### Chapter- III

Magic Realism In Salman Rushdie’s Midnight’s Children and Shame

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**Sir Salman Rushdie**

![Image of Sir Salman Rushdie]

| **Born** | **Ahmed Salman Rushdie**  
19 June 1947 Bombay (Mumbai), India |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td>Kashmiri Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Citizenship</strong></td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Genre</strong></td>
<td>Magic realism, Satire, Postcolonialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject</strong></td>
<td>Historical criticism, Travel writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Awards</strong></td>
<td>Man Booker Prize 1981, The Best of the Booker 2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Salman Rushdie’s view about Literature:-

“Literature is an interim report from the consciousness of the artist, and so it can never be ‘finished’ or ‘perfect’. Literature is made at the frontier between the self and the world, and in the act of creation that frontier softens, becomes permeable, allows the world to flow into the artist and the artist to flow into the world.”

(The Satanic Verses, P. 427)
My novel *Midnight’s Children* was really born: when I realized how much I wanted to restore the past to myself…..what I was actually doing was a novel of memory and about memory, so that my India was just that: ‘My’ India, a version and no more than one version of all the…..Possible versions I made my narrator, Saleem, suspect in his narration: his mistakes are the mistakes of a fallible memory…..and his vision is fragmentary. It may be that when the Indian writer who writes from outside India tries to reflect that world, he is obliged to deal in broken mirrors, some of whose fragments have been irretrievably lost. (Imaginary Homelands, 10–11)

The novel, *Midnight’s Children* is divided into three parts:

- Book one explores the incidents from 1915 onwards till the protagonist, Saleem Sinai’s birth on August 15, 1947.
- Book two focuses on Saleem’s childhood and his role in the Indo-Pak war in 1965.
- And Book three deals with the Bangladesh war and the dark period of Emergency in India.

At its first glance, the words ‘magic’ and ‘realism’ do not seem to be compatible with each other. Realism is all about events that have happened, largely dealing with historical settings. On the contrary, magic concerns with the use of fantastic or magical elements in the narrative. Magic Realism is, more than anything else, an attitude towards that can be expressed in popular or cultural forms.

Rushdie’s intention is to use magic realism to fill such gaps depicting the eternal circle of life and death as one of the major themes in his novels *Midnight’s Children* and *Shame*.

The Anglo-Indian writer Salman Rushdie is marginal among the few who successfully incorporate Magic Realism their works. Not only Rushdie is one of the most distinguished postcolonial writers, but Amitav Ghosh is also generally recognized as one of the most important representatives of Magic Realism.

As we know Rushdie, went to Cambridge in 1965 to read history. His studies and experiences must have helped him evolve distinct concept of historical processes and their roles. The subject-matter of Rushdie’s novels is fairly varied: it is neither stereotyped nor predictable. “There’s nothing like a consistent theme”, comments Dilip Fernandez, “that has emerged in his work so far…there are sings, however, of certain key ideas shaping up, of a perspective developing in his writing.” (Fernandez 1984:100)

One such theme is Rushdie’s concept of history and its interplay with the individual. He calls himself, significantly enough, “a fairly politician animal.” (Wise: 1984: 59)
He told his reviewer Gordon Wise that his novels *Midnight’s Children* and *Shame* are on historical themes. “It seems to me”. He remarked, “That everything in both (the) books has had to do with politics and with the relationship of the individuals and history.” (Ibid 57)

Very few things in the world of today are left unaffected by historical political forces, and no sensible writer can afford to be oblivious of them Water Allen rightly remarks:

In the literature of an age, its conflicts, tendencies, obsessions are uncovered and made manifest to a degree which is continually astonishing; good writers are, so to speak, mediumistic to the deeper stirrings of life of their time while they are still unknown to, or at any rate unsuspected by, the public, politicians and current received opinion….contemporary novels are the mirror of the age, but a very special kind of mirror that reflects not merely the external features of the age, but also its inner face, its nervous system, coursing of its blood and the unconscious prompting and conflicts which sway it. (Allen 1971: 18-19)

Salman Rushdie is one of the most renowned writers of Indian Diaspora, settled in England, Shot into fame through his popular novel *Midnight’s Children*. He was born in Muslim family in Bombay (now Mumbai) on 19th June, 1947. He grew up in Mumbai and graduated with honours from King’s College, Cambridge, Settled in England. Rushdie’s literary career started with his first novel, *Grimus* (1975), which was a poor seller. With the publication of his second novel, *Midnight’s Children*, Rushdie’s fame spread world-wide and the subsequent novels *Shame* and *The Satanic Verses* emerged Muslim fundamentalists including Ayatollah Khomeini who issued a fatwa sentencing Rushdie to death, *Midnight’s Children* won for him the Booker of Booker’s prize in 1993. In 2008 it was selected as the Best of Bookers. *Midnight’s Children* is also the only Indian novel on Times list of the hundred best English language novels since its founding in 1923.
In postmodernism literary work marked by the use of still, sharply defined, smoothly painted images of figures and objects depicted in a surrealistic manner. The themes and subjects are often imaginary, somewhat outlandish and fantastic and with a certain dream like quality. Some of the characteristics features of this kind of fiction are the mingling and juxtaposition of the realistic and the fantastic or skillful time shifts, convoluted and even labyrinthine narratives and plots, use of dreams, myths and fairy stories, expressionistic and even surrealistic description, the element of surprise or abrupt shock, the horrific and the inexplicable. It has been applied, for instance, to the work of Jorge Luis Borges, the Argentinian who in 1935 published his Historia Universal de to Infamia.’Regarded by many as the first work of Magic Realism. Colombian novelist Gabriel Garcia Marquez is also regarded as a notable exponent of this kind of fiction especially his novel One Hundred Years of Solitude. The Cuban Alejo Carpentier is another described as a “Magic Realist”.

Modernist writers such as Salman Rushdie and Calvino, Amitav Ghosh etc. use Magic Realism in their work. A fusion of fabulism with Magic Realism is apparent in such postmodern literary work.

**Indian Narrative Technique: Before Salman Rushdie**

The substance of the story of the Ramayana was narrated by sage Narada when Valmiki who later composed the epic asked, who is a perfect man? Narada had himself heard the story from God himself at a devine council. And so each tale goes back and further back to an ultimate narrator who had perhaps, been an eye-witness to the events.

In the Ramacharita Manas there are three pairs of questioners and responders. Parvati Garuda and Bharadwaja have enquiring questions which are answered by Shiva, Kaka Bhushandi and Yajnavalka. These ansers are scared truths as they are Santan ke Vachan (word from saints)
spoken on the four banks of the river. The fourth narrator is Tulsi himself who cleverly transposes all the queries of his readers to the story through these three questioners and himself becomes a part of the narrative system. He uses the listener an ever deepening understanding of life, death and destiny. These authorical voices as exploited by Tulsi do not become a part of the story nor do they make any dent in the story. These voices only elevate the story which is a narration of events of at last one eyewitness, and thus history into *Purana*.

Vaysa Muni narrated the history and tradition of this country (Bharat). The ancients gave it the name ‘Bharata-Samhita which later on comes to be known as the *Mahabharata*. It is designated as *itihasa-purana* and related by three narrators in the oral tradition. The first narrator is Ugrashrava Lomaharshini who is asked by Shaunaka and others in the forest of Naimisha to narrate the story which, in fact, was narrated by Vaishampayana in the court of king Janamejaya under the direction of Vyasa himself. Vishampayana is the second narrator from chapter 61 of the first parva. During the battle of the *Mahabharta* sanjaya becomes the third narrator giving an eye-witness account of the battlefield to the blind king Dhritarashtra.

Here all the three narrators are tellers- outside tellers-who are not a part of the history. The story which is narrated is actually composed by Vyasa who is ‘Trikalajna’ who knows the past, the present and the future but is not an exact inside teller because he does not talk with an authorial voice and does not fully participate. He only narrates as an eye-witness and becomes an insider from time to time to inform the course of time and the factual situation.

Before the battle starts he comes to tell his son, Dhritarasta about the impending doom looming large on his family and then exhorts him, “Don’t feel perturbed, just watch the course of time” Even at the end,
Vyasa enters the story with his hands raised, and calling people around to follow the path of Dharma but nobody listens to him. Vyasa is not a persona. He is in between the two narrative situations. He is a voice having a very thin role as an insider.

The Indian narrator of the oral culture describes events for the exteriorisation of the wordly process and therfore selects a vantage point in the time past or the time present or the time future which enables him to frequently change his axis in time as well as in space. This mobility gives him a holistic vision; time turns circular for him, and he talks with his total existence which may be described as orchestration of all the senses.

**Western Magic Realist before Rushdie:**

Narrative techniques used by Western authors in their literary works which influenced Salman Rushdie. Post-modern American author John Hawke’s *The Cannibal*, William Burrough’s *The Naked Lunach*, Jack Keroude’s *On The Road*, Vladimir Nabokov’s *Lolita Tohn*, Barth’s *The Floating Opera*, *The End of the Real*, used post modern narrative devices, have directly influenced. American post-modern fiction and were even called post-modern literary words the boom of the American post-modern fiction can observed in 1960 when these and other American authors started to use Post-Modern narrative techniques and aesthetic principles reflecting post-modern vision of the world as understood by Susan Sontag, John Barth, Leslie Fielder, and other deliberately and systematically.

Prior to Rushdie, technical innovation in respect of Indian English fiction was limited and restricted. Raja Rao was the first to experiment with new narrative techniques in *Kanthapura* (1938). He used a grandmother as a narrator. Kamala Markandaya uses the similar technique in her *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954) where the narrator is a grandmother. R.K. Narayan uses a flashback technique in *The Guide* (1958).
The point of view technique or multiple narrators is used first by Chaman Nehal in *Azadi* (1975), Rushdie’s narrative technique in *Midnight’s Children* (1981) goes beyond everything neither to attempted in Indian English Fiction.

In *Midnight’s Children* the narrator Saleem Sinai is eccentric and the narrative drifts into dream, nightmare and fantasy. The narrator of *Midnight’s Children* tends to see himself in both first and third person and hence the reality of the character remains married. The narrative technique blurs the chronological boundaries. The unities of time and place are also not stable. Novel’s narrative technique helps the narrator who is also a chronicler to present the variety and multitudinousness of the life of the sub continent. As Rushdie’s counterpart, Saleem narrates his history from a distance of time and place. Like the narrator of the *Mahabharata*, Sanjay who is endowed with special power to see things from a distance and narrate the events of the Kurukshetra war, Saleem is endowed with Magical Power so that he can see from a distance and read the minds of others. Saleem like Tristram is the self-conscious narrator, aware of himself as writer. In the case of Saleem and Tristan, the distance the narrator travels may be intellectual. It may be physical or temporal; many novelistic authors are distant from even the most knowing narrators.

In *Midnight’s Children* Rushdie has created something genuinely new, Saleem is really trying to tell the story of his life and the life of the new nation. His life has been badly shaped by the time, exact hours of his begetting, the confusion of his parentage and a variety of other disasters peculiar to him.

Generally, a historical context is either direct or hidden in a magical realist text. Though one cannot say that magical realism is specially Latin American, the fame of Latin American magical realism
has encouraged adoption of this form of writing globally. Magical realist writers came to be recognized in India, Canada, Africa, and U.S. and across the world for their aesthetic-political overtones. 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. The 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. But some politically motivated writers have set their magical realist fiction in large cities that are under political and social tensions. Knowing this, Salman Rushdie sets his fictions in some of the world’s largest areas such as London, Bombay or New York. We can also see that much magical realism has originated in many of the postcolonial countries that are battling against the influence of their previous colonial rules. This kind of postcolonial framework in writing magical realist fiction is applicable both to Latin America and India.

In the growth and development of Indian novel in English, 1980s occupy the most significant position. During the last one-and-a half decades some very promising novelists have published their first works, which speak eloquently about the originality and unprecedented inventiveness of these novelists along with their capability of doing away with all apishness and complexes and constraints which the earlier novelists had to suffer from. It is during the eighties that Indian English novelists and novels earned unheard of honours and distinctions in the western academic world. It is, again, during this period that highly
talented novelists produce what Anthony Burgess would call “some great unexpected masterpiece which will burn up the world” by its meritorious achievements. (Burges:1967)


What made the event noteworthy were the natures of these children every one of whom was, through some freak of biology, or phrases owing to some preternatural power of the moment, or just conceivably by sheer coincidence-endowed with features, talents or faculties which can only be described as miraculous. It was as though ….history, arriving at a point of the highest significance and promise, had chosen to sow in that instant, the seeds of a future which would genuinely differ from anything the world had seen up to that time.

Amongst ‘Rushdie’s children themselves there emerge two clear cut groups of novelists: those who treat literature as a thought-about effort, and those who regard literature as amateur self-expression. Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Allan Sealy, Rohinton Mistry, Firdaus Kanga and Farrukh Dhondy belong to the first group while Upamanyu Chatterjee represents the other. Despite their individual differences, however, these novelists display what Shelley calls in a different context “a family resemblance”.

Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* is often compared to Laurence Sterne’s eighteenth century novel *Tristram Shandy* due to its
self reflective narrative stance and to Gabriel Garcia, Marquez’s *One Hundred years of Solitude* for its skillful blending of the mundane and the fantastic.

*Midnight’s Children* explores not only, political, social and cultural events in modern India but such universal issues as the nature of literature and the relationship between individual and collective history. In the beginning of the novel Rushdie maintains the continuous efforts at synchronizing the three generation into national and domestic life so that the odyssey of Azizes and the Sinais becomes the odyssey of nation. It is the experiences of family living in Amritsar, Bombay and migrating to Karachi. There is a virtual strength in Indian literary history; the Jallinwallabagh tragedy, Quit India Movement, Cabinet Mission, Freedom Muslim league, riots and bloodshed, five years plans, Chinese, Pakistan war, Liberation of Bangladesh and emergency.

In *Midnight’s Children* Rushdie used a hyperbolic narrative- by turns lyric, street smart and allusive- and a cast of imporable characters (a telepathic narrator, a child who can travel through time, another who can change sex at will) to created a parable of modern Indian history. In *Midnight’s Children*, time is often mentioned and prophecy appears frequently. For example, after Saleem’s fathers discover that his wife is pregnant with Saleem, he replies.

“I told you so; it was only a matter of time, “Saleem, after retelling his father’s words, makes this interesting observation of time: “….but time has been an unsteadly affair, in my experience, not a thing to be relied upon. It could even be partitioned; the clocks in Pakistan would ran half an hour a head of their Indian counterparts…….”
(Rushdie, 1981: 86)

Salman Rushdie describes Magic Realism as an alternative way of approaching the truth. In *Midnight’s Children*, there are several instances of preternatural, surreal, or otherwise ‘Magical’ happenings. Rushdie artistically incorporates the elements of Magic Realism in *Midnight’s*
Children. His use of magic realism as a narrative technique is intentional. Not only does he use magic realism— the fantastic, the magical, the strange— as a useful technical tool, but he transcends it to portray the almost unreal and surreal dimensions of the Indian subcontinent. And much like the Latin American writers, he brings a magic and refreshing view of the effects of colonialism.

Midnight’s Children is a highly imaginative and inspired commentary on life, life as lived in a specific period of the past, so that the novel truly becomes a mirror of the authors as well as the people’s thoughts.

Midnight’s Children has an epic sweep covering about six decades in the history of the Indian subcontinent. Book I covers the time from the Jallianwala Bagh incident in April, 1919, to the birth of the protagonist, Saleem, on August 15, 1947; Book II extents upto the end of the Indo-Pakistan war in September, 1965, and Book III envelops the period upto the end of the Emergency in March, 1977, and includes the Bangladesh war as well. At the fictional level, Midnight’s Children depicts the events and experiences in the lives of three generations of the Sinai family. The account begins with their days in Srinagar and follows their passage through Amritsar, Agra and Bombay to Karachi, from where Saleem alone returns hidden in the basket of Parvati, the witch, only to experience the tremors of the Emergency that had been clamped in India.

Midnight’s Children assumes the form of ‘Magical Realism’ because of two reasons. First, the events that Rushdie depicts are selected especially from the recent past, that is, the post-Independence history of India. Dealing with the recent past in fiction generally entails the difficulty of avoiding explicit in the fiction and the external reality on which the former are based. In fact, Rushdie’s interpolations as to the
identification of the widow with Indira Gandhi have been criticized. The second reason for Rushdie’s use of the technique of fabulation is due to the problems of dealing with imroble events. *Midnight’s Children* deals with the most ‘unrealistic’ and improbable events like that of the Emergency excesses of the Indira Gandhi and her son Sanjay Gandhi. These events are so improbable and so unrealistic that they cannot be represented in a realistic narrative. This improbable content (subject matter of the novel) demands as improbable a form as the improbable content itself. Hence, Rushdie uses the technique of ‘Magical realism’ a form which gives scope for a kind of synthesis of fact and fantasy.

A careful analysis of *Midnight’s Children* reveals three major aspects of Rushdie’s use of history in his novel that deserve study: 1) the commingling of autobiography and narrative, 2) the striking breach of chronology and 3) the search for identity and the meaning of life, the quest for identity here being not merely that of the narrator-protagonist, Saleem Sinai, but also that of Padma, a persistent hint of whose self-assertiveness we are conscious of in the novel all through. The opening page of the novel gives as a decipherable clue to these features, characteristically, Rushdie begins.

“I was born in the city of Bombay….once upon a time. No, that won’t do, there’s no getting away from the date: I was born in Dr.Narlikar’s Nursing Home on August 15, 1947. And the time? …..on the stroke of Midnight, as a matter of fact….at the precise instant of India’s arrival at independence, I tumbled forth into the world! I had been mysteriously handcuffed to history. My destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country. For the next three decades, there was to be no escape…..I, Saleem Sinai, had become heavily embroiled in Fate-at the best of times, a dangerous sort of involvement. (MC P.1)

Now, however, time (having no further use for me) is running out. I will soon be thirty-one years old! Must work fast….if I am to end up meaning- yes, meaning-something.
And there are so many stories to tell, too many, such an excess of intertwined lives events, miracles places rumours, so dense a commingling of the improvable and the mundane!.....I must commence the business of remaking my life from the point at which it really began, some thirty two years before anything as obvious, as present as my clock-ridden, crime-stained birth.” (MC P.3, 4)

The very first sentence of the novel, *Midnight’s Children* tells the tale of Saleem Sinai, the narrator. The tale is meant to be at once an autobiography and a narrative, an account of facts and a yarn spun out of imagination, a blend of truth and fiction, “I was born in the city of Bombay”…clearly sets the tone for an autobiography. The birth of Saleem Sinai is not only connected with the birth of India, but with the birth of Pakistan also. That is why the new born baby at the time of independence of two nations- India and Pakistan becomes the hero of the time.

In the novel, *Midnight’s Children*, there is a frequent forward or backward shift in time that makes it difficult to trace the proper sequence of events in the life of the protagonist. At the very outset, after having given the date of his birth, the narrator somersaults to his thirty first birth day. He then dives deep into the past only to return to the present, and then to embark upon the future.

In the words of Renna Mitra:

“This marked-break in chronology in the novel reveals the author’s intention of giving not a record of events in order of their occurrence but of projecting the basic historical truth as interacting with affecting the life of the individual that is chiefly, the author himself as represented by the protagonist. On the one side, we have Saleem’s life, and, on the other, corresponding to this is the life and history of the nation. The story traces the various events in the life of the central character that synchronize with major happening in the recent history of India. The parallel that is worked out, though strained at times, is designed to allow an understanding of the individual’s life in terms of historical forces.” (Mitra: 2006)

Rushdie’s principal use of Magic Realism in the text involves the telepathic abilities of Saleem and the other 1001 (One Thousand One)
children born at the stroke of midnight on August 15, 1947- the abilities that enable them to read the minds of those around them.

In a magical realist text, we can see a conflict between two oppositional systems taking place and each of them works toward the creation of a fictional world from the other. These two are the world of fantasy and the world of reality and they can be seen to be present and competing for the reader’s attention. Here we come to understand that Rushdie uses Magical realist elements mixing the real and fantastic; distortion of time and incorporation of myth/legends/folklore.

In *Midnight’s Children*, history is seen through the eyes of Saleem Sinai, (it is one of the features of Magic Realism) thus reflected predominantly through individual experiences.

Certain observations made in the course of the novel reveals Rushdie’s attitude to reality, and bring home the message that the novelist’s truth is different from that of the historian. “Sometimes legends make reality and become more useful than the facts”, (MC: 47) says Rushdie’s narrator in trying to bring out the nature of fictional reality. And, again “Reality can have metaphorical content: that does not make it less real”. It is clear that Rushdie’s treatment of history is conformity with his idea of

“illusory fictional reality,” which, while recording historical truth, does not insist upon a total transcription of reality. (Pathak 1985: 217)

In *Midnight’s Children*, history is seen through the eyes of Saleem Sinai, thus reflected predominantly through individual experiences. In the novel, on the one side we have Saleem’s personal life and on the other, corresponding to this is the life of the nation. Yet, in the lives of both, only those events which demonstrate the interaction of the two have been selected. The story traces the various crises in that life of the protagonist that synchronize with the major events and movements in the history of
modern India, the Jallinwala Bagh tragedy, the Quit India movement, the cabinet Mission, the struggle for Independence, the role of the Muslim League, the post Independence riots, the five year plans, the re-organization of the states in India, the language agitation, the Chinese aggression, the theft of the sacred relic from Hazratbal mosque, the war with Pakistan, the Independence of Bangladesh, the Emergency and other historical landmarks. Rushdie himself declares that everything in his two novels, Midnight’s Children and Shame, ‘has had to do with poetics and with the relationship of the individual and history.” (Rushdie: 1984)

For Saleem, born at the very moment of India’s independence, his life becomes inextricable interlinked with the political, national, historical and religious events of his time. This gives him a strong desire to restore his past identity to himself. Realism plays a big role here in terms of describing the significant events that have happened. It goes as detailed as Saleem himself and his family members, especially the experiences of his grand father provides a unique perspective for the readers to view what have happened during the period of Indian Independence. Without magic elements, Midnight’s Children could have been ended up as another historical documentary. Overall, the use of magic realism not only makes this novel more appealing, it also narrator himself as well as the Indian history as a whole.

History of the subcontinent plays a major role in the novel as Saleem’s life is entangled with the nation with whom he was born. His grandfather is present in Delhi while Jallianwala Bagh massacre occurs, and after his birth, while they live in Bombay, his presence happens in many noteworthy events, like he becomes the cause of a slogan against Gujarati by Marathas when he accidentally falls into the procession. Midnight’s Children explores the ways in which history is given meaning through the retelling of individual experience. Rushdie is relating
Saleem’s generation of ‘Midnight’s Children’ to the generation of Indians with whom he was born and raised. As a product of postcolonial India, Saleem pieces together the multifarious fragments of his identity, just as India begins a new in rebuilding her identity in the wake of colonialism. Saleem’s story represents the plural identities of Indian and the fragmental search of self through memory.

*Midnight’s Children* recounts the history of India’s transition from British colonialism to independence. The story is expressed through various characters endowed with magical powers and is located within history. The novel is an allegory of India before and after the independence and partition of India which took place at midnight of August 15, 1947. The narrator of the story is Saleem Sinai the protagonist with an enormous nose and other magical powers like telepathy.

The novel is divided into three books. The novel tells the story of Saleem’s family and the earlier events leading up to India’s independence and partition. The narrator Saleem Sinai is born at midnight on August 15, 1947. He discovers that all children born in India between 12 a.m. and 1 a.m. on same day are having special powers. Saleem tries to use these powers to convene those children. The convention, or *Midnight’s Children* conference, is in many ways reflective of the issues India faced in its early statehood regarding the cultural, religious, linguistic and political differences. At the age of nine, Saleem starts to hear voices in his head and realizes that he can telepathically communicate with all of the other children born at the midnight hour of India’s independence. He speaks of his new found telepathic powers thus:

“I am nine years old and lost in the confusion of other people’s lives which are blurring together in the heat.” (M. C. 237)

Through Saleem’s gift of telepathy and his ability to communicate with all of the other children born at midnight who are scattered
throughout the nation, he is able to directly experience India’s diverse plurality. The diversity of their powers and background parallel’s Rushdie’s point that India is a nation that is much too complex and diverse to be defined by one homogenous culture. In particular, those children born closest to the stroke of midnight wield more powerful gifts than the others. Shiva and Parvati who is called ‘Parvati-witch’ are two of these children with notable gifts and roles in Saleem’s story.

Meanwhile, his family ventures into a number of migration and endures the numerous wars which plague the subcontinent. During this period, he also suffers amnesia until he enters a quasi-mythological exile in the jungle of Sundarban, where he is re-endowed with his memory. In doing so, he manages to connect with his childhood friends. For a time, Saleem is arrested. The Emergency heralds the end of potency of the Midnight’s Children. After that, he can only pick up the few pieces of life he may still find and write the chronicle that encompasses both his personal history and that of his young nation. It is a chronicle written for his son who is both chained and supernaturally endowed by history like his own father.

Salman Rushdie projects his concept of history as interacting with the individual and we are introduced to his idea of the interplay of the two on the very first page of the novel.

In the life of both, Saleem and the nation, the pace of history accelerates and there are a number of synchronous events on either side. Shiva’s “explosion” into the life of Saleem at the Magicians ghetto coincides with Indian’s surprising nuclear capability demonstrated with the first nuclear explosions in the deserts of Rajasthan on 18th May 1974. The wedding celebration of Saleem and Parvati synchronize with the Republic Day festivities in the country and form then on ward the parallels drawn between the life of the protagonist and that of the nation continue.
through Parvati and Laylah Sinai; at the time that Laylah enters labour, Indira Gandhi is found guilty of malpractices in the previous elections; Laylah’s son, Adam Sinai, is born on 15\textsuperscript{th} June 1975, the day the Emergency was imposed in India; he, too, like Saleem is ‘Mysteriously handcuffed to history.” And his fortunes are inseparably linked with those of his country; his distress caused by tuberculosis is suspected of having “something darkly metaphorical in it; it seems to be a manifestation of his “connection to history.”

“…..believing that, in those midnight months when the age of my connection to history overlapped with his, our private emergency was not unconnected with the larger macrocosmic disease; under whose influence the sun had become as pallid and diseased as our son.” (Fernandez 1990: 118)

One of such prominent themes is Rushdie’s concept of history and its interplay with the individual who is either closely or remotely related with this history. Rushdie calls himself, significantly enough a fairly political animal. He told his reviewer Gordon Wise that his \textit{Midnight’s Children} and \textit{Shame} were based on historical presentation. He remarks:

“It seems to me,”….that everything in both books has had to do with politics and with the relationship of the individuals and history.” (Ibid)

His studies and experiences have helped him evolve a distinct concept of historical process and their roles. (Pathak 1990: 118)

Rushdie’s hero Saleem Sinai in \textit{Midnight’s Children} observe history, is one of the main concerns of Rushdie’s works. Events of public history are narrated from the point of view of their impact on the religious consciousness of Hindus and Muslims.

Factual presentation is replaced by parallelisms, gossip, rumours, scandals, fantasy etc. The narration of historical events in a work of fiction follows the sequence in which these events are experienced and registered by an individual’s consciousness. Midnight’s Children captures the history of India through memory. The narrator combines reality with
fantasy in order to register a wider spectrum of time and reality than realism would have normally allowed. Rushdie shows how the present is conditioned the past, i.e. by history. History of an individual’s life is usually different from the history of a nation though they can interact at certain times.

In the case of an individual in Rushdie’s fiction, the past is generally in the form of a prick which must be confronted and healed before he can free himself to move on into the future. But this healing can take place only in terms of the culture and tradition of the race because it is understood primarily in those terms. Rushdie’s treatment of history is influenced by his exclusive reliance on memory and by his view of it from the standpoint of personal experience.

The narrator points out the Pakistan’s native past- whatever kind of past it was- had been an uneventful and merely a debilitating span of some decades of slavery which had destroyed its people’s will to act. Now suddenly these people had been declared free and were told to act. But the socio-political base for action that a nation’s history provides was missing in the case of Pakistan. In this regard, the writer says:

“History was old and rusted, it was a machine nobody had plugged in for thousands of years, and here all of a sudden it was being asked for maximum output.” (Rushdie 1995: 82)

As a result, the present in Pakistan, as shown in Shame, is discontinuous, chaotic etc. There is a tendency among Pakistan’s intellectuals to treat the Western writings on sociology of Pakistan as to a large extent irrelevant considering the nature of socio-culture problems of this country.

As the narrator himself tells us, “Newspapers celebrated me; politicians ratified my position. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote:

“Dear Baby Saleem, my belated congratulations on the happy accident of your moment of birth; you are the newest bearer of that ancient face of India which is also externally young. We shall be watching over your life with the closest attention; it will be, in a sense, the mirror of our own,’ (MC P. 122)
Saleem thus becomes conscious of his larger identity quite early in his life:

I was linked to history both literally and metaphorically, both actively and passively, in what our (admirably modern) scientists might term “modes of connection” composed of “Dualistically- combined configurations” of the two pairs of opposed adverbs given above...actively literally, passively- metaphorically.” (MC, P.238)

Rushdie’s Interpretation of History:–

Rushdie adopts this approach of rewriting history both in *Midnight’s Children and Shame* although he does it in a slightly different way.

In *Midnight’s Children* the life of the main hero Saleem Sinai is paralleled with the developments in India, he is connected to her history. He is one of the children who were born at the midnight when India gained independence and all of them gained magical gifts, the closer to the midnight they were born, the greater their gifts were Saleem who was together with Shiva born precisely at the minute India was born, received a letter from the premier which read.

“You are the newest bearer of that ancient face of India which is also eternally young. We shall be watching over your life with the closest attention, it will be in sense, the mirror of our own.” (MC, P. 122)

In proposing memory as a method of creating a new reality of history for the individual as an alternative to or elaboration of recorded fact, Rushdie does give limited credence to the use of recorded fact. When comparing the process of creating history to archaeology, Rushdie notes that fragments comprise memories. To have a concept of one’s own past. One must be able to imagine that history from the available fragments of memories. However, by invoking memory alongside recorded fact, Saleem re-imagines his past to compile a new reality from fragments of memory.
In relating the history of Bombay, Saleem acknowledge the destruction of rice by the development of tenements and continues, conveying the historic value of rice:

“But still, in the city, we are great rice eaters. Patna rice, Basmati, Kashmiri rice travels to the metropolis daily; so the original, ur-rice has left its mark upon us all, and cannot be said to have died in vain.” (MC, P. 107)

Just as our-rice leaves its mark on Bombay, our history – the historical truth of recorded fact leaves its mark on the new history of a new reality created by perception and memory. Rushdie plays with language in a manner similar to the way he plays with history, reality and memory.

Through Saleem Sinai, Salman Rushdie describes the necessity of accepting the partialness of memory. While re-imagination aids the mixing of memory and our history, a strict adherence and reliance to history results in cracks. Saleem embarks on a desperate search for meaning as he attempt to link his own history with that of the nation. As noted in the above passage. Saleem wonders if he is:

“Prepared to distort everything– to re-write the whole history of my times purely in order to place myself in a central role?” (MC, P. 108)

In response to his declared search for meaning against absurdity, Saleem actively and admittedly attempts to link himself with the nation. Doing so results in cracking: an ultimate unity remains impossible. The narrator fails to see what the story tells, which Reder articulates:

*Midnight’s Children* is out to show that history does have meaning: In fact, history has many meanings for Rushdie, history is individual, and history meaning is determined by the present. The message is, to a great extent, that history is not logical, it is not scientific or even objective– but it still can have meaning.” (MC, 240)

The hero of *Midnight’s Children* Saleem Sinai has a magical gift of telepathy which means that he can tune to anyone’s thoughts and communicate with them. At some point of the book he manages to
contact all the other children born at the midnight. India gained independence that live scattered all over the country and they are having forms in Saleem’s head. They quarrel over what to do with their magical gifts and Saleem can let them in or out. He calls himself ‘all-india radio.’

The traditional approach is also used in the in novel which the historical as well as the traditional matter of the Saleem’s grand father’s family. The ‘Perforated sheet; motif reappears in the third generation too, in the career of Amina’s daughter, Jamila, who becomes a famous singer. Her parents realize that her gift to too extraordinary to keep to themselves but they hesitate to allow her to be put on the stage in full public view. A family friend, Major Latif devises ‘her famous, all concealing, white silk chadar, the curtain or veil, heavily embroidered ingold brocade work and religious calligraphy, behind which she sat demurely whenever she performed unpublic. The chadar of Jamila singer was held up by two tireless, muscular figures, also (but more simply) veiled from head to foot…..and at its very centre, the major had cut a note. Diameter: three inches.

Embroidered in finest gold thread, that was the history of our family once again became the fate of a nation, because when Jamila sang with her lips pressed against the brocaded aperture, Pakistan fell in love with a fifteen year old girl whom it only ever glimpsed through a gold-and white preformatted sheet. (MC, P.313)

The sour grapes eaten by Saleem’s forbears also set the teeth of his son on edge. The fragmentation, syndrome affects the fourth generation too. Like Saleem, his son Aadam has two fathers, Siva being his real father, since Saleem is impotent, and as in the case of his father, Aadam’s personal appearance also exemplifies an endemic element of discordance:

On either side of his head flapped audient protuberances like sails, ears, so colossally huge that…..when his head popped out they had thought, for one bad moment, that it was the head of tiny elephant.” (MC, 419)
Adam suffers from tuberculosis and when he recovers and start speaking the first word he utters is the mysterious ‘Abracadabra’ Saleem’s son, Aadam also shares another unfortunate trait with his father. Like him, he too is ‘mysteriously handcuffed to history’ his destinies indissolubly chained to those of his country. This is because he is born at the precise instant when the Emergency is declared on the night of 25 June 1975. His ears are so big because he has ‘heard the shootings in Bihar and the screams of lathi-charged dock-workers in Bombay. And he refuses to speak because he is ‘a child who heard too much, and as a result never spoke, rendered dumb by a surfeit of sound. (MC, P.420)

Asha Kaushik remarks:

“A historical novel can be designated as political; when it specially and directly deals with political history. In comparison to a historical novel, a political novel is narrower in one sense and broader in another. It is narrower since it is constricted to political aspects of history. A historical novel extends beyond the political terrain to social, cultural, moral and economic aspects of history. The political novel, as it moves beyond history and addresses itself to living political problems, ideas and ideologies.”

(Kaushik 1988: 06)

Through the eyes of Saleem Sinai Rushdie narrate the historical condition of the family as well as the nation- in Midnight’s Children. Rushdie’s Midnight’s Children deals with historical facts and subjective reality. The Midnight’s Children are the citizens of post-independent India who are also post-emergency children. The most remarkable events in this period of Indian-political history are the Midnight of August 15, 1947 when India got her freedom from the clutches of the British rule in this period and June 25, 1975 when emergency was clamped on India by Indira Gandhi and made it a Slavish country as it was in the days of the British colonialism and in some respects, even worse than the British domination. Then, there are events like Indo-pak and Indo-Chaina wars, language riots in Gujrat and Bombay etc.

The shock of India’s partition into India and Pakistan unnerved common men both in India and Pakistan. The rioters at the time of the
partition looted and burnt shops and houses, killed small children and made million of people paupers and refugees:

“And in all the cities all the towns all the villages the tittle dia-lamps burn on window-sills porches verandahs, while trains burn in the Punjab, with the green flames of blistering paint and the glaring saffron of fired fuel, like the biggest dias in the world.” (MC, P.115)

Saleem’s birth is connected with India’s independence on 15th August 1947. Emergency is connected with his so-called son’s birth on 25th June 1975.

The following passages from the novel show different incidents with similarities:

“I was born in the city of Bombay…..once upon a time. No, that won’t do, there’s no getting away from the date: I was born in Doctor Narlikar’s Nursing Home on August 15th, 1947 and the time? The time matters, too.” (MC, P. 01)

Emergency is connected with his so-called son’s birth on 25th June 1975. Saleem narrates:

“He was born in old Delhi….once upon a time. No, that won’t do, there’s no getting away from the date: Aadam Sinai arrived at a night-Shadowed Slum on June 25th, 1975. And the time? The time matters too. As I said: at night, No, its important to be more…..on the stroke of midnight, as a matter of fact. Clock hands joined palms. Oh, spell it out, spell it out: at the precies instant of India’s arrival at Emergency, he emerged. There were gaps: and across the country, silences and fears. And owing to the occult tyrannies of that benighted hour, he was mysteriously handcuffed to history, his destinies indissolubly chained to those of his country.” (MC, P.419-420)

The birth of Saleem Sinai is not only connected with the birth of India, but with the birth of Pakistan also. That is why the new-born baby at the time of independence of two nations- India and Pakistan becomes the hero of the time.

Mahatma Gandhi’s assassination was the most serious incident that happened in free India. Following Gandhi’s assassination, the riots once
again broke out. It was like a calamity on the nation. The Muslims were under the pressure. But when the killer was known, Amina-Saleem’s mother reacts:

“Thank God’, Amina burst out, ‘It’s not a muslim name!’ (MC, P.143)

Salman Rushdie narrates the situation of states. States are divided on the basis of provincial languages and cultures. However, until how even clear-cut boundaries of many states are not fixed, still there are language riots.

It is a matter of record that the states reorganization committee had submitted its report to Mr. Nehru as long as October 1955; a year later, its recommendations had been implemented. India had been divided a new, into fourteen states and six centrally administered ‘territories’. But the boundaries of these states were not formed by rivers, or mountains, or any natural features of the terrain; they were, instead, walls of words. Language divides as…. (MC, P.189)

Saleem Sinai, the narrator, describes India’s aggressive stance towards China in 1962. Here he does not go into any details about the causes of war, but once again cynically says that India poured out speeches about Chinese aggression and the blood of poor martyred Jawans. This type of attitude of the narrator looks like the anti-human chauvinism of xenophobia which spread from the neutral point of the outsider.

He is concerned with the pain caused to human beings in 1965 and 1971 wars between India and Pakistan. The description of these wars, indeed, is supreme examples of his non-partisan attitude and his ability to state the truth. The claims of the government of India and Pakistan are exposes as:

…On September 9th, 1962. And the time? The time matters, too. Well, then: in the afternoon. No, its important to be more…. At the stroke of three O’clock, which, even in the north, is the hottest time of day….for away in New Delhi, Defense minister Krishna Menon (acting on his own initiative, during Nehru’s absence at the common wealth Prime Minister’s conference) too the momentous decision to use force in necessary against the Chinese army on the Himalayan frontier. The Chinese must be ejected from the ‘Thag La ridge’, Mr. Menon said… (MC, P. 294-95)
Each political and national event is shown to be related personally to the Sinai family. On the same date and at the same time of the furious Indio-China war event, Amina Sinai is seen to be reading the telegram with the news:

SINAISAHIB SUFFERED HEART BOOT GRAVELY ILL (MC, P. 295)

Saleem Sinai with his mother comes to Bombay (now Mumbai). Once again he joins Midnight’s Children’s conference. The pieces of news of Indo-China war are frequently coming:

On October 20th, the Indian forces were defeated thrashed by Chinese at Thag La ridge. An official Peking statement announced. In self defence, Chinese frontier guards were compelled to strike back resolutely. (MC, P.298).

Saleem Sinai expresses his grief upon India-China war, a great historical moment:

While parliamentarians poured out the speeches about “Chinees aggression’ and the blood of our martyred jawans’ my eyes began to stream with tears; while the nation puffed itself up, convincing itself that the annihilation of the little yellow men was at hand, my sinuses, too, puffed up and destroyed a face which was already to startling that Auyb Khan himself had started at it in open amazement. In the clutches of the optimism disease, students burned mago Tse-Tung and Chouen-Lai in effigy; with optimism-fever on their brows, mobs cuttacked Chinese shoemakers, curiodealers and restauranteurs. Burning with optimism, the government even interned Indian citizens of Chinese descent now ‘enemy aliens’- in camps in Rajesthan. Birla Industries donated a miniature rifle range to the nation. School girls began to go on military parade. (MC, P.299)

Saleem narrates, Nehru’s seventy third birthday also celebrated in the horror and noise of guns on the battle-field. Saleem describes:

The day of November 20th was a terrible day; the nights was a terrible hight----- six day earlier, on Nehru’s Seventy-third birthday, the great confrontation with the Chinese forces had begun; the Indian army- JAVANS SWING INTO ACTION! Had attacked the Chinese at Walong. News of the disaster of walong and the rout of general kaul and four battalion, reached Nehru on Saturday 18th; on Monday 20th it flooded through radio and press and arrived at Methwoids Estage. ULTIMATE PANIC IN NEW DELHI! INDIAN FORCES IN TATERS! (MC, P.301)
After Nehru’s death, Indian politics took a different mode. Nehru dynasty was tried to be rejected by the active leaders of the period.

My grandmother Naseem Aziz arrived in Pakistan in mid-1964, leaving behind an India in which Nehru’s death had precipitated a bitter power struggle. Morarji Desai, the finance Minister, and Jagjivan Ram, Most powerful of the untouchables, united in their determination to prevent the establishment of the Nehru dynasty; So Indira Gandhi was denied the leadership. The new Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, another member of that generation of politicians who seemed to have been pickled in immortality; in the case of shastri, however, this was only may, illusion. Nehru and Shastri have both fully proved their mortality; but there are still plenty of the other left, Clutching Time in their mummified fingers and refusing to let it more-----in Pakistan however, the clocks ticked and ticked (MC, P. 327)

Coming back to the partition problem, it could be said that the Rann of kutch has been a disputed territory since the partition on 9th April 1965, the Indian Army occupied several posts in this territory built by Pakistan forces, Now saleem is in Pakistan forces It was eighty-two-day struggle which ended on 1st July 1965 Saleem claims.

Let me state this unequivocally it is my firm conviction that the hidden purpose of the indo Pakistan war of 1965 was nothing more or less than the elimination of my benighted family from the face of the earth (MC, P.338)

The face in the above quoted passage expresses the innocent citizens of India for whom the partition makes no difference to their daily lives. After the death of his parents in 1971, Saleem Sinai is enrolled in a CUTIA unit. He is chosen to function as dog. The 1971 Indo-Pak war is filled with cruelty and horror. Saleem use his magic power of seeing like Sanjay in Mahabharta. The horror and cruelty of the battle saleem describes:

Shaheed looked out of windows and saw things that weren’t couldn’t have been true: Soldiers entering women’s hostels without knocking; women, dragged into the street, were also entered, and again nobody troubled to knock and news paper offices, burning with the dirty yellowblack smoke of cheap gutter newprint, and the offices of trade unions, smashed to the ground, and roadside ditches filling up with people who were not merely asleep bare chests were seen and the hollow pimples of bullet holes (MC, P. 356)
Throughout the novel sleem’s is inner life is a function of the historical forces affecting his state. He is in his own mind, the latent, elusive centre of India’s history. His parodying the history of India makes the entire narrative a historiographic metafiction. Seeing himself as the centre of the state he begins to look upon himself as an integral and an inalienable part of the state. His hold upon reality comes from a view that the reality of the state is fragmented and dispersed in the consciousness of all individuals and not in the consciousness of any one individual.

The *Midnight’s Children*, including Saleem, suffered on account of being born at dismal hour in history. They were the unfortunates, the living casualties of that numinous hour which brought freedom to India and robbed their. Their problems were, precisely the everyday human problem which arise from character and environment, they were broken problem made to be broken. Saleem is not unaware of his lot and the plight of people like him.

Yes they will trample me under foot, the numbens marching one two three, four hundred million five hundred six, reducing me to speaks of voiceless dust, just as, all in good time, they will trample my son who is not my son, and his son who will not be his, until the thousand and first generation, until a thousand and one midhights have bestowed their terrible gifts and a thousand and one children have died, because it is the privilege and the curse of midnight’s children to be both mistakes and victims of their times, to forsake privacy and be sucked into the annihilating whirlpool of the multitudes, and to be unable to live or die in peace (P 552)

Rushdie narrates history in Book III of *Midnight’s Children*, which deals with the emergency and its aftermath a more public book, because of its tone and irony; it is a dark, direct and more political book than the others. It’s more to do with the direct collision of the individual with history he adds the most gloomy thing about historical accidents like the emergency is the way of airbrushing the past what is worse the victims show a weakening in their resolve to hold on to them
Rushdie once told to his interviewer about history that the history of the 20th century has been ruthlessly sawed by the Britishers.

Most of his novels embody his efforts to re-create the history of the Indian subcontinent. He makes in them commendable attempts to charter interlocking and interdependent relationships of history and the individual and to restore the much needed sense of dignity of the latter.

Saleem sees the isolated facts of history only as they relate to him as an individual only fragment of the societal self and not society as a whole. George Lukas in History and Class Consciousness writes.

“Only in this context which speeds the isolated facts of social life as aspects of the historical process and integrates them in a totality can knowledge of the facts hope to become knowledge of reality.” (Lukas 1922: 08)

Thus Midnight’s Children illustrates the permanent plight of individual identity in the hostile modern world which makes it impossible for anyone to remain an island but compels everyone to be part of a continent, with the result that the individual is inevitably handcuffed to history.

Political situation is depicted in Midnight’s Children through the eyes of Saleem Sinai.

After observing Rushdie’s presentation of History through his new technique magical realism, the study explores how Rushdie narrates the political, religious and cultural situation of India through the eyes of Saleem Sinai.

Prior to Rushdie, political situation reflected in Indian novels in English. Bhabani Bhattachary’s novel A Goddesss Named Gold (1960) depicts the poverty and privation of the villagers in Sonamatti, illegal acquisition of lands by landlords, the dislodging of farmers from their lands, the growing affluence of the corrupt, the political manoeuring of the upstart leaders, the soaring ambitions of the greedy, the sinister
combine of the vested interests and above all the anti-national life after independence from the background of the novel.

Bhabani Bhattacharya’s novels consciously deal with the important problems that India faced before and after Independence in various field of life. His keen awareness of social reality, as seen from the political, cultural, and moral perspectives is reflected in his creative expressions.

Before Rushdie A Journal of Forty Eight Hours of the years 1945, by kylash Chandar Dutt published in 1935 was a political novel, anticipating the movement for independence one hundred and ten yeart in advance of its actual occurrence. Another Indo Anglian novel, The Republic of Orissa Annals from the pages of the Twentieth Century (1845), by Sochee Chander Datt, was also a political novel. It deals with the events of the first two decades of the twentieth century.

Another novelist who is intensely conscious of the changing social reality and politics is Kamala Markandaya. The accent of some ‘Inner Fury’ is on political forces affecting the life of the upper classes in the city. The excitement and ecstasy connected with the struggle for Independence, the hatred of the people for their rulers, the Frenzy and fury of the mob from the background of the tragedy of men and women India and Birtish.

Kamala Markandaya returns to the political theme to treat it more extensively of times during the period of the British rule coming to an end. The presentation of the political reality and political change is made through the lives of the three rulers of the state of Devpur.

G.V.Desani is one writer who in his masterpieces. All About H. Hatterr (1948) avoids political questions and pressing social concerns and yet mirrors the reality of Indian on different levels.

Manohar Malgonkar’s Third novel The Princes (1963) which offers a political panorama of changing India before and after
Independence The anther successfully presents in human terms the
dramatic event of the characters and events has an extraordinary
authenticity the palace life with its intrigues and its politics, Sports and
hunting, sex and sensuality from the matrix of the novel.

The major political events in the mid century India are the
achievement of Independence, the holocaust of partition and the World
War II. These events in fact were more than merely political. They
virtually destroyed the old order and finished with the old values. The
war had no direct impact on Indian life. Only two important novels are
directly concerned with war-Malgonkar’s *Distant Drum* and Anand’s
*Across the Black Waters*. However, the impact of war in changing values
and morals has been shown by Bhahani Bhattacharya in his *He who Rides
a Tiger*, and *So Many Hungers* which indict the black marketeers and
grain hoarders. Anand, Bhattacharya and Kamala Markandaya deal with
one of the most disturbing syndromes of the bourgeois economy totally
divorced from human values and destroying men for profits.

In Nayantara Shagal’s post Independence politics become the
obvious background with Delhi or Chandigarh as the place of action she
is however attracted more by high level politics than by political trends
that change the social structure. Indian reality, therefore, remains almost
untouched.

Khushwant Singh, Chaman Nahal and Salman Rushdie are from
the rank of writers of political novel in India in recent times. A close
study of the contemporary novels shows that they are preoccupied with
our historical past or they deal with some events of national importance
that has had wide repercussions.

Politics in post independence India is all about sharing and shaping
of power. It has also been characterized by a total eclipse of values and a
gradual emergence of authoritarianism. So, modern political novel is
concerned with the grotesque and absurd situations created by desensitized and moronic politicians. A few novelists have reacted adequately to the murky, political realities that emerged in India after independence. Problems of identity, alienation and loneliness impart complexity to their treatment of politics. The emergency and the Punjab Crisis have proved to be feeding grounds for them. They have adopted a detached and objective manner of narration and have used irony as an effective expressive mode. Nayantara Sahagal, Salman Rushdie, Partap Sharma, Shashi Tharoor were able to weave out fictional patterns which shocked our sensibility and compelled new thinking on the part of the reader.

Rushdie narrates the political situation of India through the eyes of Saleem Sinai.

*Midnight’s Children* deals with politics of Eastern India and *Shame* dramatizes military politics of Pakistan.

Rushdie believes that “Every thing is politics”. Rushdie’s “every action, thought and emotion of human being is inseparably bound up with the life and struggles of the community, i.e. with politics whether the human themselves are conscious of this unconscious of it or even trying to escape from it, objectively their actions, thoughts and emotions nevertheless spring from and run into politics” (Singh 1990: 111)

For Rushdie, writing is a political act, In *Midnight’s Children* and *In Shame* Rushdies cocerns is with contemporary history. *Shame* is a companion piece to *Midnight’s Children*. *Midnight’s Children* is hirtocical and political narration about India since independence. The second half of the third chapter attempts to show the politics of nations i.e. India and Pakistan through his narrative technique Magic Redism. *Midnigent’s Children* cover the post independence era of uncertainties and traumas in India to which the narrator, Saleem is a witness.
Midnight’s Children is highly political novel because Saleem realizes that for the individual living in a certain kind of society, there must be a relatedness of some kind between one’s private world and the public world into which one has been socialized. But the political figures who appear in the novel Indira Gandhi her son Sanjay Gandhi, Morarji Desai are depicted as monsters straight out of nightmare in Midnight’s Children. Saleem Sinai is not only narrator but he is also a participant in the action of the novel. He is a good observer of politics of India. He does so by being scrupulously truthful and by evaluating only from a humanitarian nationalistic religious or cultural point of view.

Midnight’s Children is a family saga as well as a political record of India from 1915 to 1977. The novel encapsulates the experiences of three generations of the Sinai family living in Srinager, Amritsar, Agra and then in Bombay (now Mumbai) and finally migration to Karachi from the beginning of the novel Rushdie maintains a continuous effort at synchronizing national and domestic lives so that the odyssey of the Azizes and the Sinai also become the odyssey of the nation from the year 1915 up to about the year 1977. This convergence of the national and the domestic is understood repeatedly in the course of the novel.

On the day the World War ended, Naseem developed the longed for headache such historical coincidences have littered and perhaps befouled my family’s existence in the world. (MC, P.27)

Saleem’s grandfather, Aadam Sinai trained as a medical practitioner, was called upon to visit the house of a Muslim family whose daughter needed medical attention. He falls in love with his patient latter in life they get married. Saleem claims to have inherited from his grandfather a propensity to see all things in piecemeal fashion because of his grandfather’s experience with the sheet.

“Condemned by a perforated sheet to a life of fragments (MC, P.121)
He is also a person who works for society. At Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, Adam Aziz ceases to concentrate on the events around him as the trouble mounts to unbearable intensities. *Midnight’s Children* is divided into three parts. The first part deals with authors matriarchal grandfather Adam Aziz and his archaic lifestyle while the other two parts deal with his father Ahmad Sinai, mother Amina, sister Brass Monkey wife Padma, and Ayah Mary Pereira and Saleem Sinai. It also includes a host of other characters who interacts with the family of the Sinai in their day-to-day existence.

About shooting Indians by the orders of Brigadier General Dyer he resorts to understatement rather than melodramatic rhetoric:

> Good shooting Dyer tells his men, we have done a jolly good thing (MC, P. 36)

This seemingly unemotional statement of fact is more effective than any verbose description by the narrator of the intensity of this emotion would have been.

The statement attributed by Dyer brings out his inhumanity in particular and that of the whole phenomenon of colonial rule in general. The narrator reports it without comment, but the description of the innocent people, the deliberatness of the killing and the complete lack of human evoke emotion and sympathy for the victims and indignation against the British in the average reader. Here, the narrator maintains the human position he has established at the outset. Through Adam Aziz does not seem to be directly concerned with the Indian freedom struggle.

Saleem Sinai is a highly self conscious narrator. He is aggressive coy strident subtle fatalistic, rebellious, finicky and grave. The narrator is brought up in Bombay (now Mumbai) where his father Ahmed Sinai is a financier. He seems the language riots between the supporter of Gujarati and Marathi languages as a rich child who knows neither of the two languages. In this world people behave violently for the issues like
language colour and creed. The Narrator Saleem Sinai takes the responsibility of the riots saying.

In this way I became directly responsible for triggering off the violence which ended with the partition of the state of Bombay (MC, P.192)

In Book two Rushdie narrates the hero’s childhood and ends with his being injured in a bombing raid on the streets of Karachi the Indo Pakistan War of 1965.

“On the morning of September 23rd the United Nations announced the end of hostilities between India and Pakistan. India had occupied less than 500 square miles of Pakistani soil; Pakistan had conquered just 340 Square miles of Kashmiri dream. (MC, P.343)

In the novel, there is an episode in which Saleem is enlisted in the Pakistan Army as a Man-dog on account of his having extra ordinarily sensitive sense of the smell. In creating this kind of fictional situation, the narrator’s intention seems to be to convey that the truth is too dark to reveal directly. When saleem is a man-dog the narrative slides almost completely into dreamy situation. Saleem realizes that for the individual living in a certain kind of society there must be relatedness between ones private world and the public world into which one has been socialized.

The social and political comment and the imputation of bribery and correction are undermined by the uncertain surrounding of the narrators sanity and reliability throughout the novel, Saleem is on the side of disintegration. He loses fingers, hair, sense of smell, memory and ends by being impotent as a result of the forced sterilization programme during emergency.

The other political events which Saleem narrates are also even more significant. As a spy of General Zulfikar, who has married Saleems aunt Emeraid, Saleem secretly keeps a watch on the preparations of the coup d’eat, He narrates:
“An eleven years old boy cannot judge whether a President is truly corrupt even if gongs and pips Say he is it is; not for eleven years old- to Say whether Mirzaz’s association with the feeble Republican Party should have disqualified him from high office under the new regime, Saleem Sinai made no political judgments.” (MC, P. 290)

The narrator Saleem narrates India’s aggressive posture towards China in 1962. Here he doesn’t go into details about the causes of war, but cynically say that India poured out speeches about Chinese’s aggressions and the blood of our martyred Jawans, the 1971 war seems the ultimate degradation of man. Saleem Sinai suffers from amnesia and emotional numbness as consequence of the death of his parents. The war began when the army of the Pakistan fought against the indigenous army of the East Pakistan It had dimension of cruelty and horror.

In his address to the Midnights Children he gives his verdict on politics thus:

Politics, children at the best of times a bad dirty business. We should have avoided it. I should have never have dreamed of purpose, I am coming to the conclusion that privacy, the small individual lives of men, are preferable to all this inflated macrocosmic activity. But too late. Can’t be helped. What can’t be cured be endured?” (MC-435)

Padma’s actions make her a mere stereotype she cooks food for Saleem makes his bed sulks when she is ignored and performs all talks, she is good only as an audience and a receiver for Saleem is the giver. She is sidelined when Saleem discusses politics and history. Thus the novel Midnight’s Children deals with the most unrealistic and improbable events like that of the Emergency excesses of the Indira Gandhi and her son Sanjay Gandhi these events are so improbable and so unrealistic that they cannot be represented in a realistic narrative.

Politics in post-independence India is all about sharing and shaping of power. It has also been characterized by a total eclipse of values and a gradual emergence of authoritarianism. So post modern political novel is
concerned with the grotesque and absurd situations created by desensitized and moronic politician. A few novels have reacted adequately to the murky political realities that emerged in India after independence. Problems of identity alienation and loneliness impart complexity to their treatment of politics. The emergency and the Panjab crisis have proved to be feeding grounds for them. They have adopted a detached and objective manner of narration and have used irony as an effective expressive mode. Nayantara Sahgal, Salman Rushdie, Partap Sharma, Shashi Tharoor were able to weave out fictional patterns which shocked our sensibility and compelled new things on the part of the reader.

Rushdie’s religious allegory is absorbed quickly into the political because religion has always been a potent weapon in the hands of these who ruled India. (Banerjee 1990: 24)

Political fiction, like all literature, is recorded from culture. As a cultural approach to politics highlighting the uniqueness of a system’s cultural value, beliefs, structure of loyalty and their changing connotations in the political world-plotical fiction is expected to contribute to the need and possibility of building up and indigenous framework of enquiry. A political system evolves in a peculiar historical and cultural situation which cannot be divorced from its current political context. India is a multi-religious nation; hence, religion plays an important role in Indian politics.

The present chapter is an attempt at analyzing religious, cultural and social situations in his novel *Midnight’s Children*. Rushdie attempts to mix in his fiction not only political but also religious and personal history of the characters and certain national heroes from India. Sometimes by changing their names and sometimes by mentioning them directly. Naturally the culture of those characters is closely related to the culture and history of nations concerned.
*Midnight’s Children, Shame, The Moor’s Last Sigh* encompass India’s past with its cultural and religious history. The history of India is not of Hindus alone or of Muslims alone for that matter, but also of the Britishers who ruled India for a considerably long period of global history in general and Indian history in particular. They came not simply as men but as the symbols of a new spirit of Europe. The spirit of modern age has cast its radiance from the western horizon, illuminating the entire span of world history. It has been a matter of general experience that whenever religion acquires undue significance myth and mythology become powerful in a community.

India is a land of various cultures and religions. It is a nation where idolatory is the main part of one of the major religions in the country i.e. Hinduism and at the same time Islam is also deeply rooted in India which strictly denies idol worship. In Hinduism also there are many branches which deny idolatory. Even after many immigrations and invasions the Indian culture survived and showed its unique status in the world. That is why Indian culture is not very easy to understand. At present we find Polynesian, Dravidic, Mongoloid, Semtic, Aryan races etc. in India. The stereotypical image of the Indians carried by most of the people outside India is sometimes shocking, occasionally inconsistent and most often mysterious. Some Indians look like light-skinned Europeans, blond with blue green eyes some of then like high nosed black-haired Arabics or Jews some like flat nosed, round-faced.

In *Midnight’s Children* Rushdie depicts the life of Muslims, Hindus and other communities. Adam Aziz the grand father of Saleem Sinai had spent five years in Germany. After returning he starts looking at Kashmiri life though his changed view. But once again he has to adjust himself to his original tradition or culture. Resultantly he starts praying Namaz but could not concentrate.
Aadams father is a mentally retarded person. When Aadam went to Germany his mother had to run gemstone business while his father was sitting behind a veil in a wooden chair and made bird noises. Adam’s mother used to say

For so many years even my ankles were a secret and now I must be started at by strange persons who are not even family members. (MC, P.18)

Muslim religious tradition does not allow Aadam Aziz (doctor return from foreign) to inspect the body of the lady who is sick. So the doctor in him has to observe the patient through a hole in a sheet which is held up by lady wrestlers. Still the doctor loves the patient but in fragments. The hole becomes a hereditary possession of the Sinai. Saleem feels a hole in his chest due to which he can collect the sounds beyond his reach.

Rushdie’s women characters are victims of male dominated culture. Naseem Aziz Saleem’s grandmother is the daughter of Muslim orthodox, Ghani, the landowner in Kashmir. Naseem Aziz and her daughter Mumtaz named as Amina after her marriage with Ahmed Sinai represent the Muslim tradition. Muslim woman is being measured at various levels in terms of her attitudes and practices toward institutions in Muslim religion. Naseem Aziz is always called reverned mother. She is always veiled when Adam Aziz the doctor comes to check her because Islam doesn’t allow the ladies to be unveiled before strangers.

I know you Europe-returned men. You find terrible women and they try t make us girls be like them! Listen, Doctor Sahib, husband or no husband, I am not any bad word woman. This was a battle my grandfather never won; and it set the tone for their marriage, which rapidly developed into a place of frequent and devastating warfare, under whose depredations the young girl behind the sheet and the gauche Doctor turned rapidly into different, stranger beings----What now, wife? Aziz asks. Naseem buries her face in the pillow. What else? She says in muffled times ‘you, or what? You want me to walk naked in front of strange men.’ (MC, P.34)
Aadam, the modern Muslim, instructs his orthodox wife.

Forget about being a good Kashmiri girl. Start thinking about being a modern Indian woman. (MC, P.34)

Such views reflect the conflict between traditional values and modern ways of thinking.

Amina Sinai Saleems mother follows the same culture which her mother follows.

She fell under the spell of the perforated sheet of her own parents because she resolved to fall in love with her husband bit by bit. (MC, P.68)

Padma, another character in Midnight’s Children cooks for Saleem makes his bed sulks when he is ignored and waits for him. Saleem always says that he has attempted to educate her. But Saleems deliberate attempts at educating her not clearly seen anywhere in the novel. He always elevates his rotes to a higher level and degrades Padma’s activities. What Padma needs is sympathy from Saleem; she is in love with him. Resultantly she has become emotionally handicapped in the sense that she cannot think of anything or anybody except Saleem. In short her love towards Saleem proves to some kind of trap for her. She seems to have sacrificed all her future for the sake of her love. It appears Rushdie has done an injustice to her by portraying her as a woman who does not have a right place in society because she is Saleem’s servant and an illetrate woman who wastes her life in foolish love

She is captivated helpless as a mongoose frozen into immobility by the swaying blinkless eyes of a Gooded snake, paralysed yes! By love. (MC, P.121)

In Midnight’s Children Saleem address his tales to Padma, the female naratee who some times interferes, comments and criticizes. She is Saleem’s servant, mistress and plays a significant role in the novel. The word Padma means lotus and is the symbol of one who was born in slime, mad and illiterate. Saleem disapproves Padma’s asthetic counsels. He thinks that he is superior to her in intellect. In spite of the autuor’s
Patriachal bias, rather unconscious against female intellect Padma remains a true critic of Saleem. He masterful control over saleem can be felt when we see that she is saleem's typical audience.

The other character Shiva is the alter ego of Saleem who is a Muslim as well as a Hindu deeply religious irrespective of the religion of which he is brought up.

In *Midnight’s Children* problems of identity crisis are depicted by Rushdie with his new technique Magic Realism. Saleem has various father figures like Methwold, Wee Willie Winke, Nadir khan (his mother’s love) and Ahmad Sinai etc. His changing family history makes him a combination of Muslim Hindu and British cultures with a mythological frame of reference that draws on all the components of an Indian melting pot. He devours the matters of public record because he believes; he is also the history of the nation. His meeting with Shiva through “Midnight’s Children Conference” is the meeting of or the return to Sinai blood line.”

At personal level all the characters in *Midnight’s Children* face psychological tensions of rootlessness and aligation though they are in a society and are accepted by a particular religion. The hero himself admits that though his birth day celebrated by the nation and though newspapers awarded him. He was mysteriously handcuffed to history.

Apart from this Saleem has a supernatural gift of telepathic view. As he is the narrator of the story he is more familiar with the readers whom he tells about his past present and connects himself with the next generation through Ganesha.

Rushdie’s heroes come from different historical backgrounds and are confused when they find themselves rootless Saleem in *Midnight’s Children* has an identity only within his religious (Islamic) framework. Omar Khayam in *Shame* is a bastard. Culture is what a person to acquire
in order to become a fully worthwhile moral agent. A particular person is a product of a particular culture in which he or she lives and differences among human beings can be explained by difference in their cultural upbringing. The major concerns of the life of people all over the world are, by and large, the same. Rushdie’s novels are glimpses of various aspects of social and cultural reality of Indian life and reflect different images of its changing life before and after independence.

*Midnight’s children* thus illustrates the permanent plight of individual identity in the hostile modern world, which makes it impossible for anyone to remain an island but compels every one to be part of a continent, with the result that the individual is inevitably ‘handcuffed to history’

All these children who were born simultaneously with Saleem Sinai at the midnight hour of 15th August 1947 had grown into adults by the time of the Emergency was declared by Indira Gandhi on 25th June 1975. One of the most atrocious things done in addition to others during the Emergency was that many Indian males were forcibly sterilized under the name of family planning scheme. In *Midnight’s Children*, Rushdie shows that all these *Midnight’s Children* born simultaneously with Saleem were also caught and tortured as a part of family planning drive implemented during the Emergency. At political level, almost all the characters created by Rushdie appear to be fighting for their suitable existence in society.

The study attempts at a re-reading of Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* in the light of the link between magical realism and postcolonialism. Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* is known for its brilliant use of magical realism through the use of which it has attained the status of a perfect postcolonial text. Rushdie’s style is popularly identified with magical realism and his writings deals with the uses of split identity and
conflict of immigration and exile with magical realism, post colonial writers are able to challenge realistic narrative and present an alternative reality. According to Linda Hutecheon,

“the post modern technique of magical realism is linked to postcolonialism in that they both deal with the oppressive force of colonial history in relation to the past.”

(Hutcheon 2002:23)

Rushdie uses the narrative style of Magic Realism in which myth and fantasy are blended with real life. He uses the narrative technique of Magic Realism to blur the distinction between fantasy and reality. He gives on equal acceptance for the ordinary and the extraordinary. He uses lyrical and, at times, fantastic writing with a examination of the Character of Human existence and an implicit criticism of society, particularly the elite. Rushdie can be considered as a writer who plays with the narrative technique of Magic Realism. He has earned every right to be called one of the greatest magic realists ever.
And when the woman saw that, the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise. She took of the fruit there of, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves a prons.

The first thing Adam and Eve got out of the tree of knowledge was *Shame*, not wisdom. (Genesis-3. 7-8)
The second half of the IIIrd chapter deals with Magic Realism in Rushdie’s Shame. Shame is the third novel and a companion piece to Midnight’s Children. It seems to me, Rushdie remarks that, “every thing in both books has had to do with politics and with the relationship of the individual and history.”

Shame presents a female narrative, a shift from male centred narrative in Midnight’s Children. Shame covers the time span of thirty six years, i.e. from the birth of Pakistan (1947) to the partition of Pakistan and Bangladesh in 1983. The panic, the terror and the mind your business type of warning given to the citizen can arrest and attention. Rushdie uses Magical Realism in this novel, Shame; to show the embodiment of Shame with Sufiya. This technique inserts magical situations into a setting which is otherwise quite normal.

Shame heralds the arrival of three families of a country as Pakistan, in which most of the incidents are associated with the sequence three, beginning with the title of the book. Shame translated in Urdu’s ‘Sharam’. It consists of three letters Shin-re-mim written from right to left.

After the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, in India and Pakistan, some questions are raised before the people of new nation. Some of these are who is responsible for making decisions about how the nation should be constructed? And does the obsession to rewrite history originate from insecurity and shame or from shamelessness? As Rushdie strives to answer these questions, the intersection of religion, politics, and the linkages with violence and repression are closely and uneasily interwoven in his narrative technique magic realism.

August 1947, the month Pakistan emerged as an independent nation, and April 1951, the month that the open borders between India and Pakistan were finally closed, some 14 million people moved between the two countries. Pakistan lost 6 million non-Muslim to India, receiving 8 million Muslims in return. These 8 million migrants mostly from the
Indian states of East Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Gujrat, Maharashtra and Hyderabad in 1951 constituted nearly a quarter of the population of what is now Pakistan. The majority of these outsiders settled in towns and cities; Karachi became not only the capital of the new state of Pakistan but also its largest center of refugee population of the city’s 1951 population of one million, over 600,000 were refugees from India. Lahore, Hydrabad, Lyallpur and Rawalpindi also received a large number of refugees, in 1951, Pakistan 19 largest cities had a population of nearly 4 million of which more than 46 percent were refugees from India.

**Proportion of refugees in the population of Major Pakistan Cities, 1951**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Total Population (Thousands)</th>
<th>Refugees (Thousands)</th>
<th>Refugees a Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Karachi</td>
<td>1065</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lahore</td>
<td>849</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>64.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rawalpindi</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Multan</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lyallpur</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>70.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sialkot</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>33.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Peshawar</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Gujranwala</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>51.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Quetta</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sargodha</td>
<td>78</td>
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<td>67.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sukkar</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>54.5</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Jhang</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Mardan</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Suhiwal</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Kasur</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Gujrat</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Bahawalpur</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Wah</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Government of Pakistan, Ministry of the Interior, Population of Pakistan, 1951 (Karachi 1955)
The novel *Shame* is ‘anti history’ is about Raza Hyder and Iskander Harappa. Rushdie pits his truth against the politicians. Rushdie presents the reader with an ‘anti-history’. Unlike conventional history that describes golden ages and glorious conquests, the tale about Pakistan is one where “clowns and goons play(ing) out the plots of high tragedies” (Rushdie 1991:15)

The novel is stocked with great names in history that did create myths of sorts. The fictional name Raza Hyder in *Shame* is modeled on Hyder Ali of Indian history, illustrious king of Hyderabad. Iskander Harappa is modeled on Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Bhutto gets the name of Alexander the Great. Bhutto, Iskander and Haq-Raza are grotesque caricatures of their great names. Majority of these names are traditionally associated with Indian history, even though a large part of this history also happened in what is now called Pakistan. Pakistan has always been part of Moghal Empire.

The politics of religion has become an important part of national politics in India and Pakistan since partition. Issues like the Kashmir problem, Ram Mandir-Babri Masjid issue, language problems, and the problems of state boundaries make us concentrate on the importance of religion in Indian political history. The Indian secularism today is devoid of Indian society’s full trust in it. The Indian states have been unable to protect the lives of the people who are constantly made the victims of the politics of religious issues because mostly these issues are charged with emotions.

The title of the novel *Shame* concerns itself with the marginal status of women under Islamic dictatorship. It may also concern itself with the narrator’s own migrating. The country referred to in *Shame* could be any country that has been ruined by dictatorship and corruption. At one level *Shame* is the story of Iskander Harappa (Bhutto) and Raja
Hyder(Zia ul Huq) two presidents of Pakistan, the story of how Bhutto, seeking to perpetuate his power by keeping the army in his pocket, appointed the ‘most incompetent general as commander in chief so that he need not fear insubordination or army take over. But that was a stupid idea, a matter of *Shame*. Zia ousted Bhutto, had him hanged and set up a regime of religious bigotry. The same tradition has since been in vogue in Pakistan. The former president of Pakistan Parvez Musharaff, the army chief was promoted by Prime Minister Nawaz Shariff as Army chief who ousted the democratically elected Prime Minister, banished him from the country and himself becomes the president and dictator of Pakistan and ruling the country at gun point. It would be an interesting exercise to trace the real life sequel to the Isky-Raza story.

Shame is opposed to shamelessness. Now honour and shame are the patriarchal constructs imagined in respect of women. It is shame, which result from a deliberate act of omission that one of the Shakil’s sisters had been put, on that wild night, into the family way. It is an act of shame that Bilquis was not able to give birth to a son of course not for her own fault. It is also a shame that Rani Harappa was trapped into her husband’s infidelities and remained herself devoted.

History and fiction do not blend easily, but Salman Rushdie blends it very clearly in his novels *Midnight’s Children* and *Shame*. It is an act of great genius enjoying great liberties particularly in matters of imaginatively interpreting history in order to suit the purpose of the creative writer. Both these forms are dominant forms capable of overshadowing each other without letting either know that they are being overshadowed. However, there have been great masters of this form who have taken great liberties with history and have successfully managed to maintain a perfect balance to contribute in their own ways the development and enrichment of this literary form. They have known their
histories intimately and moved among scenes of past as if natural and have reconstructed the atmosphere, the habits, the prevailing psychology of a generation of a race. The versions of history proliferate endlessly; every version being a provisional reconstruction, that it is never possible to know all the facts about anything even smallest act. The thing done vanish with their doing.”

The story of *Shame* rounded towards Bilquis, the wife of future president, conceiving thrice in life time. Her first child, a son, delivered strangulated by the umbilical cord; the second, Sufia Zeobia, a girl of unsound and undeveloped mind to be known as *Shame*; and another girl, Naveed conceived of one Sindbad Mengal, a cinema manager, Naveed delivers three times three, i.e. twenty seven children.

The three sisters shared automatic and simultaneous symptoms of pregnancy. He (Omar) gets out marry the deformed Sufiya Zinobia, the daughter of Raza Hyder (The Army Officer), who, after a coup becomes the president of the country.

Iskander Harappa, the dethroned president, is hanged. All political parties are banned, Judiciary is subverted and elections are cancelled. One notices the grip of Martial Law Adiministration after the paralysis of democracy. The story closes with the revenge taken by the three mothers with the help of Omar Khayyam.

*Shame* related to the theme of Shame and also encompasses various nuances that are associated with it. It runs on three levels

1) Political level, the cultural, and the social. On political level the novel runs like a document on the contemporary political situation in Pakistan. It may appear that the novelist concerns with the story of Raza Hyder and Iskander Harappa, the two powerful political leaders of the country. One may be tempted to draw paralles in the story of Gen. Zia and Zulfikar Bhutto. The novelist explores in depth the Iskander, Raza Polt, “a very
“Macho book- it is all about cops, politics, revenge, assassination, excursions, blood and guts” Rushdie even presents various strategies employed by these two families- Raza Hyder and Iskander Harappa. He comes out overtly how Shame is the result of excessive humiliation and that it certainly leads to violence. Naturally politicians who take recourse to the methods of repression are bound to fall one day or the other.

On the cultural level, the Rushdie draws our attention to poets and artists who are punished in Pakistan. A reputed poet in Karachi is put in jail for his patriotic compositions. Besides being tortured in human fashion,

“he had been hung upside-down by the ankles and beaten, as if he were a new born baby whose lungs had to be coerced into action so that he could squeal.” (S: P.28)

The social level, there is the theme of the social mores of the backward and superstitious Islamic society that multiplies on shame through limitless repression breeding violence. In fact, this leads to psychological horrors in society. ‘Rushdie narrates:

Repression is a seamless garment; a society which is authoritarian in its social and sexual codes, which crushes its women beneath the intolerable burdens of honour and propriety, breeds repressions of other kinds as well (S.: P. 73)

**Political Situation is narrated through Magic Realism:**

The meaning of democracy is fulfilled, when just elections are held and popular candidates are elected by the people. Force and coercion should not have any role in this process. But election in Pakistan is a farce. Force, partiality and unjust means influence the result of an election as proved when Iskander Harappa came to power as the ruler. Great voter manipulation took place.

M.K. Naik defines the political novel as:

…. (a) A piece of fiction devoted to a presentation of political ideas, or (b) a species of fiction in which action, characters and setting are all firmly grounded in politics.
Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s success at the politics of 1970 was due in large measure to a constituency that sought a complete overhaul of the country’s political, economic and social institutions. Deeply troubled by the re-acquisition of political power by the traditional leaders during the latter power of the Ayub era, the most articulate component of the Bhutto constituency demanded ‘modernisation of the Pakistan system.’ (Burki: 1975: XXXIV). Although the term ‘Modernisation- and Mawashrati Taraqui, its Urdu equivalent- was used freely by Bhutto and his supporters. (Niazi 1974: 116)

The intention of using Magical Realism in *Shame* is to show how Shame is a part of the architecture of the society that the novel describes. People in countries like Pakistan, he observes, grow upon a diet of honour and Shame ‘But Shame is like everything else’ live with it for long enough and it becomes part of the furniture. (S, P.28)

Salman Rushdie does not hold a high opinion on the politics and their operations in Pakistan. Since its new-found existence in 1947, Pakistan politics alternated between civilian government and dictatorship. But, both failed to deliver economic prosperity, communal harmony and political stability. Than interview to John Haffender Rushdie states his views about Pakistan’s politics:

I have a simple view: I believe military dictatorships to be bad and that it’s desirable to end them. But I was also trying to show in *Shame* that the last time there was an elected civilian government in Pakistan it actually did worse things than Army is now doing, that the civilian government was a different kind of dictatorship. Just to have the ballotbox does not automatically destroy to totalitarianism, if the people elected are sufficiently unscrupulous, which- both in the case of the characters in the book and in the case of history- they were..(Haffender: 1983)

One of the major important crises between India and Pakistan is due to Kashmir. Pakistan came into existence on the basis of two nation theory. It was planned by Iqbal and Mohammad Ali Jinnah. Pakistan’s
relations with India have always remained strained since the partition. The factors and the circumstances that led to the partition of the Indian sub-continent are, to a great extent, responsible for the present state of affairs as far as India and Pakistan are concerned. By the policy of divide and rule, the Britishers succeeded in keeping the Hindu and the Muslims apart. Nevertheless, some political leaders of both the communities were motivated by the urges of power politics. Ayodhya has established a new orthodoxy of Hindu Muslim conflict in India and underlying this, a renewed belief in the inevitability of such contest taking into account the character of the two sides.

Timothy Brennan notes that Rushdie’s novel Shame (1983); set in Pakistan under a military dictatorship is most notably influenced by Garcia Marquez’s novel One Hundred Years of Solitude. He identifies at least nine similarities of plot between the two novels including the haunting 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)

Rushdie’s Shame is the representation of contemporary political situation in Pakistan. Here in the novel Rushdie explored political situation through his new technique Magical realism. The second part of the novel focuses on national political events is very closely connected with the personal lives of the main characters. Bilquis tells her daughter about her ‘Scandalous marriage’ and also about her meeting with her husband before their marriage when the process of the partition of India and Pakistan was in full swing. There was a bomb blast in Empire Talkies owned by her father and she was taken into darkness and to the dull redness of the fact, and wherefrom heard the boom of its closing doors.
Jinnah was a superb tactician and various moves that he made were all parts of a master plan, the supreme objective of which was the accumulation and concentration of enormous power in his hands.

Rushdie writes about Jinnah:

Jinnah himself, the founder or Quaid-i-Azam, doesn’t strike me as a particularly God-bothered type. Islam and the Muslim state were, for him, political and cultural ideas; the theology was not the point (S, P.251)

The dream of building Pakistan and cultural nation has been a failure. In Shame, the politicians like Iskander Harappa and Raza Hyder indulge in murders. Robert E. McDowell writers:

Salman Rushdie has attempted in Shame to illuminate Pakistan’s hideous political realities in an extravagant satire in which Raza acts out the role of the Pakistani general Zia-ul-Haq, while Iskander (Harappa) represents the deposed (and later executed) head of state, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. But one might fairly ask how many readers will know enough of the inside details of these men’s lives and of the grim events of the new nation of Pakistan to appreciate a satire on them? (McDowell 1984: 38)

In Shame Rushdie depicts the sensational events through Magic Realism and execution of the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Z.A. Bhutto is one of them.

One evening, soon after my arrival, I visited an old friend, a poet. I had been looking forward to one of our long conversation, to hearing his views about recent events in Pakistan, and about Afghanistan, of course. His house was full of visitors as usual; nobody seemed interested in talking about anything except the cricket series between Pakistan and India. I sat down at a table with my friend and began an idle game of chess. But I really wanted to get the low-down on things, and at length I brought up the staff that was on my minds beginning with a question about the execution of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (S, P. 27)

The study explores the number of other major political events through magic realism. ‘Shame’ also describes the overthrow of President Ayub Khan. We also have the Martial Law imposed by General Yahya Khan, the rise of Bhutto as a political leader, the military’s action against the tribesmen of Baluchistan in the 1970s, the military camp in which
Bhutto was overthrown, the Martial Law Government of Zia-ul-Haq the attempts of Zia at Islamizing the country and the role of military in Pakistan at present.

In the novel captain Raza and Iskander Harappa one closely related, there are inter marriages among the children of the Hyders and the Harappas. Raza Hyder is politically ambitious. He becomes the chief administrator during the Martial Law and the arrest of Gichki:

Martial law has been declared Raza has arrested Chief Minister Gichi had been appointed administrator of the region. He has moved into the ministerial residence with his wife and children…. (S, P. 111)

After that, there was a beginning of a series of legendary political careers which turned into personal conflicts, breaking of relationships and at the same time, struggle for power.

Rushdie further narrates the new generation’s entry in Pakistan politics. Haroun Harappa joins politics to help his uncle. He writes a series of articles on foreign policy of the nation:

….that he was effectively running the nation’s foreign policy without even being a member of the Cabinet, President A had had to option but to invite into the government (S, P.150)

Meanwhile Haroun Harappa’s engagement with Raza’s second daughter Naveed becomes a disgraceful proposition. It becomes the cause for political instability and the change of the ministry.

Something else was happening that night. On university campuses, in the bazzars of the cities, under cover of darkness the people were assembling. By the time the sun rose it was clear that the government was going to fall. That morning the people took to the streets and set fire to motor cars, school buses, Army tracs and the libraries of British council and United States Information Service to express their displeasure. (S, P.167)

But once again Iskander Harappa is favoured with absolute majority in elections.
And by morning the people’s will had been expressed, and chairman Isky had won a huge and absolute majority of the West Wings seats in the new National Assembly (S. 178-179)

Though the political party in power changes and the chairpersons are changed no change is seen in the situation. On the contrary day by day, there is more and more deterioration in the political situations. Raza Hyder and Iskander Harappa, move on the nation’s political sence. The army is placed under the control of Raza Hyder. And then

This single error proved to be the undoing of the ablest stateman who never ruled that country which had been so tragically misfortunate, so, accursed, in its heads of state (S, P.181)

Iskander Harappa is arrested in the nation’s interest and stability; Rani and Arjunna are also locked up. Iskander Harappa is hanged into death in the middle of the night. But according to Rani,

….on the hanged man’s neck the rope leaves its mark. Iskander’s neck was clean. (Shame 187)

According to Suresh Chandra,

…..There is an exchange of roles between the solider and the politician in which soldier has proved himself a better politician besides retaining his material qualities. (Chandra 1990: 82)

Shame is the refelcting of political chaos in Pakistan. Iskander Harappa wants to remove Mr. Harappa from his path to power and then rule Pakistan. The possession of political power seems to make a person powerful enough to avenge his enemies and if necessary or willing, finish them completely. In the case of General Hyder, politics is a means of allowing him to realize his political fantasies. He likes Islamization and imposes it upon the country. Also he rules the country in his self-created image of a God fearing Muslim and he could succeed in achieving this aim. But the habit of truth-telling in the people is killed. In the end, General Hyder and his son in law, Omar Khayyam Shakil, the bastard son of Chunni Munnee and Bunny, are killed.
On the political front, Raza Hyder is always successful, but is also always frightened in his inner mind as he thinks that some day people will find out his cheating of the people in the name of Islam and then he will be punished both the people as well as by Allah. He gets power in the name of Islam, crushes individual freedom, kills Iskander Harappa, and sends his own cousin to jail— the acts which make him repent in the later part of his life.

Raza Hyder considered the option of forgetting the whole thing... that night, however, he was visited by a dream of Maulana Dawood, and the dead divine yelled at him that it was about time he started believing that a devil had got inside his daughter, because the whole business was a test of his faith devised by God, and he had better choose what he really cared about, his daughter’s life or the eternal love of the Deity. (S, P.232)

The politics in Shame revolve around Iskander Harappa and Raza Hyder. Who are they in reality? Rushdie remarks:

‘Although there is clearly something of Bhutto in the one, and something of Zia in the other, I have no way of knowing whether the personalities of Iskander and Raza are actually like those actual personalities. It really wasn’t my purpose to invent portraits of them. (S, 39)

In Shame Rushdie attacks the political abuse of religion in Pakistan when he was his dictator identity himself with God. After rounding up Talvar and two other highly placed officers, Raza says to their executioners,

“well, well, now it is all in the lap of God” (S. 250)

When Shame was written Bhutto was already dead, but Ziad was alive. Therefore, Rushdie predicts his end in a mythic form:

My dictator will be toppled by goblinish, faery means. Makes it pretty ease for you, is the obvious criticism; and I agree, I agree. But add, even if it does sound a little peevish: You try and get rid of dictator some time (S, P.257)

In Shame Raza Hyder once again, starts declaring Islamic punishment like flogging and cutting of hands for various crimes. His
coming to the power, it was claimed, resulted in the control of liquor business as well as its consumption in Pakistan in the name of Islam, Mullahs giving theological lectures on TV etc. Raza slowly turns towards crushing individual freedom. Very severe punishments were prescribed for acts watching of western movies. Women were not allowed to move unveiled on streets. People were not allowed smoking in fasting months. Anyway, there was no individual freedom during Raza’s time in Pakistan.

In real Pakistan we find that Zia-ul-Haq delivered a speech in December 1982, celebrating the birth anniversary of the Prophet. In this speech, Zia stressed the need to direct Pakistani life in accordance with the teaching of the Koran and the Sunna and to propagate the faith and perform religious duties as per the advice of their spiritual leaders. President Zia declared that nothing less than Jihad could promote Islamic values and his government searched for guidance in the Holy Scripture Nizami Mustafa or Rule of the Prophet in Pakistan. Citing the adoption of Islamic laws, he reiterated the need of strengthen the country’s moral fibre and for this reason he was determined to advance his Islamization programme. Like the Khalifa of the Islamic tradition, Zia declared that form conducting political activities until the sacred period of Ramzan had been completed.

In India, Indira Gandhi’s Emergency from 1975 to 1977 depicted in *Midnight’s Children* did the same thing are dipcted in *Shame*, as per political powers are concerns. She tried to impose her dictatorship through Emergency. Many active leaders from opposition parties were arrested. All the Midnight born children were compulsorily sterilized.
History is seen through the eyes of narrator:

Here Rushdie aims at showing how shame is a part of “the architecture of the society that the novel describes.”

Rushdie narrates the contemporary situation of Pakistan:

“Shameful things are done: lies, looseliving, disrespect for one’s elders, failure to love one’s national flag, incorrect voting at elections, over-eating, extramarital sex, autobiographical novels, cheating at cards, maltreatment of women-folk, examination failures smuggling, throwing one’s wicket at the crucial point of a test match; and they are done shamelessly.” (S.: P. 84)

Before going into details of political history in *Shame*, it would be worthwhile to focus on Rushdie’s view of Pakistan in *Shame*;

The country in this story is not Pakistan, or not quite. There are two countries, real and fictional, occupying the same space, or almost the same space. My story, my fictional country exists, like myself, at a slight angle to reality. I have found his off-centring to be necessary, but its value is, of course, open to debate, my views is that I am not writing only about Pakistan. I have not given the country a name. And Q is not really Quetta at all. But I don’t want to be precious about this: when I arrive at the big city, I shall call it Karachi. And it will contain a ‘Defence’ (S.: P. 29)

In *Shame* Rushdie has asked a very important question.

Is history to be considered the property of the participants only? (S, P. 28)

The historical novel tells us how individual lives were shaped at specific moments in history and how this shaping reveals the character of those historical periods. In doing so, it becomes both a dramatic and a social fiction, but is distinguished from the types that go by those names. History may be defined as a study of human society with an emphasis on the differences between them and on the changes which have taken place in each one of them over a period of time.

History is always ambiguous. Facts are hard to establish and capable of being given many meanings. Reality is built on our prejudices, misconceptions and ignorance as well as on our perceptiveness and knowledge. (Rushdie 1999: 18)
Lee Horsley says about history and historical novel

The historian, too, is a man of his time who, in telling stories for his time, demonstrates the truth of the observation that all his history is contemporary history. What the historian selects for consideration from the past is influenced by the interests of the age in which he lives, and in spite of the differences arising from dealing with present as opposed to past historical material…… (Horsley 1990: 24)

*Shame* is precisely the kind of a novel that begins on a note of obscenity, describing how the three lovely Shakil daughter’s unable to get married and sequestered in a big mansion under the dominant rule of their conservative, bankrupt father, wildly satisfy their natural curiosities and biological needs.

*Shame* is the ‘fairy story’ of two families the Hyders, and the Harappa’s. The heads of household are based on the Pakistani political Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (Iskander Harappa) and his predecessor general Muhammad Zia-al-Haq (Raza Hyder). Sufiya Zinobia is a product of her historical roots and the narrator’s inability to escape his connection to her and to history. She is representative of stereotypical fear of the patriarchy. Actually Sufia is a product of fantasy.

Sufia Zinobia’s creation is no less curious than Omar Shakil’s. Sufia is a character who is shrouded in the ambiguous mystery of Rushdie’s magical realist technique. It is this mystery that has caused many critics to question her role in the text. Sufia is a member of the politically powerful Hyder family. She was supposed to be the reincarnation of the couple’s son that was still born years earlier, so when they discovered her sex they were dissatisfied at the thought of this female child who should have been a male.

Sufia is the ‘hapless devourer of men, is she the weak feeble minded girl magically transformed into the fury of Shame? She is both of these things in a sense but for the narrator, the creator of the tale, she has
a much larger role. Sufiya Zinobia is the product of creation, but she is a creation of reality. She is the symbol for shame but simultaneously she is the symbol for a reality which exists outside of the historical imposition of shame onto a culture, and specifically onto women. *Shame* is a product of historical myth. The Shame which has imposed itself upon Sufiya finally results in the murder of Omar.

The author, the narrator and Sufiya,

“to not refer purely, and simply, to an actual individual in so far as (they) simultaneously give rise to a variety of egos and a series of subjective positions that individuals of any class may come to occupy” (S., P. 24)

In *Shame*, the country of Shame with its many landmarks like “Q” (Quetta), “K” (Karachi) which includes a defence colony and the new capital (Islamabad) is unmistakably Pakistan. Some of the characters have close parallels in history. President Shaggy Dog (Yahya Khan, Iskander Harappa (Zulfikar Ali Bhutto), Rani Humayun (Begum Nusrat Bhutto), Arjumand Harappa (Benazir Bhutto), and Raza Hyder (Zia-ul-Hag). Among the important historical events which find a place in the novel are the overthrow of Ayub Khan, the General Elections in Pakistan, the Bangladesh war, Bhutto’s rise and fall, Ziq-ul-Haq’s rise to power (and imagined fall!) Russian army’s moving into Afghanistan, Suppression of frontier tribes etc. Field Marshal Mohammad A (Ayub) rubs shoulders with Raza Hyder (Zia ul-Haq). Such mingling of the real and the fiction us makes the latter more convincing and acceptable.

In *Shame* Rushdie uses Magic Realism with fairy tale analogy where political allegory is very clear. The alter ego of the writer appears in the form of the narration persons. But there is a distancing between the person and the narrator. The narrator in the glory reminds the reader of the fictionality of the text and the locations. He says

*Here I am instead, inventing what never happened to me.”* (S, P.28)
“The country in this story is not Pakistan or not quite. There are two countries, real and fictional, occupying the same space, or almost the same space. My story, my fictional country exists. Like myself, at a slight angle to reality.”

This shame permeates through all the faces of the novel, the private world of Sufiya as represented by her mother Bilquis, Omar and her father Raza, and the public, by Pakistan at large. She is the representative of the spirit of Pakistan. The blushing of Sufiya is the blushing spirit of the country because of the atrocities forced upon her by her kith and kin who are supposed to be nice towards her. Sufiya’s humiliation started from her very birth, for her father expected a boy and considered her a mistake born to him. Being born as a girl in a society which values boys alone is a Shame. Her own mother says,

He (Raza) wanted a hero of a son. I have him an idiot female instead. I must accept it: she is my Shame”. (Shame 101)

This humiliation increases with the passage of each year. Her state of being an idiot might be something imposed upon her by.

“Repeated blows on the head “for” hate can turn a miracle gone wrong into a basket case” (S, P. 116)

Modern historians are of the view that history is also concerned with the problems and plights of the common man.

The novel Shame involves the fate and fortunes of characters whose lives rotate around grim obsessions unredeemed by the imagination. Their thoughts and minds are finally sucked into the abyss of unmediated polarities. The narrative revolves around lonely figures many of whom have gone berserk in the absence of a higher consciousness which could have helped them grapple with adversity.

The novel is shaped by the controlling theme of shame. The characters, the action the conflict are all so arranged and dramatized as to focus our attention on this total meaning. As the story unfolds, this theme
of shame at different levels becomes more and more sharply defined. The
questions that haunt us are: who’s Shame? How does it shape the stories
action? What are its consequences in the lives of the principal characters?
Shame – Rushdies post modern fragmented fantasy world is not an excess
of belongings it allows readers to visualize the alternates states of reality
present in the text and the world surrounding them. Through fantasy
Rushie is able to reject normative views of history has progressed and is
progressing. Joan Scott discusses the retelling of history as fantasy and
utilizes what she refers to as Fantasy Echo to support Foucault’s vision
authorship. She Says, Fantasy is the means by which real relations of
identity between past and present are discovered and /or forged Fantasy is
more or less synonymous with imagination and it is taken to be subject or
rational, intentional, control ones direct imagination purposively to
achieve a coherent aim, that of writing oneself or one’s group into history
writing the history of individuals or groups (Foucault 1977: 287)

The novel shame depicts complex networks of transcultural
relationship between the individual and historical forces Rushdie talks
about various historical situations that happened in Pakistan.

History was old and rusted it was a machine nobody had plugged in for thousands of
Years, and here all of a sudden it was being asked for maximum output. Nobody was
surprised that there were accidents No, it’s more than that there are things that cannot
be permitted to be true. (S, P. 82)

In Shame Rushdie runs widely about like a time traveller who has
lost his magic capsule and fears he will never emerge from the
disintegrating history of his race. Some of the characters in the novel
seem to negate history Omar Khayyam descended upon the cohorts of
history like a wolf on the fold. To Raza Hyder, the recalling of history is
merely a rite of blood Bilquis is suspicious of history and pushes the past
away like a poor relation. The uniqueness about Rushdies treatment of
history also lies in his idea of illusionary fictional reality. Rushdie writes.
There are two countries real and fictional, my story, my fictional country exist like myself at a slight angle of reality. I have found this off centering to be necessary; but its value is, of course open to debate. My view is that I am not writing only about Pakistan. (S, P. 29)

On the surface level the country is Pakistan but on the deeper level it may be any country where forces of repression operate. It is here that the novel transcends the confines of the particular As Rushdie Says:

I build imaginary countries and try to impose them on the ones that exist. I too face the problem of history what to retain what to dump how to hold on what memory insists on relinquishing how to deal with change And to come back to the roots idea I should say that I haven’t managed to shake myself free of it completely. (S, P. 87, 88)

The above statement shows how the novelist sorts out events judiciously and gives imaginative colouring to this plot. Timothy Brennan rightly observes.

“As though fearing reprisals, Shame hides history in allusive references to the past which are buried in casual place names and family titles and ironic reincarnations of figures from legend.” (Brennan 1988: 211)

Rushdie here in the novel employs the technique of using history as a main tool to explore his idea about history in the novel Shame. In the chronological order of events from the 14th century to the 15th century in the Hegiran Calendar a period of nearly sixty years(that is life and growth of Omar Khayyam the physician is covered in this period the domestic life are realized in a unique story of horror and deception. The world of history spoiled by deception and honor among at least two pairs of characters Talvar Ulhaq, Haroun Harappa, Raza Hyder, and Iskander Harappa moving in its realms of political satire is resolved in the world of Fantasy and haunting myth of the dead and their vengeance.

Rushdie is instinctively drawn to the world; devoid of the compulsions of facts and imminent urgencies of life for him fantasy is a timeless world for taking a long distance and telescopic view of life. Rushdie tells us this:
Realism can break a writer’s heart. Fortunately, however, I am only telling a sort of modern fairy tale, so that’s all right: nobody need get upset, or take anything I say too seriously. No drastic action need to taken either. (S, P. 70)

The world of shame with all its shamelessness of duplicity necromancy corruption and alienation is itself realized not in history but in fantasy. The world of fantasy is invoked but not superimposed on a realizable world of feet as in Midnight’s Children. But, here the fantasy is even grimmer and immediately felt. Unlike Midnight’s Children the human dimension of quest of identity and “honour” (against “Sharam” not shame) is indeed deeply felt and moving. Rushdie’s quest for “identity” and “roots” is truly vacant, in real terms, except in fantasy:

Roots, I sometimes think, are a conservative myth, designed to keep us in our places (S, P.86)

Although, historically speaking, the causes of the partition were many Rushdie presents only a causal picture of the communal disturbances that were to be witnessed on the eve of the great divide when bombs had began exploding in different places. He confesses that the religious fanatics may also have been responsible for planting a bomb in the empire Talkies owned by Bilquis father Mohammad komal because a love scene was on the move screen. Obviously, religious fenticism had taken roots members of one community went to see the westerns because the cows were massacred there in some of the scenes and were delighted to watch the killers tasting steak.

Very soon the partition became a reality. Among other things even the army was divided. Captain Raza Hyder already married to Bilquis flies to the West Wing of Pakistan which they find “a bright new world” ((S, P. 67) the rest of the story relates to the rise and fall good deeds and misdeeds of the several heroes of this country who appear on the national scence. It is for this reason that one might be tempted to call the novel in some sense an epic. But then it becomes a comic because the real factual
identities of the heroes are suppressed, veils thrown around them so that the reader may not be able to relate them to the contemporary context of any country is political history. The possibilities of reader’s temptation to draw close parallels are carefully and deliberately scuttled so that the novel may not be taken as a realistic representation which may compel trouble and compel the authorities to censor and burn it:

If I had been writing a book at this nature it would have done me no good to protest that I was writing universally, not only about Pakistan The book would have been banned, dumped in the rubbishbin, burned. All that effort for nothing! Redism can break a writer’s heart (S, P.70)

Foreseeing these adverse reactions the writer gives up writing in the realistic tenor chooses to put his material into a comic vein, though he would prefer to call it a fairy-tale:

Fortunately, how-ever, I am only telling a sort of modern fairy tale so that's all right nobody need get upset, or take anything I say too seriously. No drastic action need be taken, either. (S, P.70)

Rushdie uses historical material from recent and remote past for constructing his allegorical narrative one may mention here the exigency of employing material from Sufi culture for the sufi part of the name Sufiy Zinobia The name Sufiya Zinobai is constructed from allusion to the Muslims mystics, the ‘Sufis’ Rushdie builds into the life of the hapless girl the concept of persecution under which the Sufi sect is forced to live a half secluded life The irony of Sufia Zinobia is that it is not love which governs her life unlike the Sufi the central tenet for whose living is that ‘love rather than fear the determinant of mans relationship with God’ than into a Beast.

The history of Pakistan is problematized be the dictatorial tendencies of its rulers from the very birth of the country which has lived under what may be called the Jinnah Syndrome ‘Actually Jinnah is responsible for all the ailments of Pakistan since its reaction. As the ailing President of an ailing state he originated the poitical evils which brought
about four military coups of 1958 1969, 1977 and 1999. The state of the Military and Civil Bureaucracy in Pakistan was not so good in its first two years. Thus democracy in Pakistan has been destroyed by its creator M.A. Jinnah who sowed the seeds of autocracy which made impossible the emergence of a popular government in the country.

Raza Hyder in *Shame* easily holds his power on Pakistan in the name of religion it tries to impose islamization on his country an act which is infact against democracy and at the same time he tries to give them a false feel of democracy in the name of democracy on the other had In *Midnight’s Children* the hero is father burns the veils of his wife after their marirage which is against the culture of Islam. Human beings are so self centred that they always think that their world, their times in the world are the most significant, the most fraught with consequences the most revolutionary.

Either male or female, each character in *Shame* has his or her personal problem. The characters try to solve their problems to the best of their abilities. Razallyder wants political power. Bilqnis wants to satisfy Razas wish of having a son. Omar Khayyam wants social status Rani and Arjumand want to avenge Iskander Harrppas death. The Shakil sisters want to take revenge of their second son’s death they are waiting to kill Raza Hyder. Sufia Zinobia also wants to kill Raza because he did not love her. Rani tells her daughter even against her husband.

Chairman Iskander. Harappa, you father, whom I always loved; she replied ‘was world champion of shamelessness; he was international rouge and bastard number one. You see, daughter, I remember those days, I remember Raza Hyder when he was not a devil with horns and tail, and also Isky, before he became a saint (S, P.108)

Sufiya Zinobia, the mentally retarded daughter of the chief of the Army of Pakistan Raza Hyder, when she is twenty one years of age ner mental growth is that of a seven year old child. She kill two hundered and eighteen turkeys and four adolescent ment with her bare hands after
having sexual intercourse with them she never complained that her parents had chosen for her a man who was thirty one years senior to her. In fact, he was older than her own father Shabanu is her ayah who goes with her after her marriage.

After, at Omar Khayyam’s house one was locked up by her husband that is put behind thick walls and shuttered windows According to her mother also she was the incarnation of Shame. After her marriage

Often she thinks about husband, she knows what a husband is. Her father is a husband, also Talvar Ulgaq, and how she has one, too. What does that mean, to have a husband? What are they for? She can do most things for herself and Shabanou helps with the rest. But she has a husband. It is another mystery (S, P.214)

In this way Sofiya keeps on thinking and sometimes blushes. Her ayah, Shabanou, tells her, that husband is for money and producing babies but for sufiya zinobia this mystery remains unresolved almost forever.

Actuall the very intention of writing the Shame is subverted. The author narrator alter ego states:

I had thought before, I began, and that what I had on my hands was an almost excessively masculine tale, a saga of sexual rivalry ambition, power, patronage, betrayal, death, revenge. But the women seem to have taken over (Shame P. 173)

Omar Khayyam the hero of Shame escaping from home at the age of twelve lives his life in his own way. It becomes an internationally famous doctor as he is not true Muslim; he struggles hard makes friends with Iskander Harrappa and marries the mentally retarded sufiya zinobia though mixed in Islamic culture.

**Social Condition depicts through Magic Realism:**

Most of the Rushdie’s women characters represent Muslim women attitudes and practices toward institution in Muslim society. This part of the chapter focuses on Islamic communities’ life style and marriage institution. In Islamic community like the ideal age of marriage, ideal age
difference between husband and wife parents preference for male children the kinship, family and social variables, Purdah, polygamy, female property inheritance, dowry, arrange marriages among blood relatives unilateral divorce discrimination against girl child interms of priority to male child in feeding clothing and health care. Moreover, decision making freedom of movement and exposure to mass media can also be included.

Purdah may increase or decrease the status of women depending upon the social setting. Purdah prevents women’s participation outside the home. No liberated woman would approve of purdah system and herself observe the same. In Midnight’s Children Saleem’s grandmother opens her face to run gems business. But in the next generation Naseem herself opens her purdah as a patient before the doctor Adam Aziz later, Amina Sinai opens her veil and Shouts before the mob to save the life of Lifafa Das. In Shame Bilquis Kemal, runs naked towards the red fortress after the bomb blast in Empire Theatre.

The Shame that Sufiya feels is that of a young woman who has the mind of a child. She is a wrong miracle in the sense that her parents Bilcuis and Raza Hyder wanted a son and got a daughter. Bilquis (the mother) always calls her “Shame” and so the child in Sufiya never grows up. The beast of this shame is bottled up in her and at times takes possession of her mind growing stronger gradually. It first possesses her at the age of twelve, with a 3 years old mind, when she kills Pinky Aurangajeb’s turkeys. She is medicated upon by Omar Khayyam who at the age of 43 falls in love with her.

Shame is entirely about Pakistan- its social and political fabrics interwoven with Sharam, which is not exactly translatable into shame. According to Omar’s mothers,
Omar should not feel Shame, ‘embarrassment, discomfiture, decency, modesty, Shyness, the sense of having an ordained place in the world, and other dialects of emotion’. (S., P.39)

So, Omar symbolizes shamelessness. Secondly, *Shame* has become a part of the ethos of the politics in Pakistan. It is indistinguishable from its civilized living.

...live with it for long enough and it becomes a part of the furniture. In ‘Defence’, you can find shame in every house, burning in an ashtray hanging framed upon a wall, covering a bed. But nobody notices it any more (S, P. 28)

The novel Shame is about the transformation of a country’s the rise and fall of two men, the civilian leader Iskander Harrappa and the dictator-to be Raza Hyder, fictional Parallels respectively of Bhutto and Zia, who try to control the process and the tragic outcomes of their missions its raw material is the history of Pakistan. At first glance, the book’s oft quoted description of Pakistan as ‘‘a failure of the dreaming mind’ seems mischievous and intended to provoke. But the failed dream here is a oppressive one. It is the dream of Urdu-speaking migrants who after partition in 1947 had to govern an essentially foreigh nation feeling compelled to impose a neat formula the founding father, Mohammed Ali Jihnah’s one nation, one culture, one language onto a diverse, unwieldy polity. The dream disappoints because the country is too mutti-ethnic and multi-lingual, too multidimensional for the imposition.

The use of the first person narrative pushes readers to expect a relative authenticity to shame, because Rushdie suggests directly his personal involvement. As readers expect a degree of authenticity from the narrative form, stories with tales of magic and self proclaimed fictionc (factual Pakistan and fictional Pakistan likeness) without a clear purpose call readers to connect the authentic proposal. Magic realism forces the reader to look beyond Rushdie’s reality of magic for conventional significance.
Shame is crucial to interpreting relevance of Women; Rushdie’s nature of shame de-genders characters by portraying men and women as nothing aside from their possession of shame. Rushdie strongly persuades his Western leaders to define Shame by introducing the Eastern word connotes of “Sharam” and by pinning “Shame” against “Shamelessness” for the case of “Sharam” Rushdie includes within its meaning, “embarrassment, discomfiture, decency, modesty, shyness, the sense of having an ordained place in the world” (Shame 33).

In the technical sense, Shamlessness is not the opposite of shame as honor is considered. Shamelessness is rather shames negation, which indirectly redefines the relationship between men and women, within shame Men and women are not to be considered relevantly as opposite simply divided as those with shame and those without. When Rushdie enters Sufiya’s birth in shame, Sufiya is not entered opposite men but similar to a man with the addition of shame. Women are not understood as men and woman are mere objects of shame. Rushdie pushes the reader to relate women and shame only as much as they pertain to men and shamelessness; consequently, shame the theme readers necessarily construct significance from women, defenders the relative notion of women.

In Shame Purda is defined as “garment of womanly honour. (S, P. 64)

It can encompass a range of meanings and is chiefly associated with Islamic societies. To be veiled provides a woman with a place in society. The garment defines a woman’s modesty and restrictions on her interactions with men in society. Santi Rozairo quotes maulana Maududi a Pakistani Muslim theologian who sees purda as operating to guard against the dangerously uncontrolled’ human sexual urge purda embraces signification of honour and shame and is directly concerned with the status of women. For exam, when Bilquis Hyder ventures outside her
home for the first time, her only ‘protection’ is the veil when her clothes are torn from her body by the explosion; she is secure in the knowledge that it secures her modesty.

‘Once she recognizes its inadequacy the veil becomes a source of Shame. (S, P.64)

Ironically, in the novel, the veil is denied the kind of fixed meaning found in religio-political discourses.

The mobility of the veil, literally as the material ‘flapping’ in the wind, leads to an understanding of Biliquis Hyder’s subsequent obsession with the disease of fixity (S, P. 68)

The daughter of Bilquis and Ruza Subvert the system in their own ways Sufiya and Naveed are seen as the embodiments of shame and good news. Initially, Naveed performs the role of the ideal woman by producing an endless stream of children (mostly sons) however, as her reproductive capacity increases her name becomes an ironic signification of her fecundity. In her lines the burden of mothering because she functions solely as a ‘baby machine’ her husband is completely oblivious to her physical and psychological condition and his only objective is to ensure the fulfillment of reproduction. Finally, after production twenty seven children she realizes that she can no longer maintain her social value. Her reproductive capacity is pushed to the level of the grotesque and within the narrative mode of shame this excess of reproduction becomes a political statement.

In Shame the character Naveed and her purda operates in a different way by Rushdie. Her incessant ‘production’ of children enforces seclusion because pregnancy, Childbirth and the aftercane of the infant occur in the domestic space. If purda, as Shaheed and Mumatz recognize is a method of keeping the woman dependant on her husband, constant pregnancy then is also a form of purda which ensures. Naveed totally dependpends on her hasband as per freedom is concern. However she
shouts of this system by resorting to suicide. The episode where she hangs herself is particularly poignant. She fills the room with the fragrance of joy by Jean Patou (the most expensive perfume in the world) and she found with ‘Jusmine in her hair (S, P. 228)

Female oppression, as visible in the depiction of Naveed, is both gendered and classed. As an upper-class woman Naveed has a set of expectations placed upon her. In addition to the procreative aspect, Naveed’s suicide enacts the tensions of wearing the ‘right’ perfume constantly looking groomed and beautiful and producing babies while doing so.

Sufiya Zinobia is another character in the novel with considerable qualities of shame. Rushdie personifies in her shame of Pakistan. (Fernandez 1984: 100)

The novelist had had the first hand knowledge of a Pakistani girl who is murdered by her father in the East End of London for allegedly having made love to a white boy and brought:

Such a dishonor upon her family that only her blood could wash away the stain (S, P. 123)

Sufiya Zinobia seems to have grown out of the corpse of the murdered girl in England. Caught between two cultures, she becomes a sacrificial scapegoat in expiation of the guilt her parents feel for having transplanted themselves in an alien hand.

Her blush at birth is transfigured into the sign for the collective shame of the community. Her husband Omar Khayyam, the embodiment of Shamelessness is counterpoised against Sufiya. Who is the epitome of shame both in name and personality she links the title with the multiple nuances of shame/sharam. At each stage of the narrative the escalation of her shame is matched by a similarly accruing violence, thus establishing the textual nexus between shame and violence (S: 138)
The picture of Sufiya Zinobia also adds to the fact that extreme repression and suppression would erupt like a volcano in the form of the deadly beast of cruelty. Suppression especially sexual suppression may result in extreme cruelty as is seen in the case of sufiya her killing of the four slum boys after raping them signifies this. It stands for the extreme suppression and sexual hypocrisy that was and is the face mark of Pakistan and the regime of Zia Ul-Haq It also stand for Rushdies wistful thinking for the end of the dictatorship in Pakistan.

Sufiya Zinobia provides the greater element of fantasy than any other character in the novel. In the opinions of Rushdie himself except for the character of the girl Sufiya Zinobia, Shame is some what less fabulated that Midnigent’s Children (Interview 246) Rushdie mixes together realism and the grotesque to create a vivid image on the reader.

In respect to shame, no woman like objects within the text seem to find empowerment within the scheme of shame. The violence which shame allows for womens activism is solely utilized by Sufiya; therefore, Sufiya becomes the heroin character, the character provided direct relation to real narratives and the character whose action allows for the most significant discussion on women. Rushdie must understand the feminist reader to be directed to Sufiyas activism to structure any womens liberation. To understand the cause Sufiya champions, readers turn to shame’s women and their relevance to the axis of shame Bilquis Razas failed attempt at a son.

Rushdie uses each woman to represent a segment of life oppressed by the shamless of men consequently Sufiyas activism becomes an activity of overcoming the oppressed segments of Pakistani womans lifestyle. The purpose of Sufiyas violence the sole provision of female activism becomes to overcome the male shame within the lifestyle of Pakistani Woman.
In *Shame* Rushdie’s presentation of the Pakistani society through satire which is very effective in the novel. Rushdie exposed the falsehood and pretensions of those, whose action appear to be virtuous and innocent. The double-mindedness and the hideen cruelties are revealed in a very powerful manner, using satire as the weapon. Deterioration of values are seen everywhere especially in the case of the government officials. Bribery is something that the bureaucrats expect and it is accepted as a fact of life. The customs officer at the frontier receiving bribes is a part of life nobody sees it any longer as a crime.

A customs officer depends, for a decent income, on traffic. Good pass through, he not unreasonably impounds them, their owners see reason an accommodation is reached, and the custom’s man’s family gets new clothes. Nobody minds this arrangement (S, P.51)

Bribery, which is actually a shame, is accepted as a way of life where principles have no value at all. The interests of the society and the land are sacrificed for the safe personal well being and luxury. The gradual degradation of the society is presented in the novel.

*Shame* depicts preference for women who are dynamic and aggressive and rejects those passive roles that women are reduced to playing and sometimes, under the pervasive influence of patriarchal values, even will this subjection upon themselves. Accordingly almost all the normal women in *Shame* are shown as passive or complicit with patriarchal values and are consequently rejected and are shown in the most negative light. Thus Arjumund Harappa who is so blinded by her love for her father that she refuses to see even his most glaring omissions is condemned like her mother to a life without love; the authors condemned for Naveed Hyder and her propensity ‘towards sitting on her hair’, is evident when he summarily dismisse the story of her rebellion as not worthy of comparison with Anna Muhammad’s Bilquiss disappointment in her own inability to produce a son marks her as
complict with partriachal values even Baramma, embalmed in the fixity of her gossipy tales is subjected to the authro’s contempt and ridicule. It is only Rani and Omar Khayyam’s three mothers, apart from Sufiya Zinobia that receive sympathy and understanding from the author.

The novel *Shame* predicts the rise of the more demorratic and secular Benazir Bhutto and he suggests that even such a turn of events will not put an end to the vicious cycles which he sees as an inherent in Pakistan’s mix of religion, culture, and politics.

Thus *Shame* presents a critical analysis of the political scenario in Pakistan. The army rulers had become increasingly autocratic and dictorial. The Political developments insfead of liberating and widening the outlook of the masses had turned them more vigorously toward religion. The rulers themselves had betrayed their erotic and political ambitions and had fall a prey to their immoral conduct. On the very hight Iskander and Haroun are sentenced to death by hanging Begam Talvar Ulhq, Raza’s dauguter, is found hanged to death in the bedroom of her parents. It is not only highly ironical but also appropriately mock-epical because Talvar was the main prosecution witness against Iskander. It is indeed a fine instance of retributive justice put in operation in the novel. Another interesting incidents which is one more instance of this higher justice in operation Razas daughter, Sufiya disappear on the very night Iskandar Harappa was hanged in the courtyard of the District Jail For all the crimes committed there are death cells waiting for the killers.

It is likely that Rushdie is writing of undivided India. It is amply indicated in his expositions in his earlier novel *Midnight’s Children*, where he does not think of the three countries of the sub-continent in isolation. The three countries of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh these three countries together make *Nishapur* a Sanskrit word in a novel with Islam for its setting. Their common Shame is hushanded by an Angrez Sahib. Incidentally, the distinction of *Nishapur* an area of darkness is
conferred upon the Indian Subcontinent by the angrez Sahib though there is no reference to *An Area of Darkness* an account of the sentimental journey of V.S.Naipaul a Caribbean national of Indian origin, through India, the land of his ancestors, *Shame* is an intellectual approach of an Indian emigrant to the problem of what afflicts the region to make of an area of darkness.

This intellectual approach has three dimensions too. By incorporating the facts of history as the mainstay of the narrative Rushdie establishes his links with the naturalists of the school of Zola. By foisting interpretation upon these facts, however, a bold attempt has been made to extend the frontiers of the journalism and infuse new life into it. Rushdie had added another dimension to it by means of mystification has been achieved by making Omar Khayyam an unheroic hero and existentialist more interested in the pursuit of illusion and escape than in seeking solutions to the problems of existence.

Nishapur is, therefore, greater India, the abode of three sisters Chhunne, Munnee and Bunny-more horribly witchy than even the three witches of Macbeth. The three witches of Macbeth have the power to do some good they can also be met with in the open even though it was bush. But, these three witches of shame never leave the dark confines of Nishapur. They are born; they grow, live and breed in darkness and practice witchcraft with complete devotion. Nishapur is further defined as an immense wedge into the ocean with Impossible Mountains forming its frontier at distance. This is considered the physical dimensions of the *Shame*.

Rushdie is a secularist and rationalist, does not lose hope in Pakistan. He Makes Omar imagine, in his malarial delirium.

Visions of the future, of what would happen after the end And at last Anjumand and Haroun set free reborn into power, the virgin Ironpants and her only love taking charge. The fall of God and in his place the myth of the martyr Iskander, and after that arrests, retribution, trials, hangings, blood, a new cycle of shamelessness and shame. (S, P.276-77)
The use of fantasy in the works of Rushdie especially *Shame* may be termed fantastic realism. Standing from realism, the events Pass through a slow change and end upon sheer fantasy beyond the perception of logic and common sense. Rushdie defines *Shame* in its original form in the *Shame*. No the English word shame but the Urdu word Sharam “a short word but one containing encyclopedias of nuance”. At a personal or individual level, the hero Omar Khayyam Shakil continues to be affected by Shame and shameless throughout his life even when his mothers had banned him from feelings shame at an early age, He is born of three mothers and does not know who his real mother is to the end of his life. Nor does he knows who his father is though when he enters the world of school he understands that he is an illegitimate child born of a British officer and one of the Shakil’s Mothers, like Saleem In *Midnight’s Children*. Here too the hero is a Eurasian. The Shakil’s mothers do not show any feeling of dishonor when Omar Khayyam was conceived but lock themselves up in their large mansion and remain in their self imposed captivity till the end of the novel.

To conclude, one may say that Rushdie’s *Shame* deals with the central motif of shame that runs through the psyche of several characters as a subterranean force and finally gets as a shuttle that pulls into shape several of the Shameful story of the novel *Shame*.

Internal Similarities in *Midnight Children* and *Shame*:-

In this section, an attempt is made to find out internal similarities among the characters in Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* and *Shame*. The hero of *Midnight Children*, Saleem Sinai, claims to be brought up by three mothers in his life– the one who gives him birth, the other who exchanges the babies and the third, the ayah, who takes care of him in his childhood. In *Shame*, Omkar Khayyam is the bastard son of three mothers. He is a doctor by profession, loves his mentally retarded patient,
Sufiya Zinobia and morals her. In *Midnight’s Children* Aadam Aziz, the hero’s grandfather, is a doctor by profession who also loves and marries his patient.

In *Shame*, mentally retarded Sufiya Zinobia, in her twenties, has the mind of a five years child. Almost all the characters are seen to be struggling at psychological level to findout their roots in history. Rushdie’s female characters are also, so many times, seen to be diverting themselves from their tradition in religious life. Except for few non Muslim characters like Padma, Parvati, Uma, Sarswati, Aurora Zogiby etc. most of the major characters are Muslims and both Muslim and non-Muslim characters desperately try to keep their identity. Infact, all these characters seem to be peeping into history and get more and more confused.

According to Ziring:

“History is fickle–A human contrivance, it draws its importance from the mortal human beings who want so much to understand the nature of their existence, their purpose in a limited span of time, and their connections with a buried past and a never realized future. (Ziring: 1999.605)

In *Midnight’s Children* Saleem’s History starts from his Kashmiri Muslim grandfather, Adam Aziz and In Shame, Omar Khayyam is a bastard hero about his past. Saleem is equated with the history of his nation, i.e. India. That is why he is a Hindu, Muslim, and Christian at the same time and enjoyed his life neatly. Saleem was born at the midnight hour 15th August, 1947 at the moment when the nation was celebrating its freedom and Punjab was burning as a result of the partition. On the contrary, in *Shame*, Omar Khayyam’s birth was not celebrated because he was bastard. Due to the same reason, neither Maulana was not invited to perform his circumcision nor was naming ceremony for him held.
The hero of *Midnight’s Children*, Saleem has various father figures like Methwold, Wee Willie Winkie, Nadir Khan (his mother’s love), Ahmed Sinai etc. His changing family history makes him a combination of Muslim, Hindu and British cultures, with a mythological frame of reference that draws on all the components of an Indian melting pot. He devours the matters of public record because, he believes, he is also the history of the nation. His meeting with Shiva, through *Midnight’s Children* conference is the meeting of or the return to Sinai blood line.

In *Shame* the Shakil’s sisters- Chuuni, Munnee and Bunny are born, grown, and bred in the darkness of Nishapur. There they, together, give birth to Omar Khayyam and Baber.

On the cultural level, Iskander Harappa and Omar Khayyam are both guilty of doing all kinds of vicious things. The women too go foolishly wild with other men in the matters of sex.

In *Midnight’s Children*, Adam Aziz, the doctor, marries his patient, whom he had loved in fragments before marriage. In *Shame* Omar Khayyam Shakil could not have sex with Sufiya Zinobia though she was his legitimate wife. Amina Sinai, in *Midnight’s Children*, divorced from the impotent Nadir Khan, remarries Ahmed Sinai and begins to train herself to love him in fragments. To do this she divided him, mentally, into every single one of his component parts, physical as well as behavioural.

The next important common factor in Rushdie’s fiction is the failure of the marriage of the major characters due to various factors. Amina Sinai marries Nadir Khan, but he is impotent. Omar Khayyam marries Sufiya Zinobai and keeps only emotional attachments with her and not a physical one. Raza Hyder wanted a male child from Biliquis, but she gives birth only to female babies. Saleem, the hero of *Midnight’s Children*, is also impotent. Rani Humayun marries Iskandar Harappa, but is not happy with him because he is womanizer.