



GNITED MINDS
Journals

*Journal of Advances and
Scholarly Researches in
Allied Education*

*Vol. IV, Issue VIII, October-
2012, ISSN 2230-7540*

**ANALYSIS OF RUSHDIE'S NOVEL FLORY
ZOGOIBY'S DEMAND FOR ABRAHAM'S
FIRSTBORN SON IN THE MOOR'S LAST SIGH**

Analysis of Rushdie's Novel Flory Zogoiby's Demand for Abraham's Firstborn Son in the Moor's Last Sigh

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Abstract – *The focal point in the novel is mixing of fact and fiction which is Rushdie himself in theory. After the haughty arguments exchanged with Aurora and Vasco, Sunil-Nargis couple leave the 'anti-national gang' of 'the world of art' to be happy on the commercial side which stresses on the positive side. Next our hero, the Moor gives us a précis of the movie, what it is about and then compares and contrasts his family to the movies' family.*

The Moor's Last Sigh is an epic read; it is long and involved and generational. Dozens of characters weave in and out of the story as it paints a picture of their perspective on life- the one they all seem to share. Salman in The Moor's Last Sigh offers, through his characters, the humorous definitions of modern Indian democracy ('one man, one bribe') and the Theory of Relativity ('everything is for relatives') which shows that there is no final morality in affairs of state. When Vasco Miranda leaves for Spain, Aurora gets back to her work, just as politically Mrs. Gandhi returned to power with Sanjay Gandhi as her right hand and morality gives place to relativity in state affairs. Vasco's 'Indian Variation' upon the theme of Einstein's General Theory $E=mc^2$ is a bizarre pun on Indian polity and power. It's well framed by him who explains to the young Moor 'Indian variation' upon the theme of Einstein's General Theory:

Everything is for relative. Not only light bends, but everything. For relative we can bend a point, bend the truth, bend employment criteria, bend the law. D equals mc squared, where D is for Dynasty, m is for mass of relatives, and c of course is for corruption, which is the only constant in the universe- because in India even speed of light is dependent on load shedding and vagaries of power supply.

Key Words: Fact And Fiction, Précis, Commercial, Weave, Relative, Corruption.

INTRODUCTION

Rushdie through his narrators avows that people cannot be understood without knowing the historical forces that in large shape their lives. He is both inside and outside both the cultures; of the country he belongs to and the country he migrated to. We can also differentiate between the two countries as one is the country he writes about and the other is the country where he writes from. That gives a stereoscopic vision, so that one can simultaneously look at the two societies from both the inside and the outside. And the resultant tension strikes the required spark to produce eminent work. Rushdie's works are a postmodernist experiment with miscegenation where fiction merges with not only criticism, political history, biography but also with the society.

Salman Rushdie says that by killing the novel we attempt to kill society. Murder the story, and you annihilate the soul. The novel says Rushdie, is 'the stage upon which the great debates of society can be conducted' (italics original) (Is Nothing Sacred? Imaginary Homelands 420). He writes, not only to

entertain or to amuse but to provoke and to question, as he puts it, 'everything in every possible way' (Is Nothing Sacred? Imaginary Homelands 429). This puts forth his moral purpose of exposition and correction. Rushdie says that no passport can describe his identity; and that his loyalties are to ideas and not to places. He writes, he says, as a 'secular, pluralist man.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Rushdie has made his aesthetic predilections very clear when he requests the readers not to expect from writers like him, that his novels create 'typical' or 'representative' fictions which are invariably dead books. His books attempt radical reformulation of language, form and ideas, those that attempt to do what the 'novel' seems to insist upon: 'to see the world anew.

Of the legends that contribute to the history of a post-colonial nation, it sometimes seems that all are true and none is reliable. The post-colonial author must convey this paradox effectively within what is,

essentially, just another legend. Magic realism often results when fantasy becomes a virtual necessity in representing the meshing of two cultures, because at least two separate realities, both of which are relevant and neither of which is completely accurate, work simultaneously. One may argue that facts are facts and that they remain uncontested; but the choices a storyteller makes in presenting data are all-important to their interpretation. And we realize that in the long run, it seems there is no such thing as complete accuracy, and perception outweighs so-called reality in importance. Sometimes by juxtaposing local history with world events, and sometimes by juxtaposing two or more versions of the same events or locales, a post-colonial author presents a story with so many facts that it necessarily becomes unclear. Franz Fanon says that when the colonized writer wants to 'belong' to his people by choosing a system of 'black' values and constructing an alternative ideology, he is in danger of renouncing the present and the future in the name of a mythical past. It is often thought of, as Frederic Jameson writes in his book The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act that when a 'colonized' writer uses myth for purposes of 'liberation' it might lead to historical petrification. Rushdie's mythification in *Midnight's Children* can be viewed both as a 'strategy of liberation' and as an ideological form that avoids historical petrification.

Tiffin has also noted that post-colonial writers attempt to deconstruct European authority:

The dis/mantling, de/mystification and unmasking of European authority that has been an essential political and cultural strategy towards decolonization and the retrieval of creation of an independent identity from the beginning persists as a prime impulse (sic) in all postcolonial literatures. (171)

In historiographic metafiction (as already discussed in the last chapter) the boundary between history and fiction is not rigid but flexible, where history can be fictional and fiction can be veracious. Postmodern theory and criticism of both history and fiction focuses on what the two modes of writing share than how they differ. There has been a strong connection between history and politics, novelists write selfreflexive novels, in which they use modes of parody and magic realism. Rushdie illustrates another aspect of the historiographic metafictional mode, the opposition between the official and non-official views of the past, the dichotomy between the known and the suppressed history. The metaphoric suggestion of such division is through 'the parting' of Mrs. Gandhi's hair in the novel *Midnight's Children*, which was part white and part black. The white represented the one made visible by the official media: 'public, visible, documented, a matter for historians.' That is why Saleem says that the black part 'being secret macabre untold, must be a matter for us' (*Midnight's Children* 501). This symbolic colour significance is further extended when Rushdie, through one of his characters in *Midnight's Children*, informs the readers about the growing 'black' economy

of India owing to corruption. Not only this, Rushdie, in his usual humour, does not leave this metaphor here but traces the influence of hair-styles on the course of history. If William Methwold had lacked a centre-parting then Saleem would not have been born, besides sparing the dark evils of Emergency had Indira Gandhi coiffure been of uniform pigment.

Rushdie, with a sleight of his hand, has conjured up a new trend by mixing free-flight fairy-tale with savage political indictment. He has transformed his novel *Midnight's Children* into a political history, giving it a comic strain. With political history as the starting point, it is an epic sweep extending in time and space covering six decades of Indian sub-continent history. From the pre-Independence Jallianwallah Bagh incident, the novel covers the period till Saleem's birth on 15th August 1947, is extended up to the end of Indo-Pak war in September, 1963. The Book Three of the novel leaves us to the incidents and events up to the end of Emergency in March, 1977. These sixty-three years of narrative spanning Mahatma Gandhi's return from South Africa in 1915 till 1978 after the end of Indira Gandhi's Emergency focuses the moment of Indian Independence in 1947 as a chronological and thematic center point. He adopts variant modes of portrayal in the presentation of these historical facts that cover a vast span. The growth of the novel is textualised but forms a linear tripartite construction of thirty chapters with thirty entitled pickle jars which preserve thirty years of the narrator's age and the span of sixty-three years.

MATERIAL AND METHOD:

Rushdie does not underestimate the power of the people, but his depiction of 'India' in *The Moor's Last Sigh* is informed by an exhilarating portrayal of a place that can be psychologically energizing and spiritually sustaining. The ethos of the land-the homeland that he has carried and cultivated in his imagination while in exile-enables him to regard India with a degree of hope for an enlightened future. As he expresses his intention somewhere that 'the character in *The Moor's Last Sigh* who says motherhood is our biggest idea certainly speaks what I consider to be the truth. But I wanted a different sort of Mother India ... I wanted my own sort of Mother India. This Mother India is metropolitan, sophisticated, noisy, angry and different.'

It is not only art, society, religion that finds place in Rushdie's novels but through the theory propounded by Francisco entitled *Towards a Provisional Theory of the Transformational Fields of Conscience* he ruses science and the spiritualism with the fiction of the ancestral history. The explicit definition of the theory leaves the readers spellbound who have no other alternative but to believe the magic. Like Rushdie, even his characters are adept in more than one vocation. Francisco da Gama who pens the scientific theory, to the amusement of the readers, also attempts the second paper with the same ease

proposing "'bols', the long strings of nonsense words used by the Kathak dance instructors to indicate movements of feet arms neck,...." (The Moor's Last Sigh 21)

Another important device used by Rushdie where magical signifies the composite nature of contemporary Indian culture and society is celluloid. Be it Bollywood or Hollywood, it transforms and often transfixes the perception of narrator and his perception of himself too. The idea of 'motherness' is explored in the Indian context by taking the instance from Bollywood. Moor is born in the year Mehboob Productions' movie Mother India is made. Even the mother-son relationship is probed into by the mouthpiece of Aurora who instigates the couple quest Sunil-Nargis. The focal point is mixing of fact and fiction which is Rushdie himself in theory. After the haughty arguments exchanged with Aurora and Vasco, Sunil-Nargis couple leave the 'anti-national gang' of 'the world of art' to be happy on the commercial side which stresses on the positive side. Next our hero, the Moor gives us a precis of the movie, what it is about and then compares and contrasts his family to the movies' family.

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Here we can relish the admixture of polity, society and science to cater each other beautifully and the resultant humour lends the acrid but subtle pun on the Indian favouritism. This is reflected in Midnight's Children also where Saleem recalls a ditty sung by Mary Peri era long ago

Anything you want to be, you kin be

You kin be just what-all you want. (Midnight's Children 457)

Rushdie gives us the socio-economic impact and the consequences of Second World War in this novel. Rushdie also toys with the nature of mother-son relationships in Indian and Pakistani society, emphasizing the perversion of their closeness. In Shame, for example, the three Shakil mothers dote over their only son Omar, keeping him excluded from human society by [their] strange resolve.

CONCLUSION:

Hence it can be concluded that stereotypical mother resents her son's new wife for monopolizing his affection and tries to disrupt any opportunities for intimacy in the new marriage. Both Bariamma's nocturnal segregation of the married couples in Shame (Rushdie 71) and Flory Zogoiby's demand for Abraham's firstborn son in The Moor's Last Sigh exemplifies this unusual attachment.

The writings takes up the interdependence and co-existence of public and private affairs in their historical perspective. It takes an individual and his history out to reach society along with its culture, traditions, myth and religion. Like Shakespeare, Rushdie also portrays two distinct classes of people in the vertical hierarchy of society. The setting of the novel has characters that belong either to affluent/aristocratic society or the working class. Rushdian world is fused with flavours from tradition and modernity, religion, culture, plurality, and blended well.

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