CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION
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Although the novel in India started with feeble works in the Nineteenth Century, it was in 1930's that the Indians actually began what has now turned to be a substantial contribution to the novel in English. R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao, and Mulk Raj Anand, are the three writers who defined the area in which the Indian novel was to operate. They established the suppositions, the manner of the idiom, the concept of the character and the nature of the themes which were to give to the Indian novel its particular distinctiveness.

After the 'Big Trio' there sprang up the new novelists like Bhabani Bhattacharya, Bala Chandra Rajan, Kushwanth Singh, and Manohar Malgonkar who contributed to this genre in their own way. In the seventies there appeared G.V. Desani with his astonishing All About H. Hatterr, an earliest example of the wild fantastic fiction. Then emerged on the scene Salman Rushdie with his novel Grimus. (1975)

Grimus is a fictional fantasy. Grimus knows the secret of interdimensional travel like the other main

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characters: Flapping Eagle an American from Arizona, Nicholas Digggle and Virgil Jones. Virgil Jones is Flapping Eagle's guide to the Stone Rose which holds the key to the gate. He is compared to Sancho and Eagle to Don Quixote. His dictum 'I think, therefore it exists is a play on Descartes's 'I think therefore I am', and "this word play is a typical example of the way Rushdie uses familiar quotations to give a variation "to a familiar concept of time, space and reality."²

Rushdie's second novel *Midnight's Children* appeared in 1981. This novel dramatizes the history of independent India in the person of the beak-nosed, wildly extravagant Muslim Saleem Sinai, who was born on the stroke of Midnight bringing in India's independence. The first part of the novel records the events of the pre-independent India and the story of Saleem's grand father Adam Aziz. Part II of the novel narrates the children of Saleem Sinai and the major political changes that occurred in India. Part three of the novel deals with the emergency operations, the rise and fall of Janatha Party and the hope and despair of Saleem.

Sinai. "The novel is regarded as a phantasmagoric saga ... the post-independence India and Saleem Sinai together go through the pangs of birth, the fancies of childhood, the traumas of adolescence and the anomalies of adulthood."

Rushdie's third novel, *Shame*, which appeared in 1983, deals with the political and social events that occurred in Pakistan. The novel concerns itself about shame and shamelessness. Omar Khayyam, the son of three reclusive spinster's, grows up in the cavernous recesses of the house named Nishapur. While shamelessness has led him fail to revenge family honour, the narrator states the case for shamelessness when he comments that men will sacrifice their dearest love on the implacable altar of their pride. Omar and the narrator are rejected. Omar finally by his mothers and the narrator by a chorus voice. Like the poet after whom his non-hero is named, the narrator is a translated man.

The narrator stands in meaningful relationships to Sufiya Zinobia Hyder who becomes the beast of shame.

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Born the wrong sex and retarded by disease, she becomes midnight's bastard. She burns, with shame for years as she feels for the world, the emotions that should have been felt but were not. It is at this function that one becomes aware of the depth of relationship between character and narrator. Like Sufiya the narrator senses and expresses the unfelt shame. Sufiya, with the voice of both the child and the monster, becomes the embodiment of shame. The narrator comments that such monsters are consigned to peripheries by conventions of disbelief. But she comes to pass not in any wilderness of friends but in the heart of respectable world. The story closes in something akin to revenger's tragedy.

In the fiction of Rushdie, one finds characters which are complex in temperament and motivation. For example, in *Grimus* one comes across characters like Virgil Jones Nicholas Reggio and Flapping Eagle. The novelist not only describes and evaluates the "motives and dispositional qualities" but also presents his characters talking and acting them by leaving the reader to infer in their own way.4 For example, Virgil Jones says: "O, my sincere

apologies," said Virgil Jones, if it seems I was ducking your inquiry. Far from it, sir, far from it. Nothing could give me greater pleasure than to elucidate the matter of the frock. The fact of the matter is one's conversational partners have been rather limited of late and the opportunity is well nigh irresistible. The affair of the frock is a trifle. This passage makes the readers interpret the character of Virgil Jones in their own way.

Similarly Padma in Midnight's Children is being presented as a marvellous character. Through the employment of the methods of 'showing' and also telling the novelist makes this character an idealised woman. She is sometimes a symbol of India, of contact with the earth, of anchor that Saleem Sinai has. She, in fact, drives Saleem in reaching his goal.

Even in Shame Sufiya dominates the action. By using the alternative methods of telling and showing the novelist has delineated the motives and dispositions of Sufiya Zinobia

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5. Grimus, p. 39.
successfully. The readers feel that her blushing registers the shamefulness of her father's tyrannical rule. They may also feel that love is an appropriate emotional label for her until this degenerates into the blind savagery of arbitrary beheadings.

In the Rushdie canon women characters are stronger than men. As Uma Parameswaran rightly observes, "Rushdie's women characters invariably get what they want because they have strength or will power, the force is with them so to say, and then know to reach their goal."6

Rushdie has successfully experimented with the English language in his works. In Midnight's Children the vocabulary given to each character sounds true. The Mission school students' expression - "Hey, what're you up to man? You running away from home secretly and all?"7 illustrates the point. One observes English, Hindi and Urdu languages used by the main characters in Midnight's Children. Padma's language in the novel is "explainable as translations that


7Midnight's Children, p. 213.
retain the flavour of the vernacular. Rushdie's word-play is another device which he employs in his novel.

Rushdie is successful in capturing the cadences of Urdu and the wry irony and humour that mark Urdu speech. "Are voh tere name kya hay, are voh uska nam kya hay," the 'what its name' frequently used by reverend mother in calling the servants and in referring to very specific objects, is disarmingly familiar to the Indian reader, but is probably missed by the western reader. Rushdie has attempted a few transliteration of vernacular idioms. Examples are given below:

A) ....... donkey from somewhere!
B) ....... mad man from somewhere!
C) ....... all these persons left simultaneously after a few moments, without having broken bread or eaten salt."
D) "May your grandsons urinate upon your pauper's grave."

Thus the novelist has found an appropriate style to express a felt experience authentic to his vision and purpose.  

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To conclude one may say that Salman Rushdie's fiction is composed of elements of fantasy, the grimmest realism and potent symbolism. It has successfully realised the Indian life on one hand and the Pakistani life on the other. Rushdie has the capacity to make the mythic and hieratic impulses of his vision issue into a positively Dickensian sumptuousness of detail. He has very ably generated the astonishing energy of a novelist unprecedented in scope, manner and achievement in the Indian novel in English.