

Projection Of India In The Writings Of Indian Diaspora With Reference To Salman Rushdie And His Works

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Makarand Paranjape in one of his writings once remarked: "Indian English Literature is a contest over the nature, identity and ultimately the destiny of modern India. Of late, the realistic, modernistic, pessimistic mode of the first three decades of post- independence writing is giving way to a non-representational, experimental, self- conscious and optimistic literature. But the real challenge the writers of today face is the enforced homogenization and standardization of culture due to globalization and the new, easy and superficial internationalism which tempts Indian writers to market themselves abroad." It also needs to be mentioned that there has been a movement to take Indian writing across the globe. Fictional writings and even representations of nature and characters in its best form by writers like Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Salman Rushdie have taken Indian writing and writers to great heights. These are the efforts of several generations of Indian authors writing in English that have resulted in the international success, particularly since the publication of "Midnight's Children" by Salman Rushdie and the Indian novel in English has finally been accepted as an important literary endeavour.

Indian English Literature also comes under this genre of literature which is called postcolonial literature as India was once a colonized country. Meenakshi Mukherjee is of the view that

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the Indian Literature can be categorized into three phases. They are: Phase 1-(1920s): the historical novel, Phase 2- (1930s and 1940s): the novel of social reform and political change, Phase 3- (1950s and 1960s): the novel of self-identity including the psychological novel. The period (1975-77) marks as a watershed in the psyche of the Indian who saw it as the return to the repressive, colonial rule and resented it fiercely. It made the novelist turn to history for a theme in as deliberate and studied manner as he had done during the 1920s and 1930s. The first to capture this theme was Salman Rushdie's "Midnight's Children" published in 1980. In Shashi Tharoor's words this is the novel that labelled a generation and liberated a literature. "Midnight's Children", winner of Booker Prize in 1981 and the Booker of the Bookers in 1993, is that fictional creation which in a way pulled together all the earlier phases of Indian English novel- the historical, the social, the political, the psychological, the metaphysical into one hold all of a book and concurrently revolutionized the fictional technique.

Salman Rushdie is a diaspora writer who always mingles between two cultures- English and Indian. As he says in "Shame", "I am an emigrant from one country-India and a newcomer in two- England, where I live and Pakistan, to which my family moved against my will". The postcolonial writers like Salman Rushdie, V.S.Naipaul, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Aravind Adiga, among others, discuss the issues like the multiplicity of identity or hybrid identity, multiculturalism, transnational and globalization in their writings. It is a fact that they can have a double vision as they belong to the inside wherever they focus as also a level of objectivity since they essentially belong to the culture from which they are distanced. Salman Rushdie's work is characterised by an exhausting, energetic, culturally kaleidoscopic and formally imaginative

literary style, which expresses something of hybridizing experiences as a migrant writer who moves between cultures, continents and languages. His first novel "Grimus" (1975), is a scientific fiction, as a fantasy novel set in an imaginary island out of space and time. In his second novel "Midnight's Children" (1980), he challenges the history of India. "Shame" (1983), his third novel is about the history of Pakistan whereas his fourth novel "The Satanic Verses" (1988), is about England and the Indian sub-continent, Islamic mythology and immigrant history. His other works include "Haroun and the Sea of Stories" (1990), "The Shalimar Clown", "The Moor's Last Sigh" (1995), "The Enchantress of Florence" (2008) and his essays "Imaginary Homelands" (1991) and other short stories "East-West" (1994). Salman Rushdie belongs to that genre of writers whom we call as expatriate writers or Immigrant writers. Expatriation brings with it many advantages and disadvantages. As Rushdie says, sometimes expatriates straddle two cultures while at other times, they fall between two stools. Of all the images of multicultural hybridity that Rushdie's works contain, perhaps none is more representative than the one he borrows from the Hindi film "Shree 420", which he uses at the beginning of "The Satanic Verses" and which, as he has elsewhere suggested, could almost be Saleem's theme song: *Mera joota hai Japani*, that is, in Rushdie's neat translation:

O my shoes are Japanese
 These trousers English, if you please
 On my head, red Russian hat—
 My heart's Indian for all that.

To Rushdie, the self is never singular but always intrinsically plural. He has chosen to translate one identity into another and in doing so, has set out to make himself up in a way that forces his identity into fluidity, however much he clings to

tradition or however much he tries to shed it. And if by force of circumstances one cannot be whole, then one should make that lack of wholeness a virtue and turn one's very fractures into strength. A self-conscious mimicry, therefore, becomes a way to shuttle between Bombay and London, between the hybrid selves of the postcolonial condition; it allows one to acknowledge that one lives between two worlds. According to Rushdie, immigrants are haunted by some sense of loss, some urges to reclaim and to look back. They yearn for imaginary homelands which never exist for them.

Rushdie's "Midnight's Children" has changed the facet of Indian English Literature in 1980's. This novel plays an important role in the reversal of the centre-periphery paradigm in English Literary culture. Rushdie's example, his inventiveness, his irreverence, his audacity and above all his success has been liberating for a large group of Indian writers living either at home or abroad. Rushdie belongs to the groups of novelists who we often call as Third World Cosmopolitans who are globally visible, whom the reviewers in New York and London Review of Books hail as interpreters and authentic voices of the Third World. The Third World Cosmopolitans emerge from a non-western culture, but their mastery over the current idiom of the metropolitan meta-language of narrative ensures their favourable reception in the global centres of publication and criticism.

Magic Realism, which is used by many writers like Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Gunter Grass, among others, becomes an important literary tool used by Salman Rushdie. The chief reason for the spectacular resurgence of the Indian novel in English since 1981 is undoubtedly Rushdie himself. History as fiction was the flavour of the decade. He uses a kind of language which we call as chutnification of language which many writers of the later period have used elaborately. His literary devices

include the use of postmodern technique, narrative and his deconstructive use of history.

As a conclusion, it can be said that it is through the works of Salman Rushdie that the Indian English writers of the eighties have found a new freedom of both form and content. New writers have found his acknowledgement of multiplicity and his hybridity of language particularly liberating. It enables them to tell their personal stories in their own voices as national epics.