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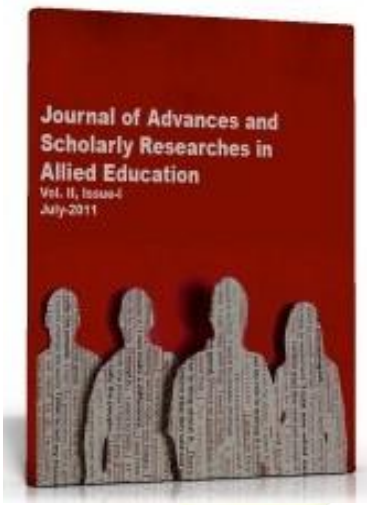
Geographical and Literary Lineage in TE Works of Salman Rushdie



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ABSTRACT

Michael J. Sandel in his book entitled Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy writes:

The global media and markets that shape our lives beckon us to a world beyond boundaries and belonging. But the civic resources we need to in the places and stories, memories and meanings, incidents and identities, that situate us in the world and give our lives their moral particularity. (349)

This does not rule out global systems but posits a network of the global, the national and the local. **In** it, while we remain encumbered in our local communities we also recognize other loyalties, and negotiate our way intelligently between them. To quote Sandel again,

Self government today requires a politics that plays itself out in a multiplicity of settings, from neighborhoods to nations to the world as a whole ... The civic virtue distinctive to our time is the

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capacity to negotiate our way among the sometimes overlapping, sometimes conflicting obligations that claim us, and to live with the tension to which multiple loyalties give rise. (350)

Salman Rushdie could be best described as having multiple loyalties, even multiple belongings - to India, to Britain, to the world - rather than as having none at all. Pico Iyer, a dislocated, displaced, and deracinated man, rightly salutes his fellows when he describes Rushdie as 'a connoisseur of dislocation' (148), and Michael Ondaatje as coming from a family of' deracinated cosmopolitans' (136).

Rushdie vividly describes the magic of India:

Well, I think India is an assault on your senses. When you go to India, India is not a low key country. India is a country with a volume control turned up to maximum, with the smell control turned up to maximum. Everything is excess. It's that thing that India overwhelms you ---- the sights of it, the sounds of it, the smells of it, the taste of it, the touch, the feel of it.... (Conversations with Rushdie 205)

The original motivation behind the novel even before Rushdie had thought of the plot or anything else is the vision of this wonderful city of Bombay of the fifties and sixties (now renamed and popular as Mumbai) which is frozen in his memory. Bombay, a hybrid and the cosmopolitan city with its composite and secular culture becomes, for Saleem, a metaphor for the multiplicity of India. Rushdie himself claims Midnight's Children to be his first attempt to capture and celebrate 'freedom' of the secular broad- minded Bombay (Step 195). Midnight's Children narrates the experiences of three generations of the Sinai family living in Srinagar, Amritsar and Agra and then in Bombay and finally in Karachi. Rushdie has the familial affection with the city of Mumbai, which participates in his autobiographical as well as political narration. In one of his interviews, he admits that every visit to Bombay for him is like 'homecoming.' Bombay has been focused due to its secularism; the place is so multiple that it is impossible to be dogmatic about anyone thing. He has tried to give, in brief, the historical and the geographical sketch of Bombay.

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The topographical Bombay, merged with somatic nation as 'Bombayness' is not powerful enough to overwhelm the country's 'powers of dilution' (Moor's 351). In Midnight's Children Rushdie coins the term 'Bombayness' to encapsulate the whole value system; its multiplicity, pluralist secularity, its ability to contain diverse and contradictory realities. He emotionally gives the topographical details with its locales, myths, legends, and also its historical facts.

Rushdie devotes a part of the novel to Sunderbans, which he calls the descent into the inferno. The 'Hell' chapter is not about the jungle, but 'the hell' is what the jungle tells them about themselves. It is an internal hell that the jungle externalizes. Rushdie fixes this in his fiction as some fantasy or nightmare and the portrayal in the novel suggests to the readers that there has to be some real place called Sunderbans located on the geographical map of India. Rushdie in one of his interviews explains that he has lent objectivity to the place by making it somewhat unreliable. It is an open version for the readers to believe or not, which saves it from a sounding oracle.

Rushdie with his characteristic metaphysical wit, violently yokes together heterogeneous elements, Saleem Sinai's face is represented as bearing a remarkable resemblance to the map of India. The demented schoolteacher draws a brilliant connection between the two:

"These stains," he cries, "are Pakistan! Thees birthmark on the right ear is the East Wing; and thees horrible stained left cheek, the West!" Remember, stupid boys:- Pakistan ees a stain on the face of India! (Midnight's Children 277)

The teacher through the geographical connotations candidly points out the political implications, and the baldness on Saleem's head seems to suggest the problem of Kashmir. Rushdie gives us the image of Kashmir as place where there is violence, anny caravans and innocent killings. Rushdie expresses his affection for Kashmir in his interview with S. Prasannarajan in the magazine India Today:

I have always wanted to write about Kashmir. Yes, there's the beginning of Midnight's Children, and Haroun and the Sea of Stories is a dream of Kashmir, but I wanted to make the subject of Kashmir central to a novel, and it has taken me this long to figure out how. (89)

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He fulfills this desire in his latest novel Shalimar the Clown and he shows his concern later in the same interview when he is asked about the idea that killed the Kashmir of his memory. He replies that 'Ideas didn't kill that old Kashmir. Greed killed it, greed for possession, Indian and Pakistani greed.' Whenever Rushdie deals with any place in his novels we can instantly and deeply feel his sense of belongingness to that place.

In the chapter 'Methwold' of Midnight's Children the origin of the city Bombay, its adaptation of the new name, reasons behind it and the geographical details are brought into focus. We are told that fishermen known as Kolis were the original inhabitants of the city; it was a dumbell-shaped island tapering at the center. It was the finest and the largest natural harbour in Asia before the Reclamation. Initially the name was after the goddess Mumbadevi but under Portuguese the name that became popular was Bombay. The city that was, and its growth at the breakneck speed is also elaborated to the readers. And Kolis that are now squashed into a tiny village in the thumb of the hand-like peninsula give it the name - Colaba. He also regretfully describes the successive invasion of the city that displaced its earliest inhabitants, the Koli fisherfolk.

In the due course of the novel Rushdis makes readers travel through many places. On the roads they come across many landmarks of Mumbai which guide characters/ readers to reach somewhere and these are the places that any native of that city can really associate him with and this helps in convincing the foreign readers also. The places and landmarks like Warden Road, Mahalaxmi Temple, Willingdon Club golf-course, Hornby Vellard, Vallabhbhai Patel Stadium with the giant Bano Devi and the mighty Dara Singh on the posters are as popular and familiar to foreigners as to natives. They, too, can associate themselves with these places while reading the novel.

Not only the landmarks of the city Bombay, but even roadside shops that led to Methwold Estate are mentioned. This is exactly a nostalgic invitation to the people who were once residents of the city. The exact location of the Estate is explained. It looked down on Breach Candy Swimming

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Club which was exclusive for the British. Many a times we are given details, which make the story seem factual. Even the Methwold's Estate has been treated in detail.

At more than one place the history of Bombay is traced: somewhere Rushdie picks up the political rule and at others he deals with the geographical aspects. While looking at the tomb of the Haji Ali, Narlikar feels remorse at the eternal struggle 0; the land and sea and draws the somatic history of the city. We are told that 'once there were seven islands, Worli, Mahim, Salsette, Matunga, Colaba, Mazagaon, and Bombay. The British joined them up.' (Midnight's Children 156)

On discussing the hot weather of 1956 with the language marchers we get to know about the vegetation that proliferates in such weather, that the crops that grow best are cane sugar, coconut palm and certain millets. Our knowledge is enriched by the information that our land is world's second producer of cotton. Whether these geographical details are the exhibition of Rushdie's knowledge or an attempt to make the foreigners feel like home is for the readers to decide. Rushdie visits and re-visits places that he wants to use in his novels and also some places, which he suspects that he might use, like for instance, Benaras - whose hostel of bereaved women he uses in Midnight's Children.

Peeping into the family affairs through the washing chest, Saleem, the narrator in Midnight's Children, switches over from private to public affairs of India, spying into the communal intimacy. To escape peer pressures he moves out of the closet of his family and practices his art of eavesdropping on the strangers. With this move he captures the whole of India giving geographical details, imbued with the historical, the social and the political ones. He gives the glimpse of Taj Mahal in north and Meenakshi Temple in the south. Sometimes as a tourist, and sometimes as an autorickshaw driver he tours Connaught Place. He puts himself in everybody's shoes and gives us the view through the eyes of the locals. If a rickshaw-waUah complains about the low fares against the rising price of gasoline, he gives a thorough cross-section of the society. And again he mentions about people who sleep in a section of drainpipe. He is a fisherwoman in Cape Comorin whose sari was as 'tight as her morals were loose....' From a writer he instantly

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becomes an avid traveller flirting with Dravidian beachcombers, being with a Goojar tribe, enjoying the glory of Kolakoi glacier. He is a handicraft woman of Jaisalmer and also an embarrased youth in Khajuraho and the Tantric Carvings on the Chandela Temples. He gives all colours of India in his snapshots. Not only he eases his curiosity with his travel, he leaps into the world of film stars and cricketers, reading gossip-magazines before he touches upon politics. He also presents the social picture of India with a huge economic gap - Uttar Pradesh with a big belly landlord to the people starving in Orissa.

Saleem compares his secret traveling through the byways of his city to the legendry Caliph, Haroun-al-Rashid but unlike him he would not have enjoyed moving around much. This legendary character is dissected into two characters, the father and the son duo in his other novel which finds place in the children literature, Haroun and the Sea a/Stories.

Rushdie in the circuitous journey moves his story in roundabouts where recurrences and crossing roads are not uncommon. He describes Rann of Kutch - a magical name for the chameleon area which is land for half the year and sea for the other half and this amphibian terrain has fabulous debris abandoned by the receding ocean. Saleem on his voyage to Pakistan in the commander's namesake ship S.S.Sabarmati comments that there is 'no escape from recurrence' (Midnight's Children 342). When Saleem hears about going back to Bombay after the stay in Rawalpindi for about four years he enjoys his 'rainbow' city after the landing and is happy to leave the city which 'looks like a village' (Midnight 's Children 356). We can very well judge the author's inclination towards the Indian city in comparison to its counterpart in Pakistan.

Very often his pertinent use of the rhetoric makes the account of the city very graphic. For example the riot of Amritsar is made very lucid and picturesque:

Amritsar dung was fresh and (worse) redundant. Nor was it all bovine. It issued from the rumps of the horses between the shafts of the city's many tongas, ikkas and gharries, and mules and men and dogs attended nature's calls, mingling in a brotherhood of shit. (Midnight's Children 31)

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Similar descriptions are found in regard to the city of Karachi also. Through such juxtapositions where mules, men and dogs are merged into one brotherhood he ventilates his disgust with the cities in India as well as those in Pakistan.

We are also made to judge the sensitivity of the place by the change in the trait of the character as we are told that Ahmed who was once a Delhi man, has now become a true Bombay Muslim at heart who places cash matters above most other things.

In comparison to Bombay, Rushdie finds in Karachi no urban culture but instead a repression of culture. In his next novel Shame where the geographical humour adds on to the political satire. For Shame, he says in the book itself that Pakistan is a place he had grown to have affection for. (italics mine)

Unlike Midnight's Children, Shame is riddled with the images of the empty, labyrinthine houses in remote places and frontiers surrounded by nothingness. Raza Hyder, the future ruler of Pakistan has succeeded in capturing 'a mountain valley so high and inaccessible that even goats had difficulty in breathing up there; ...' (Shame 79). This mountainous terrain is mock-heroically named Aansu-ki-Waddi (Valley of Tears) and the hero is nicknamed as hero of Aansu fame.

Mohenjo and Daro estates are the geographical subversive motifs, two estates of the ancient city of Harappa civilization. These are ancient civilizations of the past but Rushdie has used them ironically i'n his works as symbols of stagnation and barbarians whereas, in fact they were advanced cultures that flourished in primitive times.

The remote border town of Q., with which the novel Shame starts, resembles an ill proportioned dumb-bell, on one orb of the dumb-bell is Cantonment district and on the other old city bazaar. The house inhabited by the grandfather of the narrator and his mothers was equidistant from both worlds and towards Cantonment were Hotel Palladian and Hotel Flashman. To authenticate the validity of the town we have customs official, Farah Rodrigues' father posted at the border forty miles to the west of Q. With a passage of few pages in the novel, Rushdie clarifies that this place Q. is not really Quetta but "I shall call it Karachi. And it will contain a 'Defence'" (Shame 29).

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The country of A. is also mentioned which was attacked by the Russian army and later in the same paragraph it is hinted that Cabul is the capital city of A. So the readers can wrack their brains and test their general knowledge that the country which starts with alphabet A. and has Cabul as its capital would definitely be Afghanistan and can check the historical fact if it was ever attacked by Russian army.

In The Moor's Last Sigh, Rushdie turns to Malabar, one of the earliest roots of colonial India that has come to deserve his attention. The story meanders, twists, turns and sometimes cascades in typical Rushdie style, as the scene cuts to Cochin, then to Bombay and finally to Andalusia. Rushdie' s plot moves from the marginal Cabral Island to the metropolis Malabar Hill, Bombay and then steps out of the frame; goes abroad to, 'Little Alhambra' in Benengeli, Spain. The location transits from the east to the west. This structural movement alludes to the author's diasporic (or exilic) itinerary and his ambition to deal with more complicated, variegated human expenences.

The geographical expanse seems to increase with each successive novel. If Bombay is vividly presented in Midnight's Children, Shame presents before us Pakistan and its cities and Afghanistan gets a mention too. But The Moor 's Last Sigh altogether travels across the continent, after describing the Indian cities of Bombay and Malabar, to reach Spain.

The Moor's Last Sigh is an attempt to capture changes that have taken place in the cosmopolitan city of Mumbai. This novel may well be seen as a complex elegy for the loss of the city's earlier identity, including its name. It is very interesting to note that catering to Rushdie's palimpsestual needs Bombay has been again renamed as Mumbai. 'Bombay' is the corruption of Portuguese word Bombahai meaning 'good bay' and this got culturally transformed to the original Mumbai named after Mumba-Devi.

Aurora's paintings depict Bombay landscape blending into an Arabian seascape, with 'strange composite creatures slithered to and fro across the frontier of the elements' (The Moor's Last Sigh 226). The dividing line of the water was the focus as it presents life both in sea and water --

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'figures from history or fantasy or current affairs or nowhere, crowded towards the water like the real-life Bombayites on the beach, taking their evening strolls.' Aurora suggests calling it 'Mooristan' or 'Palimpstine.' The intermingling of the land and the water was something of the Cochin of her youth, which pretended to be a part of England, but was washed by an Indian sea. Mughal forts of India blended with Spanish buildings' Moorish grace in her works on an easel.

It is Bombay itself, the city of Rushdie's youth that provides the 'metropolitan' component- an endlessly fascinating, diverse fusion of disparate elements that he knows as 'Bombay of my joys and sorrows,' - in the novel. Rushdie recalls in rapture:

Bombay was central, had been so from the moment of its creation. The bastard child of a Portuguese-English wedding, and yet the most Indian of Indian cities. In Bombay, all India met and merged. In Bombay, allIndia met what-was-not-India ... Bombay was central; all rivers flowed into its human sea. It was an ocean of stories; we were all its narrators, and everybody talked at once. (The Moor's Last Sigh 350).

Like the protagonists in Rushdie, Bombay too is known to be 'the bastard child of a Portuguese-English wedding' (The Moor's Last Sigh 350). Rushdie's affair with Bombay is so deep and intense that it has perplexed enough critics to call it an Oedipus complex.

The history of the family IS traced geographically too, limiting the geographical division to the familial house in first three sections of the novel. The Moor's Last Sigh begins promisingly set in the rich cultural melting pot that was Portuguese India. At the very onset of the novel Rushdie takes his readers far off to Spain's Andalusian mountain-village of Benengeli where lays the fortress of Vasco Miranda. There is a mention of Benengeli village in Spain where Vasco Miranda has fled to with Aurora's 'Moor' paintings. Aurora's masterpieces of the period portray their affluent Malabar Hill home as the Moor's fantastical palace, a cousin to the Red Fort in Delhi and the Alhambra in Granada. Fantastical worlds of 'Palimpstine' and 'Mooristan' that Aurora creates in her paintings encapsulate the romantic myth of India and its pluralism, and throughout her life she urges her son to search for them.

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Moor's story is 'sequestered, serpented to four 'Edenic-infernal private universes' - Cabral Island, Malabar Hill Salon, Abraham's sky-garden and Vasco Miranda's Little Alhambra in Spain. If Bombay is viewed in Midnight's Children and Pakistan in Shame, we get the whole panoramic view Kerala here in The Moor's Last Sigh: Kerala with its cashewtown Quilon, verdant landscape, Mattancherry Jewish Community, Dutch Island, Bolghatty Island and St. Francis Church where Vasco da Gama was buried for years. We also read about the 400 old Jews synagogue which has painted Chinese tiles, scrolls of Old Testament and copper plates. We get to know the commercial value of various places; if Allepey is famous for choir, Khozikode/Calicut is the timber trading centre. Willingdon Island was made under Lord Willingden and it looks like an English Village by the Kochi harbour. Gundu Island is the smallest island around. Emakulum is the urban centre that harbours Lord Shiva Temple. The cargo ship Marco Polo is named after the Venetian traveler of the same name who discovered the coast of the Malabar. Kerala's famous Chinese fishing nets are gifts from Kublai Khan. Cranganore is a place where Romans built the temple dedicated to Augustus in the 1st century. This along with the fiction, the reader gets the historical significance of the locale.

The scene where fishermen using cantilevered Chinese-fishing nets haul up for the night is vivid. These fishermen in conical Chinese hats, move stolidly between islands and they use dredgers for cleaning the riv.er. An evening at the lagoon with all types of sails at the harbour is beautifully landscaped. Ferryboats dredger, yachts, little boats, rowboats and motor boats, tugs, Chinese fishing nets, twin-stacked steamers, cargo ships, gunboat - different types of boats used by Cochin fishermen, listed by Rushdie are preparing to have night's rest. An evening of Cochin, the city of nets is very intricately documented though it is succinctly zipped into less than a paragraph. So if Bombay Kolis find their portrayal in Midnight's Children, these Co chin fishermen are sketched here.

Rushdie discusses and re-discusses the creation of Bombay, it is the bastard child of a Portuguese-English wedding, and yet it is the most Indian of Indian cities. It is at the central point where all Indias not only meet each other but also merge beautifully. It is a place that proves to be a

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demarcating line which separates the north from the south and the east from the west of India. It is a multi-cultural city where cultures from all over India get harmonized. While the communal riots were taking place in states like Punjab, Assam, Kashmir, Meerut, Delhi and Calcutta on the basis of religion and language, the city of Bombay was comparatively peaceful. It was also India's Achilles heel: that if any invader planned to ruin India he had to ruin Bombay first. Therefore, on one hand where Rushdie rejoices in the celebration of the city of Bombay, he also laments its de-cosmopolitanisation. In The Moor's Last Sigh, no longer is Bombay portrayed as a bustling metropolis as seen by eyes of a young Saleem. It now becomes the city of Raman Fielding, a caricature of the Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray and Muslim Mafiosi-Dawood, Haji Mastan. Thus, in one of the interviews he admits that the city in The Moor's Last Sigh completes the cycle he started in Midnight's Children, Bombay in the later novel is the world of grown-up knowledge that he has of India and of this world, unlike the child's view of Bombay, of India.(Reder 200)

When we are told about the dwelling of the character Sammy Hazare who lived in the suburb of Andheri we get to know about the suburb being surrounded by 'a random tangle of light industries' like Nazareth leathercloths, Vajjo's Ayurvedic Laboratory, Thums Up Cola Bottle Caps, Clenola Brand Cooking Oil and a small film studio.

The centrality of Bombay is again talked about but this time its helplessness is compared to that of Granada. Like Granada, Bombay too was the glory of its time but, very much like it, Bombay could not be defended by its occupants. Boabdil proved his weakness as he could not defend his state, similarly, Bombayites proved to be 'wooden horses' of the famous Trojan War when bomb explosions took place. Aurora's art vanishes in one of these explosions. Her paintings die too, as if it is some stage performance of Shakespearan tragedy that ends in the littered bodies and splashed blood.

Though introduced at the very outset of the novel, we get to know about the location of the village of Benengeli only when the Moor visits it in the last part of the novel with Jawaharlal, the dog under his arm:

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The village of Benengeli lies in the Alpujarras, a spur of the Sierra Morena which separates Andalusia from La Mancha... foreigners would settle here for a while, with their pets, and then, in their fickle, rootless fashion, depart, abandoning their dogs to their fates. The region was full of starving Andalusian dogs. (The Moor's Last Sigh 385)

Then came on his way the small town of Avellaneda and famous for its threehundred-year-old bull-ring and it is also known as 'Town of Thieves.' The next settlement is Erasmo which is even smaller. So now readers are made to travel up mountains of Spain after wading through streets of Bombay or the harbour of Cochin and backwaters of Kerala. We are also told about the political history of Benengeli and Erasmo and about Vialactada- a Mexican tennis player who played with Hoad, Rosewell and Gonzalez and was, therefore, barred from Grand Slam - and he died of stomach cancer several years ago.

The novels of Rushdie are replete not only with geographical tours and explorations but they are also infused with literary references and cross-references suggesting the rich and plentiful traditional literary output. With the help of fables, "anecdotes and several other literary and para-literary digressions on the true epic lines, Rushdie justifies the titles of his novels too. The intertextuality gives the novel a postmodern dressing of the Euro-American mould, while retaining Indianness in substance and treatment. Jaidev in Connections and Boundaries in an article 'Intertextuality and Influence' defines influence as a complex phenomenon where several inter-literary, intra-literary, also at times non-literary strands co-exist, coalesce, combine and clash. He further says that it is an unconscious process - as the influence can often enter, in despite of the author and can be noted behind plot, characterisation, structure or ideology while influence largely discounts the individual volition and will, intertextuality suggests a wholly self-conscious and consciously managed activity. Intertextuality is, therefore, a device used for ironic, parodic, lucid, comic and subversive purposes. It adds depth both to art and life. Literary allusions, parallels and art metaphors lead to a better appreciation of fiction.

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Even in his first novel Grimus we get references based on the literature of the West. In Grimus, the hero scales Calf Island with help of a guide named 'V' Jones. Rushdie recalls, that Virgil is his own English Muse. The mountain of 'Calf invokes the Inferno - 'Calf in its Quranic form spells 'Qaf,' the title of the chapter in Quran that looks forward to the final day of Judgement. Timothy Brennan elaborates the literary allusions in Grimus:

Grimus deliberately mixes contemporary authors, historical personages and legendary beings in a kind of international compendium of myth. Side-by-side are references to Kafka's Joseph K., Sinbad's Roc, the Old Man and the Sea, the Ancient Mariner, Odysseus, the Phoenix, Chanakya, ... The plot outline is taken from Dante, but the mood and situations... on Kafka's The Castle ... Four Quartets... The Rubaiyat....' (Brennan 74)

He also states that Rushdie's cultural origins in the Orient are given a certain priority by the fact that the book's central myth is taken from the Shahnameh (Book of the Kings), a tenth-century ethical history of Persia, whose semi-legendary characters, for example, include the 'Simurg' - 'a huge bird who has been the destruction of the world three times and has all the knowledge of the ages. (7l)

Like Shashi Tharoor, the inter-texts and even the narrative structure of Salman Rushdie is derived as much from Indian legends and literature as from the Western texts and traditions. With the double inter-texts - from Indian and Western legends, films, literature - Saleem Sinai, the narrator constructs his history and fiction. Newman cites the 'encyclopedically intertextual' The Great Indian Novel as a work which 'reverses the traditional direction of cultural colonization, rewriting history through both Indian and British intertexts' (Newman 53). Rushdie's novels also work within two narrative traditions: of the Western novel with its subgenre, the anti-novel a la Tristram Shandy, and of Eastern story-cycles like the Panchatantra, with their chainlike linking of self-contained, shorter narratives. Thus, it authenticates that Rushdie is a multicultural writer not merely in the weak sense of having roots in more than one culture but in the strong sense of using one literary tradition to renew another. Like his creator, the creation Saleem depends more on

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legends and gossips than on the officially certified facts and that gossip-like fantasy is a subversive medium which provides an alternative view of history.

This dramatization of the problematical relationship of life to the art and of art to life, Rushdie says, is the effect of the deliberate juxtaposition of 'the oriental tale, the eighteenth century Shandean novel and the modern historical "realities" of India' (Sunday 90). And this explains the whimsicality of his novels as when some of the new actors are introduced with enough inventiveness and wealth of detail to justify major roles; yet all too often their contribution to the action turns out to be slight, and they slip or are slipped out of the picture almost suddenly.

Rushdian narrative takes course from Scheherezade. It gets distracted from the main course of the story, leaving the readers hanging in mid-air, just like her. She too used to leave Prince Shahryar in the state of curiosity night after night as it was necessary for her survival. In Rushdie's narrative, unlike linear narrative, one incident triggers off two or more narrative threads and in this way so many branches hang out from the main trunk and some times loop back or are left in the open.

Rudolph Bader has shown how closely Midnight's Children mirrors Grass's techniques in The Tin Drum: the structuring of historical memory through photos and newspaper clippings, the willful exoticism of dwarfs, magicians, gypsies and cripples; the mixing of 'fairy tale style ... court evidence, school essay, public speech and other variations of the narrative mode' until the effect is one of 'simultaneity of past, present and future'

Narrative in Shame is mutable; sometimes the protagonist is omniscient, sometimes not. Sometimes the author is the writer of the story and sometimes he is the reader of the story and this provides the shading in the novel. Rushdie is a fabulist but unlike Golding his fables just show whatever is there and are not morally didactic. Rushdie is different from a conventional fabulist since he writes in a plural form that encapsulates many writing forms available and by his architectural skill makes them co-exist. He wants to capture the whole world in its manifold manifestations rather than dealing with a single or few metaphorical concepts. His work belongs

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to the contemporary literature where the term fable finds a novel meaning than it was for the works like Aesop's Fables or Panchantantra.

Writers like Rushdie, Shashi Tharoor, and Allan Sealy turn to Indian traditions in order to narratavise the postcolonial history of India. If Rushdie adopts the traditional oral pattern in invoking Indian national life, Tharoor fictionally recasts the events and the characters from The Mahabharata to explore the events and forces that have not only made India but have unmade it also. The representation of the oral account gives the immediacy to the narrative. The narrator's self-admonishments such as 'but I am ... getting ahead of my story' as well as his stylistic corrections such as 'no, on second thoughts, you'd better cut out that advert' and 'I must learn to control my own excesses of phrase,' also lend the novels a circular digressive quality.

Rushdie continuously challenges the notion of interpretability and significance, often in provocative terms. Not only does he play with words, syntax, language, but he literally fools with the letters of the alphabet. Locked up with Moraes is a beautiful Japanese picture restorer named Aoi De - her name all vowels, as the Moor's, in Arabic, is all consonants: would that they had found each other earlier, he thinks. Aoi De - 'Her name was a miracle of vowels... The five enabling sounds of language, thus grouped ('ow-eeoo-ay'), constructed her,' (The Moor's Last Sigh 423) - whom the Moor encounters in Vasco Miranda's fortress is the personification of this dynamic principle of language. She appears when the Moor's quest for meaning, for roots, for identity is canceled by Miranda's unveiling of Abraham's possible involvement in Aurora's death. In opposite, the Moor says:

We were consonants without vowels: jagged, lacking shape. Perhaps if we'd had her to orchestrate us, our lady of the vowels. [...] There is in us, in all of us, some measure of brightness, of possibility. (The Moor's Last Sigh 428)

There are many catchy captions, they might be the name of the chapters like in Midnight's Children 'Abracadabra,' 'Snakes and Ladders' or they might be in the form of the unforgettable nickname of characters as in Shame, Bilquis Raza is named as 'Khansi-ki-Rani' or 'queen of

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coughs' or the eccentric definition of medical doctor calls up the ghost of seventeenth-century eccentrics like Burton of Sir Thomas Browne of Hydriotaphia- 'a legitimized voyeur....' (Shame 49)

Rushdie has made use of Indian vernacular tongues exploiting, to a great advantage, his native experiences. He has often repeated the use of word in the English· intoned sentences which lay great emphasis in the narration - 'Chhi, chhi' (Midnight's Children 319), 'whistling shistling' (Shame 61), grand-grand clothes.' (Shame 67) Further he has inserted the crisp, befitting vernacular words/phrases into English sentences: 'Hey bhaenchud! little sister-sleeper...' (Midnight's Children 320), 'hennaing ceremony' (Midnight's Children 321), 'innocently wide-eyed Chalaak Sahib,' (Shame 19) 'ek dum, fut-a-fut, pronto.' (Shame 155) The most fascinating thing we observe is the transliteration that Rushdie offers to facilitate the readers who are not familiar with the north Indian native language.

Rushdie has a style of presenting something grave with the added humour topped with intra - lingual nomenclature. When Aziz was emaciating under the deprivation of food from his wife he switched over to rickshaw-puller who was Hamdard which means - a compassionate one. Again when he talks of the character Zulfikar, he explains the meaning and derivation of the name for the benefit of the non-Muslim readers. He tells us that it is a famous name amongst Muslims and it is the name of two-pronged sword carried by Ali, the nephew of the prophet Muhammad.

The majority of the names carries an aura of the past mighty culture and contrasts it with the present sorry state of affairs. Thus, the power and the glory of the past are incorporated through language. His use of language, by creating a magical and humorous Indian blend of English, strengthens his critique of the forces of nationalism in India and Pakistan. The protagonist of the novel Saleem Sinai, with his hybrid origin of English father and Indian mother, resemble Indian writing in English. Aurora, is a cultural hybrid of Cameons da Gama and Isabella Ximena da Gama nee Souza. Cameons name is after 16th century Portuguese heroic poet and mother Ximena or Chimene is the lover of Cid in Spanish epic, Le Cid.

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Vasco Miranda is the metaphoric nomenclature where first name is reminiscent of the Portuguese coloniser and surname seems to be the daughter of Prospero in The Tempest. The relationship between the two is again ambivalent; they love, desire each other but still are aversive.

Again we get to trace somewhat confused but explicitly correct genealogy while Flory is analyzing Aurora-Abraham relationship. She scolds Abraham that she married Solomon Castile twenty years her senior in the same year of the Indian Uprising. How can Rushdie leave his country behind and be lost in his tale. It took place on the same day on which Francisco da Gama and his Mangalorean bride tied the nuptials. Solomon ran away to the sea and Rushdie comments again on the foolishness of his character and the inapt nomenclature 'but wise man's brain doesn't come automatic along with wise man's name. Here, he is referring to Solomon the Wise. Because in the continuing sentence he says that this broken marriage came to be known in Mattancherri as the 'Misjudgment of Solomon' (The Moor's Last Sigh 75). Over the years Abraham finds his lost father in the Chinese tiles and compares him to Sin bad the Sailor seeking his fortune on the ocean. He has transformed himself to a will free of all constraints. On the day Abraham is expecting that his father would return and he goes in his search, his father's odyssey had vanished and for the second time in his life his unwise father Solomon Castile has vanished into the blue. Thus he has again proved the wrongness in his name.

It is not only that characters and places from Rushdie's earlier works like Midnight's Children and Shame that keep popping into this book but characters from other people also pop into this book. For Example there is a passage from Waiting for the Mahatma by R.K. Narayan and a small reproduction of the Common Man by R.K. Laxman. Aadam Aziz, Saleem's grandfather, is named after the Indian nationalist, Aziz in Forster's A Passage to India. He is a representative of modernity who rejected the ancestral ways.

When the Moor is taken to the jail on account of drug trafficking, he apportions the blame and he curses his mother. He in very dramatic way abuses the age in which monsters have dominated and where even a mother can cause destruction of her child. He refers to the Hindu Goddess red-

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tongued cross-eyed wreaking havoc though in the Hindu mythology she is the goddess who is known for destroying the evil but Moraes uses the image to suit his reference. And he takes another reference from the history of English Literature of Anglo-Saxon period. He refers to Beowulf where Grendel's mother was more fearsome than Grendel himself. And then he comes back to his own mother and her infanticide.

The conflict between Moraes and Fielding is compared to the great classical epic-mythologies, Indian Mahabharta and Greek Trojan War but on a humane plane. If deities themselves participated in those great Wars here the gang leaders took sides. Though the men fought over Nadia Wadia, she is neither Helen of Troy nor Lord Ram's Sita but a pretty girl in a hot-spot. Here it can be said that Rushdie seems confusing Ramayana's Sita with Mahabharta's Draupadi. A tragedy is there but narrator is reluctant in giving it the status of tragedy as clowns are participating. He is reminded of the gambling where the late Carmen lost her fortune to Prince Henry but he refutes it to an echo of Mahabharata's Yudhistra who with his fatal throw of dice lost his kingdom. And Rushdie gives us again a glimpse of his theory of history through Moraes:

Clowns! Burlesque buffoons, drafted into history's theatre on account of the lack of greater men. Once, indeed, there were giants on our stage; but at the fag-end of an age, MAadam History must make do with what she can get. Jawaharlal, in these latter days, was just the name of a stuffed dog. (The Moor's Last Sigh 352)

Rushdie compares the Moor's attack on Fielding to Lord Ram's slaying of Ravana, the abductor of the fair Sita in Ramayana and the lines which describe Achilles slaying of Hector who killed Patroclus in the Trojan War and quotes from the epics. The difference in the use of weapons along with the treatment of the slayer with the slain is precisely pointed out. He mocks farcely the telecommunicative frog to be used in place of heavenly machines used by Ram. Also he received no applause from the elderly gods standing in heaven and feliciting the victorious Ram with flowers of applause. It is indeed a great reminder of the Ramanand Sagar's cinematic version of

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the holy Ramayana and B.R.Chopra's Mahabharata. Infact, Achilles innard munching savagery is further reminiscent of Hind of Mecca who gobbled the dead hero Hamza's heart:

I only wish I had the heart and will

To hack the flesh off thee and eat it raw,

For all that thou hast done to me!

This allusion is the allusion to allusion itself- in fact we might call this is a double-allusion or display of the author's knowledge. The novelist is being fair enough to balance not only West and East but also the different religions. Even the Achean dogs that Hector refers to in the plea '...leave me not for dogs / Of the Acheans by the ships to eat...' have the local counterparts in Fielding's dog-guards.

Further, if Ram the God, chivalrously arranged a lavish funeral for his fallen foe, Achilles much less the gallant had tied his victim to his chariot, dragged him thrice round dead Patroclus' grave. One honoured and the other desecrated but our hero had to think about his survival and escape from the well-guarded enemy's territory.

In the ending of the novel, when the Moor had avenged his mother's death by killing Vasco, he is writing the end of his story in italics:

Arthur sleeps in Avalon, Barbarossa in his cave. Finn MacCoollies in the Irish hillsides and the Worm Ouroboros on the bed of the Sundering Sea. Australia's ancestors, the Wandjina, take their ease underground, and somewhere, in a tangle of thorns, a beauty in a glass coffin awaits a prince's kiss. (The Moor's Last Sigh 433)

Arthur is King Arthur, asleep and waiting for a new world. Finn Mac Cool is a giant in Irish legend, which sleeps as well. The Worm Ouroboros appears in a book of the same name by E.R. Eddison and sleeps until wakened by dramatic change. The Wandjina created the Australian continent and the aborigines of that island (according to legend). The beauty under the glass is

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none other than Sleeping Beauty. All of these characters/entities are sleeping and go to sleep in one world but will awake in a different one.

We can figure out many aspects of literary research in the works of Rushdie like the literary theories he has put into practice, the influence that the literary lineage had on his works, the literary allusions that fill up interestingly his works and also most importantly the lingual stylistics he employs through his works.

Thus it is not that Rushdie's work is brimful of state-affairs, politics, autobiographical intrusions and public affairs, customs and myths only; the readers also travels through the places the writer has found interesting. Details of the geographical locations include famous landmarks as well as the unseen places, historical explorations, the flora and fauna. Not only this, the readers get a rollercoaster ride through the world of literature too. If intertextuality, cross-references and allusions enlighten the readers, Rushdie also gives us the interesting experience of usage of words from regional languages as Hindi and Urdu, the expressions and idioms from the locales and of the common usage. The experience of realistic ride through different geographical locations is embellished wonderfully when interspersed profusely with the world of imagination and coinage of novel words or translation/transliteration of the native idiomatic phrases that end up in topping the Rushdian platter with humour and wit.

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