a great philosopher Ibn Rushd a judge of Seville, Spain, who in reality is also known as Averroes, was discredited all his writings burnt and disgraced on account of his liberal ideas which were unacceptable to the new ruler. The autobiographical here is in the sense of retracing being pushed into exile of his fall from grace. Ibn Rushd was sent into internal exile in a village of Lucena a village full of Jews, which according to the story were not allowed to say who they were, and similarly Ibn Rushd became a person one among them satisfied in his anonymity, who

administered medicine and indulged in small scale business of trading horses and making large earthen urns used to store olive oil. Ibn Rushd knew he was an intellectual and not a man of trade. Migrancy is always present in this novel the process of self change becomes obvious especially this one the passage from fame to anonymity, which in reality was biding his time. He gains productivity of his migrancy his disillusionment ends when he sees the sixteen year old at his door, who in reality was a jinni princess. The plurality of the migrants experience one of loss and the other of looking forward to the new future and possibilities.

Plurality of cultures, heterogeneity, superabundance, Rushdie occupies both the positions of the story teller he tells stories from the Indian, Pakistani, British and then American perspective. India a country where he was born Britain for his education 1964 Pakistan where his

family moved to, England again the land of his exile and then New York, USA, where he chose to live to truly leave post colonialism behind. Self conscious of his displacement as Rushdie and the Jinni who had left her world to inhabit this one for its pleasures and adventures with the most learned companion she could find.

Rushdie loves to play with his name even making his alias Joseph Anton a celebrity all over again. He had to give up his own name and identity and give himself a new name, he had to create his own identity. The master of magic realism had to find the magic to create his own reality. He tried to invent his name from the Urdu language considering Mr.Ajeeb Mamouli which in English would be Mr.Strange Normal, a changing contradiction. But he was compelled to change it for it sounded too Asian. He had a choice of identities to decide which he would like to acquire. To have lived in a world where ordered to give up his name.

Here he calls the main character Ibn Rushd which literally translates from Arabic as son of Rushd which can be placed as his own name. The fact that Ibn Rushd was confined to a village living in a small house with small windows and he was very conscious of the absence of light.

There was a deep, sad wound in him, because he was a defeated man, had lost the great battle of his life to a dead Persian, Ghazali of Tus, an adversary who had been dead for eighty-five years. A hundred years earlier, Ghazali had written a book called "The Incoherence of the Philosophers," in which he attacked Greeks like Aristotle, the Neoplatonists, and their allies, Ibn Rushd's great precursors Ibn Sina and al-Farabi. Ghazali had suffered a crisis of belief at one point, but had recovered with such conviction that he became the greatest scourge of philosophy in the history of the world. Philosophy, he jeered, was incapable of proving the existence of God, or even of proving the impossibility of there being two gods. Philosophy believed in the inevitability of causes and effects, which was an insult to the power of God, who

could easily intervene to make causes ineffectual and alter effects if He so chose.

Light is always suggestive of knowledge and freedom.

When the writer was himself in hiding brought about by the Iranian Fatwa from the year 1989-1998, compelled to be surrounded by security and unable to express his thoughts and writing are also suggested. The different professions of Ibn Rushd did were compared to the lectures and businesses other than his primary writing. The multiplicity of children being produced was equivalent to the problems that had arisen after the publication of his controversial work, but he was too occupied with other trivial matters that drew his attention he had to evolve to stay aloft to face the realities on the ground which he didn't. He correlates himself to Ibn Rushd saying that he was "too thin skinned, far sighted, loose tongued," he said "is to feel too sharply, see too clearly, speak too freely" finding fault with himself for not being thick skinned to the circumstances. The multiples of children born from the jinn Duniya can be correlated to his book and the cost that came so heavily upon him. The name Duniya basically means the world, universe, temporal world and all its possessions. Its root word being 'dana' meaning near which in the word duniya connotes to being brought near. Walter Benjamin proposes that translation is not a simple movement between words perceived to be equivalent in different languages. There is no secure passageway between languages. The moment the translation is really literally, word by word, the meaning completely disappears. Thus the meaning can only be approximated.

It could mean that Ibn Rushd was looking for his success and the favours that he once enjoyed. The power of his knowledge, being brought down to the consequences where he is fearful of acknowledging who he was, when he was condemned he chose to live in an area where everyone was someone and now was someone else and they couldn't say who. When he was freed from exile he thought he could leave his work behind. And consider it as best forgotten and move on with his life and future. That he had just woken up from a night mare. Strangely the number of people who

surrounded him during his time in hiding could be the picture he drew about Duniya's semi mortal semi Jinn brood. Because Jinn's are supposed to be either good or bad. And it was for the mortals to decide if they were good or bad ones. The constant commotion around Ibn Rushd the sounds of the children, he needed peace and was in all hurry to leave them behind. Just like his name remained connected to his book but he would best leave it behind him. The interview Rushdie gave to Spiegel online can easily be correlated to what he experienced. That he never got used to that kind of existence and did not allow to accept it as his life and was trying hard to end it all. The daily struggles to get on with his life are comparable to the encounters of the Jinn and Ibn Rushd. But as with Duniya's children who had multiplied, the controversies only grew. The demand of having written a controversial book became so demanding upon him that he was unable to fully access what he had done and where it would lead him. If he wanted to ignore and stay away from all the problems his book didn't let him be away.

The justification he twists and turns in his mind about his creativity were reason, logic and science which are the keywords, he is trying to convince himself about what he has done and why he has done it. If not to the world he is trying to repeat the mantra so that he can finally believe. Just like Ibn Rushd who felt lonely and isolated with his attractive companion and sought refuge in his thoughts and philosophy very similar to Rushdie during his time in hiding.

After learning all the repercussions, caught in the eye of the storm which he had hoped would die down and maybe contemplated events of the few days he had hoped to forget them but when things seemed to catch momentum and got worse he realised that everything had not only gone out of hand but beyond control and the path was whirling out and he felt doomed.

In the story after a period of two years eight months and twenty eight days exactly 1001 nights and days, Ibn Rushd left without breakfast or saying goodbye, was he wanted to get over with what he had done as though he had never done it. Rushdie's own prominence was 'The Midnight's

Children' after which he wrote the book toppling his life around, he was keen to move on leaving his English wife and taking a new partner and new muse. The illusion to 1001 nights, where he was trying to differentiate where his own life had got mixed between fact and fiction.

More beautiful even than the stories within stories was the story of the storyteller, a queen called Shahrazad or Scheherazade, who told her tales to a murderous husband to keep him from executing her. Stories told to defeat death, to civilize a barbarian. And at the foot of the marital bed sat Scheherazade's sister, her perfect audience, asking for one more story, and then one more, and then yet another.

He could not figure out where one ended and the other began. That he sought refuge in fiction turning it to his own reality. The way he had assimilated his Kashmiri, Indian, English, Pakistani, Persian and Arabic knowledge and cultures creating an imaginary world where Sheherzaad told stories and became more and more wayward losing direction as he groped and struggled to come to terms living a claustrophobic existence fleeing from one safe house to another. A skill a gift which could have been used in a constructive way but he used it to self destruct. Sheherzaad and Rushdie shared the similarity where she wove stories to save herself from her murderous husband. Rushdie wove stories and speeches which instead of relieving him put him in the vortex. The master of magic realism uses the realism of his own life and mixes the magic. And lets the magic have its own meaning, ideal of creating a form that preserves its values of superabundance and difference.

Rukhmani Bhaya Nair argued that involvement with history ultimately destroys Rushdie's protagonists but not before they have raised fundamental doubts in the readers minds about their own historical certainties.

Works Cited

Benjamin, Walter. "The Origin of German Tragic Drama". London, Verso, 1977.

Nair, Rukhmani Bhaya. "Text And Pre Text History as Gossip in Rushdie's Novels".

Economic and Political Weekly Vol. 24, XVIII

– pp 994-1000, 1989.

A word with Salman Rushdie; Life during the Fatwa:

Hiding in a World Newly Broken. New

York Edition, 2012.

Rushdie, Salman. *Two Years, Eight Months and*

Twenty Eight Days. Random House

Publishers, 2015.

Speigel Online Interview.

<https://www.npr.org/2015/09/05/4373141>

18/salman-rushdie-these-days-everyone-is-

upset-all-the-time,22 Sep2012.
