Chapter-V Conclusion

This chapter deals with a resume of the findings. These findings are based on clinical analysis and interpretations of the term MAGIC REALISM AS A POSTMODERN DEVICE IN THE NOVELS OF SALMAN RUSHDIE AND AMITAV GHOSH. It also shows that how Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh have dealt with the narrative technique magic realism in their works. The study concludes with the following findings:

Rushdie’s literary work is well known for drawing on many European literary and cultural influence which range from Laurence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy* (1769), Mikhail Bulgakov’s ‘*The Master and Margarita*’ (1967), Gunter Grass’s *The Tin Drum* (1959), as well as Garcia Marquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. In addition, Rushdie draws on Indian mythological epics as *The Mahabharata* and even Bollywood movies and Indian street life.

In Indian writing in English, Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh have tried to write magical realism by interpreting its essence for a postcolonial view of reality. It is true that certain locations and countries have become associated with producing magical realist writing. In general it has been noted that magical realist fiction are often set in rural areas. Colombian novelist Marquez sets the majority of his novels in a fictional town called Macondo on the isolated Caribbean coast of Colombia. The African American novelist Toni Morrison also sets the magical realist events in rural areas and small townships.

After independence such a homogenizing narrative, shaped by the twin impulses of Nationalism and Colonialism, begins to fizzles out and by the time we reach Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* (1981) the national ideal begins to be restructured and subverted, rather than laying an insistence on a homogeneous identity, Rushdie offers a history of the nation not through a unilinear narrative, but in terms of disruption and
discontinuity (in all its magnificent cruelty). Rushdie defines the nation and through the coming into being of some unified and singular national consciousness but in terms of the original ‘1001’ marvelous promises of a luminous midnight. Rushdie’s novel has been diagnosed as a plural narrative that explodes the notion of the nation having a stable identity. It however does so without discarding the nation; it merely attempts to draw attention to the glorious multiplicity of this entity. Allen Sealy in his *Trotternama* (1988) and Mukul Keshavan in his *Looking Through Glass* (1995) follow in Rushdie’s footstep. What they are attempting is to recapeture the silenced history of those communities that lie on the margin of the homogeneous narrative of the Indian nation.

In Indian writing in English the writers of the 1930s and 1940s like Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, K. Nagarajan and K.S. Venkataramni and K.A. Abbas, Ahmed Ali, Humayun Kabir, Kamla Markandiya, Khushwant Singh, Nayantara Sahgal of 1950s have more or less spoken about the realities of colonial and post-colonial India. Rushdie’s generation, like Vikaram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Shashi Tharoor, Upamanyu Chatterjee etc. are the makers of new patterns and traditions. Among most of these novelists are those who are settled in the west. These novelists depict the post-colonial world played by neo-colonial catastrophe like economic disorder, social malaise, governmental corruption and state repression through Magic Realism.

The writers of post-colonial period mix the past, the present and the future and the imperial and the colonial culture in their fiction, dislocating time and subverting the imperial purpose in the process. They explore and expose the residual effects of foreign domination in the political, social and economic spheres. Rushdie and Ghosh depicts cultural fragmentation, colonial and neo-colonial degeneration and the crisis of identity are some of the major preoccupations. Rushdie with his

Most of the Indian English novels of recent times written by migrant writers have chosen materials for their art from contemporary Indian socio-cultural situations. They also undertake the exploration of the relationship between the East and the West. It has become a recurring theme in contemporary Indian English fiction because of the nature of the linguistic medium the novelist uses. Fictional reworking of mythology and history has given new significance and possibilities to the Indian English novel writing. Salman Rushdie, Shashi Tharoor and Amitav Ghosh often return to Indian history and mythology. *Midnight’s Children, Shame, The Circle of Reason, The Shadow Lines, The Moor’s Last Sigh, The Great Indian Novel* etc. deal with the complex working of Muslim psyche caught up in the historical and cultural labyrinth of the sub-continent.

The birth of Pakistan from India as a separate nation makes it necessary to study sociology and politics of both India and Pakistan separately because Rushdie also looks at these two countries with two different angles. The hero of *Midnight’s Children* is a Hindu and a Muslim at the same time. But the hero of *Shame*, whose roots are in Islam, is a bastard. The defusion of democratic ethos in India in general and in Pakistan in particular, the assimilation of values of modernity in the two cultures, geared to tradition and the rise of new expectations among these people have all necessitated a systematic examination and analysis of emerging trends.

In *Midnight’s Children*, Rushdie used new narrative technique Magic Realism, the children born at the stroke of midnight at the very
moment when India got freedom; develop the capacity to communicate with each other telepathically. Rushdie’s *Shame* (1983) presents the subcontinental historical and cultural realities. The country referred to in the novel could be any country that has been ruined by corruption and dictatorship. The novel offers a fantasized interpretation of degenerate post-colonial society that denies freedom and justice to women.

The author of the novel tries to subvert western modern, western constructs of identity and cultured by employing specific postmodern literary techniques such as fragmentation, plurality and language along with magical realism. *Midnight’s Children* can be considered as one such attempt of Rushdie to recapture India from this perspective.

Rushdie’s novels are littered with remarks about the mysterious relationship between reality and truth. “What is real and what’s true aren’t necessarily the same “we are reminded. Fictional reality is different from reality as we know in the everyday world. In fiction, what actually happened is less important than what the author can manage to persuade his audiente believe”. What *Midnight’s Children* presents is the “memory’s truth.”

*Midnight’s Children, Shame, The Moor’s Last Sigh, Grimus, Haroun and The Sea of Stories* are not realities- if we study the characters like Saleem’s ability to listen through the air, Omar Khayyam’s birth, Moares Zogoiby’s double life, bird hero in *Grimus* and Ocean of stories in *Haroun and the Sea of stories*. Still implications of some facts are unavoidable elements in these pieces of fiction. Saleem, Omar Khayyam and Moares Zogoiby are, in fact, connected with the actual political activities of their respective nations and periods in such a way that the reader is likely to feel the themes of Rushdie’s fiction to be incomplete if these actualities are not taken into account while studying these novels on the other hand, East, West has a socio-cultural-political base. At political
level, almost all the characters created by Rushdie appear to be fighting for their suitable existence in society.

In the multi-cultural and multi-religious country like India, party politics plays an important role a partition of India and creation of Pakistan have their roots in this diverse composition of India as a nation. Such a diverse state of affairs of Indian polity has many times given riots communal, parochial elements and differences which have further led India to experience violences too. This can be seen in cases like Mahatma Gandhi’s assassination; Indira Gandhi’s murder by some of her security personnel who were Sikh and Rajiv Gandhi’s brutal end Rushdie has narrated these facts through his new technique magic realism in fictions. Rushdie’s novels cover the whole map of politics in India in the twentieth century. Through it in parts it gives the sense of wholeness. Indian struggle for Independence, the winning of it peacefully, the nation passing through disaster and crisis and the deaths of Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru are some of the unavoidable, unforgettable historical realities of India.

At personal level, all the characters in Midnight’s Children face psychological tensions of rootlessness, alienation through them, are in a society and accepted by a particular religion. The hero himself admits that though his birth was celebrated by the nation and though newspapers awarded him, he was mysteriously handcuffed to history. He is called, stainface, baldy, sniffer, Buddha and even piece of the moon and even something more than all these. He was prophesized twice, once by Ramramseth, the seer and six hours before his birth, by a Sadhu. But when he was born, a mystery happened which was that Mary Pereria changed name-tages on the two infants, giving the poor baby a life of privilege and condemning the rich-born child to misery and poverty. That
the twice-blessed one went to be brought up in poverty and the unblessed came to be known as Sinai.

Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* and *Shame* are based on the assumption that in social systems where power depend either on changing relationships between political structure and several elite groups or where political power is largely at the disposed of one, or at the most, two elite groups, the emergence of another politically powerful group is clearly of great and notable importance. If we accept this analysis as a working framework for the study of the relationship between political power and social groups or classes, the study of mobility and political change begins to take a more coherent form.

Rushdie shows reality through Magic Realism; that in-efficient leadership brings corruption by the creation of a caucus of advisers. An incompetent man lacks self confidence and therefore seeks to strengthen his own decisions by collecting a group that can lend support to him. It is such a group that enables him to function at all levels and, naturally members of such a group demand returns for the services they render. Rushdie, in most of his novels, explores the problem of corruption which is ultimately a problem of corrupt leadership. It is inescapable when incompetent person get to the top through malpractices and manipulation. When a person gets leadership through character and ability, people accept his leadership even when they do not agree with him on all the points. Even those who are disappointed with such a leader generally won’t have any sense of grievance or resentment against him. Democratic leadership, in order to be successful, should, therefore, be based on intellectual and moral qualities.

It could be said that India is one of the very major themes in Rushdie’s fiction. Rushdie analyses India from political historical angle. While writing, he takes help from history and culture of India and his new
technique Magic Realism because, since many centuries, India has been a target of many foreigners. Resultantly, Muslim and Britishers ruled India for a number of centuries. The Portuguese and the French, for a short duration, have also lived and ruled here. As if India was a big cauldron used for cooking a number of edible items together, many great foreign traditions came to mix here and they became a part of India. So, it could be said that India, in fact, is one of the most ancient melting pots. That is why India is of Muslims, of Hindus, of Buddhists, of Christians and of all other minor faiths. At the political level, after Indian independence and the partition of India, politicians in India and Pakistan started using or rather, misusing, and religious situation to their advantage which ultimately proved to be greatly disadvantages for the common man in both these countries. The hero Saleem Sinai (Midnight’s Children) marries Parvati and after marriage only changes her name as Laylah, but does not force her to convert to Islam which shows Rushdie’s attempt to maintain religious harmony of the Indians. He also uses other Hindu myths such as that of Ganesha, Rawana, and Kali and so on.

In Midnight’s Children male characters are mostly inactive and impotent and serve as caricatures. Saleem, Ahmad, Adam and Nadir Khan are sometimes given to dream and hallucination and are found to be unreal. Again these characters have real life connotations. Rushdie believes that the fantastic and unreal are far more reliable modes of storytelling and often a more accurate mirror of truth. In Midnight’s Children the magical and fantastic has a significant place. Uncle Hanif is successful as a film maker when he adopts the fantastic and unrealisic mode of storytelling in his film ‘The Lovers of Kashmir.’

Till the end of novel, Saleem asserts the truth of History through his own history remaining “handcuffed” to his own times. His saga ends with the prophetic vision of his own disintegration at the Independence
Day celebrations– his death in the form of fission and explosion, with the final release of energy as “the bomb blast in Bombay”. Saleem envisions a future for India’s infinite children entrapped between hope and annihilation. It is the privilege and curse of Midnight’s Children to be both masters and victims of their times and to be unable to live or die in peace. The novel ends on a note of pessimism in 1978 and gives a comprehensive view of Indian history in the pre and post independant era and is a continuum between lived experience and recorded history.

Through the novel Rushdie depicts various events through Magic Realism which give us a glimpse of Indian history– Indian’s first Independence Day celebrations, Nehru’s complete speech” Tryst with Destiny” Gandhi’s assassination are vividly described when Aadam Aziz and his family members come to know that it is Godse who murdered Gandhi, Amina says that by being Godse he has saved their lives. Her words echo the feelings of Muslims in India, who feel consoled at the fact that a fellow Muslim has not done it.

Salman Rushdie’s novel *Midnight’s Children* provides us with perfectly illustrative examples of how magical realism can work with this form of historical postmodernism. In his essays on writing Imaginary Homelands, Rushdie reflects the view of Jameson and Tonkin, stating that ‘History is always ambiguous. Reality is built on prejudices, misconceptions and ignorance as well as on our perceptiveness and knowledge (1991:25)

Like Khushwant Singh and Chaman Nahal Rushdie’s aim is to relate private lives to public events. The connection between public affairs and private life cannot be overlooked; they interpenetrate and that is how the writer needs to examine them, the one in the context of the other. But since he was writing about India, a country he had quit long ago, Rushdie felt hesitant before embarking on the ambitious work. As a
preparation, he came back to India on a long visit he had not been here for ten years. He toured the country for six months and talked to all kinds of people to recapitulate the colours, smells and catch-phrases. As a result Rushdie has created *Midnight’s Children* in 552 pages; the novel looks at the Indian sub-continent through the eyes of a young man born a stroke of the hour of Indian Independence.

In *Midnight’s Children* there is a lot of autobiographical material in the book. There is a close identity between the hero Saleem and writer Salman. Rushdie confesses, “The fact that he is called Saleem and I am called Salman…..It’s not surprising that the identification is made.”

Since the story is told by Saleem, the first person narration gives an immense intensity to the work.

The historical context in *Midnight’s Children* and *Shame* is the same. So also are its central concerns. Both these narratives depict the changes which came with colonialism in the native culture and consciousness and which then shaped the histories of the two nations. These narratives build around the individual as he faces these changes which affect his sense of time, reality and selfhood. The crucial problem taken up here is whether the local people and the nation can face up to and tide over the forces of cultural and political imperialism of the west. The characters in this drama are the different aspects of the social and historical consciousness of the people, flashed out in figures drawn from the myths of their collective psyche as well as from their recent political history. These characters might as well exist within the individual and fight each other on the plane of his mind and consciousness, or they might be witnessed in society at large. Hence they are allegorical representations epitomizing the conflict within the collective consciousness of the nation itself.
To play with History is such a delightful subject. *Midnight’s Children* is about India, *Shame* (1983) is about Pakistan, now a troubled state. Shame dramatizes “military politics of the divided Muslim India”, whose history Rushdie considers a “disaster”. *Shame* opens in the imaginary town of “Q” Quetta in Pakistan. And in this town lived “three lovely, loving sisters’ “Known by the names of Chhunni, Munnee and Bunny. Omar Khayyam, an image of suspense and fantasy, is born as the fantastic son of these three sisters who share automatic and simultaneous symptoms of pregnancy, and interestingly with no father in picture. In the process of unfolding this fairy tale, Rushdie makes a savage attack on the political life of Pakistan.

By getting independence in 1947, a new era of fresh challenges and added responsibilities. During the first twenty-five years of independence the nation was confronted with such burning problems and traumatic experiences as to put its inner strength, its talent, and its resilience on a fire test. The first traumatic experience, at the political level to the newly born republic was that of partition. The lack of adequate preparation and safeguards at the time of the partition led to a communal carnage of unprecedented proportions resulting in 6, 00,000 deaths and exods of 8.5 million refugees from Pakistan with stories of untold inhuman sufferings. Along with this, there was also the problem of more than five hundred princely states covering an era of approximately 7,000 square miles, which had become technically independent with the lapse of British paramountcy. The question of the integration of the other small foreign possessions in India was also solved by negotiations in the case of the French Settlement and by direct action in that of Portuguese Goa.

In *Shame*, Omar Khayyam Shakil struggle with the society in Pakistan which has tried to rule—as they say—according to Islamic tradition. Omar’s attempts to mingle himself with the political authorities
are aimed at getting his lost status in Pakistan society. His marriage with
the mentally retarded Sufiya Zinobia and sex with Shahbanou the aya are
in a way, an unconscious imitation of Saleem’s life in India (Midnight’s
Children). All these characters suffer almost the similar social problems
in their own social situations; struggle to find out their own solutions and
in the ends are confused. They are rootless and powerless both socially
and personally.

Rushdie’s women characters come on roads sometimes by
divorcing their husbands; sometimes in a disturbed mental state in certain
situations and sometimes to protect themselves etc, they need social
status and equality.

In Shame, the political leaders are more important than political
parties in Pakistan. Through there is a blood relation between the rivals.
Raza Hyder and Iskandar Harappa their struggle for power becomes a
prominent issue in their lives. They try to dominate their society and hold
it in their grip as long as they can Pakistan in Shame contains primitive
tribal groups, British-trained army officers, corrupt politicians, upholders
of democracy, eager participantes in military dictatorship, religious
fundamentalists, and many for whom Islam is merely some kind of a
profit oriented cultural background rather than a galvanizing and all-
consuming creed.

Timothy Brennan notes that Rushdie’s novel Shame (1983, 84), set
in Pakistan under a military dictatorship is most notably influenced by
Marquez’s Govern one cultured years of solitude. He identities at least
nine similarties of plot between the two novels including the hunting of
killers by those unjustly killed and the stories of popular generals and
leaders who are shot through the chest and who do not die (Brenan : 1989)
The post modern characters are portrayed as individual different from the ancient classic and realist modes. "Post modernist fiction generally takes the disintegration of character a stage further, playing with the conventions governing the representation of character so as to expose these to the readers scrutiny "Almost all the characters in Shame have their real life counterparts. But the hero Omar and Sufiya Zinobai are characters of pure imagination they are given a realistic aura, though subverted. This subversion to a certain degree is seen in all the characters that create their own temporal private world in the case of Omar a Sufiya their identities are not personal or historical. They have to make and find out their identities outside the framework of history. It is his lack of identity that makes Omar a peripheral hero with the fear of feeling of always beings at the edge. He may fall off at any moment into the world of anonymity. He comes to have his existence only in the pages of the book Sufiya Zinobia is also the result of pure imagination as revealed earlier.

The basic narrative technique in both Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* and *Shame* involves the treating of all things in terms of duality. *Shame* was published one year after *Midnight’s Children* and the two narratives seem radically different from each other. Yet, the major themes and constructive principles of both these novels are the same.

Salman Rushdie wants to introduce the world he comes from with all its components and necessities and put it in the centre of western attention. At the same time Rushdie is not afraid of speaking his mind even through it proved to be very dangerous. May be that is one reason for using magic realism to avoid being attacked for criticizing the political and social situation, Rushdie writes his novels under the cover-up of magic realism in which everything is possible. Eventually, the reader does not have to believe in everything that is described in the
fiction. For that reason the magic in the texts is not anyhow explained, only the author (who regularly enters the story) maintains that what happened is really true.

Rushdie’s sensibility is basically Indian-demoractic, secular and humanistic. Indian myths and legends have been so extensively used in *Midnight’s Children* and even in *Shame*. One may perhaps get glimpses of goddess Kali in the retributive and murderous Sufiya Zinobia and of the legendary demons in Raza Hyder. In fact, as we have seen, through *Shame*, the nightmarish and monochromatic Pakistani reality has been examined, satirized and ridiculed from the perspective of one who has his ‘roots’ fixed in undivided Indian and drawn sustenance from its values. He looks back with nostalgia at the old world of his Indian childhood as “continuity” and a “reality” as different from the facts of his present “faraway life” as “illusions”.

The political map of the country was further re-drawn with the creation of linguistic states in 1956. Not less than three brief but eventful wars were fought during this period, such as the encounter with China in 1962 and the wars with Pakistan in 1965 and 1971; the latter resulting in the dismemberment of Pakistan and creation of Bangladesh with the death of Jawaharlal Nehru in 1964 an age appeared to have ended. More recent events in the political history of the nation election of Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister, bifurcation of the congress in 1969, imposition of the emergency in 1975, defeat of the congress in 1977, its come back to power in 1980, and defeat again 1989- have revealed both the strength and weakness of Indian democracy. All these events have been successfully projected in the various novels in Indian English fiction and Rushdies *Midnight’s Children* is one of them in which Rushdie using his narrative technique magic realism to explore the above elements. The post-independence Indian English novelists have seriously and painfully
recorded in their novels, the tragedy of partition, the communal, the linguistic and casteist passions which maddened the people in the very hour the freedom was born, and the agonizing spectacle of “the divided house in place of emotional integration, with a deceptive floor and a precarious roof”.

Despite the appropriateness of magical realism as a narrative form for the cosmopolitan Indian writer, the especially Indian writer Arundhati Roy has also adopted the form. Whilst also belonging to the Indian middle-class and being influenced of the writing of Salman Rushdie, Roy who is form and being influenced by the writing of Rushdies, Roy. Who is from the south of Indian and whose writing is not from the metaphor?

In Rushdie’s fiction, culture and civilization have wide ethnographic implications. It includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, customs, law and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society. Culture is both the classification and explanation of human differences. His fictional works are the biographies of common men who, participating in building and making history of their nations concerned; keep their individual identities as representatives of their society.

In Midnight children Aadam Aziz a Kashmiri Muslim marries an aristocrat’s daughter. A doctor by profession, he finds it difficult to adjust himself with the old tradition in the society. From social point of view, his love marriage with Naseem in those days was a revolution. Saleem’s birth and the exchange of babies are symbolic of the birth of democracy in India. The growth of Saleem in place of Shiva and vice versa is representative of the growth of pseudo democracy. Saleem represents the middle class society in India after independence. While representing the vast multitude of India, he suffers humiliation through forced sterilization and other means of subversion. His marriage with Parvati-the-witch and
having sex with Padma is a deviation from social norms. At the same time Rushdie portrays Saleem as impotent. In the end Saleem painfully realizes all his weaknesses. He is born defective; he has a snotty nose, stainface and is baldy. He is a Hindu, a Christen, and a Muslim at the same time. He realizes religious integrity and represents all the good ideals in each religion. He hates the socalled supersititions in the name of tradition.

Rushdie’s firmness on secularism, religious and other such matters are even more ambivalent. It is undoubtedly true to say that the faric of modern India is what it is on account of secularism and that any real setback to secular values may be dangerous to her unity. But it would be foolish to say that there was no term or concept in ancient Indian tradition to convey the idea of secularism. Terms like Dharmanirapeksata and better still, Sarvadharmamabhava refer to secularism. As for the practice, good Indians, despite their strong religious orientation, have always been secular in the trust sense of the word. Indian culture, as Rushdie rightly point out, is ‘a rich mixture of tradition, and its plurality is an established fact. And to ask whether India exists is, as Rushdie himself says, ‘a strange, redundant sort of inquiry (Rushdie 1991: 26)

India is a multi-religious country and Indian characters, like their Pakistani counterparts in Rushdie’s fiction, represent the socio-religious activities of India’s and Pakistan’s life.

Rushdie’s novels, which became an international literary success, created a real generation of its own in the form of a crop of young Indian novelists eagerly following in Rushdie’s footsteps. Among these novelists the most talented ones are; Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Allan Sealy, Upamanu Chatterjee, Shashi Tharoor, Farrukh Dhondy, Rohinton Mistry and Firdaus Kanga. The New York Times (16 December 1991) has called these new Indian writers ‘Rushdie’s Children’. These novelists, Anthony
Spaeth has pointed out, are making conscious efforts to redefine English prose “with myths, humour or themes as vast as the subcontinent.” Rushdie himself once told to an interviewer in 1982. “I think we are in a position to conquer English Literature”, and this is what precisely these novelists are trying to do in their own ways. “It is the privilege and the curse of midnight’s children.” Rushdie reminds as towards the end of his great novel, “to be both masters and victims of their times.”

Thus, magical realism is way of showing ‘reality’ more truly with the aid of various magic of metaphor. Quite naturally, *Midnight’s Children* is significantly shaped the course of Indian writing in English after its publication. Rushdie looks like a story teller who tries to return the English language to the tradition of magical realism which has a tradition of magical realism which has a history from Cervants through Sterne to Milan Kundra and Marquez.

The author of the novel tries to subvert Western modern, Western constructs of identity and cultured by employing specific postmodern literary techniques such as fragmentation, plurality and language along with magical realism. *Midnight’s Children* can be considered as one such attempt of Rushdie to recapture India from this perspective; we can come to the conclusion that Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* and *Shame* successfully like magical realism with postmodernism.

Rushdie’s use of Magic Realism in *Midnight’s* and *Shame* is more appealing. Various themes and elements of multiplicity, displacement, migration, fragmentation, disintegration and corruption, etc. are metaphorically used in various incidents in the texts. Rushdie assumes Magic Realism an effective tool to solve the problems of postcolonialism. So, by connecting and combining historical events, mythological stories and fictional narratives, Rushdie tries to create a true picture of Indian postcolonialism.
Amitav Ghosh belongs to the literary tradition that was fostered and nourished by Salman Rushdie, Shashi Tharoor and other. Like many of his contemporaries he has been immensely influenced by the political and cultural milieu of post-modern India. Amitav’s *The Circle of Reason* (1986) is a skillfully constructed novel encompassing a world that stretches from a remote village in Bengal to the shores of the Mediterranean. *The Circle of Reason* marks a break from the traditional themes of the India English novel.

*The Circle of Reason* (1986) is a postcolonial novel that focuses on the persisting colonial legacies and challenges binaries. It depicts the adventures of Balaram Bose, who strictly adheres to reason and logic prescribed by the dictates of Western science and admires the Western scientists like Madame Irene Joliot Curie, Louis Pasteur and their discoveries. He is also fond of Phrenology. The novel juxtaposes Western science and pseudo-science, Phrenology. Balaram tries to use the antiseptic, the Carbolic acid to kill germs, so that he could purify human beings and cure them of their money madness.

First section of the novel *Satwa*: Reason, depicts the day-to-day lives of people of the village, Lalpukar in West Bengal, near the border. Ghosh points out that migration of the people across the borders has resulted into that no culture or nation can lay its claim to being pure and discrete.

The novel, to the much extent is set against the backdrop of the Bangladeshi war of Independence in 1971. Ghosh refers to the history of partition that enforced thousands of refugees from Bengal to seek shelter in different parts of India and dividing lines (borders) were drawn between India and Pakistan. Through Balaram, Ghosh has developed the idea that culture is a process of circulation that has nothing to do with national borders.
The novelist suggests that knowledge of science and faith in reason have no base in real life situation. Balaram’s abstract knowledge that lacks worldly wisdom brings about disaster and death. Ghosh has brought together the Indian and Western elements.

The figure of the circle in the title also works against the linear logic of modernity and of Enlightenment rationality. Linearity stands for the modern and prosperous Europe, America, and Tokyo. The post-colonial state is depicted in the novel as an administrative machine that has nothing to do with the well-being of the people.

Bhudeb stands for the materialistic people plotting against the reasons. The episode showing Balaram’s house on fire, and interference of police inculcates the point that an interest in profit, backed by force, easily overpowers individual’s efforts to bring about enlightenment and social improvement. Thus the novel also depicts the state and its force of police as an impediment to the officious exercise of reason.

The episode of the fallen plane invites philosophical speculation from different groups—preachers of doom, optimist, and stoics. It depicts how a war machine, emblem of modern technological development is transformed into modern materials of the village.

Part two of the novel, **Rajas: Passion** is set in al-Ghazira on the Parsian Gulf. The episode showing Alu accidentally buried alive when a new building called the ‘Star’ collapses has allegorical significance. It shows cultural logic of global capitalism that destroys the ancient trading cultures of the Middle East.

The second section of the novel also focuses on the different aspects of the life of Ras people: their indulging in talking, listening and telling stories, gossiping, having tea at Zindi’s house, fighting in front of Haji Fahmy’s house, their indulging in intrigues, falling prey to conspiracies, dancing, worrying about things and so on.
In the last section, **Tamas**: Death, Ghosh distorts the rigid line of demarcation set between pure scientific reason and the values of real life, between rigid scientific principles and the goodness of human heart.

Ghosh elaborates the history of Indian politics of post-independent era. He presents two brands of socialists in India, the one represented by Hem Narian Mathur and the other by Murali Charan Mishra. Uma’s father, Hem Narian Mathur devoted his life for the upliftment of rural masses with his knowledge and wisdom of books and scientific theories. But Uma doesn’t search for the causes of ills in human body or society. Uma firmly believes in the human touch that is necessary while dealing with crisis or the problems of life. Thus, Ghosh has confronted the knowledge and wisdom and the practical approaches towards the social upliftment.

Ghosh mocks at the Hindu death rituals as well as the so-called scientific attitude, rationalism and Hindu philosophy through the episode of the cleaning of the dead-body of Kulfı with Carbolic acid instead of Ganga-jal. It focuses on the action against the Hindu death rituals. Through this novel, Ghosh also suggests that the traditional religious or spiritual beliefs and modernity have to co-exist. At the same time, Balaram’s Western science and ideology and Alu’s Eastern philosophy considering money as dirt, are mocked at by the novelist, as they do not seem to be applicable in real life situations.

The characters are seen moving from place to place, continent to continent without forming any relationship worth the name. In this way, as per the postmodern tendency, Ghosh had depicted his characters as they are and not who they are. Ghosh has depicted them trapped in such a non-productive circle that all their efforts are proved to be abortive. Their struggles lead them to nothingness. However, the novel provides a ray of hope.
The last section **Tamas**: Death indicates a tendency to decay, to die. Still, at the end, there are hints of restoration of life, of reason. It also presents the place of religion in postcolonial societies. This novel also deals with the anxieties about order and control. It reveals the inadequacy of the police system. By means of staging Chitrangada, Ghosh has pointed out how national identity is staged in bourgeois diasporic communities through public displays of cultural patrimony.

Ghosh suggests that logic and rationality need to be merged with emotions in the day-to-day life affairs of modern society. Hence, the vicious circle of reason needs to be destroyed. And the remedy lies in shunning the perception of establishing an ideal ‘germless society’ that may be free from dirt, greed, money and corruption. The novel is also read as an allegory, the displacement of non-European people caused by imperialism.

The novel juxtaposes stable, traditional culture with diasporic, postcolonial culture within the paradigm of ethnography. The characters are not conventional but are descriptive. Here, we have a doctor, a professor, a scientist, a salesman, weavers, a merchant, a lawyer and housewives.

“The all embracing structural principles of Magic and Irony eloquently weave the total pattern of the novel.” Amitav’s *The Shadow Lines* (1988), set in Calcutta of the 1960s moves with an easy felicity through Calcutta and Dhaka and London. The time span of the novel covers from 1939 to 1979. The year 1964 played very important role in the life of characters. In *The Shadow Lines* memory links the past to the present and many of the characters live more in the past than in the present. It blends history, geography, voyages, trade, magic memory and multiple view points. Amita brings in his memory of is childhood experience of riots in Dhaka.
The Shadow Lines is divided into two sections. The first section Going Away ends with the narrator’s coming face to face with Ila’s indifference towards him. It also ends on a note that Ila possessed his life and her going away meant death to him. The second section Coming Home ends with the narrator’s regarding self-possession; his getting over his love for Ila, union with May Price and an acceptance of Tridib’s death. The incidents taking place in India as well as abroad are scattered all over the novel. Yet they are coherent and create a structured plot. If Going Away means “going away from the self.’ Coming Home means “combining back into the self.”

Amitav Ghosh has used this style of breaking away from linearity meaning progressive movement from past to present to future but is only partly successful. The narrator can move into the future only after coming to terms with his past. Grandmother is fixated in the past and Ila in the present so they remain stagnated and cannot move forward into the future.

The Shadow Lines we draw between people and nations can be both an absurd illusion and source of terrifying violence. In 1964, Thamma flies to Dhaka, She wonders if she would be able to see the borders between India and East Pakistan from the plane because after so much of violence and human slaughter, she feels that two nations would have built strong walls to distinguish. When her son laughs and asks her if she thought that the border was a long black line with green on one side and scarlet on the other like it was in a school atlas, she says, “of-course’ not: But surely there is something trenches perhaps or soliders or guns pointing at each other or even just a barren strip of lands which they would call no mans land? When she is told that she might see some green fields, she lamets the mutilation of motherland for nothings. Born in Dhaka and separated from her birth-place, by a history of bloodshed and
lines on a map, Tha’mma loses her linguistic accuracy when she thinks of home. She feels to understand how her place of birth had come to be so messily at odds with her nationality. Where politically it may be essential to have separate identity and sovereignty the same cannot be said of the people of that state.

In *The Shadow Lines* most of the characters, namely the narrator, Ila and grandmother are misplaced identities in time. None of them live in their own real present. Grandmother does not accept the reality of partition the way it is. Grandmother hates to mention on her passport from that Dhaka is her native place and yet when she reaches Dhaka her question is “It’s all wonderful. But where is Dhaka? (TSI, P.206) She lives in her own built up notion of reality. She does not take the riots seriously and therefore becomes the cause of death of her uncle whom she had gone to rescue and also her innocent nephew Tridib. Her identity is unreal, meant to be dismissed. She fails to accept that time and space is dynamic, therefore prone to changes like the human mind.

In the modern times, the concept of freedom seems too reduced to the idea of retaining one’s identity and distinction. Ghosh has ventured to show that such a narrow meaning of the concept of freedom implies separation, division and distance among people, communities and nation. The nation of distinct identity- the basic for claiming freedom has come down to mean a selfish concern with one’s own interests. If on the personal, individual level it has resulted in a loss of family and community spirit, on the public and political level, it has taken the form of narrow nationalism. But freedom in this sense in an illusory idea as the events and experiences narrated in the novel prove, and people continue to think and behave in identical manner. They influenced each other, continue to be similar and remain connected inspite of the walls and boundaries built in the name of winning freedom.
Once Ila, Robi and the narrator go for a couple of beers in the Grand Hotel in Calcutta. After a drink Ila wishes to dance but both narrator and Robi refuse. She says that if they don’t dance with her she would dance with somebody else and picks us a businessman. Robi restrains her saying that girls didn’t behave like that there. When she actually leaves for the businessman, Robi gets up and knocks him down. They come out and Ila shouts at him for behaving so violently, she says that she would do what she likes and that is why she had chosen to live in London. It’s only because she wanted to be free, free of their culture, free of all of them. This incident adds an important dimension to her character to be reviewed only afterwards. Later when author discusses something about Ila’s stay in London with Tha’mma, she says it is not freedom she wants, she wants to be left alone to do what she pleases that is all any whore would want. She will find it easy enough over there that is what those places have to offer. But that is not what means to be free is.

Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines* raises a few very important questions against the backdrop of emergence of increasing city-states everywhere and its demarcation and delineation on the maps. These Shadow Lines that are drawn cannot divide a memory or experiences as Tha’mma and her old uncle believe and so do many others. The narrator’s grandmother has got great affinity for Dhaka and her uncle who is ninety years old is staying there even after the partition and is reluctant to come to India. He lived with a Muslim family whom he had given shelter in his house during the partition. He is being looked after by the same family and he refuses to move away from this place. He says that if he moves out of his native place and transfers to Calcutta and they decide to draw a line once again then where would he go, having spent all his life in united India and being so enmeshed in Bengali culture where in the past Hindues, Muslims and Bengalis spoke the same language, shared the same culture and
sprang from the same racial stock, and sat on the floor in a certain Bengali manner and celebrated their own Bengali new year on 15th April.

Rabindranath Tagore was held in high esteem by one and all. He was born there, had spent his life there and would die there only. The same was the reaction of the narrator’s grandmother also who is a staunch nationalist:

I don’t believe in this India-Shindia. It’s all very well, you’re going away now, but suppose when you get there they decide to draw another line somewhere? What will you do then? Where will you move to? No one will ever have you anywhere. As for me, I was born here, and I’ll die here.” (TSL, P. )

Back in history in 1905, Lord Curzon, one of the able Viceroy to rule India, tried to split Bengal into two halves on the plea of better administration and management. He tried to take advantage of the religious gulf between the two major communities but his efforts ended in failure in 1911 when the Bengal is irrespective of their religious got together and a bloody revolt proved that Bengalis were more prone to nationalist sentiments than to religious passions. Tha’mma wanted to visit her old house in Dhaka and actually went there with Tridib and May where she met her ninety year old uncle being attended by Khalil- the rickshaw driver and his family. She was quite surprised to find that her uncle who would even avoid the shadow of the Muslim while eating was being fed by a Muslim family. It is here that Tridib, he and Khalil become the victims of the riot.

Indira Nityanandam, in Interpretations: Amitav Ghosh’s shadow Lines, observes:

‘The Shadow Lines that mark the borders that divide people into native and foreign and insiders and outsiders are not merely a physical reality for Ghosh. These lives go for deeper into our psyche and are hence more long lasting and formidable. When character breaks these lines, they are integrated with the world around them and if they do not break them, they remain with us is: “Are these lines drawn to keep outsiders out of insider in?” (Indira: 2000)
The Shadow Lines is full of symbolic references of Houses old and new, maps and mirrors, and boundaries, all these symbols in one way or the other deal with the theme of man’s search for identity, his search for roots. This is not a story of the grandmother or Jethamoshai, but it is a story of the eternal suffering of every man torn between the past and the present. Though, differently treated, it is a story of Khuswant Singh’s Train to Pakistan or Bhisham Sahani’s Tamas or Deepa Metua’s film The Earth 1947. The novel ends but does not conclude. It raises serious questions about our roots, our identities and at the same time questions why war? Why riots? Why partition? Why borders? Why Shadow Lines?

The protagonist Tridib (signifying God or Tridev) is a supreme reality, permeating throughout the work, with the vision of divinity, demolishing, all artificial divisions of mankind. Grandmother’s departure is, in fact, a ‘home-coming; to her ancestral house and so the domestic partition proves to be meaningless O.P. Mathur confirms:

‘….That the communal riots have been a source of his inspiration, thereby giving an inkling into his repulsion against artificial decision and violence and his implied affirmation of unity and enrichment of life’ (Mathur 2000: 55)

The Shadow Lines suggests, then, that there are two major issues individual development, marked by going away and coming home. In this sense, the novel is full of journeys. In the word of Suvir Kaul–

Though like novels of any other period, the expatriate fiction too presents the psychodrama of human relations; their predominant quality is defined by their postmodernist propensities. Rushdie celebrates “the plurality, the excess of culture, the rootlessness which means that if one does not belongs to one place, and then one belongs too many.” The celebration of difference of marginality, of ethnicity, of sexualities which were once considered deviant, mocked at the modernist sorrow for a
fractured self and reveled in disruptions and fragmentations. Through the fictional technique of Magic Realism the marginalized consciousness may fracture constructed reality in fabulous forms to express its own heightened sense of reality. Self reflexivity and confessionality characterize fictional works of Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh. The development of a creative artist’s consciousness and how the creative life is entangled with emotional existence from the focus of many a work of fiction of these post modern novelists.

“In The Shadow Lines, it is of course the male narrator’s growing imagination, empathy and intellectuality which allow for the exploration and understanding of complex, themes. As his horizons expand and become international in scope, his questions, Memories and experiences provide the structure of narrative. But even as his consciousness mediates and frames other voices, stories and experiences, we become aware that some of these voices, counterpoint his narrative, and even interrogate his telling of the story-in the many stories of this novel-overlapping at points, mismatched and contentious at others- The Shadow Lines becomes not simply a male bildungsroman, an authorized autobiography, with its obvious agenda and priorities, but also a dialogic, more open ended telling of the difficulties, interdependencies and inequalities that compose any biography of a nation.

In Midnight’s Children the protagonist Saleem Sinai travels the whole Indian subcontinent physically as well as his telepathic powers. Rushdie’s hero Saleem travels only Indian subcontinent, But Amitav’s protagonist Alu in The Circle of Reason travels from Indian subcontinent, (Lalpukar, a small village in East Bengal) to al-Ghazira on the Parsian Gulf and Egypt to India. And ‘Tridib’ the protagonist in The Shadow Lines travels Indian subcontinent, Dacca and London.
Ghosh’s characters move from place to place; continent to continent without forming relationship worth the name, they keep telling stories and try to link up plot of the novel but too little avail. Ghosh’s every character stands for a tale, but no character has habitation, or roots.

Rushdie’s *Midnight Children* is first person narrative. The novel begins—once upon a time type novel. “I was born in the city of Bombay….one upon a time.” Similarly Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines* also the first narrative. The narrator recollects his evolution into a research scholar and the memories of his personal life are recalled and narrated in the context of public chronicles—partition of India, riots, the Second World War, the partition of Pakistan; India’s war with China and Pakistan communal riots in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan and other incidents of consequence that happened between 1939 and 1980.

*The Shadow Lines* begins—thirteen years before the narrator is born in 1939. …..my father’s aunt, Mayadebi, went to England with her husband and her son, Tridib, (Ghosh, 1988, 1)

Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* covers the period April 1919 (Jallinwala Bagh incident) to the period of Emergency in March, 1977 and includes the Bangladesh War. Where as Shame covers the period from partition 1947 to 1977. Which focuses on politics of Pakistan? Rushdie’s hero Saleem Sinai tells his tale with the tale of nation simultaneously. Saleem tells the story of Sinai family. The narrator tries to convince the readers, that there is an integral relation between the private destiny of an individual, Saleem Sinai and the public destiny. The narrator’s perception: “From the moment of my conception, it seems, I have been public property.”
In *The Shadow Lines* unnamed narrator tells story of Indian and English family. Indian family i.e. narrator’s family- Chandhary’s and English family Mrs.Price (a widow).

The Indian family is further subdivided into two families. They are Choudharys. One consists of the unnamed narrator, his parents and grandmother, Thamma. The other family comprises Mayadebi and her husband, the Saheb. They have three sons, Jatin, Tridib, and Robi. Rushdie’s *Shame* depicts the story of three family of a country known as Pakistan in which most of the incidents are associated with the three.

Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* and Magic Realist strain in recent Indian writing in English. Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines* might seem to be an object lesson in realism. Cold, hard facts the very stuff of realism- are contantly being invoked. Phrases such as in 1962, the year I turned ten (TSL 115), with which the second half of the novel opens, become an established formula that operates as a kind of mantra in the novel. Amitav Ghosh’s novel crosshatched with a careful plotting of temporal and spatial co-ordinates, but the stories that are attached to these co-ordinates soon merge into one another. No less than *Midnight’s Children*, Ghosh’s novel is fraught with the problems of memory. If everyone has a right to tell their stories in these novels, the ‘little histories’ that challenge the metanarratives of nation and empire subjectivity seems an uncertain place in which to base those histories. The very beginning of *The Shadow Lines* is paradigmatic of what comes afterwards is this respect. In 1939, thirteen years before I was born, my father’s aunt, Mayadebi, went to England with her husband and her son, Tridib.
Amitav Ghosh shares his vision of life through narrative technique in his novels. Both the novels are emotional journeys. The novels end with many questions regarding history, culture and civilization. Let us hope for a new world where there is no partition, no walls, where there are no boundaries or barriers, where there are no wars or communal riots, where there are no Shadow lines and where we do not have to struggle with silence. The imperative for such universal respect for human life can best evolve only from a revival of values-from a universal ethics that re-awakens the forgotten awareness that no individual is here alone or only for himself, that each of us is anchored to the wider communities of life on this planet. We are an integral part not only of an intimate social laws must be respected. Let us share the feelings of Upanishadas “Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam” i.e. the whole world is our extended family.

The crystallization of this conscientious, imaginative and active concern with politics in a purposive and pointed direction coincided with the impetus given to the historical, political movements in post modern or post colonial India. For the first time in recent Indian history, it focused on man both as an individual and as a social being. This is vitally reflected in the novels taken up for the research study.

Thus Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh employ Magic Realism to describe various issues of postmodernism in their novels and the attitude towards them. Apart from the main magic realist elements, there are also minor features which comprise great parts of the novels. This magic and miracles mostly belong to the mythology and tradition of the eastern world and are presented matter of fact without any commentary. They appear in both writers’ novels and create the atmosphere of a typical magic realist text.
Amitav Ghosh makes his final statement on violence while recounting the events leading up to the killing of Tridib, Jethamoshai and Khalil the rickshaw puller. The study concludes with the following poem of John Lennon written in 1975 that stirred a generation might have inspired Amitav Ghosh when he created the character of Tridib.

*Imagine there’s no countries*

*It isn’t hard to do*

*Nothing to kill or die for*

*And no religion too*

*Imagine all the people*

*Living life in peace....*

*Imagine no possessions*

*I wonder if you can*

*No need for greed or hunger*

*A brotherhood of man*

*Imagine all the people*

*Sharing all the world. (Lennon : 1975)*

Tridib, too, had dreamt of:

‘A better place a place without

Borders and countries.’ (TSL, P. 186)