

## Salman Rushdie- A Silver Lining in a Cloudy Sky

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**Nakul Grover**

M.A. (English Literature)

IGNOU, New Delhi

### **Abstract**

It has been a century Salman Rushdie has been in the literary world. He is a writer who depicted the post-colonial era in an illustrative way. Rushdie is a post-modernist writer who has been straightforward regarding the representation of ideology. Like every other post-modernist authors, he also showed his reliance on religious and cultural harmony and rejection of the authoritative political structure. While talking about socio-political transition, the author relied on paradox. His most innovative way of using magic realism most stylistically has been the focal point of his literary works.

The pivotal aspect of Rushdie's work is various ideas taken from early literature. The most important aspect of his literary work is the non-linear and minimalistic approach to the plot that he created. The research paper is going to discuss Salman Rushdie's life and his literary works. While reviewing an author, it is important to go through his early life to find out any relevance or reflection of incidents that the author mentioned in his works. So, the early life of Rushdie will help to analyze his literary style and also helps to understand the reason behind various literary aspects.

**Keywords:** Life and Career of Salman Rushdie, Literary Style of Salman Rushdie, Various Aspects of Salman Rushdie's Works

### **Introduction**

Amidst the murky world politics, an author was born with a silver lining. His wit and excellent writing skill enamoured the readers and frightened autocrats. How can we define Rushdie? A novelist who won the Booker Prize or a man of magic realism? Perhaps he is more than that, and the research paper will try to discuss his work and life and also try to see how he evolved as an author. While talking about Salman Rushdie's work, it is essential to mention that he portrayed a time when the Indian subcontinent got actively addressed as 'third world.' Due to that, many Western readers used to treat his work as a bizarre entertainment; others considered it as a threat.

### **A Brief Insight of Life and Career of Salman Rushdie**

Salman Rushdie was born on 19th June 1947 in Bombay to Kashmiri's parents. His father, Anis Ahmed Rushdie, was a lawyer, and his mother's name was Negin Bhatt. Rushdie has three sisters, and his childhood was spent in Bombay, and he did his schooling in Bombay later he was moved to England and finished his high school education. After that, he studied history at Cambridge University. After completing his conventional education, Rushdie started his career as a copywriter for Ogilvy and Mather. Besides working at an advertisement agency, he started writing 'Midnight's Children.'

He published his first work in 1975, and that is way before he became a full-time author, and his first work failed to earn readers. His most notable work published in 1981, and it is 'Midnight's Children.' The book earned acclaim and hatred both at the same time. After that, the author published his third work in 1983, and the name of the book is 'Shame.' Rushdie wrote his non-fiction work called 'Nicaragua' and published it in 1987. His most controversial literary work is 'The Satanic Verses' published in 1988, and in 1990, he published 'Haroun and the Sea of Stories.' It was the time the writer was dealing with a fatwa. Despite all the obstacles that came to his way, he never stopped writing and kept on publishing his literary works one after another.

### **A critical review on the literary style of Salman Rushdie**

Salman Rushdie, the name has become a controversy due to his incisive critical perspective on the post-colonial era, religion, socio-political scenario of the Indian subcontinent, and misinterpretation of religion. But what makes his literary style unique is his use of metaphors and allegory. The style he chose is magic realism, in which the plot is a fusion of imagination and realism. In one of his notable works, 'Midnight's Children,' the theme deals with the liberation of expression but through magic realism. On the other hand, the story progresses through historical events and parallel deals with Hindu and Persian mythology.

The central theme of Rushdie's work is magic realism, and the writer skillfully incorporates realism in mythology and fables. Other than that, most of his work is based on the Indian subcontinent or Pakistan diaspora. Being born in British India and later moved out to different continents made the author search for cultural identity. Likewise, his character from 'The Moor's Last Sigh' also deals with a feeling of being uprooted and kept on looking for a home in a foreign land. Besides having mythological influences, his literary works have a strong influence on Sufism and ideology of Omar Khayyam. In his literary works, Rushdie blatantly criticized the blasphemy of Muslim extremists and used verses of the Quran. The author never ignored emotion amidst the pandemonium of socio-political conflicts.

### **A Detailed Discussion on Some of Salman Rushdie's Literary Works**

Salman Rushdie is a post-modernist author who wrote 11 novels, dozens of essays and two children's novels, and also a few non-fictions. Rushdie is known for painting life with history and mythology. Here are some of his notable works that created an impression on the readers' minds.

#### **Grimus**

Grimus is Salman Rushdie's first novel that was published in 1975, and it is a fantasy novel based on science fiction. His story based on the Indian subcontinent, and the central theme of the story revolves around an ideology of immortality. The main character of the story is an eagle that gained immortality after drinking a magical fluid. After gaining the power to remain immortal, he started looking for his immortal sisters for 777 years. It is also a journey that takes the readers through self-exploration and a parallel universe.

Coming to the aesthetic part of the novel is the writer drew inspiration from mythology and also incorporated several religious ideologies. He also incorporated Sufism in the most efficient post-modernist way. More importantly, the narrative of the novel is allegorical.

### **Midnight's Children**

It is a novel that was written when India is about to be a free country. The entire story revolves around the time and situation of the transitional period. The book is a true example of a genre called magic realism. The book incorporated historical events under a shroud of allegory. The protagonist of the novel is Saleem Sinai, who was born when the clock struck twelve, and India was declared a free country. The protagonist was born with the magical power of uncanny sense and had strong telepathic power and sensitive olfactory organ.

The entire novel is divided into three distinct parts, and as the story progresses, the readers find a series of events that occurred in due course of independence and partition. In the story, as Saleem has telepathic power, he calls for a conference of the children who were born at midnight on the same day. The novel is a satire of, and it was published at the time when was facing an emergency. The novel also talks about the political turmoil in a metaphorical way, and for that author used the Hindu scripture. The book received the most prestigious award that is Booker Prize three times.

### **Shame**

Rushdie's third novel, 'Shame,' came out in 1983, which is based on the political turmoil of another new nation. The novel is also followed the magic realism, and the plot of the novel portrays the political turmoil of post-colonial Pakistan. The reader embarks on a journey of shameless violence that is a normal phenomenon of a nation that is born right away. The author showed a conflict that occurred to protect religious authenticity without giving up ethnic value. The novel also talks about the lineage of relationships, the situation of women both in the domestic and political sphere in a male-dominated society.

### **The Satanic Verses**

The most discussed and controversial novel of Rushdie is 'The Satanic Verses,' which has a series of verses taken from the holy book 'Quran.' In this novel, the author depicted how politics influence religion and how that incident makes a religion insensitive and merciless. The entire novel deals with various aspects of religion and politics with the help of allegory and satire. The narrative of the novel is a dream of the protagonist. It also shows the exploitation of a religion and how hatred can turn the follower monsters. The novel portrays series of events that the world has been familiar with like- plane hijack, problems of emigrants, worshipping Hindu God and Goddess, racial discrimination, and many more.

### **The Moor's Last Sigh**

Salman Rushdie's fifth novel is 'The Moor's Last Sigh,' which was published in 1995, and the story evolves in Bombay and Cochin. It is a novel that deals with numerous historical figures that have substantial evidence in world history. It is a chronicle of an immigrant who is struggling to find a home. The story showed how a person could feel when he is evicted from his roots and how he feels vulnerable to cultural modernity. Rushdie's work is an intricate depiction of history, myths, religion, and cultural ethnicity. The pivotal character Moor

embarks on a journey to find out the root of his family's origin, and on that journey, he encounters love and eventually becomes disappointed.

The novel shows relationships and its various aspects like there is a relationship between mother and son, and there is a relationship between a lover and the relationship with the protagonist's sister. In both cases, the relationships were painted with the skillful hand of the writer. The best part of the novel is that all these three women have prominent individual existence in society. The novel concludes with a significant regret of the protagonist as the name suggests the same.

### **The Enchantress of Florence**

The ninth novel of Salman Rushdie is 'The Enchantress of Florence,' and it was published in 2008. Several critics consider the book as one of the best-researched novels of Rushdie's. The plot is highly imaginative yet replete with historical significance. It is a story where a European man visits the durbar of Mughal Emperor Akbar. The protagonist is not only satisfied with the visit but also tells that he is related to Akbar's family. And Akbar is a son of an Italian princess, and after that story progresses through a series of historical events and folk tales.

The entire novel is divided into three parts. The first part is set in Fatehpur Sikri, and part one is more of an adventurous journey to the past. The second part of the novel is the storytelling part, where we get a glimpse of Florence. And lastly, in the third part of the novel, where the characters go back to the street of Florence there we see another dynasty. The central part of the novel is adventure, history, and folk tales told from various perspectives.

### **Various Aspects of Rushdie's literary Works**

To analyze the work of eminent writer Salman Rushdie, you need to go back to the author's life. He is an Indian-British author who was born to a Kashmiri family and lived in India for quite a significant time. And his profound knowledge in history and mythology made him choose magic realism, where he incorporated history and mythology seamlessly. So, talking about various aspects of his literary writing, the history of the post-colonial period has significant importance. The historical events followed by the incorporation of Hindu and Persian mythology. The author innovatively binds the two with magic realism. Besides that, he also remained prominent while presenting his own political belief in his literary works.

In his literary works, he never stepped back from criticizing the bigotry nature of the religious leaders. His atheist idea is prominent in his literary works, and through his work works, he always looked for cultural and religious harmony. He was born in the post-colonial era, the political transition of the country. Thus, in novels, the representation of women in society at the time of independence is prominent.

### **Reference links**

<https://literariness.org/2019/04/04/analysis-of-salman-rushdies-novels/>

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**Author's Bio:**

\*Nakul Grover has completed his post-graduation in English Literature from IGNOU, New Delhi. His primary areas of research include Postmodern Studies and Gandhian Studies in English Writings. He has qualified UGC-NET Examination a couple of times in English Literature. Besides this he has worked as a writer for many start-ups and companies in past seven years. His articles have appeared on various self-improvement websites including Mind Valley, Fearless Motivation, The Leader Maker, Flipping Heck, etc. He is also an author of book Superhuman In You published in 2015.