Chapter-III
Treatment of Major Themes

The present research works is an inquiry into the major themes and literary style of V.S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie. It is also an inquiry into V.S. Naipaul’s fiction as an experiential recreation of the third world consciousness as it emerges into an anguished awareness of ‘unimportance’ in the modern world. Today Naipaul stands as the master of the novel, a creative craftsman of such surpassing talent that Britain’s leading literary critic, V.S. Pritchett, calls him “the greatest living writer in the English language. He (Naipaul) is viewed as a satirist who provides unnecessarily ridiculous appearance to his characters. His literary style is examined segment ally: the value of the absence or presence of a narrator in his individual works and the uses of irony and satire as distancing devices as well as expression of personal distaste. Besides, there is a tendency to interpret and justify such criticism in terms of Naipaul’s own pronouncements over a number of years without tearing them as part of a body of literary thought and criticism.

As observed by me, in the novels so far studied, Naipaul has followed recognizable patterns of the tradition of the novel, staying close to the novel of sensibility. He has regulated the distance between the protagonist, narrator, author and reader to ensure that the dominant vision of each novel is that of the narrator, leaving the novels open-ended. Though, there are dramatic and literary resolutions in the lives of the protagonist and the narrator, respectively, in each novel—the latter arriving at a centre of stillness, however temporary. Naipaul, by depicting the narrator as the controlling agent of the novel, suggests other stories with different narrators and different endings.

This study attempts to demarcate the literary fields within which Naipaul as a writer and visionary has developed. The values of the Western literary tradition within which he is situation are recoverable. The anguish over the Lack of tradition expressed in literary terms is the expression of a deeper existential loss which is irrecoverable and
irreplaceable.

Often the last four decades Naipaul’s oeuvre has grown into some sort of a literary odyssey, quite like what its author has called his ‘journey without maps’. Before, during, and after his many journeys Naipaul has made both overt and covert observations on nations, cultures, races and communities, which have forced world-wide attention. His books of course testify to his powers as a shrewd delineator of people, situations and settings. As result, Naipaul has roused not only much controversy and provocation but bitter hostility and resentment too. All along his writing career till date, he has drawn a formidable array of admirers and detractors. Many of his books are poker-faced, instilled with strong streaks of satire and ironic turns of the screw. Naipaul clearly entrenches a dispiriting sense of life here as an umbrella term for the Caribbean life and culture in general, and the disaffecting Trinidad as a metaphor for it all.

Besides it, the present research work is also an inquiry into the themes of major works of Salman Rushdie as well. For well over a quarter century Salman Rushdie has been an impressive presence on the world literary scene. Starting with *Grimus* (1975) he has published eight novels, the latest being *Fury* (2001). Despite their relatively small number, the impact Rushdie’s novels have had on common readers and critics alike are profound. His novel *Midnight’s children* (1981) gave a new direction and orientation to fiction all over the world. The intellectual, intercultural and inter-textual richness of this novel, and indeed of every other novel of Rushdie’s, teases the readers and challenges them to comprehend and come to grips with them. His books create tension, induce anticipation, and evoke conflicting emotions between (and within) the readers. With each new novel Rushdie initiates a fresh discussion and debate which compels the scholars and readers to re-evaluate every so often.

Rushdie has been a much discussed author, and a great number of critical studies have already appeared. But what happened in 1988-89 was something unprecedented in the history of English literature. With the publication of *The Satanic
Verses in 1988 the discussion of Rushdie went beyond the realms of literary criticism. This book inaugurated what has come to be known as the “Rushdie Affair”, and a highly polemical view began to be expressed.

In the last few decades the concept of ‘themes’ of V.S. Naipaul as well as of Salman Rushdie has emerged as a popular subject for researchers and readers. It evokes the interest of scholars and researchers to explore this branch of knowledge. A number of books, articles and papers have tried to locate the themes of both these writers. As per the design of the study, the following two novels are being discussed in this chapter:-


**The theme and form of The Mystic Masseur:**

In the novel, ‘The Mystic Masseur’ Naipaul concerns himself with the Political reality of Trinidad just before and after independence. Independently the novel examines different aspects of the reaction to political independence of the individual and group. The novel dramatizes a particular feature of Trinidad’s inability to go back to colonial security or to generate a national identity thus emphasizing its political insignificance. The novel is an arrested moment of reality which is not a final assessment of the situation. It discusses the politics of mutual self-deception which flourishes unhindered in a non-polemical society. Such a system gives the impression of self-sufficiency until a crisis reveals its hollowness and unreality: being isolated and self-isolating, not seeking its links through inertia.

*The Mystic Masseur* is an account of a typical aspirant to power and prestige gravitating to politics as the supreme possibility. Emphasis is on Ganesh’s qualities of personality: his assertiveness and his alertness to opportunity indicating his greater sensitivity to his environment. He dominates easily in an environment. This is lethargic and easy-going. He is the prototype for Naipaul’s instinctually successful man, the
Nazruddins of the world, who know when it is time to move on; they intuitively avoid the existential trap of extreme situations when choice becomes irrelevant.

_The Mystic Masseur_ is a very exact expression of the narrator’s views on the contemporary Trinidadian hero—the politician. A parody of the log cabin to while house success story, for the sense of nationhood that inspired the fathers of democracy is totally missing, misunderstood or lauded, he is essentially alone and self-involved, acting more in a world of fantasy than showing crucial awareness of vital issues. The novel is hence as much the story of Ganesh as that of the unnamed narrator. He appears in a dual role: as the first person existent in Ganesh’s life, a fact which proves crucial to both of them and establishes the subjective counter thrust to the objective biography, and the third person omniscient narrator of that biography.

They share a common landscape but belong to different generations. The narrator, now a young student in England, meets Ganesh for the second time in his life as the leader of the Government delegation from Trinidad to England. Ganesh’s gesture of non-recognition and denial reveals his hollowness: his suppression of all sense of loyalty to his past in a desire to fill out a role whose significance he has not grasped. Stunned the student asserts his existence retaliates by exposing Ganesh. The narrative winds its way through the issues of Trinidadian identity – independence, politics, and community – as it is viewed by one who is very conscious of his nationality. The epilogue is titled ‘A Statesman on the 12.57’ and it stresses the fact of the narrator’s awareness of himself as a foreigner in England:

In the summer of 1954, the narrator was at an English University and he was waiting for the results of an examination. One morning he received a letter from the colonial office. A party of colonial statesmen was in Britain for a conference, and I would be willing to entertain a statesman from my own territory?

What he is not aware of are the underlying tensions, uncertainties, frustrations of his inherited colonial past which he also shares with Ganesh. This
past-surfaces when Ganesh ignores his individual existence and treats him as a colonial would behave with a Trinidadian – one below notice. Unable to assimilate this blow to his self-esteem which he experiences as a betrayal of a trust he in turn betrays Trinidad by exposing Ganesh for the picaroon he is and describing him as being representative of his society. The narrative simultaneously becomes a revaluation of the background from which he has evolved. Thus able to distance himself through Ganesh he arrives at a negative self-realization. This significance of the narrative is implicit in his sympathetic portrayal of Ganesh as a young man. The earlier part of the story is occupied with Ganesh as an ambitions and independent young man, yet idealistically and poetically inclined with a driving passion for books.

He asserts his independence of thought again and again, rejecting his superstitions, materialistic and garrulous society. But he soon realizes that it is through this society only that he can realize his freedom from it. And so we see him submitting to its demands in order to use it to further his own ambitions. We see a man for whom his society provides no alternative patterns of a free life-style, for which even as he uses it he develops distaste. His callous treatment of Ramlogan, his father-in-law, exemplifies his treatment of Trinidad. Even his autobiography, ‘The years of Guilt’, is an indirect denial of Trinidad for he attributes his success only to the ‘hand of providence’. So that the narrator and Ganesh both meet as representatives of a society they both reject in their rejection of each-other.

Naipaul, in dramatizing this mutual involvement of Ganesh and the narrator, enables the readers to realize the existential experience of each as differing because of the different sense of time and place—historical as well as existential (moulded by success and defeat respectively). Ganesh is seen as a man who moves ahead only by rejecting Loyalties and responsibilities. He feels free with a new name, a new profession, unhampered by his wife or friends and the world before him. We see the paradox of his
freedom. He has a name which is not his – Ganesh Ramsumair is altered to G.Ramsay Muir; a profession in which he is a puppet – he is less qualified to be an M.B.E. than he was to be a masseur; as a man he is truly adrift without the loyalty of Leila and Beharry to support and encourage him. The narrators, in revealing him as a charlatan has only succeeded in evoking our sympathy for him. By linking his private sensibility to his public career Ganesha’s roguery appears as an element of his ‘innocence’: his ‘self-cherishing’ and his ‘self-regard’; he accepts praise and Hattery as his due. These terms Naipaul uses repeatedly to characterize a trait which acts as a pitfall to sincerity towards others yet constitutes a kind of faith. This innocence can become a condition of change provided the impetus is present. Ironically the narrator’s progress as student is halted as he attempts to reconstitute Ganesh’s colonial sense of success to present it as an awareness of national loss.

The slant of narrative reveals the narrator’s awakening to the fact of an apolitical society. Ganesh is not political leader though he has the natural talent for it. His society is not politically conscious though it is alert and aggressive when it feels threatened; group action is natural. Neither leaders nor voters are at all aware of the outside world as a challenge to them or as judging them. Politics is not part of the social consciousness of his country the public votes for personalities not for issues.

Ganesh did not have time for the affairs of the Hindu Association. The island elections were two months off and he found himself embroiled. Inder Singh had decided to go up in Ganesh’s ward and it was this rather than the promptings of the Association or Beharry or Swami that made Ganesh stand for the elections. (193)

We had no election meetings, but Swami and Partap arranged many Prayer meetings for him ....... Quite casually, in the middle of a lecture, he would say in Hindi, It may interest one or two of you in this gathering tonight to hear that I am a candidate for the elections next month. I can promise nothing. In everything I shall consult God and my conscience even at the risk of displeasing you. (194) Ganesh’s election committee arranges a Bhagwat and a free lunch and invites indar sing to it.
Inder Singh came in an Oxford blazer and Swami as organiser of the Bhagwat, introduced him to the audience. Inder Singh lost his deposit and had a big argument with the secretary of the PPU who had also lost his. Inder Singh said that the PPU had decided to give compensation to the members who lost their deposits. He felt that there was nobody to talk and after the results of election the party disappeared for the sake of progress and unity.

Though only twenty pages describe Ganesh’s actual entry into politics the whole book moves towards it by describing him in various roles which involve awareness of the public. He can communicate successfully; he is aware of his environment; he has ability to would public opinion and to foresee failure, to move out in time. His final awakening to the possible meaning of politics is suppressed. It does not receive the necessary public support. He works out a new political theory with Indar Singh-Socialinduism.

The notion of ‘home’ plays an important role for most people as it provides a sense of belonging and security, and where one can decide on acceptable values and forms of behavior. Home also an opposing territorial connotation of making space through closure: ‘only those who belong can come in, and a house-owner can shut the door on outsiders’ (Castles & Davidson, 2000:130). The notion of home is not confined to a home but may be extended to a wider social space, even a nation. The girmitya ideology may be comprehended as a form of ‘home-building is “the building of a feeling of being at home” based on four ‘affective building blocks’: ‘security, familiarity, community and a sense of possibility.’ (Quoted in castles, 2000:131). Similarly, place-making is defined as the reshaping by ethnic groups to construct their neighborhoods to correspond more closely to their needs and values. Place-making process involves three sets of strategies ‘naming, rituals and institutions.’ Home building and place-making
are both important for community formation. Place-making is an essential aspect of migrant existence and the memory of the old place, however imaginary, helps “authentication, self-generation and legitimation” (Mishra, 1991:2). While recognizing the need for making a home, Naipaul is highly critical of the mythologized, claustrophobic orthodox Hindu world reconstructed in Trinidad. His peasants carry over items from their rural homes to the new plantation economy that are reduced to symbols in the absence of a real cultural memory.

Ganesh, in the ‘mystic Masseur’ discovers this to his dismay as Hindu rituals related to birth and death are reenacted in a distant setting that desacralizes them. On his father’s death, he performs the last rites perfunctorily ‘unit it seemed that ritual had replaced grief’ (Mystic Masseur:20). In this way, Naipaul documents the process of the progressively waning memory of the homeland in the novel ‘The Mystic Masseur’.

The History of Ganesh Ramsumair:-

The novel elaborates the story of a man named Ganesh Ramsumair belonging to Trinidad. The author has made the claim that the history of Ganesh is, in a way, the history of our times. The claim is valid, but only to a limited extent. This book, variously described as a spiritual thriller and a metaphysical whodunit (who done it?) has had an enormous success, especially in Central America and in the Caribbean.

From Ganesh Ramsumair to G.Ramsay Muir:-

Ganesh Ramsumair has been formally educated to only a low level; but he has read widely and, by making use of this wide reading, he is able to establish himself first as a masseur, and finally as a religious and psychological adviser, or a
pundit. His fame spreads over the whole of Trinidad and, in 1946, when the first elections are held on this island; Ganesh manages to cash in on his popularity and gets elected as a member of the Legislative Council. In his new role, he shows himself a great patriot and a defender of the rights of the people of Trinidad; and he refuses even to participate in the rituals of the British rulers of the island. He even supports a strike of the sugar-workers, expressing some vague Marxist ideas. However, when he is roughly handled by the crowd, his sympathies turn in the opposite direction and, as a consequence, he adopts the clothes and attitudes of the Britishers. When he is no longer an elected member of the Legislative Council, he is nominated to that body, and afterwards receives the title of M.B.E. Finally, he appears in England under the name of G. Ramsay Muir. In each step of this career, the author is satirizing the rise to power of a representative of the people in a country which is about to achieve its independence from British rule.

Humour; Sparseness of Detail about Society:-

The account of the career of Ganesh is replete with humour; but there is a sparseness of concrete detail about the society of which Ganesh is a representative. In other words, though we are told much about Ganesh’s own life and career, we are not told enough about the society of which he is a representative. There is simple not sufficient detail of the interaction of the society to support the author’s claim that the book is a history of our times. Another weakness of the book is the inconsistency in the literary power granted to the narrator by the author. The narrator is, of course, Ganesh himself, and so the story is written in the first person pronoun.
Two Conflicting Views of Life:-

In the character of Ganesh, the author presents the dilemma to which the author often returns in his novels. The dilemma consists in the problem of reconciling two conflicting views of life. During Ganesh’s early career, events happen to him, and he makes no effort to direct or control them. He even marries Leela Ramlogan because her father has decided upon this match.

Ganesh’s attitude in these matters is mildly fatalistic, and this seems to justify his lack of initiative and his success by reference to God’s will. However, success does come to him, and, under its impact, he begins to see that advancement in life can be achieved by deliberate planning, correctly made and energetically executed. From this point, his success grows and, in the context of the book, it is manifested symbolically by his acquisition of western goods and products. His house expands; he moves into business ventures related to his success as a pundit; and he obtains a refrigerator which he keeps filled with bottles of Coca Cola, thus showing the triumph of western civilization. Ganesh now plans, looks ahead, perceive opportunities, whereas previously he had simply expected events. The whole book is written lightly, the novel being primarily comic in intention even though the subject is one which Naipaul takes seriously.

The Author’s Contempt for His People for Aping the Whites:-

Although the book is genial enough, a certain lack of sympathy on the part of the author is clearly perceptible. The hero approaches his lowest point of achievement in such scenes as the dinner at Government House where the author describes an imaginary confrontation between the most unsophisticated members of Creole and Indian society on one side and the highly civilized and sophisticated wife of the Governor on the other. All that Naipaul finds ridiculous in Creole society is brought out
in this scene: the bad grammar, the lack of taste or social grace, and the struggle to behave like the white people. A black man is shown as being dressed in a blue suit with yellow gloves and a monocle which eventually falls into the soup. Several of the guests at the dinner have difficulty in using their knives and forks. Of course, we can accept such a scene as farcical and as intended to show the Creoles and the Indians following the painful and absurd road to civilization and sophistication exemplified by the Whites. But we also get the impression that Naipaul himself regards these people with more contempt than compassion and he is therefore wanting in sympathy. These are the same people whom Naipaul afterwards described in The Middle Passage as being “like monkeys pleading for evolution.” The incongruity of his position here is that, while he laughs and mocks at the Creoles who crudely imitate and ape standards of pseudo-whiteness, he can only do so by assuming these very standards himself.

**Search of place and Identity in Mystic Masseur:**

*The Mystic Masseur* is the testimony of Naipaul’s concern for the displaced people with a drifted consciousness. It is the heart-rending story of a man’s deliberate negation of his origins in his material pursuits. It recounts the reserve tale of the process not of repossession, but of defeat of how Ganesh Ramsumair, a Brahmin of Indian origin, turns into G.Ram say Muir-a mimic man. The narrator of ‘The Mystic Masseur’ rightly affirms in his introductory remarks: “I myself believe that the history of Ganesh is, in a way, the history of our times ……….” The narrator announces the mock-heroic dimension of the novel’s political fable through this statement.

‘*The Mystic Masseur*, in spite of all its claims to objectivity, is a subjective account of the island politician in the 1950s. The book is also a ‘tongue in cheek’ comment on the concept of biographical writing as a revelation of truth. For all his efforts to assemble objective data about Ganesh (autobiographical mutual, eyewitness accounts, newspaper reports, reported dialogue and conversation) the organizing sensibility touches it up with his own vision. The novel dwells on the absurdities of democracy as a form of Government which has not evolved out of the needs of the
people! At best democratic government in the country of its birth is an uneasy marriage between capitalism and democracy where the interests of the moneyed classes prevail. In Trinidad it has unleashed the avaricious instincts of a society which is already picaroon. Naipaul in presenting Trinidad ‘en situation’ suggests that democracy reveals its state of being adrift completely. Politics is the challenge as well as the trap for the Trinidadian Consciousness. He necessarily understands the meaning of political freedom in terms of the colonial definition: in the frameworks in which it was handed-over to him – democracy as the rage for power to be attained through money as the medium of exchange which purchases all requirements. It awakens the Trinidaian to the knowledge of undiscovered areas-which need exploring though the goal is visible. It will enable him to speak with dignity and possess in identity; be will be equal with the rest of the world. However, not having a political past politics does not form part of the composite ideal consciousness of the individual. It alienates him from his past without proving him with a supporting environment, leaving him suspended. Lacking sophistication and power Trinidad and other third world countries continue to be used as political stooges in the larger game of the bigger powers, who along with arms exports their culture in the holds of gunboats.

In this novel Naipaul has underlined the conditions of world Communication as being essentially political in nature; Trinidad’s unpreparedness to do so at that level is its failure. Political anxiety has introduced the dialogue between the person and his notion but political awareness is necessary before it can communicate with the rest of the world. Political reality structurally represents the multivalent poetic vision in this novel. The political situation in Trinidad reflects microcosmically the larger political disparities: highlighting the Community of need disguised by ideologies. It speaks the universal language of corruption and the prostitution of politics. Naipaul represents two antithetic political situations – one objectively and the other subjectively, Camouflaged by a superficial, deceptive resemblance with
masquerades as democracy, independence and equality. One is powerful, secure, superior and patronizing. The other is weak, insecure and obsessed by a sense of unimportance. So, the novel discusses the relationship between political and personal anonymity in a situation in which the individual is yet unable to distinguish his individuality apart from that of his society.

**The Mystic Masseur and Third-World Politics:**

The novel is set in Port of Spain and the rural area of Trinidad where the Indians lived and worked, and is a comic study of life in Trinidad in the face of the post-colonial rise of politics which smacks of mutual self-deception. The central concern of the narrative while emphasizing this aspect, centers round the meteoric rise and metamorphosis of Ganesh, the protagonist. Nineteen forty-six as Naipaul records was the turning-point of Ganesh’s career:

Nineteen forty-six was the turning-point of Ganesh’s career; and, as if to underline the fact, in that year he published his autobiography *The Years of Guilt* (Ganesh Publishing Co. Ltd., Port of Spain. $2.40). The book, variously described as a spiritual thriller and a metaphysical whodunit, had a considerable success of esteem in central America and the Caribbean. Ganesh, however, confessed that the autobiography was a mistake. So, in the very year of publication it was suppressed and the Ganesh Publishing company itself wound up. The wider World has not learnt of Ganesh’s early struggles, and Trinidad resents this. I myself believe that the history of Ganesh is, in a way, the history of our times; and there may be people who will welcome this imperfect account of the man Ganesh Ramsumair, masseur, mystic, and, since 1953, M.B.E. (Mystic 18).
In the beginning Ganesh felt awkward when he entered the Queen’s Royal College. This awkwardness came to him, as the narrator points out, because of his Indian name. Though, Ganesh’s character is expressing his views on the contemporary Trinidadian hero. Though Ganesh is trying to make his impact clear and distinct in the emergence of the new nationhood of Trinidad, he, along with Harbans and R.R.K. Singh, suffers from self-deception. Inwardly he contrasts Trinidad with the larger consciousness of sophisticated London. There is obviously a physical and intellectual poverty in the midst of plenty. Ganesh and his ancestors lived a very circumscribed life as labourers in substandard work. Set in the West Indies on the eve of its independence 

The Mystic Masseur highlights displaced and mediocre individuals in pursuit of recognition and success. Various ethnic groups are creolized. Ganesh is a representative of a community which is money as well as peasant-minded. This society is considered to be spiritually static because it has cut off from its roots.

Strangely enough all the qualities of Ganesh are not really virtuous, but there the only working expediency which is most indispensable and suitable for any individual to succeed in the Caribbean society during the transitional period between the disappearance of the older values and the appearance of a new cultural loyalty and standard.

The way Ganesh spreads a story that his name is really Gareth and not Ganesh shows how tenacious he is to employ crusade methods to realize his goal. All the time the narrator gives an impression of the confident awareness of his own potential greatness. His career is built on his own efforts. He is in the opinion of William Walsh “dutiful, devious, unscrupulous—each where it is necessary to give this greatness a chance to shine out” (Walsh, 67). The way Ganesh tackles every situation with success shows that he has plenty of commonsense. The comments of N. Ramadevi are apt:
He proves to be “smarter” than others, and his “smartness” is not condemned by the people of his society in which “smartness” and “intelligence” have come to be viewed as synonyms and with awe (23).

It is a quality which beguiles and enchants with a “tolerance” for every kind of human activity and affection for every demonstration of wit and style (Ramadevi 24).

The narrator of The Mystic Masseur who is also the biographer of Ganesh writes about him with timely comment juxtaposition, and humorous deflation and is very careful in revealing the absurdity of a society has pronounced him a hero. His aspiration to power and prestige gravitates to politics as the supreme possibility of success. Thus, the narrator makes it clear that political power is ultimately, an embodiment of the colonised’s dream of power, possession and self-realisation. However, the narrative identifies the destiny of the country with the personality of the gradually emerging political leaders like Ganesh. It only means that the individual conduct of Ganesh will ultimately put its impact on the going-on of the country. As a colonial novel the novelist’s sense of political pressure will determine the character of the protagonist and that of the narrator also.

Fountain Grove, the place to which Ganesh goes is a misnomer, for as the name suggests instead of water flowing all the time and plants growing luxuriantly, the place are grim and drab. Thus, it reveals a kind of physical poverty and the concurrent intellectual poverty of the people who inhabit.

The arrival of Ganesh was perhaps the greatest happening. After an unsuccessful stint as a school teacher and after barely escaping starvation because of the inheritance he had after his father’s death Ganesh begins life anew at Fountain Grove. His first action was starting. He started there a Cultural Institute. His frequent itinerary in the place shaped his relationships through inspirations from different individuals. On the advice of his aunt and his father-in-law, Ganesh, apart from looking after the Cultural
Institute, took up the job of a masseur. But soon he was disappointed with masseur’s trade. Thereafter he turned to writing a book. After producing it he said that the book was just a primer, because the people of Trinidad are “just like children” (Mystic 94). The following conversation between Ganesh and Beharry will show that Ganesh had in his character all the trickery necessary for political success:

‘Look, Ganesh. You must always remember the sort of people it have in Trinidad. Every-and anybody not educated up to your standard. Is your job and is my job to bring the people up, but we can’t rush them. Start small and later on fling out your anthology at them is a good idea, mark you. But leave it for now.’

‘Something simple and easy first, eh?’ Beharry placed his hands on his thighs. ‘Yes, the people here just like children, you know, and got to teach them like children.’ ‘A primer like?’

Berharry slapped his thighs and nibbled furiously. ‘Yes, man. That self.’ ‘Leave it to me, Beharry. I go give them this book, and I go make Trinidad hold it head and bawl’ (Mystic 94).

In the words of the narrator, “the wider world has not learnt of Ganesh’s early struggles” (Mystic 18). In fact, the life of Ganesh comes by extension to serve as an example of the conmanship and imitativeness which is so very characteristic of developing countries. As a whole, the novel is an account of the apotheosis of one man who represents the whole community. The narrator says that Ganesh’s career beginning from a quack masseur, a fake mystic, a phoney author through a corrupt politician record an allegory of “the history of our time” (Mystic 18).

It is significant that Naipaul has given a symbolic name to the protagonist of the novel. The name of Ganesh is obviously after the Hindu elephant god, Ganesa or Ganapti, who is the Lord of categories and remover of obstacles. Ganesa, as the Hindu scriptures reveal, is always associated with success and prosperity through his wives,
Siddhi and Riddhi. Whenever an enterprise is undertaken, Ganesa is invoked. In the beginning of the *Mahabharata*, Vyasadev, the wisest of the scribes has indicated that Ganesa, the elephant god is the patron of writers and of learning (See Danielou 291-97 and Mani 272-73). So throughout the novel, it is found that like the Hindu god, the protagonist (Ganesh) has an insatiable appetite for food and a craving for frame and bigger things. These are two kinds of gluttony symbolised by the fat belly of Ganesa, the propitious deity in the Hindu pantheon. However, what the Hindu god has never done or never desire to do is done by Ganesh. He is an opportunist whose central motif in life is to bring success to him by defrauding others. His ultimate prosperity as a politician is unfortunately grounded in his early failures as a masseur and a mystic as a writer whose works instead of being wise is meant for exploiting a credulous populace. Ironically we came to know that his reputation as a writer is established by the publication of his book *Profitable Evacuation*, an extended essay on constipation. The book should have been discarded for its scatological images which are almost like inspecting a drain.

The above sequence of the career of Ganesh offers an opportunity to the novelist to express his views on politics, particularly the one that the hero in politics is also its villain. Ashamed of his Indian heritage, Ganesh calls himself G. Ramsay Muir when he had an M.B.E. degree, a trick which he had adopted when he was in school. This was a trick of acceptance by the English community. His political rivals also anglicise their names as Beharry and Cyrus Stephen Narayan for similar acceptance.

The theme of political decadence is intensified by the choice of images and symbols. The setting of the novel, thus, emphasizes the way Trinidadians have alienated from their surroundings, suggesting that their identities have been disintegrated. For example, Beharry keeps his books, like the venerated *Gita* in a run down shop. Ramlogan is trying to win Ganesh as a son-in-law by offering his daughter Leela in marriage by introducing things such as Chinese calendars in his dilapidated store. Collectively speaking these images as Landed White has rightly asserted “dramatise the confusion of origins and loyalties, customs and aspirations, which is the setting of
Ganesh’s success” (65). It is also seen that Naipaul is adopting similar technique of incorporating images and symbols to highlight Ganesh’s imitation and fraudulence. His portrayal gives us an impression that even though he is victimized; he rises to be the master of all confusion. It is said he has fifteen hundred books in his library, books published by Everyman, Penguin etc. But in actuality he has never seen or read them. It is interesting to note that to highlight his mysticism and to deceive people he wears Indian dhoti and koorta, but he prefers to wear European dresses on other occasions. His house has a Hindu exterior, but the interior has all the modern European scientific household gadgets. This is nothing but mimicry. However, as a politician and con-man he combines in himself Eastern spirituality with Western materialism and secularism, Indian orthodoxy, with modern revolutionary ideas.

His marriage with Leela is presented by the novelist as a long drawn-out process. His trick to win over Leela and her father Ramlogan shows how clever he is in the art of conmanship. The following dialogue of Ganesh with Leela and Ramlogan is a self-explanatory comment on this aspect of his character:

‘Leela!’ the face whispered. ‘Oh-is you. What you doing here?’ ‘I come back for you, girl.’ ‘Go away quick march from here, you hear, before I throw this tureen of dirty water all over your face and wash away the grin......................’‘But, Leela, it is you who leave me. I couldn’t send you a message because I was writing.’ Go and tell that to Beharry, you hear. Look, I go call Pa in a minute and what he have for you ain’t nice, I could tell you.’ The smile on the face became more impish, and the whisper was more conspiratorial......... ‘Sahib!’ Ramlogan’s voice rasping from within. ‘Sahib! Come inside, man, sahib. Why you pretending that you is a stranger and standing up outside? Come in, sahib, come in, sit
down in your old place in the hammock. Oh, sahib, is a real honour.

I too too proud of you’ (Mystic 98-99).

It is most important that he did not eat until he extracted a sizable dowry from Ramlogan. Knowing full well that at Founte Grove he will succeed as a business man if he increases his spiritual reputation, he leaves no stone unturned to achieve it. It is ironic that he because a member of the legislative assembly by virtue of his mystical character. He is clever in climaxing his political campaign by organizing a seven-day recitation of Bhagwat, because he knew the religious leanings of the citizens. During the recitation he also organized free distribution of food. His duplicity of character comes to the surface when he condemns the labour movement of the people by supporting the British colonialists. After being politically successful by manipulating his Indian heritage, he kicks it by changing his name to G.R. Muir. This is how he is presented both as a hero and a villain.

The poster, for Ganesh’s electioneering apart from emphasizing his ability, goodness, energy and sincerity, underscores holiness as his last but not the least quality as a politician. It is this aspect which helps Ganesh to win over the confidence of the local citizens. Further, his pretentious innocence is also another factor which endears him to the voters. From the beginning Ganesh has an inkling that he is meant for something larger than what is available in contemporary Trinidad. The way Narayan, Ganesh’s political rival, is defeated shows the manner in which Ganesh has structured his political ideology. In order to hoodwink, Ganesh planned to bring an item of news in the Sentinel, a local daily, that he was “panning the formation of a representative assembly of Trinidad Hindus to be known as Hindu League” (Mystic 185). This activated Narayan who said that the Hindu Association of which he was the Chairperson is the only Association representing the Hindus in Trinidad, and the question of forming another Association under the leadership of Ganesh did not arise. Like a true politician Ganesh rose to the occasion and made a sharp announcement regarding the Inaugural Meeting of the proposed Hindu League. This may be taken as Ganesh’s first step
towards politics. It sets the tone for his successful emergence as an MLC in the island elections. Prior to this, Ganesh had faced formidable criticism from Narayan reporting for *The Hindu* in its gossip column titled “A Little Bird Tells us.” He calls Ganesh a “religious visionary,” implying that Ganesh is really a quack and charlatan. The attacks of Narayan went on increasing and came in a varied and unexpected form. The narrator says as follows:

One month Ganesh was accused of being anti-Hindu;
another month of being racialist; later he was a
dangerous atheist; and so on (Mystic 157).

It is rightly commented that “Ganesh as such is not a political leader though he has the natural talent for it” (Ramadevi 32). The Trinidadian society becomes aggressive when it is threatened by danger, but neither the leaders nor the voters are politically conscious. In a way they have rather a sort of distrust of politics of any kind. Therefore, the people would vote evaluating personalities only without bothering for issues raised by them. The comments of the narrator on the role of Ganesh emphasise this point well:

Ganesh didn’t have time for the affairs of the Hindu Association. The island elections were two months off and he found himself embroiled. Indersingh had decided to go up in Ganesh’s ward and it was this rather than the promptings of the Association or Beharry or Swami that made Ganesh stand for the elections (Mystic 198).

It was Ganesh’s wife, Leela, who inspired him by saying “But you have to go up. You not going to sit down and let that boy fool the people?” (Mystic 198).

Naipaul takes this opportunity to comment on the significant role that words have in such societies:
He held no election meetings, but Swami and Partap arranged many prayer-meetings for him. He worked hard to expand his Road to Happiness lectures; three or even four taxis had to take the books he required. (Mystic 199).

In fact, Ganesh fought the cleanest election campaign as indicated in the following words of the narrator:

He had no platform. And his posters were the simplest things: GANESH WILL DO WHAT HE CAN, A VOTE FOR GANESH IS A VOTE FOR GOD; sometimes even plainer statements, GANESH WILL WIN and GANESH IS A MAN OF GOOD AND GOD 9Mystic 199).

His victory in politics can be attributed to certain appropriate strategy that he took by applying his knowledge of practical psychology and his close observation of the people of Trinidad.

The continuous reference of Beharry and Great Belcher to the importance of Narayan ignited the spirit of Ganesh to defeat him in the ensuing “1946 Election.” We have already stated how he rebuffed the move of Narayan by forming the Hindu League. He further goes ahead to launch a paper named *The Dharma*. The intention was to counteract the statements of Narayan and to expose his corruptive activities such as misappropriation of funds collected for the “Home for Destitutes.” It is, therefore, evident that even in the beginning Ganesh acts like a past master in politics. Certain personal moves which are dear to the hearts of the electorates are undertaken by him. These strategies include arrangement of *Bhagwat* by the election committee of Ganesh.

Though the narrator is adopting an ironic and mock-heroic tone, nowhere does he condemn the character of Ganesh. In fact, as a novelist Naipaul is quite detached. He maintains neutrality in presenting the character of Ganesh, leaving
the conclusion to be drawn by the readers. The neutrality in which Ganesh is portrayed gives an impression that Naipaul is probably approving of whatever Ganesh does in order to establish his selfhood and achieve recognition as a political leader.

Ganesh is obviously seen by the novelist in his contradictory complexity. He does not dismiss him as a clever trickster only, but he gives him credit as being smart. He cultivates all the political qualities through which he can keep at bay the attributes of the Trinidadian society which tend to victimize and enslave. Therefore, “the usual charge against Naipaul that he is sardonic and malicious does not bear out as his fictional characters show that he is investing them with sympathy; they are human, they contain a cauldron of boiling opposites and incompatibilities” (Gowds 39). One, of course, may say that the transformation of the ungainly Ganesh into the Guru of the society “is a comedy essentially of the individual person in his damaged society” (Singh 58). But behind the comedy lies a human self which is incorruptible. For example, he compensates his failure as a masseur and his disappointment in having no children by his determination to continue in writing books.

Though he had formed the Hindu League to counteract the moves of Narayan’s Hindu Association, the reasons for his standing for elections lay elsewhere:

Ganesh didn’t have time for the affairs of the Hindu Association. This island elections were two months off and he found himself embroiled. Indarsingh had decided to go up in Ganesh’s ward and it was this rather than the promptings of the Association or Beharry or Swami that made Ganesh stand for the elections (Mystic 198).

That a real politician should not sit down and allow his adversary in politics to fool the people is emphasized in the following dialogue:
Ganesh asked Leela’s advice. She said, ‘But you have to go up. You are not going to sit down and let that boy fool the people?’ ‘Indarsingh ain’t a boy, man,’ ‘It was hard not to believe that.

His rise from the position of the mystic masseur to that of the Member of the Legislative Council is a story of “shifting about of reality” and the “mixing of things.” In other words, the rise of Ganesh indicates that the history of a place or a person lies in “a constant remaking and renaming of the world and of individual lives through simultaneous processes of displacement and accumulation” (Gourevitch 29).

Naipaul cannot be accused of lacking sympathy in the portrayal of Ganesh. The novelist satirises him, no doubt, it is done mildly. For example, in the Government House dinner scene, the manners of Ganesh as depicted by Naipaul is a case in point. For the newly elected politician that Ganesh is, his introduction into the formalities was rather a torture. But he returns home and tells his wife Leela in an amazing way.

Ganesh is not in favour of violence, but he could be very tough when it was necessary. For example, he deals with Narayan confidently when he was out to create trouble. Ganesh also ruled similarly with an iron hand when “Indarsingh lost his temper, bared an arm, quoted Gandhi, talked about the Oxford Union, and said he was ashamed of the corruption in the Hindu Association” (Mystic 195). Ganesh then gave a signal and four men rushed to Indarsingh and physically lifted him outside. Indarsingh was shouting “undemocratic” and “unconstitutional” (Mystic 195) but he was silenced once for all to make the rest of the meeting smooth. The rebuff was so timely that it speaks very high of the political tactics of Ganesh who knows when to use violence and where not to use it for the sake of political gain.

It is the opportunistic politics which Naipaul exposes in the political fight between Ganesh and Narayan. Unfortunately, Trinidadian politics as we find is
conceptualized on imitating the Western model. Therefore, the observation of Eric Williams is in proper order as noted below:

Political forms and social institutions were imitated rather than created, borrowed rather than relevant, reflecting the forms existing in the particular metropolitan country from which they were derived (501).

As a novelist Naipaul wants to say that no one should accept any political ideology that comes from outside if one does not understand the thought, science, philosophy, and law that determine such an ideology (Rothfork 184).

In this way The Mystic Masseur narrates the fortunes and eventual “success” of Ganesh Ramsumair, a West Indian of Hindu origin. Beginning as a poor and gullible orphan, Ganesh rises to be a celebrity of Trinidad and is decorated with an M.B.E. He achieves this by consolidating and putting to use, the mixture of Western and Eastern (Indian) values and skills which he possesses, though his success as a colonial is achieved only by his betrayal of his native interests. Worldly, despite his ambitions as a writer and voracious reader, Ganesh is shown up as a fraud and a stooge of colonialism. Yet, in as much as he is self-made and has struggled to build his life, he is not judged totally adversely—Ganesh, the con-man is at the opposite pole from Biswas who, lacking the viciousness which makes Ganesh trim to scale, his father-in-law and other opponents, retains his integrity even in failure.

The Hindu society whose structure Naipaul condemns in Biswas is here shown up more as victim than as tyrant. The society is easy material to be exploited by the British on the one hand, and religious gurus (such as Ganesh becomes). The abscess which forms has subsequently to be treated by a regular doctor and the narrator’s tone tells us that Ganesh is a quack. Yet Ganesh is important enough to be an exceptional type in his society: “...the history of Ganesh is in a way, the history of our times... Ganesh Ramsumair, masseur, mystic, and since 1953, M.B.E.” (MMR. P. 18).
Naipaul’s expatriate sensibility born of an opposition between Hindu and Western worlds traces their spilt-influences in Ganesh. Ganesh begins as a typical Naipaul protagonist in his rebellions against Hindu culture. The Indian thread ceremony is humiliating to him for it publicly exposes the contrast between the two words.

The novel abounds in autobiographical notes. Ganesh’s studies at Queen’s Royal College, the brief teaching post which he leaves when his teaching is mocked at, the ambition to write a book, the Indian friends and weddings attended, the experience of authoritarian Hindu family organization, the migratory impulse to the West and Ganesh’s reliance on Hindu metaphysic, all connect with Naipaul’s own life and the fictional characters of his other novels, like Biswas, Anand, Ralph and Indar.

The West comes to Ganesh in the shape of the “mad” Englishman Mr. Stewart, “the man who was to have a decisive influence on his life” for he asks Ganesh to write down his thoughts. Ganesh’s starting a “cultural Institute” whose aim “will be the furthering of Hindu Culture and Science of Though in Trinidad”, and his turning “seriously, dedicatedly to books” after ordering three hundred books from the Everyman catalogue, indicate the blend of elements of the East and West which attracts him.

Ganesh’s love of books makes him an outsider to his community. Wanting to write and be published by an American publisher without knowing how to set about it, he manages to have printed a thousand copies of his thirty pages “A Hundred and one Questions and Answers on the Hindu Religions”, but not the best salesman can make the book sell. Out of this gloom of failure, he determines to set up as “Ganesh: Mystic”, and his fame spreads after curing a terrified boy of an imaginary “black cloud”. Then, growing wealthy, he is shown as a mimicking colonial bringing “improvements” to his new house which are a refrigerator, lavatory and musical toilet-paper rack. The inner world continues unchanged- “What God Told Me” and “Profitable Evacuation” are his two classics (the chord of Gandhianism is unfailingly struck by Naipaul). Ganesh brings out a paper Dharma to counteract his arch-critic Narayan’s The Hindu. He founds the
Hindu League and topples Narayan to become President of the Hindu Association. Winning the Island elections, he triumphs where his friend Indarsingh, Bachelor of Arts from Oxford, now seeking a stake in his native land, actually loses his deposit.

Ganesh’s “defence of British colonial rule is memorable” and he is rewarded with the M.B.E. The Epilogue, returns to the narrator, now at an English university, chronicling the final transformation/mimicry of Ganesh who surrenders his own and converts to G. Ramsay Muir.

Naipaul’s interest in the impact of colonialism on racial identity is evident in the portrait of Ganesh. The novel also speaks of his interest in Indian immigrant society, its attitudes, Hindu religion, India, and the life left behind in India. Hindu India is captured in the background to Ganesh’s life in “the only mango tree in the village”, a picture of Vishnu “beautiful four-armed god standing in an open lotus”, the mumbling of Hindu couplets, “a framed picture, issued by the The Gita Press of Gorakhpur…”, bathing and pooja rituals and a parcel of ancient Hindu manuscripts bound “in red cloth spattered with sandalwood paste”. Naipaul’s sensibility reverences these hallmarks of an old Hindu India for its completeness. In as much as Ganesh adapts to the practices of this tradition-bound community, his alienation is false and superficial, and never a matter which engages his being. He succeeds as Hindu, as Trinidadian and as the aspiring colonial politician, playing off whichever side of his personality fetches him money and status. The narrator’s own experiences lead him to understand Ganesh, but Ganesh is after all the supreme insider from whom Naipaul separates himself.

Salman Rushdie’s Midnight’s Children:

As Salman Rushdie’s second novel, *Midnights Children* published in 1980, he received international name and fame. The novel won Mc Connell Prize for fiction in 1981 and it became famous as a masterpiece in the history of English literature. The novel was received, both in India and abroad, with enthusiastic and almost unanimous acclaim. Skeptical voices were silenced by exuberant rhetoric and hymnist panegyrics.
Rushdie was accepted as a major writer and ranked with such widely diverse authors as Henry Fielding, Laurence Sterne, Rabelais, Charles-Dickens, Franz Kafka, James Joyce, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Gunter Grass and Milan Kundera. The book rode a wave of popularity unprecedented in the history of Indian writing in English.

More than twenty years have passed after that sensational event. Rushdie has published five more novels in the intervening period. One of them shook the world as no book had done before. But Midnight’s children, unlike many award-winning novels, continues to be read and discussed with interest not only by ordinary readers but by literary critics as well. The passage of time has sobered the uncritical enthusiasm and created a space for balanced critical judgment. The socio-economic and literary changes which have taken place both in and outside India and the tumultuous events of Rushdie’s own life—particularly the controversy over The Satanic verses—have made critics and scholars more guarded in their response to Midnight’s children and its author. Initially described as a comic-epic in prose about the picaresque journey of a fabulous hero whose birth coincided with India’s Independence and whose life encapsulates the experience of the country, the novel has gradually been subsumed in a theoretical discourse on nation, nationalism and post-coloniality. It is now regarded as a foundational text of postcolonial novel which challenges the authority of imperial textuality and disrupts the cultural and linguistic stability of the colonizing centre. It shows an alternative way of conceiving history that breaks down barriers between cultures. Others have viewed the book as a fictional representation of the postmodernist celebration of fragmentation, multiplicity and self-reflexivity. Rushdie’s perception that all narratives are susceptible of being re-written, his insistence on the ‘provisional nature of all truth’s and his narrativization of ‘slices’ in the form of ‘fragments of broken mirrors’ also refurbish his disposition towards post-
modernism. Critics have written about his multiple literary influences, his fusion of Indian oral tradition and western novel genes, and his innovative use of language. Everybody in India was not, however, amused by the book’s commercial success. Some severely criticized its ‘chutnification’ of Indian history while others challenged Rushdie’s claim for radicals’ innovations in language and style.

It was argued that Rushdie could not be considered as an Indian author because of his outsider position and that the success of *Midnight’s Children* was largely due to international publicity. But few people now deny its influence on younger writers for whom the book released a new spring of creativity and heralded a spirit of freedom. They were infected by Rushdie’s confident use of English and inspired by his acknowledgement of multiple viewpoints and narrative modes as well as his audacious attempt to place the marginalized story of an individual or a family at the center stage of national drama. Midnight’s children has been recognized as a landmark novel, an important turning point in post-Independence Indian fiction in English. Its runaway success catalyzed a spectacular resurgence of Indian English novel and brought about a remarkable change in the attitude of the reading public in India and abroad towards his phenomenon which has remained, until then, a largely walled in literary entity.

**Theme and form of *The Midnight’s children***:-

The very opening paragraph of midnight’s children establishes Rushdie’s narrative method, his interplay of history (India’s arrival at Independence’), autobiography (‘I was born in the city of Bombay’) and fantasy (‘once upon a time’). This interplay is sustained throughout the narrative which has a tripartite structure, consisting of three books and thirty roughly correspond to the thirty years of Saleem’s life and India’s thirty-year course from Independence to Emergency. History provides the book with its narrative axis and the linearity of public events holds the novel together. All the important historical events hold the novel together. All the important historical events in the chapters which sub-continent, from the Jallianwala Bagh massacre (1919) to the Emergency (1975) are ingeniously linked with the crucial turns in
the story of Saleem and his family so that autobiography of an individual reads like the history of a country and the odyssey of a family becomes the odyssey of a nation from 1915 to 1977, the period of Indian history Rushdie charts in the novel.

In his quest for individual identity, Salem ventures to rewrite the entire history of his times from random shards of memory, all the while conscious of falling victim ‘to the temptation of every autobiographer that since the past exists only in one’s memories --- it is possible to create past events simply by saying they occurred’. He makes no distinction between official facts and gossips and history and legends. He takes liberty with chronology and blends history with fiction, allowing concocted stories to encroach upon recorded events, in order to preserve the correspondence between his lives, and create the illusion of himself as a protagonist at the centre. Saleem knows that he can not lay claim to objectivity and that the reconstitution of his history is bound to be largely fictive because of his egotistical and selective framework of reference, his fallible memory which constantly plays tricks and provides an excuse for factual errors and unreliability, and his partial, fragmentary vision represented by his mnemonic icon, the perforated sheet. Despite his intention to produce a comprehensive account of the past with its continuities and missing links, he is condemned by his heritage-his grandfather’s perforated sheet – ‘to see (his) own life-its meanings, its structures- in fragments.’ (107) Implicit in his statement is the admission that human beings are ‘capable only of fractured perceptions’ (111, 12) and that all reclamations of the past are bound to be provisional and incomplete. He attempts to re-imagine the past and restore it to himself with the aid of memory. Rushdie foregrounds memory as an inextricable aspect of his delineation of India and makes the subject of the novel the other way by making use of memory as our tool. (1H, 10) Saleem Compares his presentation of history through memory to the picking process (‘chutinification’) which invariably leads to alteration and transformation: in words and pickles, I have immortalized my memories, although distortions are inevitable in both methods.’ (459) the pickle metaphor
suggests that history, reshaped through the imagination of a creative artist, becomes a kind of fiction. The story of Saleem doesn't look authentic history; it is just played with the shapes of history. *Midnight’s Children* offer a fictional alternative to the official history of the country. He presents the postcolonial history of India from an individual point of view. Rushdie seems to suggest that individual reclamation of the past provides a version of truth which is valid for the individual.

Part I of *Midnights Children* covers the major events that took place in India from 1915 to 1947 i.e. Pre-Independence era of India. Part II narrates the childhood of Saleem Sinai, the chief character of the novel. And the last part deals with the emergency period and the related incidents in India in those days. The novel presents the three generations of the Sinai family. It is the story of Saleem Sinai, born with 1001 other Indian children in the hour of midnight, 15 August, 1947. Of the 1001 children, who were born in various parts of the country, only 581 have survived by 1957. Each of these children possesses a superb magical power. The most powerful among these children are Saleem and Shiva who are the arch-sivals for leadership. Saleem calls a conference of the midnight children. These “children are not free from the faults that the adults have.”

Saleem blames the grown-ups for poisoning the minds of these midnight children. India’s elite Muslim, Parsu and Hindu live happily here in Bombay. The Methcoold estate in Bombay where Saleem lives is described as “three-story homes of gods standing on two-story Olympus, a stunted Kailash!”

In part one, Saleem, the protagonist, narrates the story of his grandfather, Aadam Aziz, a young doctor who returned from Germany with a good medical degree. One morning, this doctor was taken to examine a patient, Naseem, the ailing daughter of Ghani Sahib, a landlord in Kashmir. He treated her and later on
married her. He got a job at Agra University. When he was shifting his family to Agra, he witnessed the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar.

Aadam Aziz was surprised to see Nadir Khan at his residence, one fine morning. He wanted to save his life as he fled from assassins. He expressed his love towards Mumtaz, the second daughter of Aziz, but Major Zulefikar was assigned a job to capture Nadir Khan, whom Nadir avoided skillfully. In the meantime, a wealthy businessman from Delhi Ahmed Sinai married Mumtaz, later on known as Amina.

Soon after the communal riots in Delhi, Ahmed shifted to Bombay where Saleem took birth on the midnight stroke of August 15, 1947 at the time when India got independence and became free. Saleem says that “the children of midnight were also the children of the time fathered by history.” (118) Saleem said that his birth was prophesied by a fortune-teller and a Sadhu, gruted by the press. Saleem bagged the prize from the Times of India. Then Prime Minister Nehru sent his parents a letter praising him and his attitude. Nehru also wrote in the letter that Saleem would become the mirror of the nation.

Part One of the novel chiefly narrates the events that took place in India from 1915 to 1947. Therefore it deals with the early life of Saleem’s grandfather Aadam Aziz. Part Two of the novel begins with the never ending crisis faced by the family of Ahmed Sinai. The family decided to migrate to Pakistan. But they became the victims of 1965 war. Saleem thought that he was creating a world. Illusion of responsibility was of power and not of any guilt. Saleem was neither innocent nor was the only person who was guilty. In midnight’s children, we observe the patches straight away taken from history. These patches are correspondingly related by direct allusions to practical politics. The readers are supposed to decipher on their own. The class tension is portrayed in the scene where boatman Tai Bibi and Aadam Aziz have hot discussion.
It goes on when we notice the conflict of the poor accordion player Willie Winkie and the methwold household. Saleem and Shiva fight over the birthright of India itself. Saleem puts before us the mirror of Indian history. The reader finds number of episodes from the past which are tied together by saleem. The fiction and the fact go side by side in order to create astonishing effect on the readers. Timothy Brennan describes Midnight’s children as “repeatedly recalling the sectarian violence of contemporary Indian political life”.

The familiar ‘nativist’ rhetoric of much Third-World fiction is therefore both appropriated and parodied. Although much of midnight’s children upholds within a modern and political mode, repeatedly recalling the sectarian violence of contemporary Indian political life and the class tensions against which any national unity is artificially constructed, it is nevertheless designed to suggest the living presence of India’s mythical past, not as ‘vital tradition’ but as ‘false consciousness’.

India’s mythical past is felt everywhere in the novel. Ganesh is perhaps the most central of all the images. He is a God of good fortune. From the opening pages to the concluding chapter His reference is there. Aadam Aziz is said to have a nose “comparable only to the trunk of the elephant-headed Ganes.’ (8) In the last pages, Saleem’s ‘son’ Aadam Sinai is described as ‘the true son of Shiva-and-Parvati-(the) elephant headed Ganesh.’ (1500) Aadam has the qualities of Ganesh i.e. ability to overcome difficulties. Ganesh is ‘the typical embodiment of success in life and its accompaniments of good living, prosperity and place.’

The character of Shiva in the novel has nothing to do with the Shiva myth. For examples, shiva’s ‘gift of war’ is narrated like the god of destruction. But Shiva in the novel is fallible. He intentionally frightens weaker people. He uses offensive language. He has criminal mind. His action can not be justified. We can not expect metamorphosis in his character. He expresses no regret for whatever he does. Shiva joins the election fraud. The rivalry of Saleem and Shiva may have its roots in the legendary rivalry b/w
Shiva and Brahma. Saleem imagines the whole of Indian history and correlates it with his life and other characters. His impotency (lack of practical political power) is in no way an obstacle to his becoming a writer. Saleem acts himself a kind of Big Brother when he narrates how his mental transmissions had the power of entering minds at will. Padma is called Saleem’s ‘interlocutrix’ who plays an important role in novel. She calls Saleem ‘city boy’. The word ‘Padma’ indicates lotus and according to the the ancient Indian concept, the word ‘lotus’ symbolises someone who is born in slime and mud but capable to capture the essence of both worlds, the sordid and the beautiful. Padma’s relationship with Saleem is often strained. The graphic description of her relationship with Saleem makes us feel that she is an enchantress.

Padma is a servant, who is narrated at the beginning of this novel like this: thick of waist, some what hairy of forearm.” (21) Saleem cannot extract that heavenly pleasure from her as he is important. He is unable to make love to her but he is not indignant. Saleem is sexually attracted towards Padma, but it is the same monotonous ‘cold respect’.

Saleem totally disapproves Padma’s aesthetic counsels. He is rather snippy about her suggestions. He thinks that he is superior in his thoughts. He knows the limitations of her advice. Syllogism of her advice is noticed by Saleem. Therefore, he temperamentally sometimes avoids her advice. Padma is not vociferous. Her strength of story telling is Superb.

Padma’s plebeian strength of story telling is repeated in the story proper by serval characters. Mary Pereira, Saleem’s Christian ayah, whose gift of preserving memories he compares to Padma’s making of chutney (252), and above all, by the boatman Tai, whose chatter, says, Saleem, was fantastic, grandiloquent and ceaseless (9) whose age no one could remember, whose verbiage was endless and his talk, ‘magical’ and who was illiterate. Padma avoids any contentious argument with Saleem as she dislikes any breaking of narrative spell:
I must interrupt myself. I wasn’t going today because Padma has started getting irritated whenever my narration becomes self conscious, whenever, like an incompetent puppetcu, I reveal the hands holding the strings (72).

She is an illiterate and she regards Saleem as a person who gives more time to his writing. She feels that she is in a very difficult or unpleasant situation. But she never overacts though she understands the nothingness in her life. Her masterful control over Saleem can be felt when we see that she is Saleem’s typical audience. She is true critic of Saleem. But there are certain limitations to her criticism. Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* is a postmodern fantasy. It is a novel which is confessional, but it is a humble effort to gravitate towards the history of India, though the incidents are not in clear chronological order. There is a feeling of inertia sometimes in Saleem’s character. He recalls the halcyon days of his early days. The novel is a strange blend autobiography, history and fantasy.

**Conclusion:-**

In this chapter the themes and forms of *The Mystic Masseur* and *The Midnight’s children* have been discussed. To conclude, we can say that in the novel, ‘*The Mystic Masseur*’ Naipaul concerns himself with the Political reality of Trinidad just before and after independence. Independently the novel examines different aspects of the reaction to political independence of the individual and group. The novel dramatizes a particular feature of Trinidad’s inability to go back to colonial security or to generate a national identity thus emphasizing its political insignificance. On the other hand, in Rushdie’s *The Midnight’s Children* India’s mythical past is felt everywhere in the novel. Ganesh is perhaps the most central of all the images. He is a God of good fortune. From the opening pages to the concluding chapter His reference is there. In this way the novel is a strange blend autobiography, history and fantasy.
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