Chapter 5
The Moor's Last Sigh

Postmodern thinking has been greatly influenced by the coming of the technological age, satellite broadcasting, popular rising, forced migration, tourism, mind-boggling speed of information and news media and other things. McHale comments about postmodernism:

"Postmodernism can be seen as a progression from the epistemological concerns of modernism to a greater interest in the nature of being which demands answers to such questions as: What world is this? What is to be done in it? Which of my selves to do it? What is a world? . . . What is the mode of existence of the world (or worlds) it projects" (McHaie.18)

These questions are appropriately dealt with in Rushdie's work as he attempts to examine and narrate a postcolonial world in a flux. Rushdie's peculiar brand of postmodernism is exhibited in these lines of his novel, The Moor's Last Sigh: "That most profound of our needs, to our need for flowing together, for putting an end to frontiers, for the dropping of the boundaries of the self" (Moor's Last Sigh 433).

Rushdie gives a new shape to historical novel form. Without generalisation he demonstrates the impossibility of our experience, as he says in Midnight's Children:

There are so many stories to tell, too many, such an excess of intertwined lives, events, miracles, places, rumours, so dense a commingling of the improbable and mundane! I have been a swallower of lives, and to know me, just the one of me, you'll have to swallow the lot as well (Midnight's Children 9).

In fact both Midnight's Children and The Moor's Last Sigh can be seen as metafictions as they are bound up in a dialogue not only with the history of India's independence but also with other Third World's fictional narrations and English canon itself. Postmodernism is an essentiality rule-breaking kind of art and the novel violates three unities of time, place and action and in its use of magic realism; conventional mimetic art is given up. Rushdie ridicules the whole project of realist art.

Likewise, in The Moor's Last Sigh, all the usual ingredients of Rushdie's fiction are found. We can see a large canvass; a narrative covering several generations; characters sporting different kinds of eccentricities; employment of thinly disguised real-life personages; 'a conscious attempt to allegorise; a magic realism and constant word-play. The presentation of family tree and its dynastic structure of
four books corresponding to the four generation of Da Gama’s and Zogoiby’s mocking the vast project of the epic. The large-scale setting alludes to the traditional epic form. The hero is of national importance and is capable of performing superhuman deeds. However, Rushdie's narrator is without benefit or need of Virgil’s. There is an abundance of references from Milton’s Paradise Lost or Virgil. Moor irreverently abandons high seriousness for a last hurrah, a final, scandalous skin of shaggy dog yarns and a set of rowdy tunes for the wake.

One of the great hallmarks in Rushdie's use of postmodernism is that he goes away from the dry and humourless tone of Bumes and Pynchon and he continuously amuses and revels in endless play of contradictions, which his text proposes. He is concerned with finding a place in literary history and tries to carve out his own unique territory.

Postmodern writers abandon linear narrative forms and split open the division between the real and the imaginary. Rushdie also practises this thing and in this revisionist perspective he merges fact with the fantastic and firmly links the fate of his characters with Indian history. The Moor's identity, a "high-born-cross breed", is seen to parallel that of a nation with a long history of immigration and imperialism. In the conventional historical novel, attempt is being made to hide the violation of the ontological boundary between real and imaginary characters. Rushdie transgresses the rules of this genre in creating wholly fictional confrontations between real and imaginary characters.

In The Moor’s Last Sigh Mo’s sister Ina beats Indira Gandhi as number one "Role Model" in a magazine. Raman Fielding is a thinly disguised portrait of Bal Thackeray, the leader of Shiv Sena. Cameons becomes involved in the Indian National Congress. Rushdie admits that his story is not history but it plays with historical shapes. "Art, ultimately, was not life; that what might feel truthful to the artist ... did not necessarily bear the slightest connection to events and feelings and people is the real world"(Moor’s Last Sigh 247).

In the postmodern condition, Lytard champions 'open' systems and deplores terrorist systems which demand that everyone speak in a single voice. Moor laments "the tragedy of multiplicity destroyed by singularity, the defeat of many by one" preferring to be "a nobody from nowhere, like no one, belonging to nothing".

That way The Moor’s Last Sigh though grounded in the history of India is also an attempt to narrate family history and its non-linear structure is a reflection on the fragmented processes of recollection. Rushdie suggests that memory is unreliable and that the past is vulnerable to distortion. "Ah the legends of the batting of da Gamas of Cochin! I tell them as they have come down to me, polished and fantasticated by many re-tellings" (Moor’s Last Sigh11).
Be it as it may in postmodernism it is difficult to distinguish truth from falsehood. The notion of truth is interrogated and the ability of arriving at a single meaningful and knowable version of the world is suspected. The Moor recognises that different and perhaps equally valid truths that exist about his family:

"For the moment, I present the approved and polished family yarn; which being so profound a part of my parent's picture of themselves—and so significant a part of contemporary Indian art history—has, for those reasons if no other a power and importance I will attempt to deny (Moor's Last Sigh 78).

Critics think that Postmodernism proposes a contradictory idea which claims to avoid totalising discourses and get in the way it becomes totalising itself and refuses to priviledge any single discourse. Rushdie is aware of these contradictions but recognises his inability to resolve it. He explores its possibilities for artistic representations. The central metaphor of The Moor's Last Sigh is the idea of a palimpsest. First it is applied to Aurora's particular form of art but as the novel proceeds this metaphor is extended to cover history, India a country and the identity of the self. The Moor's Last Sigh is a painting by aurora but it is the title of the novel also. For the world Abraham (The Moor's father) deals in talcum powder and spices but his transactions mask his trafficking in cocaine and prostitution.

The city itself, perhaps the whole country, was a palimpsest, Under world beneath Over world, black market beneath white; when the whole life was like this, when as invisible reality moved phantomwise beneath a visible fiction, subverting all its meaning, how then could Abraham's career have been any different? How could any of us have escaped that deadly layering? ... How could we have lived authentic live? (Moor's Last Sigh 184-5).

India is seen as constituted from layers of alien empires and Bombay as "the bastard child of a Portuguese English edding and yet the most Indian of Indian cities". Cameons is a humorous portrayal of the individual who is made up of parts at variance with one another. He was a member of the National Congress. The Moor who is originally of Arabian and North African descent is figured problematically, "Before the emergency we were Indians, after it we were Christian Jews". When Aoi, the Moor's fellow prisoner in Vasco Miranda's 'Little Alhambra' removes the top layer of The Moor's Last Sigh, she recognises the fact that in removing one layer, you annihilate the other. Here Rushdie seems to propose that contradictions should be internalised and we should accept multiplicity.

Postmodernism is "indeed an outstanding age of international creation, striking experiment and some degree of aesthetic coherences having its own distinctive preoccupations and stylistic choices. In postmodern fiction, verbal play, internal rhyme, unfinished sentences and strange verbal conjoinings
characterise the linguistic pattern. It is highly self-reflexive fictional form foregrounding and problematising the processes of writing. It is appropriate that Rushdie subverts conventional uses of language in dealing with India after imperialism through texts addressed to the Western world. He has said that it is a situation in which English, "no longer an English language now grows from many roots; and those whom it once colonised are carving out large territories within language for themselves."

In a postcolonial country, choice of language is unavoidably a choice of identity. He writes with an overly distinctive Indian flair. There are many phrases, words, and actions that would not be understood by someone unless they have an understanding of Indian culture and some understanding of Hindi. His prose is done well, but becomes very repetitive and wordy. In *Midnight's Children* language divides the nation and similarly during the language riots in *The Moor's Last Sigh* Aurora complains: "All these different lingoes cuttofy us off from one another," ironically claiming that "only English brings us together" (*Moor's Last Sigh* 179). Rushdie's use of language is vast and entertaining. He uses the fast paced, cliched internet language.

In postmodern writing there is a tendency to mistrust meaning. The concept of reality Rushdie's text give form the idea that we are living through an information revolution as he uses the great number of literary and other references. By an intertextuality, which crosses over history, a sense of the simultaneity of past, present and future is created. *The Moor's Last Sigh* is rich in literary allusions such as *Aesop's Fables*, nursery rhymes, and music hall, Hindu and Biblical myth, Shakespeare, westerns and a cartoon picture. Here we find 'Snow queen' fairy tale also parallel to the Aurora / Uma / Vasco relationship. Classic Oepidus myth is also thinly disguised (The Moor is firmly linked to Oedipus with his club like hammer hand and the deceptive tape recordings set up by the malicious Uma in which she has the Moor admit to his sexual desire for his mother). The Moor's imagination of his confrontation with his father reminds of those in Bladerunner or Star wars.

The culmination of Rushdie's fictional self referentiality occurs when Aurora's style of painting is described in terms of postmodernism. Rushdie's fiction is an eclectic mix of styles and opinions. In this novel he shows us the dangers of postmodernism. Uma is driven to insanity by her attempts to "take on radically different personal in the company of different people; she no longer had a clear sense of authentic identity that was independent of these performances."

Renaming of Adam Zogoiby shows his lack of genuine selfhood. The most important example is Vasco's Little Alhambra in which the Moor is trapped. It is portrayed as dictatorial nightmare. It is argued that Rushdie finally rejects postmodernism when he comments:

In Indian country, there was no room for a man who didn't want to belong to a tribe, who
dreamed of moving beyond, of peeling off his spin and revealing his secret identity—the secret, that is, of the identity of all men of standing before the war-painted braves to unveil the flayed and naked unity of the flesh (Moor’s Last Sigh 414).

Both postmodernism and postcolonialism are concerned with the deconstruction of centralised logocentric master narratives of European culture, an attempt to dismantle the centre/margin binarism. Their focus on language and writing in the construction of experience are overlapping concerns. However Rushdie’s use of postmodern techniques to discuss India’s postcolonial situation might be seen as wholly inappropriate, as his portrayal of India and Indians might be seen as guilty of stereotyping in his use of magic realism and the implication that India can be described in terms of disunity, fantasy and irrationality. Brennan has argued of Rushdie:

Though he writes about his native land, Rushdie carefully abstracts its features and makes them exotic, as if to reflect the uncomfortable similarities between himself and an adventurer stationed in London selling Oriental wares to a public whose tastes he knows from several decades of travel (Brennan:xii).

However, both postmodernist and postcolonial literary practices are involved in a ‘space clearing gesture’, and not only does Rushdie open up and problematise postmodernist representation but he also engages with and recognises the vast body of colonial literature and the need to seek out a means of representing the postcolonial subject.

The Moor’s Last Sigh is none the less a timely and compelling novel that captures and explores many of the complexities and contradictions of the emergent discourses of nationalism in postcolonial India. The novel also throws light on the condition of the postcolonial world. It also shows the hybrid, ambiguous status of the Anglo-Indian writer. In Rushdie, we find the multitudes of Britain and India. His use of intertextuality suggests that the reality of postwar nationalism is that it is international.

The novel Moor’s Last Sigh speaks of several foreign influences such as International Aesthetics, Fundamentalism and Hybridity, and Neo-Colonial Construction of India.

**International Aesthetics:**

Rushdie is similarly pessimistic about the relationship between community and postcolonial national identity, though for different reasons. In The Moor’s Last Sigh, community is not beneficent, but violently and authoritatively exclusionary. The strongest community in the novel is that of the Hindu nationalists, led by Raman "Mainduck" Fielding, a caricature of the leader Bal Thackeray, and Rushdie
holds them responsible for the transformation of his beloved cosmopolitan Bombay into sectarian Mumbai. Rushdie therefore turns back to the image of the nation as family, both paternal and maternal, to try to resurrect an inclusive image of Indian plurality.

Perhaps unsurprisingly given its prominence in political and literary texts, the family metaphor has become a central trope in postcolonial criticism as well. Postcolonial studies are beset by the question of aesthetic and material context: how to account for a text's relationship to colonial experience without subsuming its other attributes to a comparison with the West. This question frequently emerges in terms that Fredric Jameson sets forth when he characterizes literature either as libidinal and private or as national allegory.

This model has been exhaustively critiqued for its homogenization of colonial experiences and its replication of colonialism's center/ periphery organization. As Revathi Krishnaswamy cautions, Jameson's paradigm of postcolonial literature as national allegory uniformly constitutes all Third World intellectuals, regardless of their gender or class, as marginalized insurgents or as nationalists struggling against a monolithic Western imperialism. Difference is reduced to equivalence, interchangeability, syncretism, and diversity, while a leveling subversive subalternity is indiscriminately attributed to any and all.

The most prevalent alternatives to Jameson's reading of postcolonial literature are those substituting class, gender, or racial identifications for national ones and those focusing on the local material-historical concerns of the text. How, then, do we approach novels, such as *The Moor's Last Sigh*, that embody national allegory as what can literature teach us about fundamentalism? Since September 11, 2001, social scientists have rushed to offer their interpretations of radical Islam, the clash of civilizations, jihad, and other purportedly relevant phenomena. Rarely do commentators turn to literary sources. There is much contemporary fiction that would in fact have proved valuable: both Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* and Hanif Kureishi's "My Son the Fanatic," for example, offer useful reminders that fundamentalism is a modern, metropolitan, late-capitalist invention. But the most obvious novelistic source on fundamentalism would, of course, be the work of Salman Rushdie. While *The Satanic Verses* anticipated many of the themes that later played out in his own history, Rushdie's best work on fundamentalism and its enemy hybridity - the two modes of belief that in his estimation define all culture - came in his 1995 novel *The Moor's Last Sigh*. That epic and often disorganized novel brilliantly represents fundamentalism and hybridity as not only competing modes of expression but competing forms of historiography. Through one or the other, all thinking people organize their ideas of art, love,
and politics and their pictures of past, present, and future. Ultimately, Rushdie reveals the apparent opposites as distorted versions of each other. In *The Moor’s Last Sigh* there are not one but multiple fundamentalisms, and as it turns out, all of them are contemporary, manufactured phenomena. Conversely - and less palatably to his cosmopolitan readership - Rushdie shows hybridity too to be its own brand of fundamentalism.

**Fundamentalism and Hybridity:**

Dohra Ahmed writes,

A year after Khomeini’s fatwa Rushdie effectively if obliquely forswore Islam as a literary subject. In a 1990 review of Philip Roth’s memoir *The Facts*, Rushdie retells the story of Roth's experience following the publication of *Goodbye Columbus*. Vilified by Jewish readers, whom he had previously identified as his constituency, Roth responded, in Rushdie's summary, "I'll never write about Jews again!" On that score, Rushdie declares portentously, "he seems to speak directly, profoundly, not only to, *but for*, me" - the implication, of course, being that Rushdie would never write about Muslims again. However, Rushdie's foresight and ambition would not allow him to limit himself so categorically. Announcing that Roth speaks for him even as he himself speaks for Roth is a careful and unusual maneuver. As he both swears and does not swear a parallel vow to Roth's, he both obeys and does not obey it in *The Moor’s Last Sigh* (Ahmed 224).

Just as fundamentalism does, hybridity appears in many guises, including what the mythical land whose loss the original Moor sighed for. Rushdie, and Aurora after him, based the novel's title which is also the title of series of Aurora’s paintings on the legend that Arab Andalusia’s last sultan, the weak and quixotic Boabdil, wept upon being forced from Granada, where as Rushdie put it elsewhere, a composite culture thrived with Christians and Jews and Muslims living side by side for hundreds of years. As his namesake cried for Andalusia, our Moor and his creator both mourn the loss of a tolerant, multi-cultural India whose demise Rushdie dates at the rise of the Hindu right in the 1990s. Elsewhere, the same ideal becomes Moor's vision of love, the blending of spirits, as melange, as the triumph of the impure mongrel conjoining best over what there is in us of the solitary, the isolated, the austere, the dogmatic, the pure; of love as democracy, as the victory of the no-man-is-an-island, two's-company Many over the clean, mean, apartheiding Ones. What begins as an apparent prescription for art and culture metamorphoses into a comprehensive philosophy of every aspect of life.
Colonial Construction of India:

The widow in *Midnight's Children* and Raman Fielding in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, both these political figures and their respective perverse ideological inclinations seem to push postcolonial Indian society onto the brink of what Chakrabarty calls the assumed death of the social. Civil society appears to collapse as an atmosphere of chaos and anarchy seems to reign supreme. *Midnight's Children* may be Rushdie's reaction to Mrs. Gandhi's declaration of Emergency and *The Moor's Last Sigh* a response to the rise on the subcontinent of a new right-wing militant Hindu political movement in the late 1980s. Nevertheless, we see Rushdie's imaginative reconstruction of India in these two novels as a clever reworking of the old colonial paradigm in which the colonies were always the inevitable locus of chaos and anarchy, the epitome of uncivilized existence. These are tropes fashioned to look down upon colonial and postcolonial periphery with some version of the idea of backwardness. Rushdie's political stance becomes quiet evident and more aggrieving if one takes into account his public statement referred to earlier in the essay.

In conclusion it may be said that the trope of modernity enables Rushdie to discursively constitute India through an orientalizing lens that leaves the subcontinent's transition into modernity grievously incomplete, legitimizing the West's claims to authority over the ex-colonized and still disadvantaged terrains and also re-inscribing in the process colonial power relations in a new postcolonial context. Rushdie indeed seems to be turning white a disease that leaks wholesale into his fiction.

The centralization of state authority instituted by Indira Gandhi during the Emergency, the fanatical scene of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya being demolished by the self-styled devotees of Lord Rama, the supernatural images of Lord Ganesha drinking milk getting a political interpretation that justifies a right wing Hindu mass movement, the burning alive of the Australian missionary Graham Staines and his two sons - all these incidents may have left Indian modernity precariously lodged on the edge of an eminent danger of falling over flat on its face. But even these events are not reasons enough for rendering the image of the subcontinent in terms of 'lack' and 'failure'. One simply cannot understand why writing nearly three decades ago Sumit Sarkar has to open his seminal text book on Indian history - *Modern India* - on an elegiac note describing India's entry into the 'habitations of modernity' as a story of bourgeois modernity that is grievously incomplete. After all, the pursuit and framing of knowledge is not a politically disinterested and innocent exercise.
Works Cited


Conclusion

Salman Rushdie is one of the greatest living writers staying in the West. Rushdie, a Bombay born, England-educated, did various odd jobs before switching over to the career of a writer. He began writing fiction.

Rushdie was born in Bombay, then British India, into a Muslim family of Kashmiri descent. He is the son of Anis Ahmed Rushdie, a Cambridge-educated lawyer-turned-businessman, and Negin Bhatt, a teacher. Rushdie has three sisters. He wrote in his 2012 memoir that his father adopted the name Rushdie in honour of Averroes (Ibn Rushd). Rushdie was educated at Cathedral and John Connon School in Bombay, Rugby School in Warwickshire, and King’s College, University of Cambridge, where he read history. His father Anis Rushdie was rusticated from the Indian Civil Service (ICS) after the British government found out that he had changed his date of birth.

Rushdie worked as a copywriter for the advertising agency Ogilvy & Mather, where he came up with “irresistibubble” for Aero and “Naughty but Nice” for cream cakes, and for the agency Ayer Barker, for whom he wrote the memorable line “That’ll do nicely” for American Express. It was while he was at Ogilvy that he wrote Midnight’s Children, before becoming a full-time writer.

Various influences are seen in Salman Rushdie’s writings, and the first of these is his family folks. A serious reader can discern that Midnight Children is about India, Shame about Pakistan and Satanic Verses about England. If Saleem Sinai is Rushdie himself Ahmed Sinai is his father and Azin Sinai, his grandfather. The facts of his life, the incidents and characters that people it, are re-played in his fiction, but with their meaning and significance drawn out, displayed, allegorized. Thus, avid consumers of Rushdie’s anecdote about himself—disseminated in his interviews and essays—are likely to recognize in Saladin B Chamcha’s life several incidents drawn from his creator’s, including the infamous kipper incident in The Satanic Verses which Rushdie has pronounced ‘absolutely true’.

‘Saleem and Salman are after all’, notes Rushdie, ‘if you look back etymologically, kind of versions of the same name ... so there are clear affinities made ... he’s the same age as me more or less ... he grows up in my house, he goes to my school, some of the things that happened to me happen in more interesting form to him.’ The conversion of his own life into fiction is evident even more so in Rushdie’s latest novel, Fury (2001), which many reviewers have disliked for this precise reason (Rushdie 308).
The town of Bombay, his birth place is India for Rushdie.

Salman Rushdie was born to an affluent Muslim family in Bombay on 19 June 1947, only two months’, Rushdie is fond of saying, before ‘the British left’ India. Being the eldest child, and a much-adored only son (Rushdie has three sisters) conferred upon him a sense of his own importance. Bombay, which he calls that ‘most cosmopolitan, most hybrid, most hotchpotch of cities’, is, to a great extent, India for Rushdie, the major setting as well for Midnight’s Children, his novel about India’s birth; and symbol and embodiment, more recently, in The Moor’s Last Sigh, of the erosion of the myth of a secular, multi-lingual, multicultural India.

Rushdie had his education first in Bombay and then in England. He specialized in History. Then he returned to Pakistan (where his family had moved in 1967, for which he did not forgive them). He served on Pak radio briefly. England, Pakistan, study of history and Bollywood have influenced Rushdie heavily.

The folklore as well as story-telling traditions appear in Rushdie again and again. His father had bought a library of an Anglo-Indian officer, and Rushdie’s mother was a story-teller. Omar Khayyam Shakil, in Shame, inherits a library bought by his grandfather from a departing English colonel. Rushdie’s was a family of storytellers: his father, ‘a magical parent of young children’ because he knew how to tell a story, reappears in Haroun and the Sea of Stories as Rashid Khalifa, a well-known storyteller, whose tales ‘tall, short, and winding’ are ‘really lots of tales juggled together’; and his mother was ‘the keeper of family stories.’

Rushdie is thus influenced by various forces and Indian English writing is just one of them. This scholar has made a brief yet useful survey of Indian English literature in chapter one.

Once his first novel, a science-fiction story Grimus (1975) failed to make a name, Rushdie like older writers Hardy and Dickens, decided to write about India and more about something much closer to his knowledge of the world. In ‘The Indian Writer in England’, Rushdie recalls how, on revisiting his house in Bombay, he was ‘gripped by the conviction that I, too, had a city and a history to reclaim’; at that moment Midnight’s Children was really born. Rushdie, who boasts of possessing virtually total recall, set out to assiduously recall as much of the Bombay of the 1950s and 1960s he could to serve as material and inspiration for Midnight’s Children. Published in 1981, it was a runaway success; it won the Booker Prize (in 1993 it was awarded The Booker of Bookers, the best of the twenty-six books to have
won the prize from the time it was instituted in 1969), and made him a celebrity lionized by the media the world over.

Over the years, from at least 1984, Rushdie was mapping out what was to become his most controversial work, *The Satanic Verses*, in an oeuvre dominated by other controversial works. “This is the first time’, Rushdie is reported to have said after completing it, ‘that need to write a book from the whole of myself. . . my entire sense of being in Id.’ With the migrant’s vision, identities, and concerns as its central preoccupations, *The Satanic Verses* is set in Margaret Thatcher’s Britain, with characters who shuttle between Britain and the subcontinent, twentieth-century India and Britain, and seventh century Asia. *The Satanic Verses* also attempts to embody Rushdie’s attitude to Islam, to matters of faith and doubt. Even before it hit the market, the novel caused a stir in the publishing world by garnering a huge advance.

Andrew Sanders adds, “Quite the most striking and inventive single novel to discuss India’s transition from Raj to Rushdie is Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*” (Sanders 659).

Various influences like India, history, Indian Partition, Post-modernism, magic realism, stream of consciousness narrative technique have influenced *Midnight’s Children*. This is interpreted in Chapter Two of the present thesis.

*Shame*, Rushdie’s novel set in and about the ruling elite of Pakistan, followed two years later. It was also enthusiastically received, garnering much critical acclaim. It won *The Prix du Meilleur Livre Etranger* from France. It was banned in Pakistan, with copies being smuggled in. Coming from the perspective of a reflective expatriate narrator, who has only occasionally participated in the life of the nation he narrates, *Shame*, unlike *Midnight’s Children*, is a vision of Pakistan by an ostensible outsider. Foregrounding the distortions and dislocations his perspective may be heir to the narrator also raises questions about the value of an outsider’s perspective, the advantage and by definition the migrant might possess by virtue of their—as Rushdie says in ‘The Indian Writer in England’—long geographical sight’.

*Shame* in which the fabulist traditions of *The Thousand and One Nights* and *Rubayat* of Omara Khayam figure in a highly political allegory about Pakistan (*Cambridge Guide to Literature in English* 969).
If *Midnight Children* is about India, and *Shame* about Pakistan, the next novel *Satanic Verses* (1988) is about England, Rushdie’s adopted home, touching upon Kuran. Anuradha Dingwaney writes,

At the same time, in a scathing critique of the Raj revival in a spate of films and novels about India—*Gandhi, The Far Pavilions, The Jewel in the Crown, A Passage to India*—Rushdie, in ‘Outside the Whale’, wrote vociferously against the revival of the imperial mindset in Britain. He also denounced British racism by writing eloquently about the ‘new empire in Britain’ (Dingwaney 310).

In Andrew Sander’s view,

“The *Satanic Verses* offers its readers a further phantasmagoria, but now one with an international and multicultural dimension in which time and destiny, good and evil, the secular and the religious, the material and the spiritual are dangerously and inventively interfused.” (Sanders, 659)

*The Satanic Verses* attempts to embody Rushdie’s attitude to Islam, to matters of faith and doubt. Even before it hit the market, the novel caused a stir in the publishing world by garnering a huge advance. Various influences like Islam, Mohammad, vision and voices, Eliot’s Waste Land are apparent here. All this is analyzed in the fourth chapter of the thesis.

While in hiding, Rushdie has written a ‘children’s’ book, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (1991; promised to his son, Zafar) and put together a collection of essays written between 1981 and 1991, entitled, not inappropriately, *Imaginary Homelands* (1991). He has also brought out a collection of short stories, *East-West* (1994), several of which, Rushdie says, were written for, but did not find place in, *The Satanic Verses*. He has revisited, in *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, the narrative and geographical terrain first mined in *Midnight’s Children*. His latest novels, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999) and *Fury* (2001), have not been as well received, the reviews having been more mixed and the reception less spectacularly controversial than for the earlier, political fiction.

For Rushdie, *The Moor’s Last Sigh* (1995), appearing six years after *The Satanic Verses*, and written while in exile, marks the ‘completion of a cycle he began in *Midnight’s Children, Shame* and *The Satanic Verses*— “the story of myself, where I came from, a story origins and memory.’ More than anything else, *The Moor’s Last Sigh* revisits a particular place Bombay, and a particular project, the birth and growth of a nation, India that he first elaborated in *Midnight’s
Children. This time, though, it is through the perspective not of a narrator from the Muslim middle class, but from one in whom two other minority communities—Christian and Jewish Indians, settled in Goa—are conjoined. But, like Saleem, Moraes Zogoiby (nicknamed the Moor) is also a magical, extraordinary figure: a giant with a deformed hand, he suffers from a rare genetic disease that forces him to grow at twice the rate ordinary humans do.

As in Midnight’s Children (and through somewhat different means in The Satanic Verses), The Moor’s Last Sigh celebrates mixtures, impurities, hybridity – more than one community and culture, after all, jostle within Saleem Sinai and the Moor. Of these, Bombay, according to the Moor, is the exemplary spatial embodiment: ‘Bombay was central, had been so from the moment of its creation: the bastard child of a Portuguese-English wed’ ding, and yet the most Indian of all Indian cities. In Bombay all India met and merged. In Bombay, too, all-India met what-was-not-India. (Dingwaney 310).

All this is interpreted in Chapter Five

Salman Rushdie is a great writer, indeed.

According to Anita Desai, Rushdie showed English-language novelists in India a way to be ‘post-colonial’. There is an entire generation of novelists from India who feel the weight of Rushdie’s influence as enabling (or disabling) their own talents. Quite apart from what Rushdie demonstrated via his technique, his vivid descriptions, and his idiosyncratic characters, he showed Indians how the English language could be appropriated, bent in any way one wanted, to achieve sensational effects. To cite but a few examples, all from The Moor’s Last Sigh, of Rushdie’s transforming magic: relentlessly punning his way into his narrative, playing on words, the Moor remarks upon the conundrum of the discovery of India—

‘how could we be discovered when we were not covered before?’; ‘we were not so much subcontinent as sub-condiment. . . [the Portuguese, the French and the English] came for the hot stuff. Elsewhere, the Moor, a ‘Cathjew nut’, transcribes his great-grandmother, Epifania’s Indian-English, with hilarious effect: ‘In this God-fearing Christian use, British still is best, madder moyselle . . . If you have ambitions in our boy’s direction, then please mind of your mouth . . . Pudding-shudding? Why not? These are Christmas topics frawline.’ And, finally, the Moor plays on the similarity between insanity and ‘insaaniat’ (humanity) to aver: ‘Just as I have rejected all supernatural theories, so I will not allow her [Uma, his treacherous lover] to be mad . . . insane
persons are excused from moral judgement, and Uma deserves to be judged. *Insaan*, a human being. I insist on Uma's insanity.' (Dingwaney 310).

The findings as we can see it in Conclusion of the research are as follows:

1. Salman Rushdie is one of the best English writers. He presents the entire Asian subcontinent, both India and Pakistan included, in reality.
2. Rushdie criticizes Islam for reforms.
3. Rushdie is a great visionary, a genius, an innovator, and experimentalist.

There is a select bibliography.
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