



Evolution of Salman Rushdie as a Novelist in Post Colonial Writing

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Abstract

In his literary works, Rushdie deals with the concept of nationalism, history, politics, culture, migration, colonial and postcolonial power structures, freedom of speech and identity. His works provide expression to the extensive cultural, historical, religious and political concerns of the Indian Subcontinent. Most of his literary works set in Indian subcontinent handle the sociopolitical matters of the subcontinent. His works are the fine blending of facts and fiction, as such Rushdie efficiently handled the use of myth, tool of irony, parody and fragmentation to emphasize political evils, hegemony of authority, orthodox society, and corruption in social and political arena and plights of the marginalized, in his works.

Key words: culture, postcolonial, literature, language, history, politics, migration.

Salman Rushdie is one such distinguished and applauded author of Indian novels. He has thirteen novels to his credit: *Grimus* (1975), *Midnight's Children* (1981), *Shame* (1983), *The Satanic Verses* (1988), *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (1990), *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995), *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999), *Fury* (2001), *Shalimar the Clown* (2005), *The Enchantress of Florence* (2008), *Luka and the Fire of Life* (2010), *Two Years Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Nights* (2015) and the most current one *The Golden House* (2017). He has additionally authored *East West* (a collection of short stories, 1994) and nonfictional works which encompass *The Jaguar Smile: A Nicaraguan Journey* (1987), *Step Across This Line: Collected Nonfiction 1992-2002* (2002), *Wizard of Oz* and *Joseph Anton: A Memoir* (2012). He has co-edited an anthology *Mirror Work: 50 Years of Indian Writing 1947-1997* (1997), *The Best American Short Stories* (2008 as guest editor) and *Homeless via Choice* (1992, with R. P. Jhabvala and V.S. Naipaul)

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Rushdie's works may be examined within two narrative frames of tradition, the Eastern and

the Western. His narrative fashion no longer best subverts however additionally interrogates conventional writing traditions and discourses in the process of writing. Rushdie is acclaimed for his labors for giving Indian touch to the English language in his literary corpus. His English reflects the socio-political issues of the Indian subcontinent. Rushdie's first literary venture *Grimus*, a sci-fi is set in an imaginary island. This fantasy novel is influenced by a twelfth century Sufi narrative poem 'The conference of the Birds'. It narrates the tale of Flapping Eagle, an immortal American Indian who ventures a journey to discover the meaning of life. The novel did not impress the critics.

It was only through the publication of extensively acclaimed *Midnight's Children* in 1981 which brought laurels to Rushdie. The novel has grabbed Booker and James Tait Black Memorial Prize (for fiction) in 1981. The publication of *Midnight's Children* stormed the global literary domain and directed new vistas to Indian English novel. *Midnight's Children* narrates the accounts of the Indian subcontinent from the point of view of its main character Saleem Sinai who was born at the stroke of midnight of August 15, 1947 when India achieved freedom from the British rule. The novel is a famous tale of three generations of Saleem Sinai's family which relates to the history of India from 1915 to 1977.

Rushdie's third novel *Shame* (1983) is a parody on political condition of Pakistan. It portrays a specific period from Pakistan's History by narrating the family drama of Raza Hyder and Iskander Harappa whose characters are supposed to be based on President Zia Ul-Haq and Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Government of Pakistan imposed ban on *Shame*

The book bagged the French literary prize Prix du Meilleur Livre Étranger (Best foreign book) and was also a close runner up for the prestigious Booker Prize. In 1988, the appearance of most controversial novel *The Satanic Verses* causes indignation amongst Muslim world for its fictional rewriting of an event from Islamic history which was struck out by later Islamic historians.

Living under the constant fear of death, Rushdie occasionally used to appear with high security. Irrespective of such life threatening circumstances, Rushdie never remained dormant in terms of his creativity. He was still focusing on his writings.

Rushdie's fifth novel *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, published in 1990, is a fantasy devoted to his son Zafar. The novel is inspired by the children's literature which exposes the story of Haroun and his Journey to the valley of K to return his father's stories to him. Without which, Rashid reveals that he cannot justify his life. This novel is an amusement for the children and appeals to adults as well.

Narrating the wonderful story, within the course of the novel, Rushdie remarks on myriad elements like reading, significance of fiction, speech, role of the writer, stories, censorship, stupidity of war etc. The novel obtained the *Writers' Guild Award for Best Children Book*. The novel displays his own experience of censorship of speech resulting from the Fatwa of Ayatollah.

Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991 published in 1991 after the publication of *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*. This collection of essays discloses Rushdie's interpretations on variety of themes such as migrancy, exile, literature, cinema, racial prejudices in England, politics and religion in India, his view on associated authors. This collection offers valuable comprehensions to recognise Rushdie's imaginary world.

Rushdie's fifth novel *The Moor's Last Sigh* is set in Bombay, just like *Midnight's Children* but the setup of Bombay of *The Moor's Last Sigh* is different from that of Saleem. It is a Bombay of postcolonial India which exposes its Portuguese connections and in which communalism and religious abhorrence display its hazardous consequence. The storyline follows the technique of *Midnight's Children* and speaks some of the concerns already deliberated in *Midnight's Children*. The novel was nominated for *Booker Prize* and grabbed a prestigious *Whitebread Novel Award* and *British Book Award's Author* of the year. The novel created storm in the minds of few religion fundamentalists in India.

In 1999 appeared Rushdie's sixth novel *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*. The novel is reconstruction of the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice in the perspective of contemporary rock music. The pair of Orpheus and Eurydice is reformed through the pair of Ormus, Camaand Vina Apsara .The novel comprises a range of references traversing from Greek myth, European philosophy to the famous men of culture.

His next novel *Fury*, published in 2001 is set in New York. The story revolves around, a middle aged, Bombay born intellectual man Malik Solanka, who is striving to escape from himself. His conception 'Little Brain', a philosophical animated doll is very famous. Rushdie handle various themes like exile, migration and rootlessness in the novel.

Shalimar the Clown appeared in 2005 has been acclaimed as the *Book of the Year* by *Time*. It earned Vodafone Crossword Book Award, and was also nominated for the *Man Booker Award*. The personal lives of the characters move parallel with the actions of contemporary world which is under the threat of terrorism. *The Enchantress of Florence* appeared in 2008 as the ninth novel of Salman Rushdie.

The story is set amidst the sixteenth century Renaissance era and Mughal era of Emperor Akbar. The story is splendid intermingling of history, epic, fiction and fable written under the impression of Postmodernism.

Luka and the Fire of Life published in 2010, which is supposed to be the sequel of *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*. Rushdie has composed this novel for his younger son Milan. Rushdie has shaped a magnificent realism of magic, imagination, bursting with mythical allusions, allegorical figures and location.

Many honours and awards bestowed upon Salman Rushdie by different countries and institution. Above all, his *Midnight's Children* has been conferred with *Booker*, *Booker of Bookers* and *Best of Bookers* for best novel in the history of *Booker Prize*.

He was endowed with Knighthood in 2007 for his service to literature. He enjoys the honorary

doctorates and Fellowships at six European and Six American Universities. He offered his services as *President of PEN American Center* between 2004 and 2006 and enjoyed the privilege as the *Chairman of the PEN World Voices International Literary Festival* for ten years. In 2008 he became a member of the *American Academy of Arts and Letters* and was named a *Library Lion of the New York Public Library*.

Salman Rushdie's techniques for crafting characters in his novels is spellbinding. The influence of this multiplicity in Indian milieu had on his thoughts which additionally got deliberated in his writings. He is influenced profoundly by the different cultures of the east and the west. It is aptly clear from his writings that he has great dislike for religious fanaticism and dogmatism. His themes, characters, dialogues and straightforward statements are able to carry the feelings and atmosphere of the Indian sub-continent. His novels are characterized by secular. fantasy that is the result of his deep thinking, which has a kind of stimulating effect on the politically conscious mind.

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