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Post modernism is a defiance of almost all the norms that came before it. There is no topic that is proscribed, in fact this genre revels in its acceptance of all themes. Writers have freedom to explore any subject matter and are as such not restricted by borders, virtual or imaginary. Their fiction touches on topics like history, affairs of state, various ethnicities, love, sex, religion and the struggle for freedom within and without. The amalgam of art, poetry and literature writers created was a new faith against the elitism of art. There is a strong appeal to free the female of the conservative male dominating society and its double standards. Postmodernists also probe into the human psyche to explore the perception of despondency and psychology of rootless people.

Postmodernist writers use magic realism in their fiction. This is an integration of the fantastic and/or mythical ingredient matter-of-factly into otherwise rational fiction. Thoughts, dreams, imagination, flights of fancy, myths, symbols and images are given prominence and considered existent. Dreams are considered essential because they are a reflection of unconscious desires and anxieties in individuals and myths, because they are a symbolic representation of a culture’s, a country’s ethos and its values. The amazing thing is that although every culture has its own myths, the response these myths evoke in the psychology of people tend to be, if not similar, at least, comparable.

Salman Rushdie is a writer of Indian origin and has lived in India, Pakistan and The United Kingdom. He presently resides in New York. He has worked in advertising and is a full time writer now.
This dissertation seeks to study the portrayal of women characters in the novels of Salman Rushdie, under three heads- the mother, the rebel and the beauty. The research will highlight the emotional and psychological aspects of these women in a bid to understand their character and their behaviour.

In Chapter I, the introductory chapter, an attempt has been made to introduce the Indian English novel in India, tracing its growth through pre and post independence, highlighting the greats in the genre. It also attempts to draw attention to the aspects of post modern and post colonial writing. The chapter sets Salman Rushdie in his age, with a description of his life and times, his works and accomplishments. His novels, Midnight's children, Shame, The Satanic Verses, The Moor's last Sigh, The Ground Beneath her Feet, Fury, Shalimar the Clown and The Enchantress of Florence are summarised and the hypothesis of the research work is laid out.

In Chapter II, the concept of motherhood is studied under two heads- the strong matriarchal mother and the submissive, maternal mother. The chapter will discuss whether the emotional make up of the mother figure determines her locus of control. If the most important role of the woman is that of the mother then is she complacent in that assurance or does she go on to use that very role, that of a mother, as a catalyst for control impulses. For this, criticism on motherhood and society's views on it will be included. It portrays motherhood in its various aspects, in a bid to understand if she finds fulfilment in this biological role.

In Chapter III the idea of rebellion is taken for the study. It deals with women characters rebelling in some form or the other to find their feet, to find utterance for their thoughts. If women do not work, are not economically independent, then do they have
control over their lives and those of others, or do they submit themselves to the will of circumstances and society. Salman Rushdie’s women characters carve their own identity in the roles they occupy and do so in unobvious ways, without treading the path of society’s ways of rebellion.

In Chapter IV there is a discussion on how traditional concepts like beauty and sexuality in society, are dealt with in the novels, in the context of the women who possess them and those who use them. If the idea of woman as a sex object and an object of desire is used against the woman, as one is wont to see, then her role and importance are negligible and merely ornamental. The chapter aims to see how Rushdie portrays his women characters in their various roles in order to understand their stance on their biological and sexual roles.

In Chapter V, an attempt has been made to highlight the use of language and of the style of Rushdie’s writing. It considers language usage in all the novels considered for this research and concludes with highlighting an important characteristic of each novel. It dwells briefly on the writer’s style, magic realism and talks of it in relation to the works under consideration.

In Chapter VI, the concluding chapter, there will be a summation of all the findings of the research. Ideas for further research will also be put forth. Rushdie’s importance as a post modernist writer will also be brought about. For Rushdie, being truthful no matter what the cost is paramount to his writing. This belief is self evident in the care he takes to create his plots and his people. His is writing filled with pain of birth pangs of a new nation, a peculiar and personal weltanschauung coupled with the wariness of a cosmopolitan sensibility, filled with weltschmerz. No matter what, his voice enhances the many lives it touches.