CHAPTER -1

INTRICACIES OF POSTCOLONIAL IDENTITY: LOCATING RUSHDOIE IN INDIAN ENGLISH FICTION
It may be that writers in my position, exiles or émigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge—which gives rise to profound uncertainties—that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind.

(Imaginary Homelands 10)
The Indian English writing is a representation of a consciousness that emerged prima-facie from a confrontation between tradition and modernity and, from a combined representation of the sociohistorical process of colonization and decolonization. It includes a metaphysical process of identity formation—the cultural and ideological confrontation and synthesis of the East and the West. At the heart of our understanding of 'identity', which is a multi-accentual concept, lies a growing consciousness that emerges from an interaction between tradition and modernity, the dialectic of the global and the local, the tension between existential anxiety and ontological security. The global and the local intersect in very complex ways and selfhood or identity is 'reconstructed' in reflexive relation to the institutional transformations. The postmodern culture, which accentuates institutionalized modernity, globalization and transgression of boundaries of every kind, ushers in a culture of real vitality and a paradigm of networking and becoming. Within the semantic instability of postcoloniality, modern identity is continually presented with doubtful scenarios under difficult choices that at some level are between several possible worlds. It is against this historical and psychological process of a cultural and ideological confrontation and synthesis that one would better appreciate the formation of a provisional identity.

Living in a post-traditional world with partial and provisional identity, in fact, has become an inevitable necessity as well as a big challenge since under the endemic changes identity itself has become a real problem. Tradition, which was used as a 'whale's belly or rather a counterpoint to unsettling features of
the earlier phases of modernity, has now become much less fixed and secured. The consequences of late modernism involve in the gradual erosion of traditional forms of lifestyle, customs, beliefs and cherished assumptions across generations. The profusion of spaces and the permeability of boundaries never permit the subscription of the old idea of a 'home' as a cosy comfortable place nor a perfectible, coherent and 'unified' identity anymore. Now all identities are 'fluid' and 'fractured'; the essentialist notions of identity have given in to the new idea of dispersion and hybridization of identities in the late modern world. In other words, the postmodernist cultural experience has put the question of identity in a speculative space for redefining the self not in terms of the loss of home or culture but the abundance or profusion of them through networking and rediscovering the ways in which a 'home' or a 'wholeness' is constructed.

Amidst the dynamics of a rapidly changing world where identities are no longer sacred or secure but are constantly distorted and simultaneously reconstructed, it is really interesting to see the peculiar ways the politics of identity grapple with the huge proliferation of particularism that seem to authenticate personal stories and emphasize collective, communal experiences. A seemingly defiant authenticity— not necessarily progressive— is reconstructed around a shared communal past to oppose the dominance of universalism. Notwithstanding the dislocations and fractures of present culture, various resistant identities seem to emanate, seeking to redraw maps of reality by networking solidarities across genders, classes and cultures.

If chaos is the law of nature, order has all along been the dream of man: controlling and 'recording' human experiences are part of man's 'dreaming self', which give some kind of meaning to the otherwise evasive nature of reality. Thus in the reconstruction of meaning and maintenance of identity, an act which is not unessentially an act of love itself, the role of narrative becomes paramount.
For, by telling stories perpetually about self and setting, by making a sense of possibilities of the past, present and future, one can reflexively produce a more or less coherent sense of an otherwise ‘fractured’ identity. In the face of a sweeping globalizing trend of modernity, which has forced upon a kind of partial and provisional identities, any artistic maneuver that seeks reconstruction or redescription of identity to give us an alternative version of truth or reality is surely not an unwelcomeable change.

The conscious act of ‘redescribing’ the world in terms of connectivities is, therefore, an act of faith that narrative is so closely associated with, for narrative is one of the most essential constituents of one’s understanding of reality. One is often surrounded by most varied forms of narrative; each of them links to one or some of the several aspects of reality. The novel is only a particular form of narrative that reflects the problematic of correspondence between the literary work and the reality it tries to represent. It is very much capable of granting some insights, observes Michel Butor, for one’s "special understanding of life and reality". In other words, as man tries to create the world in accordance with his needs, so does the novel ‘create’ and ‘recreate’ reality to fit into the need of the moment and metaphor.

But to create reality and relate it to the variously generated identities in an age of intensive social and cultural change is not that easy. It poses a crisis of correspondence between different identities as well as a crisis of representation since the postmodern culture has been increasingly identified with a detachment of the signifier and the signified, image from truth, and representation from reality. In this phase of extreme self-reflexiveness, literature no longer can perform the simplistic function of reflecting an all too obvious pattern of ‘objective reality’; what characterizes our present reality is that ‘chaos’ is the most likely answer. Moreover, the novel today is no longer read as merely
a unique aesthetic entity but as a 'form' that tries to impose certain structures on our inchoate experiences. It opens door for the fictional self-discovery of our own times that might go to the point of staging a hoax. The novel and the novelist—both skeptic and anarchist—are engaged today in an unceasing quest for recreating reality and relating to us how reality appears or might appear.

The novel by now may appear a traditional genre, but it is and always has been different in every age. Its sense and sensibilities change with history and its own environment like all knowledges do. The novelist’s sensibility does not grow in a vacuum, rather it often gets moulded by the immediate physical environment as well as the currents and cross-currents of ideas, values, attitudes, concepts and concerns prevailing in and around that environment. In other words, the novel builds its ideological superstructure through its story and discourse which its material historical basis; it is greatly altered by major historical events, intellectual positions, shifts in socio-political, ideological, cultural and gender relations. One finds the novel is always engaged in a fight for the fictional and discovering imagination amongst the ideas and emphases of its own time.

If one is rather interested in the role of narrative in producing history by establishing a community or a group identity, or one believes that a narrative is a retextualization of history, one can look at either of the two basic elements of narrative—its story or its discourse. In the first case, the sequence of events might help to recreate a community by functioning as their history. This role of narrative is relatively familiar: the creation of a community or a nation involves the positing of a history, and to be a member of this group identity is precisely to take certain stories, as in some sense, the stories of the past. The ‘whatness’ of a work cannot possibly exclude what Rene Wellek calls ‘concerns’ and ‘anxieties’ of the social reconstruction, for they are not extraneous moral values but are integrative functions of the literary imagination. On the other hand, the
role of discourse is less familiar, though possibly more important. Narrative discourse, particularly its structure of address, posits an imagined community which is much like a nation, in that it consists of people who have no idea of each other’s actual existence but who are constituted as a community or nation by the discursive structures of the text. If a narrative is a retextualization of history, admittedly, then, the structural principle of a narrative is to superimpose a form of desire on history, allowing it to be the controlling or guiding spirit.

In his remarkable book *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson looks at the way in which the realistic narratives construct, by the presuppositions of the narrative discourse, an imagined community of people who do not know each other but are very much brought together in a novelistic space. The realistic novel posits continuity between space and time of the novel and that of the community of readers in such a way as to pull them into the community map. It gives a hypnotic confirmation of the solidity of a single community, embracing characters, author and readers, moving onwards through calendrical time. While Charles Dickens or R K Narayan or Mulk Raj Anand might have no idea of their readers’ individual identities, they wrote to them with ironical intimacy as though they formed a community and were indeed in relation with each other. Such imagined communities as are posited by the discourse of narrative are in fact the stuff of nationality, for a nation too is a group of people who do not know each other but have the axiomatic confidence in the existence of many other addresses of communal narratives.

It is true that Anderson pays much attention to those who are included in the Creole nation so much so that he fails to consider those who are excluded or marginalized altogether. The fraternity representing national identity is actually forged by working through and incorporating only the existing hierarchies of gender, class and culture. It does not explicitly include the marginalized ones.
as equal, although it always implicitly claims to represent them. Moreover, the
forms of marginalisation differ during the forging of variously generated national identities: particular sections of the people may either be openly excluded from the community or be invited to participate identity formation in terms that enforce their subordination.

In fact, identity as a major category of political debate has emerged only since the 1960s; the prime locus of identity politics is the USA, a country made up of diverse ethnic communities. But the issue of marginalisation that affect the process of identity formation, especially in case of the emerging nations, are not only intricately connected with cultural and political realities but also with the violent, traumatic, often messy unforming of other kinds of communities. Therefore, if in Anderson’s view nation-states have to forge a sense of community between otherwise unconnected people, in case of developing nations otherwise connected people have to learn to imagine and, believe in, a sense of difference—the ‘other’. While national identities may be formed by invoking or even creating the idea of a collective national memory through careful selection from multiple histories, it is also important to trace those stories of one’s cultural identity from quite different set of traditions and ancestors than only those enshrined either by communalists or by the trumpeters of the Nation. Producing alternative narratives of common cause and shared experiences is therefore of greater value than the stereotypes of literary realism.

For stereotypes, whether positive or negative, are opposite to humanity and reality. The new experimental avant-garde, the New Novel, which emerged after World War-2, has dispensed with much of the Old Novel’s stereotypes that Henry James often calls ‘solidarity of specification’. Coming from the aesthetics of an essentially bourgeois-nationalistic-humanist tradition, the Old Novel had used realism as a discourse to see diverse human experiences as

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unified wholes. Registering its protest against such canonizing design of maintaining status quo, the New Novel, on the other hand, reinvested realism to reconstruct identity as sum of all social circumstances. It ironized narrative, pluralized awareness, and multiplied perceptions in the modern world that has become a place of random history and chaotic time chiefly because of the confrontation of tradition and modernity.

Rapid industrialization since the early 1940s spurred the modern phenomenon of cultural displacement and chaotic history in unabated ways. The increasing homogenization of metropolitan culture, besides breaking down local and communal cultures, seems to have foregrounded questions on migrancy, identity, history, sociology, linguistics, culture studies and so many. Postmodernist literature especially of the Third World has taken up these issues on cultural and metaphysical dislocation partly because most of the living literary luminaries of our time are modern migrants who have been writing from within a participatory position of culture formation and partly because of the Third Worldist canonizing principle. The terminology as such refers to the intellectuals and writers who have crossed their national frontiers and have been living and writing abroad. The problem and perspectives related to the phenomenon of migration are, therefore, very interesting and pertinent to the ultimate analysis of the 'diasporal dream'— the quest for a 'home' and a 'wholeness'— in the postcolonial fictions of the new generation Indian English writers.

In the aftermath of the War, more precisely during 1960s, there followed an unstoppable dynamic of decolonization throughout Asia, Africa, South America and Europe. Although it was no uniform matter altogether, the transfer of power from colonial to postcolonial state of the national bourgeois brought bewildering experiences, giving an increasing awareness of the people's participation in 'alternative cultures'. Within England itself, for instance,
decolonization was in full swing: in the wake of massive labour recruitment, large number of people from Asian, African and Latin American countries migrated to England, constituting a mélange of cultures within the imperial culture of Britain. These emigrants contributed enormously for England's industrial growth and economic rise; besides, they constituted a complex expression of racial identity within 'established' Britain.

The post-war British novel, however, failed miserably to recognize the contributions made by these immigrants in the socio-cultural life of England. The juggernaut of British fiction continued to roll on the same old track of the old, secular, insular stultification of English narrative tradition. It is really surprising to note how British novelists could ignore what actually was the essence of England right then—it was a colonizing spirit with little to colonize but itself. In fact, the omission or non-inclusion of cultures of those immigrants, which is a form of cultural politics, deprived English novelists one of the most graphic occasions and opportunities needed not only for overcoming their constipated cleverness but also for partaking in any theory of a British alternative culture.

Why Britain alone rather the imperial West as a whole, notwithstanding an undercurrent of its literary socialism, remained largely a racial and ethnic image of the former empire like Orwell's 'White English'. While the western novelists preferred to stay, to quote Paranjape's phrase 'inside the whale'—insulated from major shocks and squabbles of postcolonial scenario, novelists from the decolorized nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America felt, on the other hand, an urgent need to tackle their chaotic history in order to draw new and better maps of global reality. Thus, the emergence of the Third World literature that flourished in the 1960s and early '70s may be seen primarily as a counter-canon to the western literary tradition, which emphasizes on civilizational difference. As against the western literary canon of bringing the heterogeneous
realities of the Third World countries under a false, homogeneous category of ‘Commonwealth literature’, the counter-canon seems to be composed of documents telling the rich history of radical oppositional cultural productions and practices in the former colonies. It produces novels based on the principles of eclecticism—taking what seems fitting and leaving the rest—and neo-colonialism, seeking imaginative affinities amongst hotchpotch traditions that include in and percolate through the writer’s cultural roots.

Consequently the struggle between the western and the non-western description of life and reality appears at once internal as well as external. Quite inexplicable as it were, not many western/white novelists of the 1960s and ‘70s could concern themselves with such burning issues of public concern as colonialism, neo-colonialism, poverty, political chicanery, racial politics, religious segregation, sexual and class exploitation and so on and so forth. While two thirds of people around the globe were being exploited or dehumanized, the First World writers failed to see what was actually worth looking at, what was actually going on all around them. Unfortunately even today they never seem precisely doing that—the reconstruction of the sociohistorical reality; rather they have engaged themselves in writing all about the angst-ridden suburban characters and their spiritual quest for a short-cut solution that perhaps lies in narcissism of love making.

In an apparent reaction against the western writing practice that excludes ‘politics’ from fiction or that treats public affairs simply as peripheral, the Third World writers often write books that are about the world, about their shared sociocultural experiences. Thus Marquez, Naipaul, Derek Walcott, Italo Calvino, Vargas Liosa, Toni Morrison, Bharati Mukherjee, Salman Rushdie and many such novelists, who share a common unstable history of decolonization and cultural hybridization, who hover between borders and feel real social changes,
do try to grasp the interrelations of a set of different determinations—sociopolitical, ideological and aesthetic. These writers often try to foreground ‘politics’ by providing profound insights into the political forces that shape emerging societies and new identities. This is a matter not only of explanation but also of ethics in a world of cultural differences and shared spaces. It is true that the Third Worldist literature has given prima-facie importance on the generic issue of cultural/metaphysical dislocation partly because of its own canonizing principles and partly because most of the present literary luminaries are modern migrants who have crossed the seas and changed their skies. These migrant writers, despite their variegated difference seem to share a harsh questioning of radical decolonization theory, a parodic attitude towards the Janus-headed ‘national culture’, a manipulation of imperial imagery and local legends as means of politicizing current events. Thus, the Third World literature appears a kind of ‘resistance literature’, which is not neutral, safe, or devoid of ideology, but has a vast political, cultural and emotional sweep over the ultimate analysis of the ‘diasporal dream’ that seeks to forge an integrated identity.

Although it is only the privileged cosmopolitans like Naipaul, Liosa, Carlos Fuentes, Bharati Mukherjee or Salman Rushdie who, because of their avowed participation in a polyglot culture, have been readily accepted by the western readers as the real interpreters and authentic voices, what has actually made the Third World novel so interesting to the first World audience is, Timothy Brenan observes, the foregrounding of politics—the interplay of race and class, imperialism and neocolonialism, metropolis and periphery, tradition and modernity and so on. The quest motif in the Third World writings is all-inclusive: they narrate individual quests by excavating piles of rich national and cultural history as a source of memory and hope. One finds in these writings not only a genuine endeavour to capture a new world reality that has a definite social basis in transculturation but also an increasing eagerness to fulfil the paradoxical
expectations of a metropolitan public. The Third World writers try to satisfy, on
the one hand, the unwritten guidelines of metropolitan taste by supplying the
market demand for novelty either as exotica, political expose or literary trickery.
On the other hand, they deviate from these guidelines by being deliberately
pedagogic or prescriptive by adopting a synthesized narratology, by mythicizing
history without processing the events in the manner of the media, but they also
tend to provide the reader information as if it were already known or shared as
mass experience.

The search for synthesized forms of narrative that could possibly tackle
the chaotic history of modern times gives the Third World novelists a new mode
of expression that seems to be away from realism but toward a category widely
known as ‘Non-fiction’. While the events of a realistic novel have no existence
independent of the narrative discourse, the problem accrues if one turns to the
Non-fiction Novel or the historical narrative. The problem lies in the facts that
while those narratives presume the independent existence of the events they
report, there is no way to disengage the events in their nudity from the teleology
of their points of view. The Non-fiction Novel is based on contemporary political
events, trying to understand, then describe, and then make credible much of
contemporary reality. The Third World novelists have relegated this paradoxical
situation with considerable success; they have been able to do this by refusing
to take art seriously in the old sense and by using art as a vehicle for exploding
its traditional pretensions to show the vulnerability and tenuousness of language
and art in a less soberly rationalistic mode of consciousness, one that is more
congenial to myth, tribal culture or visionary experience. While standing close
to the art of journalistic and yet differing from its method and function, these
writers have better ways to narrate what has happened to a circle of listeners
who share with them a common chaotic history. Their art of telling stupefies,
sickens, infuriates, and finally embarrasses the listener’s own imagination. But
it is always relishing seeing the storytellers spinning a mischievous candour around the reconstructed story that is not only provocative but also scrupulous and susceptible to historical facts.

The cultural experience in the emerging societies of the Third World, which tells that the damage to reality is at least as much political as historical, forms a literary sensibility of general nature. The shifting strands of skepticism and subversion have enabled the Third World writers to hold reality up to a constant unremitting interrogation. This in reality has created a real scaffold for the writers who seek to probe deep into modern existence not as a rationally classifiable entity but primarily as a fluid, seamless process. Moreover, it has provided a unique opportunity to the expatriate writers who decide to rewrite their ‘hyphenated identities’ in a palimpsest; for postmodernism poses no hindrance whatsoever from stealing or synthesizing motifs and narrative structures from the whole historical past of human civilization. As such, the synthesis of ‘magic realism’— a narrative mode of holding ‘history’ and ‘fabulation’ together, and ‘oral narrative’— a narrative of recollecting memories of a shared cultural past—has been increasingly identified with a genuine Third World consciousness. For not only does it emanate from a deep revolt against cultural hegemony, political chicanery and a deep disappointment in the face of erosion of cultural roots, but from the exigencies for spontaneity in narration, fidelity to fictional reality and novelty in artistic expression.

Ex plan? Magic Realism.
Despite being the largest and most important single colony in the history of European imperialism, India had been ignored and undersized for too long by the West in its renewed interest in the Third World literature. Even no one in the remarkable history of Indo-English prose writing—a tradition that includes great stylists like Tagore, Nehru, Anand, Raja Rao, Kamala Markandaya or R K Narayan—had been very successful in reinvesting the interest and imagination of the western reading populace in India. The major reason for this historical silence seems to be primarily a cultural one; the western conceptions of what the novel requires put it into a cultural cordon. The West’s claim for classical nineteenth-century novel has rested largely on mimetic assumptions going back to Aristotle’s conception of literary plot. Moreover, because the novel defined literary reality when the imperial West intervened in the colonized East, Indian narrative was thought, primarily on political consideration, to be of inferior quality having nothing to offer to the western novelists or novel readers. Edward Said in his classic study Orientalism exposes this cynical attitude behind such false portraiture as basically an extension of and justification for cultural imperialism; the racial superiority of the White. Rushdie, likewise, criticizes the imperial West’s ghetto mentality that creates a chimeric category of ‘commonwealth literature’. He accuses in his essay “Commonwealth Literature Does Not Exist” that the category not only leads to excessively narrow reading of Indian narrative but also distracts attention from what actually is worth looking at, what actually is going on at the levels of geo-political experience and artistic experiments.

However, in the wake of the rise of the Non-fiction Novel that straddles the boundary between fiction and reportage and el realismo magical that expresses a genuinely Third World consciousness, the Indian English novel seems to pushing out frontiers of the possible to crave its own distinct patterns.

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and practices. Of late, an efflorescence of bumper writing, representing sense and sensibility of the sociopolitical realities of the Indian subcontinent and the psyche of national identity has cropped up. Situated in sociohistoricity and postcoloniality, these Indian English novels seem to have found their own identity on their own merit. Especially since the 1980s, there has been a real excitement about this genre all over Europe and America: the old colony appears to have shot its way into the western consciousness primarily due to its broad cultural context—its contradictory versions of unbound aspirations and belated frustrations, half-accurate memories, equivocations, and provisional answers to a mixed bag of cultural experience.

Having its roots in the Mahabharata, the new Indian English novel has all along become non-mimetic in presumption; there is no real plot, no real sense of character and, no serious attention to beginning, middle and end. But there has always been a critical awareness of the way in which cultural groups, as a way of constructing an identity, produce fantasies of a lurid past, and ask what sort of signifying purposes determine these connectivities. Having its roots in the sociohistorical process of colonization and decolonization, what has been the most interesting aspect of post-independence Indian literature is the ‘cosmopolitan experience’ and the way it has established connectivity amongst the wider experiences of the world. There has been an obvious intimate artistic aspect attached to the sociopolitical experience of cosmopolitanism: the new generation Indian English writers increasingly believe that to be Indian does not mean to remain ‘inside the whale’ or to remain cut off from outside influences. Like India itself becoming a big-city culture, these writers never hesitate to openly celebrate the plural and partial nature of their cultural hybridity. By virtue of their global awareness the new pedigree never think of English as being irredeemably tainted by its colonial provenance. They seek to forge an integrated
identity of their own in an imaginary territory that is sovereign and owes no particular allegiance to any capital. They partake in this aesthetic of irreverence by celebrating their inside-outside position—the ability to see at once from inside and out is a great thing, a piece of good fortune which the indigenous writer cannot enjoy. It is an enabling experience that shows new ways in which migrant writers can cope with the demands of their flitting experience. Corroborating this standpoint, Rushdie remarks in *Imaginary Homelands*: “If you are an extra-territorial writer, you select a pedigree for yourself, a literary family... We are inescapably international writers at a time when the novel has never been a more international form... cross-pollination is everywhere” (20).

Situated in sociohistoricity and postcoloniality, the new generation Indian English novels of the 1980s represent India in a much broader cultural context of human civilization, showing a marked advancement over the earlier phases. The unequivocal credit of being the trendsetter of uninhibited experimentation upon story, innovative narrative techniques and usage of English goes to Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*, which has achieved a synthesis of autobiography and national history, political allegory and non-fiction, myth and fantasy, thwarting any easy categorization. Published some twenty-five years ago, this epoch-making novel still continues to remain the seminal force of influence for the writers trying for new modes of communication today. Commenting upon the influence of this epic-novel, William Walsh observes in one of his essays:

> Combining the elements of magic and fantasy, the grimmest realism, extravagant farce, multi-mirrored analogy and a potent symbolic structure, Salman Rushdie has captured the astonishing energy of the novel unprecedented in scope, manner and
achievement in the hundred fifty year tradition of the
Indian novel in English.

What Walsh finds awfully beautiful about this book is its knack for
rearranging history, seeking new areas of life and reality to tell that reality is
evasive and multi-dimensional and there is no single way of apprehending life’s
realities. The complex narrative technique tried in this novel is, as the author
admits in an interview to Dillip Fernandez, basically due to his realization that
the experience in the Indian subcontinent is so complex, multitudinous and
unstable that its representation must be subjective, interrogative, experimental
and confessional, blurring any possibility of objective reality. Furthermore, what
one notices here is that the novelist never appears defensive or apologetic at
any point about his innovative use of English; rather he uses it very confidently
just as in case of any other Indian language, or as one of the tools to grapple
with identity that cultural displacement has forced upon him. This kind of shift in
interest and attitude giving Indian English novel a new sense and sensibility, in
fact, has been the ultimate consequence of India’s cultural odyssey from the
precolonial to the postcolonial identity.

The concern with ‘identity’, in fact, has often been one of the commonest
yet very crucial themes all along the hundred and fifty year tradition of the
Indian English writing, it is so because it has been primarily a product of two
distinct worlds— the Indian and the Western. In different strands of Indian English
novel, whether utilitarian exercise, historical romance or realistic narrative,
 novelists from the earliest generation down to the present— from Bankim
Chandra to Narayan and still to Rushdie or Arundhati Roy— have consciously
grappled with the question of identity, its formation, appreciation and
representation. They all have their own discovery of India too, trying to come to
terms with what it means to be an Indian. On close observation, however, one
can see a subtle attitudinal as well as operational shift in so far as the handling of the vexed question of identity is concerned.

In fact, the first generation Indian English novelists, who sprang up as a liberal bourgeoisie class as a result of the economic, intellectual, and cultural forces unleashed by British colonialism, could manage to confront the problem of identity with an amazing sense of élan and ease. As this elite class was the first to absorb values of western humanism and liberal individualism, they became opposed to the traditional orthodox values of the feudal class. Their newly acquired identity did not always fit in with the old one, but they tried to blend both—initially clumsily and gradually with greater finesse. It was not only a process of adjustment at mechanical and physical levels but also at intellectual level with fine artistic sensibility. Their awareness of a cultural divide—that Indians were different from the British—made them conscious of the creative advantage of marginality that lie in the curious understanding of their racial/national history and in rewriting the accounts from an indigenous point of view. The newly-awakened interest in a shared cultural history and racial identity, which had its roots in a nascent nationalism that in its turn owe to the understanding of an inherent cultural divide, made them aware of writing fiction based on history, a setting remote in time not only to strike a common cultural identity but for a suspension of disbelief. They understood, as Meenakshi Mukherjee claims in her *Novel & Society*, “The primary purpose of historical fiction is not the accurate recording of facts but the evocation of an atmosphere larger than that of the ordinary daily life.” Thus, whether it was novel written for didactic or nationalistic purpose or history written as novel to approximate Indian reality, the early generation novelists could perceive the artistic possibility of altering history by bringing the two opposed tendencies—tradition and modernity, real and ideal, East and West, historical and supernatural—to suit their situation and purpose. Furthermore, they were conscious of the importance of bilingualism.
that could be used for reaching out to a double audience, the elite native on the one hand and the mass western reading populace on the other.

But while the early novelists would begin their quest from within the cocoon of a safe, solemn and staid tradition featuring individual quest for permanent solution or meaning in life, the new generation novelists tend to pull all traditionally settled certitudes about identity to test and write family sagas featuring uprooted, peripheral individuals, often belonging to minority communities, who try to probe the centrality of their partial, peripheral identity. The pre-independence Indian English novel has its immediate context in such major themes as nationalism, Gandhian ideology, independence struggle, social issues like casteism, poverty and the East-West conflict where as in the post-independence era the dramatic shift is to the colonial period, reexamination of imperialism, increasing hybridization of Indian society, metropolitanism and psychoanalysis of national identity.

The sincerity and intensity with which K S Venkataramani, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao examine sociohistorical realities of the 1930s, especially the repelling and horrifying spaces that define the destiny of the wretched and the social outcast in colonial India, not only challenge the moral consciousness of the upper caste Hindus but also suggest sociohistoric metaphors of enslavement, subjugation and marginalisation. They seek a sort of confirmation that one needs a kind of solidarity with other people in society to forge a common identity. This compulsion, this forced homogeneity demands the novelists to be securely fastened not only to an Indian story but to an Indian setting also. One always finds in their works, written in the tradition of ‘dirty realism’ or the French ‘miserabilisme’, the notion of existential suffering tinged with an Indian philosophical overtone; one cannot possibly read R K Narayan without having such a feeling. Not to speak of the growing influence of western humanism or liberalism, one cannot miss the radical change that was taking place within the
Indo-Anglian novel of the ‘30s. It went abroad to become increasingly international: Anand, Narayan and Raja Rao were not only writing allegory of the Indian reality in the form of impoverished and alienated self, they were also waging epic struggle to reach out to the western readers by providing them exotic hot cakes. Such a cross-cultural shift supported by burgeoning professionalism gave them a renewed sense of confidence to work upon English and use it as a richly tasteful creative medium. Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura*, regarded as a minor classic today, stands testimony to such experimentation with new narrative technique and linguistic innovation; at least the revenge of history was back by making the colonized slouching to colonize the colonizer.

Dhan Gopal Mukherjee’s *My Brother’s Face* (1925), one of the best novels that were built upon the theme of an individualistic quest for a personal meaning in life dramatizes the narrator’s intellectual anguish over confusion of values arising from his Indo-European duality. The narrator, much like his creator, returns to India after twelve years in Europe and America and, finds himself utterly confused by the changing faces of India where the best of the seventeenth-century is at war with the best of the twentieth. His sympathies are clearly with the Timeless India which, to his utter discomfort and dismay, appears to be dismantling because of the pressure from variety and complexity of contemporary India that has created a kind of ‘double’. Puzzled and awe-stricken, he prefers to seek the guidance of his spiritual ‘guru’ who, he believes, could provide him solace and certitude in his inward search for a permanent meaning of life. His ultimate realization, however, comes through a distinctive private tone: the sages of the ‘Upanishads’ have answered that the true brother is he who wears the one face dwelling in the thousand faces of all life.

Nevertheless the post-independence era Indian English novelists generally seem to have remained insulated from major shocks and squabbles of the outside world except the partition. The liberal bourgeois class had
undoubtedly identified themselves with popular aspirations during freedom movement, but immediately afterwards retarded to their traditional class position of eliticism and aloofness only to hide themselves, as Makarand Paranjape would say, 'inside the whale'— liberal in outlook but implicitly accepting settled certitudes of the social and political order. At least question on 'politics' did not appear to them matter of any concern, rather the umbilical cord of spiritual nourishment continued to choke all question of common concern. Even a novelist of international repute Sudhin N Ghosh's quartet— *And Gazelles Leaping, Cradle of the Clouds, The Vermilion Boat* and *The Flame of the Forest*— recusantly rebuffed at political questions and were concerned primarily with the spiritual awakening of their narrator-questers. One finds in them Ghosh's leaning towards tradition and uniqueness of Indian civilization but his distraction against variety and modernization. His young hero of *The Flame*, as he is keenly conscious of the hardship and helplessness of the common people, feels lost and terribly-lonely amidst a mélange of cultural confusion; he completely withdraws himself from whatever little public contact he had and joins a 'kirtan' party and sets out for a pilgrimage. One cannot possibly miss out in these novels an unmistakable sympathy of the writers with what could be labeled as three-dimensional characters, vying for universally believable identity based on the of East-West dualism.

Balchandra Rajan's *The Dark Dancer*, on the other hand, portrays the protagonist's search for identity in the post-independence India: it presents the East-West confrontation that Forster encounters in *A Passage to India* through dramatization of the psychological crises of the Cambridge-educated Krishnan whose mind is enriched by European intellectual thought though his heart remains devotedly Indian. The book, moreover, deals with the unfortunate division of the subcontinent and its tragic consequences on the metaphysical level, reminds of Yeats: "Many times man lives and dies / Between his two
entities / That of race and that of soul”. Furthermore, it reminds of the novels of Manohar Malgonkar and Khushwant Singh and the Indian English Novel’s growing engagement with the sociohistorical identity of the nation—a broad cultural framework through which the novels of the 1960s and 1980s carried on their quest-motif. Here one finds a narrative mode that is anti-realist, episodic and historical moving in the direction of the literary genre that straddles chronicle as well as fiction.

But despite enormous economic growth, rock-solid political stability and tremendous sense of well being and self-esteem generated around India’s identity as an emerging world leader in the 1960s, Indian English novel in general could not come out of its oyster to tackle larger issues of socio-political importance. One gets shocked to find Mulk Raj Anand, the most socially committed novelist of the ‘30s, turning more and more inward to produce a philosophical treatise *Seven Ages of a Man*; Narayan closeted and comforted himself in the quaint, private world of Malgudi where things happen only by chance or by accident and nothing ultimately matters in the cosmic flux. Raja Rao, after his narrative success in *Kanthapura*, turned his back to the emerging socio-political realities and remained immersed in Vedantic metaphysics. His hero in *The Serpent and the Rope*, like Dhan Gopal Mukherjee’s angst-ridden introvert protagonist, uses the quest-motif for his spiritual awakening: the hero’s individualistic quest is sought to be resolved through an all-knowing ‘guru’ who is expected to solve his spiritual dilemma beyond all doubts. What is interesting about these and most of other novels such as *The Silver Pilgrimage, A Bend in the Ganges, Voices in the City, The Dark Dancer* or *Shadow from Ladakh* coming out in the 60’s is that they are unequivocally built on a distinctively private tone albeit the fact that all are innovative and experimental in one sense or other. They have protagonists from majority Hindu community who invariably turn to a spiritual guru in search of a personal meaning of life where community
aspiration, national history and other big questions or issues hardly find any real importance. Moreover, in these novels the protagonists' quest never leads into their family history, for they probably take it for granted that home and blood relationship are the surest or unquestionable certitudes that constitute a solid national identity.

The Indian English novelists of the 1960s and ‘70s, nonetheless, sought to explore the artistic significance of archetypal and mythical forms attempting to achieve an expression that was both authentic and modern, that would be close to the contemporary art forms and yet be deeply rooted in the indigenous tradition as well. The search for a discourse like this was already showing in some kind of a tension between the archaic past and the technological present. What one finds is that the Indian thought, though opting for change, was not yet very much prepared to abandon its traditional concern for the transcendent and the timeless. But the trend of desymbolization of the Indian cultural reality was slowly slouching which could be increasingly noticed in the works of younger novelists: the forces of history seemed to uncovering through intercultural writing with an ingenious metaphor that Rushdie coins in *Midnight's Children* as 'Anglepoise light'. Besides destabilizing the secured sense of referentiality and releasing modes of communication from predictability, this metaphor defamiliarizes and suggests a sense of divided sensibility as much as of dichotomy— patria-expatriacy, rural-urban, local-global, nonviolence-brutality, reality-fantasy, Indian-European and so on— to be found in novels like *Azdi, The English Queens, The Apprentice; Inside the Haveli* and *Bye Bye Blackbird*.

The shaping of the new Indian sensibility during late 1970s turned to be an inevitable historical necessity. What is common between the artistic expression and the intellectual firmament of the period seems to be the notion of freedom and unbridled experimentation. The novelists could feel the pressure
for relooking into the nature of narratology not only to experiment with but to readjust and extend these innovations to the peculiarities of modern consciousness. The 70s were one of the most turbulent periods in Indian history: all at once the whole country was jerked out of its ‘inside the whale’ security-veil to stand vis-à-vis the grim realities of national history and, the average Indian’s consciousness was awakened by the close of totalitarianism during the emergency. Moreover, it witnessed an unprecedented phenomenal influx of refugees from the erstwhile East Pakistan that emerged as a new independent country in world map after the Indo-Pak war. While on the one hand the issues related to forced or chosen migration brought forth a trail of socio-cultural and psychological tensions too hard to be mitigated very easily, they reinvested on the other hand human enquiry into several potent questions as morality, religious tolerance, nationhood, and identity. As Viney Kirpal has rightly observed in her edited book, the 1970s were a “gestation period” for the shaping of the new sensibility of a mixed Indian tradition of synthesis, polymorphism where all communal groups including the minorities have an important place.

The way for shaping of the new sensibility of polymorphism or cultural synthesis with uninhibited narrative innovation was in fact shown by G V Desani in his novel All about H. Hatterr way back in 1948. A real class by itself, this funny book is perhaps the first genuine effort after Rabindranath’s Gora, to introduce a half-breed unabashed protagonist to express the comic nature of the quest-motif. The narrator-hero Mr. Hatterr, half European and half Malayalan, ‘fifty-fifty of the species’ adopts a composite name Hindustani-wala Hatterr and journeys through life beyond the confines of class, creed and continent. He passes through the hands of a succession of charlatans and all the wisdom he gains is that life is contrast, and the possible response to it is to accept it with all its contradictions. The dazzling, puzzling, leaping prose style adopted in this book is perhaps the first genuine effort in Indo-English novel to go beyond the
Englishness of the English language. G V Desani—long forgotten as the true maestro of giving Indian English novel a new direction, however, continues to inspire the new generation writers to adopt the theme of mixed Indian identity and uninhibited experimentation in narrative strategy to say that the East-West cultural conflict is out, the awareness of the world as a large home is in; realism and consistent characters, linearity and order are out, fantasy and hyphenated characters, non-linearity and disorder are in.

Consequently, one finds the new novels of the 1980s often reflect unbridled liberty in experimentation in narratology. The controlling temper of the period seems to be a synthesis or what Rushdie identifies in *Midnight's Children* as "chutnification of history": the awareness of the growing internationalization of the world and the theme of a mixed Indian tradition are prima-facie conditions leading to the quest for roots and 'Anglepoise discourse'. Consequently, novels like *In Custody, Days of the Turban, The Memory of Elephants, A Fine Family, Trotter-Nama, Yatra* and others, which are concerned with identity, tend to choose their protagonists from the minority community. They relate the quest-motif of their individual narrator/protagonist to the past of their family and the favorite mode is an extended family saga, interlinking the family-tale with the history of the subcontinent. The unfurling of events provides ample room for rich political allegory; the past making up the present is full of meaningful changes not only in the life of the individual but also that of the nation. This gives certain advantage to the postmodernist novelists who believe that it is a business of theirs to create the past and make it contemporary in order to save memory from corruption of power and politics. For it is memory that can probably give some enduring meaning to man's never-ending quest for identity or that may provide safeguard against cultural amnesia of modern times.

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The new generation Indo-English novelists thus appear to have been busy in rewriting their partial and provisional identity in ‘fictional history’. As against the writing of ‘historical fiction’ that involves the paradox of turning the fluid nature of fiction into clear outline of history, these writers have been writing ‘fiction as history’ which involves turning events into history as they turn historical events into art. The essential pressure for turning into such a sensibility as this comes from the ultimate realization that the writer’s visions are so new and urgent, that the voices are so piquant and pressing and, that the old narrative forms are too rigid and inadequate to sustain the extra pressure of holding the essential doubleness and mysteriousness of human experience, of inventing a ‘home’ and a ‘wholeness’ by connecting grotesque allusions amidst opposing forces of particularism and globalization. One finds in the new Indian novel a great determination to break away from traditional narrative politics and an increasing awareness to regard the world as one big home. Cultural encounters do not shock any more just as it used to do earlier, for characters try to make a home everywhere, recognize hyphens as part of their whole identity.

Moreover, the New Novel seems to have a vast emotional, historical, cultural and political sweep as the characters in them are represented as the sum of all sociocultural circumstances. In writing *Midnight’s Children*, for example, one of Rushdie’s aims seems to be centrally involved with aspects of the most theoretical debates of his time to get over his peripheral identity and, to explore the limits of individuality in a country as big, as strange and as culturally variegated as India. Thus the narrator-hero of the novel Saleem Sinai, when encounters the baffling question “Who what am I?” finds new ways of asserting his identity by handcuffing himself to the subcontinent’s history: “I am the sum total of everything that went before me, of all I have seen done, of everything done-to-me”(457).
Midnight's Children projects the view from within of the new generation Indians. For the narrator-protagonist the quest for identity is not just a search for his parental roots at a personal level but also the search for the validity of the Indo-British legacy in modern India where the great maw of politics consumes all race, religion and culture. The novel projects the problem of cultural juxtaposition in terms of politics and morality, leading the protagonist to seek his identity in terms of connections and places outside the chronological framework of Indo-British history. The novelist finds a story here which not only finds parallel to his own story of multiple identity but also finds a way of telling it; he mixes the fabulous and the historic, fantastic and comically absurd events into socially realistic setting; makes room for anecdotes, tales, essayistic asides, political commentary to 'encapsulate' the enormous multiplicity of India into a central unity in the Western mould. Makarand Paranjape has rightly evaluated the novel's artistic marvel in his essay “Inside and Outside the Whale”:

This momentous book really jolted the very foundation of the Indian English novel. Its energy, its self-indulgence, irresponsibility, disorder and cockiness really shocked the staid form of the Indian English novel....To put it simply, so long the Indian English novel lived inside the whale before this big book! But now all the new novels want, like Midnight's Children, to shriek and kick up a hell of a row. Now, nobody wants to be left behind inside the whale. Everyone wants out. Realism, consistent characters, linearity, order are “out”; non-linearity, fantasy, and disorder are “in”. Yes, “out” is “in”. (221)
Thus it has been widely recognized that the new Indian English novel since the 1980s has become an interesting literary experience to reflect on the problematic of cultural displacement. Its prime concern is to explore the post-colonial responsibility of forging an integrated identity within the condition of being in-between, of being torn between alternative worlds of identities, with dissembling themes of love and lamentation, hope and despair. The Indian expatriate writers including political exiles, first generation migrants, non-resident Indians hold patria and expatria, exile and nationalism, realism and fantasy within the theoretical location of these questions and their own representational practices. They often proclaim their identity with a country whose artificiality and exclusiveness have driven them into a kind of problematic—a simultaneous recognition of nationhood and alienation from it.

The culture of the migrant—the inbetweenness, the double unbelongingness or even the multiple-belongingness—has become the most potent metaphor in the Third World literature for, the migrant perhaps deserves the distinction conferred on him as the central or defining figure of the twentieth century. Major Indian diaspora writers like V S Naipaul, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Salman Rushdie, whom the Western reviewers consider as authentic public voices, appear to have been busy in redrawing the frontiers of Indian English novel that seeks to remake the world by drawing new and better maps of reality in its own image. It is neither a eulogy nor any wholesale criticism of the culture of the exile, rather it is a common acknowledgement that while most of the Indian English novelists' greatest creative achievements since the '80s have come from migration, assimilation and transculturation, some of the greatest pathologies of our time, too, can be traced to the migrants' obsession for a 'home' and a 'wholeness'. The obsession for a home as a cosy comfortable place and wholeness as a bridge between their fractured identities is the most
powerful psychic force that motivates the diasporal behaviour which is believed to be stemming from the conditions of the existence, the human situation.

Rapid decolonization and massive industrialization since the early 1940s have spurred the modern phenomenon of migration or cultural dislocation in unabated ways. The increasing homogenization of metropolitan culture, besides breaking down local and communal cultures, seems to have raised many questions related to different fields of human investigation such as history, sociology, psychology, politics, linguistics and so on. Postmodernist literature thus appears to have taken up the issue of cultural and metaphysical dislocation partly because of its own canonizing principles and partly because most of the living literary luminaries of modern time are migrants. The terminology, as such, refers to the intellectuals and writers who have crossed national frontiers and migrated across history. The problems and perspectives related to the phenomenon of migration are very pertinently analyzed in *Shame* through a 'diasporal dream'— to build imaginary homelands and try to impose them on the ones that exist. Hence, the understanding of the migrant's psyche that roots itself in itself for imaging and reimaging the world must be based, as Fromm claims in *The Sane Society*, on the "analysis of his needs stemming from the conditions of his existence".

Expatriates, refugees, exiles or persons who have migrated from their native country, who are uprooted from where they actually belong by history and culture, are more or less haunted by a sense of loss of home as a safe good place, a torturing loss over past acquaintance and attachments. It is not simply a physical loss of being in a different place, rather a metaphysical dislocation of being 'elsewhere', surrounded by the others whose social behavior and cultural codes are very unlike, and sometimes even offensive to, the migrant's own. The other aspect of the disruption is 'language'— referred to as "tyrannese" by Wendell Berry— that loses its power of direct reference and
designation as a result of the migrant's physical alienation from his/her native 'roots'. This feeling of being bereft of an important part of their true identity, Rushdie tells in *Imaginary Homelands*, evokes an urge in the expatriate writers "to reclaim a lost home in a lost city in the mists of lost time", "even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt" (9). The migrant novelists whether conservatives like Jhabvala or Naipaul or radicals like Mukherjee or Rushdie, who themselves are writing within the nuclei of alienation and participation, are constantly attempting this but are caught in the web of an Orwellian dilemma—the struggle of breaking out of the orbit but not quite making it.

For, though the need for 'home' as a cosy comfortable place and 'history' as a connecting bridge attains obsessive proportion, the discomforts of being in so many 'homes' and in so many 'selves' at the same time which is the history of postmodernism, poses artistic as well as metaphysical questions that the expatriate writer has to grapple with. He has to assess and reassess the true nature of the narrative to see how much of the possible versions of imaginative reconstruction can ensure a sense of home. But which home or which particular history could they return to, if possible? The irony is that there is no particular home or any coherent history as such: the only place that was once home to them has been locked at their back, their physical dislocation has cut them off from the umbilical cord; the history which once nourished them well now has undergone sea-change because of "the corruption of the clock" as Rushdie has describes in *Midnight's Children* (38). If they have got to return to any, however, it is only through art and imagination, making the fantasy of a home and mythicizing a history.

But the answer to vital questions—can their imagination, divorced of experience resist the visionary view and give the reader the sense of a real presence? Or can their language stand responsibly to mean precisely what they say?—remains very difficult and inconclusive. For, the cross-cultural ethos,
more often than not, tends to raise some deep individual, social, metaphysical and artistic questions that the expatriate writers have to yield and analyze in one form or another. The process of separation from a once-admired culture, its people and its language setting is not at all an easy experience in itself; one has to put frantic efforts to one's voice constantly heard, fighting anonymity and the threat of being pushed to the periphery. The immigrant, therefore, has to question, assess, criticize, analyze and ultimately decide how he is going to live in an altogether new environment. The quest—moving away from self to discover self—is actually a process of redefinition of the migrants' identity in relation to a known world now disenchanted with and an unknown world lying flat and bare to venture into.

One recalls how the promising Alexander Solzhenitsyn failed miserably to hold the imagination of the West after his deportation. Cut off from his Russian heart amidst the intellectual isolation in Vermont the artist's mind dried up. Other writers like Stefan Zweig, Bertolt Brecht, Erich Maria Remarque, the Mann brothers—Thomas and Heinrich—who had fled Germany during the dark years of Nazi repression, often lost to themselves once they were unable to breathe life-giving air of their natural environment: All of them believed that their native country would get over the repressive regime and provide them a burgeoning environment that could boost their art and intellect. But as everybody knows too well the new Germany proved equally worse to belie their hope.

Of the Caribbean writers, Wilson Harris, Samuel Selvon, Derek Walcott, and George Laming to name only a few, who still write from outside, there is no win situation either. They all moved out of their country in the 1950s in search of a better break. They chose to flee the society that was stifling their creativity, but they all clang on to the roots from where they drew metaphysical sustenance and, waited outside with the desire that their island would one day emerge more inhabitable from the throes of the so-called Cultural Revolution.

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Unlike the Western exiled writers who crossed their national boundaries to settle only in another western society which shared cultural, religious as well as linguistic topography very much similar in nature, the Indian immigrant writers to the western countries find themselves under tremendous stress and strain on the interrelationship of the social definitions and cultural codes which are quite distinct from, and often opposite to, one another. The intrinsic value systems of the two diametrically opposite cultures are too sharp to be mitigated completely. Identity in a caste-based society like India has a fixed sense of socio-cultural placement; the communal consciousness of an expatriate Indian offers at least some kind of safeguard against a possible cultural amnesia. As cultural amnesia is one of the preconditions to initiate any sort of cross-cultural dialogue, the Indian expatriates find it really excruciating for destructing and simultaneously reconstructing the self as required to take part in, and to identify oneself with, the Western cultural process.

Rushdie, Bharati Mukherjee or a lot of free-migrants, who have migrated across national frontiers from their cultural roots by being allured by the attraction of a second country to risk the unknown of a new home elsewhere, posses a guilt-less exuberance in the utopian myth that expatriation is often a necessary expression of bohemianism. Raymond Williams associates such a sensibility with vagrancy: “There is usually a principle in exile, there is always relaxation in vagrancy”. In sharp contrast to Orwell who found expatriation most damaging to a writer, the celebration of the vagrant’s relax and exuberant mood while reporting the state of being inbetweeness is very much detectable in the works of these liberal writers; how can one miss such tone in Rushdie’s bold declaration in *Imaginary Homelands* that the migrants are “the central defining figure of twentieth century” (277) and that their expatriate experience is both enjoyable and fruitful:
Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools. But however ambiguous and shifting this ground may be, it is not an infertile territory to occupy. If literature is in part the business of finding new angles at which to enter reality, then once again our distance, our long geographical perspective, may provide us with such angles (15).

If stereotyping is an easy way of producing history by establishing a community or group identity by positing continuity between space and time, one must welcome the way radical writers like Rushdie imagine events for discursive purposes by deliberately destroying the traditional art of story-telling. They create the aesthetic of irreverence, subscribing to their misconceptions, prejudices, ambiguities attached to their blurred vision through unreliable narration. They seek to forge an integrated identity of their own in an imaginary territory which is sovereign and owes no particular allegiance to any capital.

One can find a unanimous ideological sharing between the immigrant's 'transculturation'—a better way of referring to the modernist idea of 'acculturation'—and Angel Rama's 'cultural plasticity': "If the community is lively, it will accomplish a selectively, both of what exists within it, and what comes in from outside effecting invention in an *ars combinatario*, appropriate to the autonomy of its own cultural system". The connotation is loud and clear: in the postmodernist conception of literature various alien cultures or histories, like disparate experiences, can be familiarized, without neutralizing their oppositional characters. There is no hindrance whatsoever for borrowing experiences, motifs or narrative structures from other texts or places; on the other hand, these are various modes available to suit to the writers who partake in intercultural rewriting.
In fact, postmodernist imagination has provided Rushdie and other expatriate writers who have floated upward from history a unique opportunity for feeling free to roam through the whole historical past, making and remaking the past to suit to their own purpose. Hence the peculiar weightlessness attached to migration does not necessarily mean 'Rootlessness' to these writers. On the contrary, it has led them to a kind of 'multiple rooting': the myth of 'ontological unbelongingness' has been replaced by a larger myth of 'excess of belongingness'— one belongs nowhere because one belongs everywhere. In other words, it is not the traditional identity crisis of not knowing where one comes from or where to go, but on the other hand, it is the typical problem of excess rather than absence.

This idea of the availability of an open universe or the excess of culture is undoubtedly an old European ideology that the Third World cosmopolitans have borrowed from High modernists like Eliot and Pound. In the literary imagination of these writers the idea of cultural excess served as a counter-point to the recoiling terror of the fragmentation of the 'self'. Eliot preferred Indian philosophy in the impersonal setting of *The Waste Land* to counter the terror of cultural dislocation, alienation and fragmentation of the self. Pound and other writers of the age equally obsessively held the ideas of excess and disruption, unity and fragmentation in tight balance primarily to forge a wholesome, integrated identity. In no case, however, the displaced splintered self or the accompanying sense of unbelonging was ever a source of celebration. What one finds quite new in the fiction of the Third World cosmopolitan writers is that the idea of belonging is only a bad faith or a mere myth of origin; belonging nowhere is rather construed as the perennial pleasure of belonging everywhere. Thus, the very idea of cultural displacement and inner fragmentation has become a source of exuberance in the postmodernist tradition.
It is quite interesting in this context to note Rushdie's cherished position and self-representation in the related issues of migration, transculturation and the growth and development of the consciousness of the evolving identity. For, it has undergone quite a significant change from time to time, especially in the aftermath of Ayatollah Khomeini's 'fatwa' on him. What one finds in his early novels before this tragic episode is that his narrators' mood is primarily that of a vagrant's, a sense of celebration. In this version migrancy has been broadly treated as an ontological condition of all human beings, and the dislocation of the individual or the fragmentation of the self in this postmodernist context begets no fear, no pain, nor any kind of loss. However, one also finds in the center of his writing his disturbed and problematic relationship with the Indian subcontinent. India that constantly bombards with dreams and desires but deprives him of his immediate reality which forms part of his 'whole' identity and, an equally insistent West that constantly reminds him the hybrid nature migrant, are thus constantly at war. The migrant writer must have to make peace with both the worlds in order to give some kind of meaning to their integrated identity which is at once plural and partial. The center of the expatriate Indian English writers' writing, one often finds, project their disturbed and problematic relationship with India. India that constantly bombards with dreams and desires but deprives them of their immediate reality which forms part of their "whole" identity and, an equally insistent West that constantly reminds the plural hybrid culture of the migrant, are thus constantly at war. The migrant writer must have to make peace with both the worlds in order to give some kind of meaning to their integrated identity which is at once plural and partial.

Rushdie has always been concerned with giving a voice to the voiceless, with giving the power of description to the disenfranchised, and today, Rushdie is renowned for his brilliantly vicious political satire. However, on a deeper level, his books transcend beyond the ephemeral relevance of political satire as he
aims at giving the power of description to the migrant, a character with whom Rushdie can easily identify. One can appreciate this unifying theme in Rushdie's works by examining his life, his deliberately chosen style of prose, and the theme of 'double identity' in his novels and in his personality. Thus his works appear responsive to the world rather than removal from it.

(Ahmed) Salman Rushdie is a case of direct Indian expatriate. He was born to a progressive and well to do Muslim household on 19 June 1948 in Bombay (now the new name is Mumbai). On 14 August that year Pakistan got itself divided from India on religious line, a fact Rushdie could hardly sympathize with. History bore witness to an extraordinary chaotic and unsavory period as about 60 lakh Muslims moved north to the newly established Islamic Pakistan—the Land of the Pure—while about 80 lakh Hindus and Sikhs moved south fleeing it. Rushdie's parents, however, remained in Bombay where Rushdie was growing up never to be identified with the strongly pro-Islamic stance of many Pakistanis. His early childhood grew up amidst a composite culture with Hindu, Sikh, Parsi and Christian friends on Warden Road (now it is Bholabhai Desai Road); received his primary education near Flora Fountain (the new name is Hutatma Chowk). In fact, Bombay— the most cosmopolitan, most hybrid, most hothchpotch of Indian cities —has become a moving metaphor for India's cultural vitality in Rushdie's fiction.

In 1961, when he was thirteen, Rushdie was sent to England to study at Rugby school where he got wanton exposure to outside world. His parents, along with three sisters, followed him to England the next year, became naturalized British citizens and lived for two years in Kensington which features as a locale in the Verses. Getting over the shock these days when his father decided abruptly to move the family to Karachi in Pakistan, a country that he could never come to terms with, Rushdie decided to stay back and enjoy free-living in London. In an obvious self-referential account in East, West Rushdie
admits: “God, I love London... I see the remnants of greatness and I don't mind telling you I am impressed”. He knew he wanted to be a writer—his hero, as he often said, was the acclaimed Urdu poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz. However, he chose to study not literature but history at Kings College, Cambridge where his father Anis Ahmed Rushdie had his study too. In his senior year Rushdie investigated the origins of Islam and encountered the episode of the ‘Satanic verses’ that later on he concocted in his novel.

In the spring of 1968, when he graduated from Cambridge, the senior Rushdie tried to persuade his young lad to settle in Karachi, but for no avail. However, his brief stay in that country turned out to be very short and suffocating. In the beginning Rushdie tried to venture into television production that had been his favoured interest in Cambridge. Not very late, however, he got first hand experience of state censorship which convinced him that he belonged back to London where breathing fresh with liberty and freedom was not that much difficult. His experience in Pakistan added another layer to his dual expatriate sensibility, leading him to negotiate simultaneously with the cultures of the East and the West. Entering a world less known yet lesser-loved, Rushdie discovered a stinking wasteland that was Pakistan: it had acquired, he felt with increasing conviction in Shame: ‘a mistaken identity’ right from beginning or a failure of the dreaming mind whose shame engulfs all. The novel mystifies Rushdie’s quest motif through the birth of its protagonist who takes up the quest to know his dubious parentage; for, Rushdie himself is born of three mothers — India, Pakistan and England — having ore or less equal claim on him.

Life for Rushdie may be full of trials and tribulations, but he did have his moments of fun and romance. In 1970, he met Clarissa Luard, the model for
Pamela Lovelace in The Satanic Verses, and they began living together. In 1976 they married, got a son Zafar who later turns out to a kind of hero in the author's fantasy novel Haroun and the Sea of Stories. Shortly after the publication of Shame, Rushdie ended his marriage to Clarissa Luard by having a relation with author Robyn Davidson. His portrayal of both these ladies in The Satanic Verses, however, is very sympathetic compared to his own casting in the unsympathetic Saladin Chamcha's role. In 1986 he met the American writer Marianne Wiggins; both got married two years later only to be separated in the early days of the author's hiding in the wake of Khomeni's 'fatwa'. But Rushdie writes back in vengeance with his Haroun and the Sea of Stories, the first published novel after the 'fatwa'. On the one hand, it remains a testimony to the dictatorship syndrome that Rushdie has told so succinctly in Shame, and on the other hand a robust proclamation of the imagination's ability not simply to refresh but to reshape from within the lives upon which the brute force is imposed from without. Though primarily written for children, this small book is an assertion of individual freedom in a world where freedom is being increasingly strangled either by religious extremists or by nationalistic conception of the new country as an essential totality.

It was actually in the 1970s when Rushdie had turned his energies to writing fiction; his first published novel came out in 1975 in the form of Grimus—a dystopia set on an imaginary island. Although the book was poorly received, it surely does hint at things that were to come out of the promising author. It records unmistakable reflections of Rushdie's own struggle for coming to terms with the inevitable conditions of cultural transplantation. However, the reader finds that this process of using the author's own stories and experiences—the death the migrant dies, the agony of mutation, and the emancipation and self-knowledge of rebirth—to build imaginary homelands gaining momentum from
the *Midnight's Children*, which continues in the next two novels *Shame* and *The Satanic Verses*, and still further to *The Moor's Last Sigh*. These novels, though each one is individual through and through, reflect the unifying theme by presenting the author's life, his deliberately chosen prose style, and the 'double identity' that one tends to find in his works as well as in his personality.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


