Chapter I

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Modern India is a cauldron of cultures and contradictions. It is as rooted in its past as it is striding towards its future, it draws from its own indigenousness and explores other worldly influences; it has its own heritage and embraces everyone else’s as well. It creates literature in its many languages, ancient and modern, and is equally at ease with a language that was brought to its shores. This open-mindedness is fertile ground for the creation of writing that is unique, multidimensional and multicultural.

The birth of the Indian-English novel occurred with Raimohan’s Wife (1864), presented as a serial, written by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. But it would not be unfair to say that most of the significant Indian-English novels appeared in the nineteen-fifties. Writers who had been active in the literary scene for over two decades—Raja Rao, RK Narayan, and Mulk Raj Anand—created their masterpieces in this era. New talent emerged as well. Thus, in terms of quality, the last thirty years were more significant than the first ninety after 1864.

The vigour of the genre is evident from the themes the novels depicted. Social novels such as those by Bhabhani Bhattacharya, Khwaja Ahmed Abbas and Mulk Raj Anand existed comfortably with pure entertainers like the novels of Manohar Malgonkar. Raja Rao’s philosophical-metaphysical novels and Anita Desai’s psychological novels completed the picture. There were also novels written with the foreigner or tourist in mind. These books depicted India the way the non-native might perceive it—exotic, filled

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with mysterious charmers and apothecary and kings with fabulous wealth. To be realistic, it also depicted the poverty, dirt and heat of the nation as well. The works of Nayantara Sahgal, Ruth Prawer Jhabavala and Kamala Markandeya belong to this category.

Initially the sensibility of Western critics led to the establishment of norms to understand literature. This sensibility was more in keeping with European Literature. Thus there was a gap in the understanding of the philosophy and themes of literature from India. In recent times however, this gap is closing fast due to burgeoning interest.

The impetus for the Indian novel in English was established in the 1930's. But the ground work for it was laid more than a century ago. The novel came into being in the latter part of the nineteenth century. And since life was so largely influenced by colonialism, the writing too was tailored on the style prevalent or was dominated by British ideas and concerns. But as the novel marched forward with growing confidence, by the mid twentieth century, there was a paradigm shift in the issues it raised, its new styles and its warp and weft.

The novels played an important role in the envisaging and personifying of the far-reaching vision of anti-colonialism. The inspiration for novels came from within and without the country; the social revolution that stemmed from the Swaraj Movement and the economic and political upheaval that transformed Europe during the era of modernism respectively. The positive outcome of colonialism was the variety of cultures it brought into being, and the fusion of indigenous and alien persuasions.

Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and RK Narayan are the ‘Big Three’ names when one envisages influences at play. Mulk Raj Anand was involved with the issues of the underdogs of society. His novels, The Untouchable (1935) Coolie (1936), Two Leaves
and a Bud (1937), and The Village (1939) treat them, not patronizingly but with empathy and respect. The peasant, the sweeper, the plantation worker, the tea picker, the labourer, the drudge worker, the sepoy all emerge alive and vibrant, despite being hungry, and anguished and having their best efforts thwarted by the vicissitudes of life. This is the triumph of the human spirit and it was especially pertinent to the time when the novels were written.

RK Narayan is best loved for Swami and his Friends (1935). In a career that spanned over half a century, he created many masterpieces such as The Bachelor of Arts (1936), The Financial Expert (1952), The Guide (1958) and the Malgudi series. While Mulk Raj Anand spoke extensively about oppression of caste in Indian society, RK Narayan's books did not mention caste at all and instead focused on the essential good in the human spirit.

Raja Rao is renowned for his works Kanthapura (1936) and The Serpent and the Rope (1960). Kanthapura highlighted the spark of authentic patriotism and awakening, typically Indian in its uniting of social and spiritual values.

Soon writers began to experiment with and chronicle the extraordinary epoch they lived in. They broke from the traditional norms and created distinctive subjects, forms, concepts and styles of literature—modernism was born.

Modernism is a term used to describe newness in literature and arts post independence. There are various interpretations to this term, which is considered a new thought and belief in the constitutive faith of imagination. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines Modernism, "the deliberate departure from tradition and the use of innovative forms of expression that distinguish many styles in the
arts and literature of the 20th century." An important support system was the intellect that laid the foundation for modernism. It did so by questioning the customs of religion, morality, social structure and indeed the basic understanding of the human self. The general thematic concerns of Modernist literature are well-summarized by the sociologist George Simmel in *The Metropolis and Mental Life* (1903), where he says "The deepest problems of modern life derive from the claim of the individual to preserve the autonomy and individuality of his existence in the face of overwhelming social forces, of historical heritage, of external culture, and of the technique of life." (35)

If the ‘Big Three’ constituted the ‘First Wave’ of Indo-English Novelists, then the Second Wave was undoubtedly dominated by writers such as Bhabhansi Bhattacharya, Nirad C Chaudhary, GV Desani, Ruth Prawer Jhabwala, Manohar Malgonkar, Kamala Markandeya, VS Naipaul and Nayantara Sahgal.

Bhabhansi Bhattacharya’s is renowned for her socially oriented novels like *So Many Hungers* (1947), *Music for Mohini* (1952) and *He who Rides a Tiger* (1954). Nirad C Chaudhary wrote his books with an aim to show himself as the last bastion of British values. *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* (1951) remains his most celebrated and most reviled book. GV Desani’s sole novel, *All About Hattert* (1948) is unique in its word and sentence forms. Critically acclaimed for producing a new kind of English, the novel uses a form of the language which is neither Indian nor British and at the same time, a bit of both.

Ruth Prawer Jhabwala, CBE is a Booker prize-winning novelist, short story writer, and two-time Academy Award-winning screenwriter. She is best known for her novels like *The Householder* (1960) and *Heat and Dust* (1975). Manohar Malgonkar’s


Nayantara Sahgal's fiction deals with India's elite responding to the crises engendered by political change; she is one of the first female Indo-Anglian writers to receive wide recognition. Her memoir *Prison and Chocolate Cake* (1954) garnered much praise as did her novel *The Day in Shadow* (1971).

Themes for novels such as those mentioned above were plenty but freedom from the colonial yoke and social criticism featured prominently. Gradually, a difference between pre and post independence writing began to become evident. These writings were termed postmodernist.

Postmodernism is a melange of many theories and ideas. It is this very reason that renders a satisfactory explanation impossible. The concept of 'wheels within wheels' can be applied to this phrase; it is a general term that brings together criticism in art and literature. The recent developments in both fields come under postmodernism. It can sometimes be an almost militant, extreme defiance of the traditional forms and
preoccupations that came before it. Linda Hutcheon in her work, *Circling the Downspout of Empire* (1989) describes postmodernism as, "art which is paradoxically both self-reflexive (about its technique and material) and yet grounded in historical and political actuality."(150). In this, writers experimented with forms, and attempted to put an end to the snobbery of ‘modernist high art’ by using models from ‘mass culture’. But because of the intricate nature of post modernism, it is imperative that one framework not be used for all, and that the writing be understood in the background and the context in which it has appeared. Writers have freedom to explore any subject matter and are not restricted by borders, virtual or imaginary. Their fiction touches on topics like history, politics, various cultures, 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.

According to Anthony Giddens in his book, *Modernity and Self Identity* (1991), "Postmodernism is an aesthetic, literary, political or social philosophy, which was the basis of the attempt to describe a condition, or a state of being, or something concerned with changes to institutions and conditions".(43). *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary* refers to postmodernism as a style and concept in the arts characterized by distrust of theories and ideologies and by the drawing of attention to conventions.

Topics like eroticism and incest which may be considered taboo are dealt with freely in post modern writing. There is a strong appeal to free the female of the conservative male dominating society and its double standards. The Postmodernist also probes into the human psyche to explore the perception of despondency and psychology of rootless people.
The ideal character of the postmodernist writing is one who is shock resistant. In order to do that, the characters would keep themselves aloof from the pain of existence in the world. This would be achieved by the alienation of self and by emotional disconnect. Indeed much of postmodernism may appear filled with extreme scepticism, almost nihilistic. Exaggerating some aspects of life and downplaying the others is the writers' way of making enquiries into the human condition often resulting in writing which is ironical, sarcastic and satirical.

Postmodernist writers use magic realism in their fiction. This is a matter of fact integration of the fantastic and/or mythical ingredient 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, a country's ethos and its values. 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.

The literary discipline of postmodernism that began in India in the seventies, and has been made full use of by an elite set of writers, the 'Third Wave', like Vikram Chandra, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Amit Chaudhari, David Davidi, Amitav Ghosh, Raj Kamal Jha, Arun Joshi, Rohinton Mistry, Salman Rushdie, Siddharth Dhanavanth Sanghvi, Vikram Seth, Kushwant Singh, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Eesai, Kiran Desai, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Githa Hariharan, Bharathi Mukherji, Arundhati Roy and others who have gained world wide reputation for their quality writing.
Vikram Chandra garnered much praise for his novel *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* (1995) which won him the David Higham Prize for Fiction. His novel *Sacred Games* (2006) has varied women characters including an aspiring movie actress, a widow battling poverty and a young girl in quest for her family.


Shashi Tharoor has written both fiction and non-fiction. His novel *Show Business* (1992) has female leads such as Maya and Mehrnaz Elahi. *The Great Indian Novel* (1989), his most acclaimed book, uses the Hindu epic, The Mahabharata with memorable characters like Draupadi and retells the history of modern India. His novel *Riot* (2001) is subsumed with the spirit of the murdered Priscilla Hart.

Anita Desai’s writing is not as conservative as the old style writing has been. Her work is sometimes considered foreign, but she writes from the memory of her German mother’s deep sense of anxiety during the Second World War. She is an

Shashi Deshpande's first literary offering was a collection of short stories—*Legacy* (1978). This was followed by her first novel, *The Dark Holds No Terror* (1980) in which a young girl called Sarita seeks to find her inner self. In the novel *That Long Silence* (1989), Jaya plays the role of dutiful wife and mother.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's works are partially autobiographical. She is the acclaimed writer of the collection of short stories, *Arranged Marriage* (1995) which focuses on women from Indian caught between the traditional and the modern worlds. Her novels like *Mistress of Spices* (1997), *Sister of my Heart* (1999) and its sequel *The Vine of Desire* (2002) too have women like Tilo, Anju and Sudha in the latter two novels. Banerjee writes about the immigrant and the sense of alienation that goes with being an immigrant. She writes especially of the woman, for as she says in her website, “Women in particular respond to my work because I am writing about them. Women in love, in difficulties, women in relationships.”

Sudha Murthy's simple and lucid style brings to life characters such as the mother-in-law and her relationship with her daughter-in-law in *Dollar Bahu* (2008).

Anita Nair is the acclaimed author of *Ladies Coupe* (2001) which, as the name suggests, is replete with women characters such as Akhila, Mariko anthu and Janaki. Nair’s novel *Mistress* (2005) traces the story of Radha, a Kathakali exponent.

Arundhati Roy catapulted into international fame in 1997 when she won the Booker Prize for her novel *The God of Small Things* (1997) where her main character Ammu
displays grit and conviction in the face of many odds. Subsequently, her body of work has consisted of essays.

Among these writers, Salman Rushdie comes under the focus of this research as a leading light of the Indian diaspora. He is more postmodernist than postcolonial in his writing due to the complexity of design in his novels and the use of the literary tradition to reinvent language. Rushdie perhaps assumes that the manipulation of language is more important than the realistic representation of life. The use of the world's repository of stories and myths, ranging from The Arabian Nights to those in Greek mythology, the use of the Hindi film technique, the parallel worlds of time and space and the ubiquitous use of popular culture as reference points indicates that Rushdie has moved beyond the elitism of the Westernised literary 'modernist' and into 'post modernism'.

It must also be noted that he is a postmodernist who in the words of Andrew Blake, in his book, Salman Rushdie: A Beginner's Guide (2001) “insists on the hybridity as the crucible for the emergence of the new and who makes no claim to defend authentic traditions, however of them he might be.” (26)

Rushdie's novels and writings come together to form a cultural history of the twentieth century, offering many an insight into the way of life of three continents, and making political commentaries on the states of Britain, India and Pakistan. His ideal form of life is the flux of identity in the big post colonial cities such as Mumbai and London, which he sees as destabilizers of the concept of 'western' superiority. But he is more than just a histo-political analyst. He is also a literary technician whose influences range from Classical to Modern, European to Latin American and whose subjects tread on many aspects of popular culture, from rock music to advertising slogans.
Rushdie is inclined, even excited to inhabit the voices he illustrates and employs. In fact, if anyone is justly worthy of the over-used term, postmodernism, it is he. His work offers a defence of 'literature', but it is also a positive observation of it; his novels are not an attack on popular culture, but an acknowledgement of its power to engage and to move us.

Rushdie is also postcolonial in the simple aspect of his work dealing with contemporary India and Pakistan and with Western cities with large populations drawn from parts of the world which emerged from Western imperial conquest during the third quarter of the twentieth century. This, despite the brutal criticism he has been subject to for his representation of the developing world and of its women in particular.

Postcolonial writing in Indian writing in English is often preoccupied with marginalised social groups such as the down trodden and women. Both male and female writers have highlighted the dominating tendencies of tradition-bound societies towards inferior groups.

Thus, Rushdie is not on any one particular side, and yet on all sides at once. He is a writer of an earlier moment and of a different place, educated in India and England, and inhabiting the postcolonial and multicultural world of the Western metropolitan cities. But he also writes as an evangelist for the new voices of people who have moved away from the Indian subcontinent. Postcolonial literature though claims to allow a voice to the oppressed people from the various former empires 'write back' against the West's attempts to impose its own voice on their histories and identities. Therefore Rushdie's personal position as a privately educated Londoner, now living in New York, with a background in advertising, might appear to critics as a denial of all this. As does his insistence on writing in English.
This means that there is a rejection of postmodernism’s politics of identity, rather than a politics based on class or gender difference or global inequality. It conveys a consumerist attitude in its authors, whose identity politics becomes those of lifestyle choice, a sampling of various cultures and cuisine. This in turn is nesec to produce books and programmes about them, while the people from whom the ideas and products originated end up empty handed. In Rushdie’s display of the non-western world for western consumption, he becomes part of the problem.

When one considers Rushdie’s place in Indian Writing, one is confronted with the knowledge of how he invented the use of language and he makes his own work art of the tradition he is reinventing. One might say that Indian Writing in English found utterance in Salman Rushdie’s writings. That with him, it found its feet. Rushdie’s use of language, the way he appropriated Indian themes and settings, offered routes to post-colonial writers everywhere in the world, specially so in India,” says Githe Hariharan whose *The Thousand Faces of Night* (1992) won the Commonwealth Prize. This sentiment is also echoed in the words of Pankaj Mishra, author of the travel-book *Butter Chicken in Ludhiana* (1995) and chief editor of Harper Collins (India), who adds that Midnight’s Children not only inspired many Indians to start writing fiction in English, but also to write in a brave new way.

Rushdie’s novels prefigured the emergence of writers such as Hanif Kureishi and Meera Syal and his work acts as a constant point of comparison to theirs. His imagined India, like theirs, has gone beyond the old-fashioned nationalism which desires roots in a particular language and history. That Kiran Desai, for *The Inheritance of Loss* (2007) and Arvind Adiga, for *White Tiger* (2008), have won the Booker Prize, adds further proof of this theory.
Rushdie is one of the most important writers of the postmodern era. Most of his writings are based on his experiences and are a reflection of his life and his views. He straddles many cultures and continents comfortably. In a review of *The Satanic Verses* (1998) for the New York Times, AG Mojtabai says,

> It is Mr. Rushdie's wide-ranging power of assimilation and imaginative boldness that make his work so different from that of other well-known Indian novelists, such as R. K. Narayan, and the exuberance of his comic gift that distinguishes his writing from that of V. S. Naipaul. In Salman Rushdie's work, both India and England are repopulated and take on new shapes. For the Indian subcontinent there is a more commensurate bigness and teemingness, a registration of the pandemonium and sleaze of contemporary life. (3)

To appreciate the present writing style of Salman Rushdie, it is imperative that we look at his background and literary origins. Ahmed Salman Rushdie was born on 15th June 1947, into a prosperous Muslim home in Mumbai. He attended school in Bombay and lived in India till 1961, after which his family moved to Pakistan and then moved to England in 1964. Rushdie was educated in Rugby and Cambridge. He was knighted in 2008. He started his career as an advertising copywriter and is said to have come up with the 'Naughty but Nice' caption for cream. He wrote some journalistic work, had one novel rejected and then published *Grimus* (1975). This book is a rich mix of science fiction, myth, legend and philosophy. The story follows 'Tlapping Eagle', a young Indian who receives the gift of immortality after drinking a magic liquid. He is ostracised because of his light skin and his mother's death after childbirth. It is his sister 'Bird Dog' who protects him and presents him with the elixir of life before she
mysteriously disappears. Flapping Eagle sets out in search of her, spending 777 years, 7 months and 7 days in the quest. During his quest, he falls through a hole in the Mediterranean Sea which leads him to a parallel dimension in the mystical Calf Island. This Island is peopled by immortals such as him and this commonality brings about a lassitude in Flapping Eagle who tries to get rid of the Immortal Effect or The Grimus Effect by scaling the island's peak, from which the mysterious and corrosive Grimus Effect emits. Through a series of thrilling quests and encounters, Flapping Eagle comes face-to-face with the island's creator and unwinds the mysteries of his own humanity. Bird Dog is an important character because it is Flapping Eagle's search for her that sets him on a soul-seeking quest. She is also the one who brings about a final confrontation between Grimus and Flapping Eagle when she is sent by the former to summon the latter. Flapping Eagle's innate trust in his sister causes him to set aside his doubts and accompany her. Rushdie portrays Bird Dog's transformation from an independent, spirited courageous young woman to a meek, submissive and servile one in this novel.

It was the publication of his second book, Midnight's Children (1981) that won him international acclaim. The book was awarded the Booker Prize in 1984 and the Booker of Bookers in 1993, for the best novel in the first twenty five books to win. It has also won the Best of Bookers at The London Literary Festival in 2008.

The novel is written with the grand backdrop of the political and cultural transformations which followed the end of the British rule in India. It is also considered a landmark in the use of magic realism in Indian Writing. In Bock One, the male protagonist of Midnight's Children (1981), Saleem Sinai, a thirty-year-old pickle factory worker narrates his life's story to a woman named Padma. The story begins with
Saleem's grandparents Aadam Aziz and Naseem Ghani in Kashmir. The couple move to Amritsar and then to Agra where they bring up their three girls Emerald, Mumtaz and Alia and two boys – Mustapha and Hanif.

Aadam becomes optimistic about India's coming freedom in advance of the arrival of Mian Abdullah, a social activist known as the Hummingbird. The poet Nadir Khan, dating Emerald, is one of the Humming-bird's confidantes. When Abdullah is assassinated, Khan comes to the Aziz house and is hidden in the basement for three years. During his confinement, he and Mumtaz Aziz fall in love and are married. Emerald, feeling jilted, tells the army officer, Major Zulfikar, that Khan is hidden in the house. Zulfikar falls in love with Emerald and marries her; Khan runs away; Mumtaz meets Ahmed Sinai, marries him and changes her first name to Amina.

Ahmed and Amina move to Delhi and from there on to Bombay. Amina is pregnant with their first child, when the couple moves into the Methwold estate in June 1947. When the baby is born, at the stroke of midnight on August 15, the midwife, Mary Pereira, exchanges the Sinai child with another infant. The child whom the Sinais take home is celebrated as a symbol of Indian independence: his picture is on the front page of the paper, and prime minister sends a letter addressed to him. The other baby falls into obscurity.

In Book Two, Saleem's father, Ahmed Sinai is rendered weak and invalid when the government freezes all his assets. His wife Amina proves lucky at betting on horses and secretly amasses a fortune, which she uses to hire lawyers to save the accounts unfrozen. But Saleem's childhood is tough, given the financial strife and the fact that other children pick on him because of his odd looks.
When Saleem is nine, his father hits him on the ear, and he develops the ability to communicate telepathically, to put himself in the minds of other people. This discovery leads him to create a network connecting all of the Children of Midnight, the ones who, like him, were born on August 15, 1947. Through the group he calls the Midnight's Children's Conference, he telepathically contacts Shiva, the child with whom he was switched at birth, who believes that he, not Saleem, should be the conference leader, advocating violence and control.

Saleem is injured at school; a blood type test reveals that neither of the people he thinks are his parents actually are. He is sent to live with his uncle Hanif and aunt Pia, who are in the film business. After a huge financial loss, Uncle Hanif kills himself. Saleem's whole family gathers for forty days of mourning after which they leave to Pakistan. Here, Saleem's telepathic powers are too weak to contact the Children.

When he returns to Bombay, Saleem's father arranges an operation to fix the boy's draining sinuses, and as a result Saleem develops an extraordinarily keen sense of smell but loses his telepathic power. His 15-year-old sister becomes a popular singer in Pakistani radio. Saleem confesses love for her, and she is repulsed, refusing to ever see him again. War breaks out between India and Pakistan: Indian bombs kill Saleem's grandmother, his aunts Pia and Emerald, and his parents.

In Book Three, Saleem wanders around Pakistan with amnesia. He joins the army and leads his patrol up the Padma river. He comes across Parvati-the-witch, one of the Midnight's Children, who recognizes him from the image that he projected, and he is taken under her care and that of Picture Singh, a snake charmer. They hide him from the Indian army then help sneak him back into India along with them. Frustrated by her
unrequited affection for Saleem, Parvati-the-witch summons Saleem's rival Shiva, who makes her pregnant. Saleem marries Parvati knowing that he will be unable to father children with her. Government forces, led by Shiva, attack the ghetto, and Parvati is killed. The remaining children of midnight are sterilized by the government.

Saleem accompanies Picture Singh to Bombay. Saleem smells chutney, which reminds him of his childhood: he goes to the factory where it is made and finds the factory is run by Mary Pereira, his old nanny. She hires him, and he works in the factory by day and tells his story to Padma by night.

Saleem's thirty-first birthday finds him experiencing mixed emotions—jubilation at a married future with Padma and the sombre reality of the spectre of death lurking in his psyche. The book ends on this rather dark note.

Shame (1983) is Rushdie's most deliberately political novel. Through a first person account it takes the reader through the world of Pakistani high politics: dictatorship, nepotism and corruption. Although this novel has many personal political opinions, there are also two other strains in the voice. One is of a writer who wants to take his fiction to the world. Rushdie says, "I tell myself it will be a novel of leave-taking."(75). The other is a note of caution at being vilified. He subverts this by claiming that this is a work of fiction, aware all the time that this very statement will invite the invariable comparison between his fictitious country and Pakistan. The novel begins and ends in a fantastic house in the town of Q., located on the arid, isolated border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Named Nishapur, home of the great Persian poet Omar Khayyam, it is inhabited by three sisters who for twelve years raise a son, named after the poet. They rear him in strict isolation from the world, instilling in his brilliant mind a strange
feeling of being peripheral and inverted. In exchange for being allowed to attend school, Omar is ordered never to feel shame. He goes away to medical school to pursue a brilliant career as an immunologist and shame does indeed appear to have no part in his voyeuristic, misogynist character. Omar befriends and debauches with a rich playboy, Iskander ("Isky") Harappa, who marries Rani Humayun, who immediately sees Omar as a threat. Isky and Rani have one daughter, Arjumand, nicknamed the "Virgin Ironpants," for her determination to overcome her gender sexually and professionally. On his 40th birthday, Isky hears the call of History and abandons his debauchery to enter politics. For years, he has been the rival of Raza Hyder, a military hero who calls himself "Old Razor Guts." Raza has married Bilquis Kemal, a woman whose mind is shaken by the suicide of her idealistic father. After a wrenching stillbirth, she bears two daughters, Sufiya Zinobia (nicknamed "Shame") and Naveed (nicknamed "Good News"). The elder, left mentally retarded by a fever as an infant, takes within herself all the unfelt shame of the world, which eventually becomes incarnate as a Beast. Omar treats her immunological disorder and falls in love with her. Omar marries her quietly, but he is forbidden to have sexual relations with her. Despite her mental limitations, Sufiya Zinobia knows husbands are for giving women babies and when Omar impregnates her ayah Shabibanou, the Beast again takes over and four young men are forced to have sex with Sufiya Zinobia and have their heads torn off. Omar and Raza Hyder realize the truth and drug and imprison Sufiya Zinobia, unable to kill her. Raza Hyder, who was placed in charge of the army by Prime Minister Iskander Harappa, has overthrown him, instituted Islamic law and allowed Isky to be tried, brutally imprisoned and executed. Raza is himself overthrown by a military coup and flees with Bilquis and Omar, to supposed safety in fortress-like
Nishapur, disguised shamefully in women's burqas. There, Omar's three mothers rejoice to find Raza, the murderer of their second son Babar, in their hands. After the visitors endure the wild ravings of malaria, the three sisters dispatch Raza Hyder with great gore in the dumbwaiter they had specially customized to serve as their means of limited communications with the outside world. The Beast that has taken over Sufiya Zenobia hunts Omar in the bed where his grandfather died and after a last eye-to-eye confrontation, beheads him. The shell of Sufiya Zenobia is cast off, set free and the spouse-protagonists are consumed in a great fire. Thus divine justice is meted out to all in the end.

Rushdie's journey through Nicaragua, as a journalist became the book, The Jaguar Smile (1987) which is his first full-length non-fiction book. The book is subtitled A Nicaraguan Journey and relates his travel experiences, the people he met as well as views on the political situation then facing the country. The book was written during a break the author took from writing his controversial novel, The Satanic Verses (1988). Rushdie visited Nicaragua as a guest of the Sandinista Association of Cultural Workers (ASTC) for the seventh anniversary of the "triumph" of the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (Sandinista National Liberation Front) - when the Somoza dictatorship collapsed and the Sandinistas took power.

In Nicaragua, Rushdie met most of the prominent members in Daniel Ortega's left-wing government that, having been declared 'pro-Soviet' by the Reagan administration, was having to defend itself against a U.S. backed rebel army, the contras. The Jaguar Smile (1987) is the product of these meetings: "a portrait of a moment, no more, in the life of that beautiful, volcanic country" (5). This travelogue-cum-political
treatise, has three distinct agendas organised into an organic whole says Pradyumna Chauhan in *Salman Rushdie Interviews: A Sourcebook of His Ideas* (2001). Firstly, it is an "imagistic attempt to evoke the place through a series of almost metaphorical images". Secondly, it is "a more conventional kind of travel writing with straight-forward description of places and people"; and thirdly, it involves "a series of set piece political encounters - interviews with leaders and opposition figures and so forth" (79).

Rushdie was thrust into the harsh limelight with the publication of his next book, *The Satanic Verses* (1998). The book was the winner of the Whitbread Prize for that year and is principally about identity among those that move to countries with different world views and who try to reconcile these differences within themselves. The story of *The Satanic Verses* (1998) chronicles an ancient legend about the Prophet Muhammad, founder of the Islamic religion. Muhammad, who received the Word of God directly from the Archangel Gabriel, was tricked by the devil into including satanic verses in the holy book of the Quran. Salman Rushdie's fictional version of this tale features the Prophet Mahound, founder of a religion called 'Submission'. The social and political pressures faced by Mahound tempt him to speak false verses to the people of Jahilia in the hopes of gaining personal power and prestige. Mahound repents of his actions and recants the satanic verses. His disciples applaud his courage in standing up to the pressures placed upon him by the evil Grandee of Jahilia and his beautiful wife, Hind. As Mahound's power grows, he triumphs over his former enemies and all the citizens of Jahilia become his converts. The beautiful yet vicious Hind seeks revenge against the prophet. She kills him on behalf of the goddess Al-Lat, but her revenge comes too late. Mahound's death does not stop the spread of Submission and he leaves behind countless followers to continue along his path.
The story of the prophet is the heart and soul of the novel, but the primary plot line, from which all of the other tales spring, is the story of Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta. Together, they miraculously survive a fall from an exploding airplane, yet their survival comes at a price. When they wake up on the shores of the English Channel, they find themselves transformed. Farishta has taken on the appearance of an angel and Chamcha has grown the horns and cloven hoofs of the devil. Through this remarkable story of transformation, the author explores the prejudices which immigrants face in the Western world. Ultimately, it is clear that appearances can be deceiving, since Farishta's angelic aspect masks a violent rage. Saladin Chamcha's satanic look proves to be merely a projection of the negative image he harbors about his Indian roots. By the end of the novel, Chamcha decides he will not be judged by his looks and embraces the ethnic diversity which he once found loathsome. Through these two memorable characters, *The Satanic Verses* (1998) explores a peaceful resolution of the tensions caused by the collision of two religions and two diverse cultures.

Both characters struggle to piece their broken lives back together. Farishta seeks and finds his lost love, the English mountaineer Allie Cone, but their relationship is overshadowed by his mental illness. Chamcha, having miraculously regained his human shape, wants to take revenge on Farishta for having forsaken him after their common fall from the hijacked plane. He does so by fostering Farishta's pathological jealousy and thus destroying his relationship with Allie. In another moment of crisis, Farishta realizes what Chamcha has done, but forgives him and even saves his life.

Both later return to India. Farishta, still suffering from his illness, kills Allie in another outbreak of jealousy and then commits suicide. Chamcha, who has found not
only forgiveness from Farishta but also reconciliation with his estranged father and his own Indian identity, decides to remain in India.

The second sequence tells the story of Ayesha, an Indian peasant girl who claims to be receiving revelations from the Archangel Gibreel. She enlists her village community to embark on a foot pilgrimage to Mecca, claiming that they will be able to walk on foot across the Arabian Sea. The pilgrimage ends in a catastrophic climax as the believers all walk into the water and disappear, amid disturbingly conflicting testimonies from observers about whether they just drowned or were in fact miraculously able to cross the sea.

A third dream sequence presents the figure of a fanatic expatriate religious leader, the “Imam”, set again in a late-20th-century setting. This figure is a transparent allusion to the life of Ayatollah Khomeini in his Parisian exile, but it is also linked through various recurrent narrative motifs to the figure of the “Messenger”. Through parallel story lines, Rushdie addresses the burning issues of the time.

Rushdie published a work for children, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (1990) which won the Writers’ Guild Award. A children’s story, inspired by *The Wizard of Oz*, this book is also a political response to his Muslim clerics. It was Rushdie’s first novel after *The Satanic Verses* (1988). It is a phantasmagorical story set in a city so old and ruinous that it has forgotten its name.

The book is a political allegory and centres around Haroun, the young son of Rashid, who is also known as the Shah of Blah amongst his critics and as the Ocean of stories amongst his friends. Rashid loses his power to fabricate stories eloquently when his wife leaves him and elopes with the neighbour Mr. Sengupta.
On a tour to the valley of the Dull lake, where Rashid goes to win supporters on behalf of a corrupt politician, Mr. Buttoo, Haroun catches hold of a water genie called Iff who claims he had come to dismantle Rashid's story water supply in his bathroom and blackmails him to take him along to the moon Kahani (where exists the ocean of stories which is the source of Rashid's tales) so that he might fix his father's sudden lack of words.

Once in Kahani, Iff realises that a deep rooted evil had drilled into the ocean of stories. Together Haroun, Iff and Butt the hoopoe make way to Gup land where live the Guppies whose only occupation is storytelling. But the air is thick with tragedy and hardly suitable for any stories at all since the Guppies' precious princess has been kidnapped by the dangerous Chupwalas.

The story then proceeds to see the brave but loquacious Guppies fighting a ridiculous war with the dark and graceful but abnormally quiet Chupwalas, while Haroun almost single handedly deals with the shadow of their dreaded chief, Khattam-Shud. The war ends with the victory of the Guppies, who reward Haroun by granting his wish and restoring his father's storytelling capabilities.

Rushdie published a short book on the film, The Wizard of Oz (1992) where he discusses the making of the movie, the intricacies of its plot, the depth of its music and the meaning of its themes. His next work was a collection of 75 essays and reviews, Imaginary Homelands (1992), which carries Rushdie's observations on vital issues that range from socialism to arts and culture. Throughout the 1980s, Rushdie wrote prolifically on many issues: about the politics of religion and race in three countries, about writers and books from all around the globe, about the vocation of the writer and
the powers of literature, the potential of the imagination and the dangers of censorship, capital punishment; and, repeatedly, about migration as the archetypal experience of the twentieth century. The reflection on migration and metamorphosis is the commonality in his non-fiction and fiction and thus many of these pieces also address urban society's conflicts.

His next work was *East, West* (1994), a collection of short stories explored the cultural and political problems of a world in which the traveller, the migrant, living in the latter half of the twentieth century, will have to come to terms with being seen as 'The Other'. At the end of the book, one senses Rushdie trying to establish his identity again.

The book consists of three parts - the first one set in the East, the second one in the West, and the final part about expatriates from the East living in the West.

In the East section are three stories 'Good Advice Is Rarer Than Rubies', 'The Free Radio' and 'The Prophet's Hair'. 'Good Advice Is Rarer Than Rubies', is about a young Muslim woman seeking an immigrant visa to U.K. who sabotages her own interview with the consular officer as she prefers to stay home. 'The Free Radio' is a story about a young rickshaw driver who undergoes a vasectomy for he mistakenly believes he will be rewarded with a free radio. When he belatedly discovers that the reward scheme had already ended, he pretends he has received a radio. The third story is 'The Prophet's Hair' which narrates the tale of the theft of the Prophet's hair from the holy shrine in Kashmir. The hair is later discovered by a money lender who covets it bringing calamity to his family.

In the West section the three stories are 'Yorick', 'At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers' and 'Christopher Colombus and Queen Isabella of Spain Consummate Their
Relationship'. In 'Yorick' Rushdie retells the story of Hamlet's jester Yorick, who, 'by becoming a Fool-Actual, sacrifices the privileges of the Fool-Professor'. By dismissing it as a "cock-and-bull story", the narrator shows how he has imbibed the professional skills of the Fool and prepares the reader for the next story in this section. At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers' is a statement on the "uncompromising times" that we live in. It presents a dystopian vision of a future rife with crime and disease. In a throwback to his fascination with The Wizard of Oz Rushdie portrays the auction of the ruby slippers to be a beacon of hope in that troubled time. The next story is about Christopher Columbus’s amorous dreams of consummating his relationship with Queen Isabella of Spain.

The final part – East, West has 3 stories – 'The Harmony of Spheres', 'Chekov and Zulu', and 'The Courter'. 'The Harmony of the Spheres' is narrated by a former Indian student at Cambridge who comes under the spell of a paranoid-schizophrenic Welsh writer of a book on the occult arts. At the opening of the story the writer commits suicide; however, his dairies indicate that he had long "lubricious" sessions with the narrator's wife immediately after their honeymoon. In 'Chekov and Zulu', the characters are based in London and operate under the supervision of the Indian Government's intelligence division. The story opens in London a few days after the assassination of Indira Gandhi in New Delhi. Chekov visits Zulu's home to inform his wife that the intelligence chief, alarmed by Zulu's AWOL, now openly suspects Zulu to have joined the U.K.-based pro-Khalistani militants whom he had been assigned to spy on. Whereas, it so transpires that Zulu returns from his mission of militants and stung by the accusations leveled against him quits and returns to Bombay. He achieves great prosperity as the owner of a chain of personal security companies. Chekov continues in
government service and is killed in May 1991 while accompanying Rajiv Gandhi. 'The Courter' appears to be the most autobiographical story in this book. The narrator, a sixteen-year old boy from Bombay studying in England, is trying to find his identity. When his parents come to England for a year-long visit, he is troubled by his conflicts with his father and the frequent quarrels his eleven-year old sister has with the father. This story is interlaced with the story of the family's sixty-year old Indian housekeeper who is courted by an old East European porter. The two transform their games of chess, modelled on war, to love. But at the same time she feels acutely home-sick. She goes back to Bombay. The narrator makes the opposite choice and acquires British citizenship. In this story, Rushdie poignantly describes another of his characteristic concerns: the predicament of 'inbetweenness'.

The following year, another novel, The Moor's Last Sigh (1995) was released. This book too won the Whitbread Prize. Set completely in India, partly in Cochin and then in Mumbai, it is postcolonial and postmodernist in its exploration of the multitudinous and almost irreconcilable ethnic and communal differences within India. The Moor's Last Sigh (1995) tells the family history of Moraes Zogoiby, known as 'the Moor'. He is the last survivor of a family descended from the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama, who sailed to India in search of spice and whose offspring grew rich in shipping it to the West.

The most influential person in the Moor's life is his mother, Aurora who is a strong, difficult character who would destroy the one true love of her only son's life, cast him out of her home and life, and, unreconciled, suffer a tragic, accidental death.
While posing for his mother's Moor paintings and listening to her chatter, Moor understands her personality. Like magnets, mother and son attract and repel one another. Even though Moor has three sisters called Ina, Minnie and Mynah, he shares the strongest bond with his mother. Abraham, Moor's father remains, for a long while, a distant, indistinct character. Moor finds love with Uma Sarasvati, a mysterious, contradictory figure, who utterly shatters the Zogoiby family. Aurora, alone, is never taken in by her charms.

Moor's new life begins in prison, following his arrest for Uma's murder and involvement in his father's black marketeering in narcotics. He is rescued by Raman 'Mainduck' Fielding, who is closing in on his goal of political mystery of Bombay. Moor becomes 'Hammer', a member of Fielding's elite goon squad that terrorises and intimidates anyone who opposes the interests of the Hindu majority. For the first time Moor is comfortable with his deformed right hand and administers savage beatings to foes, not just obediently, but enthusiastically and with relish.

Following Aurora's death, Moor reconnects with Abraham and allies with him to bring peace to his mother's still tormented soul. Abraham's commercial empire bursts asunder when its illegal underpinnings are uncovered. In a rapid denouement, all of the main characters, except Moor, perish in an orgy of fire bombings that level much of Bombay.

Moor flies to Spain, to search for four of his mother's paintings that survived the conflagration. He was certain that three of the paintings had been stolen by Vasco Miranda, the artist whom Aurora had dismissed from her household fourteen years earlier. Miranda's painting, which Aurora had mocked as commercial fluff, had earned
him a vast fortune and international fame. He used his riches to construct a hideous fortress in the town of Benengeli. There, Moor is taken prisoner and locked up in the tower with a Japanese art conservator, Aoi Ué, kidnapped to remove Miranda's pedestrian over-painting of The Moor's Last Sigh in order to reveal the original portrait of a bare-breasted, young Aurora Zogoiby. Miranda orders his new companion to record his life story in full detail, promising that, like Scheherazade, he will be allowed to live so long as his tales amused his master. When both tasks are complete, Miranda turns his gun on them. Aoi perishers, but Moor is spared when the drug-crazed, blooded gunman's heart explodes as he had long ago predicted it would. Moor flees, nailing sheets of his story to trees and fences across the countryside, coming to rest in the overgrown cemetery which is the opening scene of the novel.

Rushdie returned to the novel in his next offering with *The Ground beneath her Feet* (1999) where he attempted to write an alternative history based on classical mythology. The novel is divided into eighteen chapters and traces the story of Vina Apsara and Ormus Cama who influence and change rock and roll. Their story is told by Umeed 'Rai' Merchant, a photographer who was Ormus' and Vina's childhood friend and who becomes Vina's sometime lover.

In the beginning of the novel, we find Vina Apsara being feted as a guest at Don Angel Cruz's plantation. Accompanying her on the trip is her old friend, the photographer Umeed Rai. An earthquake strikes and a helicopter is sent to rescue Rai and Vina. Anxious to send pictures of the devastation caused by the earthquake, Rai does not accompany Vina despite her pleas for him to go with her. That is the last time he sees Vina. The next chapters proceed as a flashback.

The novel narrates the birth of Ormus Cama, the child of Lady Spenta Cama and Darius Xerxes Cama. His birth is overshadowed by the stillborn birth of his twin brother Gayo. Ormus joins the other pair of twin boys in the family, Khusro and Ardaviraf, also called Cyrus and Virus. Umeed's parents- V.V. Merchant and Ameer Merchant- meet each other when they arrive, separately, to greet the Camas on the birth. When Cyrus tries to kill the constantly singing Ormus he is sent away to boarding school. Ormus ceases to sing after this incident for fourteen years.

The Merchant family is a study in contrasts. V.V. Merchant is fascinated by the history of Bombay and knows all the old stories. Ameer introduces the love of words and word games to her son Umeed. Rai meets Vina on the beach where she is accompanied
by her uncle Piloo Doodhwala, his wife and daughters. The Merchants are related, albeit
distantly, to the Doodhwalas. A week after this meeting Vina turns up at their doorstep
seeking refuge from a murderous Piloo.

Meanwhile, Spenta and her friend Mrs Kalamanja hope that their respective
offspring- Ormus and Persis – marry some day. But their plans are thwarted by the
meeting of Ormus and Vina at a record store. They fall in love and Ormus takes an oath
of celibacy, promising not to touch Vina till her 16th birthday.

On the night of her 16th birthday when she and Ormus are out celebrating, a fierce
fight breaks out between V.V. and Ameer. When Vina returns home she is greeted by a
harangue from Ameer that sends her flying out of the door. The Merchant house burns
down three days later and there is no trace of Vina. She has flown out of the country with
the help of Persis and Mr Kalamanja. The Merchants move into separate apartments in
the same building complex as the Camas. Rai becomes a constant companion to Ormus
who immerses himself in his music. In a public performance he is spotted by Yul Singh
who tries to convince him to travel to the United States to pursue a career in music.
Ormus is too timid to take the plunge.

A parallel story of Cyrus, Ormus’ brother who is sent to boarding school is also
part of the narrative. While there he commits a series of murders and is jailed. He escapes
and makes his way to Bombay where he murders his father. Later Cyrus surrenders at
Tihar jail. After the death of her husband, Lady Spenta moves to England with
Ormus and Virus. Ameer dies of a brain tumour and V.V. hangs himself on the night of
her funeral.
Vina comes looking for Ormus and finds Rai instead. After a brief meeting, she disappears again for a decade. Ormus begins to gain fame with his music when he meets with an accident that leaves him in a coma for three and a half years. Across the world, Vina hears his song on the radio and flies to his bedside. The lovers rekindle their romance but when Ormus asks her to marry him and she refuses, Ormus vows to not consummate their relationship for ten years. After a decade they marry and continue to court success in the music world. Vina seems happy personally and professionally till the earthquake strikes.

The novel moves to present day narrative with both Ormus and Rai trying to come to grips with Vina's demise. One day Rai receives a message from Ormus that states he has found Vina. When he arrives at Ormus' apartment Rai is stunned to see Vina. Only it is not her but a young woman called Mira Celano, a mother of a toddler. Mira and Ormus revive the defunct band and begin to tour to, mixed reactions. Ormus is shot dead by an unknown assailant who is never found. The novel ends on a note of domestic bliss with Rai, the narrator of the story finding some semblance of domestic bliss with Mira and her daughter.

The next novel was *Fury* (2001). Again the use of mythology, in this case, the three Furies is evident. The book's main protagonist is Malik Solanka, a 55-year-old ex-academic of Indian descent with a serious drinking problem. Solanka, who lives in Britain with his English wife and 4-year old son, is the creator of Little Brain, a highly popular mechanical doll that quotes philosophy.

One night, after a particularly heavy bout of drinking, Solanka suddenly finds himself standing over the sleeping bodies of his wife and son with a carving knife in his
hand. Confused and alarmed, he decides to leave his family and head to New York where he hopes to escape the inner demons that he believes drove him to almost murder his family.

_Fury_ (2001) contains numerous subplots, including references to a series of murders in which the victims—wealthy young women in New York—are raped and scalped. The disoriented Solanka fears that he may have committed these grisly crimes in his drunken rages. The murders, it turns out, were carried out by the girls' boyfriends.

In the US he is befriended, reviled and persecuted by his own and other people's inner demons. Mila Milo, an incest victim and young Internet entrepreneur, seduces Solanka and then creates a new line of dumbed-down Little Brain dolls. The dolls supposedly embody the contemporary obsession with celebrity and are a huge commercial success.

Another important woman character is Neela Mahendra, who is a ravishing beauty. Neela falls in love with Solanka while she is also politically committed to the Lilliput-Blefuscu national liberation movement, a fictional South Pacific island fighting for independence. Solanka visits the island and is kidnapped by the insurgents. Neela intervenes to secure his release but she is killed in the process. Solanka returns to the US somehow calmed by her martyr-like devotion to the cause and to him.

A collection of essays, _Step Across This Line_ (2002), marked Rushdie's return to non-fiction. His second collection of essays, the book spanned the early years of the Iranian Fatwa to post September 11th. The essays were observations on global culture and
politics as much as they were about his own influences. At the core of his collection of a decade's essays and journalism are pieces recalling the events and insisting on the issues that transformed him from being an author to being a global celebrity.

This book was followed by the novel, *Shalimar the Clown* (2005). It is a political novel, at heart a love story, set against the backdrop of Kashmir. Rushdie concentrates his story on four main characters—Shalimar, Max Ophuls, Boonyi and Ophuls' daughter, India. Rushdie frames this story within geopolitical and contemporary contexts, attempting to tie it in with something much larger. Rushdie focuses on Kashmir, an area of tension since the India-Pakistan partition, and one in which violence has escalated dramatically in recent times.

Shalimar and Boonyi, the girl he is in love with are both from Pachigam, a small but renowned town of entertainers and caterers. They are of different religions, but that poses no problems for their marriage. Shalimar and Boonyi's fairy tale love story sours quickly when Boonyi realises that marrying Shalimar condemns her to a lifetime jail sentence. She has ambitions which cannot find fulfilment in the small town she will be stuck in for the rest of her life. So from that moment on she is on the lookout for a chance to escape.

Opportunity finally comes in the form of Max Ophuls, newly appointed American ambassador to India, who comes to visit Kashmir and is immediately taken by the beautiful dancer, Boonyi. Ophuls was born in Strasbourg, an area that, like Kashmir, has seen a lot of strife. He is a wartime hero who marries another Resistance legend, Peggy Rhodes (known as the Rat or Ratty). Boonyi becomes pregnant, gives birth to a girl who is taken to England by Ophuls’ wife. Boonyi, addicted to drugs and shamed by the affair, returns to Pachigam.
When his wife leaves him for Max Ophuls, Shalimar is blinded by his all consuming obsession to avenge his humiliation. He is thus driven to violence and gets involved in conflicts that have nothing to do with him. Leaving his life and family, Shalimar joins the extremists pretending to believe in their cause, but all the while preparing himself for the ultimate aim of his life, to kill Maximilian Ophuls.

After he murders Boonyi, Shalimar finds a way into the USA. Here he seeks employment as Max Ophuls' driver and kills him in broad daylight, at the doorstep of his daughter, India. Shocked by her father's brutal murder, India travels to Kashmir in search of answers and finds her roots. She also falls in love with a Kashmiri man, Yuvraj. Shalimar is jailed in the USA and upon her return; she targets him not with arrows or knives but with her letters that were full of hatred for him. In the final part of the novel, Shalimar has escaped from prison and makes his way to her house. She waits for him with her bow and arrows ready to kill if necessary.

Salman Rushdie's latest book, *The Enchantress of Florence* (2008) is set in the time of King Akbar and attempts to connect Florence and Fatehpur Sikri. The connecting link between the two cities and epochs is the beautiful princess, Qara Köz, so gorgeous that her uncovered face makes battle-hardened warriors drop to their knees. It is her story that brings about the book's meandering journey. A mysterious yellow-haired man in a multicoloured coat steps off a rented bullock cart and walks into 16th-century Sikri: he speaks excellent Persian, has a stock of conjurer's tricks and claims to be Akbar's uncle. It is the story of Akbar's great-aunt, Qara Köz, which the man (her supposed son) has come to the court to tell. It has, for the first time, as its protagonists, two women, the imaginary Jodha Bai and the beautiful Qara Köz.
The stranger has arrived at Fatehpur Sikri after a journey by sea where he drugs the captain to divest him of the treasures he has collected from his voyages. In it is a missive from the Queen of England to Emperor Akbar. The stranger decides to bear the letter to the Emperor and seek royal patronage. The Emperor lonely in his alienation and his dislike for the obsequiousness that surrounds him, creates an imaginary wife- Jodha Bai- who is the epitome of womanhood.

The stranger takes shelter in a brothel where the main attraction is Mohini, a prostitute so thin that she is referred to as Skeleton. It is Skeleton who prepares the stranger for his royal audience. The stranger, who calls himself Mogor Dell’Amore, reads the letter to him and the Emperor is charmed by his mannerisms. He invites Mogor to his palace. But even as the closeness grows Mogor is put in the dungeon when the sailors of the ship he travelled in arrive and accuse him of the murder of their captain. Mogor now declares that he is Vespucci and claims nothing can harm him, seeing how he is under the spell of the most powerful enchantress of the world. The mad elephant that is ordered to crush him, lifts him up tenderly and places him on his back. This miracle puts Mogor/Vespucci in the Emperor’s favour again.

He begins to narrate his story claiming that his mother was a woman called Anjelica whose brother was the First Mughal Emperor of India, whom she called ‘the Beaver’. When Lord Wormwood attacks their kingdom he demands that Anjelica be given to him as a prize. She is then offered by him to his water carrier to use as he desires but two days later, the water carrier dies and Anjelica is considered to be a sorceress. At last she yields to Wormwood and ten years pass. She once again becomes a spoil of war when Wormwood is defeated by King Ishmael. Angelica is the princess Qara Köz. She is the hidden sister of Princess Khanzada. They are both taken as spoils of war and
when Wormwood frees them, she chooses to stay back with him. Along with her constant companion, the Mirror, she uses her beauty and power to wage and win many a battle of wits. Mogor believes he is the son of the princess but in the end it turns out that he is the Mirror’s son, although the princess and her companion were unaware of it and therefore blameless. The novel ends with Qara Köz returning to Fatehpur Sikri and to Emperor Akbar and surrendering herself to him.

All of Salman Rushdie’s works contain women characters in some role or form and this makes Rushdie an important post modernist writer from the context of feminist writing. Linda Hutcheon in her work, *Circling the Downspout of Empire* (1995) refers to Rushdie as a writer, “who would be categorized by others as either post-colonial or feminist in preference to the label “postmodern.” (150). The reference gives rise to the issue of the representation of women in Rushdie’s novels. Rushdie as a writer brings in global sensibility in an Indian setting in almost all his novels. This amalgamation of Western and Indian thought influences the portrayal of women in his works. Predominantly, his female protagonists are from the Indian subcontinent and thus follow their distinct brand of feminism unique to the Third World context.

The need for Third World feminism arose when feminist scholars from the West viewed women from the Third World as sufferers. To highlight this, Amanda Gouws in her work “Feminist Epistemology and Representation: The Impact of Postmodernity and Post-Colonialism”, quotes Mohanty portraying women “only as victims of underdevelopment, oppressive traditions, illiteracy, poverty and religious fanaticism.” This typecasting led to a rejection of the attempt to typify sisterhood as a common and similar experience across the world.
Mohanty in the book *Third World women and the Politics of Feminism* (1991) summarises third world feminists' writings as follows:

1. the idea of the simultaneity of oppressions as fundamental to the experience of social and political marginality and the grounding of feminist politics in the histories of racism and imperialism; 2. the crucial role of a hegemonic state in circumscribing their/our daily lives and survival struggles; 3. the significance of memory and writing in the creation of oppositional agency; and 4. the differences, conflicts, and contradictions internal to third world women's organisations and communities. (10)

In addition to analysing their own situations, Third World women are articulating powerful critiques of the Eurocentrism of much Western feminism, its amnesia about colonial history and its tendency to reproduce colonial modes of representation. The depiction of a woman as a main character was first seen in Indian writing in English, in Mulk Raj Anand's *The Old Woman and the Cow* (1960). Republished as *Gowri*, this novel is considered a landmark on many fronts. One sees the main protagonist transform from being meek and submitted to her fate, to one of strength and self will. One may also consider RK Narayan's *The Painter of Signs* (1976), where he introduces Daisy, a liberated woman into the little town of Malgudi, and the novel follows the consequences of her presence.

Many Indian women novelists have explored female subjectivity in order to establish an identity that is not imposed by a patriarchal society. Thus, the theme of growing up from childhood to womanhood, that is, the *Bildungsroman*, is a recurrent
strategy. Santha Rama Rau's *Remember the House* (1956), Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's first novel *To Whom She Will* (1955) and her later *Heat and Dust* (1975) which was awarded the Booker Prize, and Kamala Markandaya's *Two Virgins* (1973) are good examples. Sex is implied in these novels, but depicted more explicitly in *Socialite Evenings* (1989) by Shobha De, in which she describes the exotic sex lives of the high society in Mumbai.

The image of the New Woman and her struggle for an identity needs support structures outside the family to enable women to survive. Nayantara Sahgal uses this theme as the nucleus of *Rich like Us* (1986). Other novels, such as Rama Mehta's *Inside the Haveli* (1977), look more towards issues of traditional Indian culture, particularly the debate on female education. Another example of the western educated female protagonist's quest for her cultural roots is Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night* (1992).

A number of Indian women novelists made their debut in the 1990s, producing novels which revealed the true state of Indian society and its treatment of women. These writers were born after Indian independence, and the English language does not have colonial associations for them. Their work is marked by an impressive feel for the language, and an authentic presentation of contemporary India, with all its regional variations. They generally write about the urban middle class, the stratum of society they know best.

Anita Desai, in her psychological novels, presents the image of a suffering woman preoccupied with her inner world, her sulking frustration and the storm within: the existential predicament of a woman in a male dominated society. Through such
characters, she makes a plea for a better way of life for women. Her novels have Indians as central characters, and she alternates between female-centered and male-centered narrative.

As early as 1894 in *Kamala*, Krupabai Satthianadhan explored the cultural clash suffered by a Hindu woman who is given a western education in India, and the experience of being caught between two cultures has remained a prominent theme in writing by Indian woman.

The Hindu moral code known as *The Laws of Manu* denies woman an existence apart from that of her husband or his family, and since the publication of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s *Rajmohan’s Wife* (1864) a significant number of authors have portrayed Indian women as long-suffering wives and mothers silenced by patriarchy. The ideal of the traditional, oppressed woman persisted in a culture permeated by religious images of virtuous goddesses devoted to their husbands, the Hindu goddesses Sita and Savitri serving as powerful cultural ideals for women. In mythical terms, the dominant feminine prototype is the chaste, patient, self-denying wife, Sita, supported by other figures such as Savitri, Draupadi and Gandhari. When looking at these narratives silence/speech can be a useful guide to interpreting women’s responses to patriarchal hegemony. Silence is a symbol of oppression, a characteristic of the subaltern condition, while speech signifies self-expression and liberation.

The image of women in fiction has undergone a change during the last four decades. Women writers have moved away from traditional portrayals of enduring, self-sacrificing women toward conflicted female characters searching for identity, no
longer characterized and defined simply in terms of their victim status. In contrast to earlier novels, female characters from the 1980s onwards assert themselves and defy marriage and motherhood.

Recent writers depict both the diversity of women and the diversity within each woman, rather than limiting the lives of women to one ideal. The novels emerging in the twenty-first century furnish examples of a whole range of attitudes towards the imposition of tradition, some offering an analysis of the family structure and the caste system as the key elements of patriarchal social organization. They also re-interpret mythology by using new symbols and subverting the canonic versions. The work of Indian writers is thus significant in making society aware of women's demands, and in providing a medium for self-expression and, thus, re-writing the History of India.

The average Indian woman of today is a far cry from her Vedic ancestors, the Nari, the Prakriti, the graceful half of the Ardhanariseswara, the winsome Parvati, the glowing Usha, the awe inspiring Mother Kali. The women are now beginning to stir out of their placid stoicism and the women in the novel often serve as the symbol of the seething discontent raging within the heart of the ordinary Indian. She is no longer the paragon of virtue and chastity extolled by poets, priests and philosophers. She is the symbol of the imagination, of sensibility itself. She is the artist's expression of his awareness of the cumulative pressures of social experience. She is no longer the symbol of retreat into personal regression and self-pity but a symbol of growth, purity and development. She provides a fascinating glimpse into a hitherto scarcely known aspect of Indian fictional and social life.
A preliminary study shows that Salman Rushdie has been the subject of study for many scholars. He has been seen as a social reformer, a polemical writer, a voice of the diaspora, a religious writer etc. Despite this, it is observed that women in his writing have not been given due consideration. In fact he has been accused of being a misogynist by feminist critics, for whom Rushdie's depiction of women reveals a hostile attitude towards women. Critics believe that his representations of strong women like Mrs Gandhi in *Midnight's Children* (1981) as the destructive aspect of the Hindu Goddess Kali and that of Mrs Thatcher are demonstrative of his deep resentment for power wielding women. He also shows negative stereotypes in women, be it Uma Sarasvati as a heartless manipulator in *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995) or any of the main women characters like Neela Mahendra and Mila Milo in *Fury* (2001). He believes women to be sexually vulnerable, like Amina Sinai in *Midnight's Children* (1981).

Catherine Cundy, in *Salman Rushdie, Contemporary World Writers* (1997), her study of Rushdie's works, claims that Rushdie resents women as a whole. She concludes that 'Rushdie's self-appointed status as champion of women in the face of religious, political and cultural constraints upon their freedom should not go undetected.' (105)

A research on this criticism would be both timely and relevant given the general view that, in the conception and portrayal of women characters, Salman Rushdie shows a typical Indianess. Rushdie has come in for criticism for portraying women as insignificant beings. This criticism coupled with the fact that Rushdie is a writer with varied sensibilities, experiences and scholarships will make the study an interesting and original attempt. If the woman is not the main character then it must mean that she is devoid of power and has no significant role to play in the progress of the other characters.
The hypothesis of this research is to study the depiction of women in the select works of Salman Rushdie against the backdrop of the abovementioned criticism.

The study concentrates more on the content than on the stylistic aspects. Since the researcher aims to study women characters in novels, Rushdie's non fiction, children's fiction and science fiction could not be included in the present research. This is to maintain the unity of the theme and the books will be thus treated as secondary sources. The works that have been considered for this research are as follows:

- Midnight's children 1981
- Shame 1983
- The Satanic Verses 1988
- The Moor's last Sigh 1995
- The Ground beneath her feet 1999
- Fury 2001
- Shalimar the Clown 2005
- The Enchantress of Florence 2008

The research methodology used in this study is the inferential method where the novels were read several times and Rushdie's depiction of women was noted down and taken up for analysis and interpretation. One of the primary concerns is to sieve through the works for women-oriented thought and to elucidate, if at all, Rushdie's progress as a writer with feminist sensibilities. Since the novels are narrative in nature, and owing to its
stream of consciousness technique, the interpretations have been made in relation to the context of occurrence. Portrayal of characters has been studied using the psychological, the social and the archetypal approach tracing the story from the vantage point of each character. An in depth study of the texts has been done and inferences are drawn from the textual point of view and to substantiate the view point, references have been quoted from the criticism available.

The research divides the topic of the depiction of women into three main chapters and studies the treatment of women against that backdrop. The research will feature a chapter on the language of the novels and come to an understanding of what purpose it serves.

The researcher proposes to explore the hypothesis against the following categories:-

a. The conventional woman (or the mother)

b. The liberated woman (or the rebel)

c. The sex object woman

The categories lead to the scope of the study being broadly delineated under the following heads.

i. Introduction

ii. The Mother

iii. The Rebel

iv. The Beauty and Sex Object

v. Language and Style

vi. Summation
All the chapters are based in entirety, on the books taken for the research. The sources for the rest of the study are from secondary sources—textual analysis and criticism.

In Chapter One- The Introduction, the researcher has traced the origin the English novel in India. The three waves of writing are analysed and the concepts of post modernism and post colonialism have been highlighted. There is a brief introduction to today’s writers and to Salman Rushdie. His life and works and his style have also been discussed. There is an analysis of writers who feature women as characters of strength. An outline of the research work has also been given.

In Chapter Two- The Mother, the researcher aims to analyse what motherhood means in the works. It would mainly be a discussion on the aspects of motherhood that is encountered in the texts and the prevalence and importance of the same. For this, the concept of motherhood has been divided into the ‘soft’, maternal, power- indifferent mother and the aggressive matriarch, who is power- wielding. 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.

The Third Chapter- The Rebel, shall contain a detailed discussion about revolt by women characters in the roles and beyond the roles they play. 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.
Women occupy many roles in the novels and in this chapter; five aspects of these roles will be discussed:

Women fight against their sex.

Women fight against society.

Women carve their own identity.

Women rebel in, not against, the traditional roles they occupy.

Women save men

The Fourth Chapter- The Beauty and Sex Object, will comprise of 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. The characters are argued against these main ideas:

Sex as Incest

Sex as Shame

Beauty as Identity

The Fifth Chapter- Language and Style, will deal with the nuances of Rushdie's use of language and what he tries to convey with it as a vehicle. The chapter will focus on the various stylistics he uses to create his work and on magic realism as well.
The Sixth Chapter- Summation, will discuss the findings of the present research and suggest further research ideas.

Rushdie's uncanny insight into the Indian socio-political and cultural scene does indicate his Indian heritage but his depiction of women in his works implies a western influence. As Aijaz Ahmad in In Theory (1992) says, "living in the contemporary milieu of the British Left, he has not remained untouched by certain kinds of feminism; and he is clearly aware, and quite capable of effective narrativization, of many kinds of women's oppression in our societies."(64).But whether Rushdie's narratives succeed in acknowledging and promoting the efforts made against these oppression remains to be seen.

Salman Rushdie is one of the most powerful voices of our time. He is especially important because through his work, he raises unsettling, often disquieting questions about identity and loyalty. In a world and a time where even the sureties of faith, of religion, of science and of literary value often come under the scanner, his is a much needed voice. In a time when women's rights and the emancipation of women is not mere theory, it is pertinent that we see them walk out of the pages of novels and into real life.

In the next chapter, the aspect of motherhood is taken up and discussed against the power it bestows on the woman and her position therein.