

**POLITICAL AND CULTURAL RELEVANCE IN THE SELECT  
WORKS OF SALMAN RUSHDIE AND AMITAV GHOSH**

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH,  
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I, Dr. M.Nageswara Rao, Lecturer, Department of English, Sri Y.N.College (A), Narsapur, West Godavari District, declare that this Research work entitled "Political and Cultural Relevance in the Select works of Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh" has been written by me under the scheme of U.G.C. Minor Research Project in English, during the period 2017 – 2019, which has not previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associate-ship or Fellowship.

  
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**SALMAN RUSHDIE – Born on 19<sup>th</sup> June 1947**



**AMITAV GHOSH– Born on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1956**

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## **PREFACE**

The aim of the research project is to study the select novels of Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh from the point of cultural and political relevance and to bring out good human relations which are linked to both cultural and political atmosphere in the society. The social life is undoubtedly depended at large upon culture and politics both National and worldwide. Attempt has also been made to ascertain the fact that in the face of traditions, customs, religions and castes and dichotomies of the country, the characters and the themes often cross the frontiers and play the roles especially in the Middle East and England. Further, the work tries to establish that Salman Rushdie's and Amitav Ghosh's novels expose the cross and multicultural bonds being interlocked between India and Britain as well as its neighbouring countries.

It is an humble attempt to study the select novels of Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh in the light of cultural and political relevance. The research project has been divided into six chapters. The first chapter is an introduction which gives brief analysis about the growth of Indian novel and the biography of both the novelists, Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh. The second chapter is Political relevance in Rushdie's *The Midnight's Children* and *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* and in Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* and *Cambodia at Large in Burma*. They deal with identity crisis, alienation and political relevance and realities which are presented in the society worldwide. The third chapter is about cultural relevance in terms of cultural differences, colonised culture, multi-culture, cross –cultural relationship which are really striking subjects in the novels of Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh. The fourth chapter is about comparative study in light of technic and style of narration, common themes, characterization in the works of Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh. The Fifth chapter, Conclusion, summarises the core chapters with a critical point of view.

# **CHAPTER – I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

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#### **INDIAN ENGLISH FICTION :**

By 1930, Indian English Literature was more than a century old yet it had not produced a single novelist with a substantial output. The Gandhian age (1920-1947) has perhaps reached its highest point of glory during the Civil Disobedience movement of the 'Thirties'. The nationalist upsurge had stirred the whole country to the roots to a degree making it acutely conscious of its present and its past and filling it with new hopes for the future. A society compelled into self-awareness and provides a fertile soil for fiction. The three major Indian English novelists namely Mulk Raj Anand, R.K Narayan and Raja Rao began their career during this phase. During this period Indian English fiction discovered some of its most significant themes such as the ordeal of the freedom-struggle, East-West relationship, the communal problem and plight of the untouchables, the landless poor, the economically exploited etc.

A new dimension was added to the novel of social portraiture when the trio entered. R.K Narayan began his series of Malgudi novels with *Swami and Friends* (1935). Anand deals with both Gandhian and communism with rather cheap irony in *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942), Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938) is easily the finest evocation of the Gandhian age in Indian English Fiction.

An interesting literary phenomenon during this period is the rise of the ethnic novel represented in this case by a group of Muslim novelists. Most of them wrote evocatively about life in Muslim households. Their most characteristic note is a nostalgic presentation of the decay of Muslim culture. Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi* (1940) aims at depicting "a phase in our national life and the decay of a whole culture, a particular mode of thought our eyes". In Humayun Kabia's *Men and Rivers* (1945), the East Bengal riverside scene affected by the changing moods of the river Padma and its impact on the life of the fisher-folk are depicted with all the authenticity as an insider, though his plot creaks with too many romantic joints. Aamir Ali and K.A. Abbas drew their themes and characters from the general Indian scene.



The first remarkable feature of post-independence Indian English Fiction is the consolidation of their reputations by the leading trio of Anand, Narayan and Raja Rao. Anand's *Untouchable* (1935) still remains his finest work among his novels-viz., *Seven Summers* (1951), *Morning Face* (1970), and *Confession of a Lover* (1976). R.K. Narayan's *The Financial Expert* (1952), *The Guide* (1957), and *The Man eater of Malgudi* (1962) treat the theme of nemesis impressively, while raising significant questions such as the role of the cash-nexus in modern society, appearance and reality and the fate of evil in human life. Raja Rao's *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960) is one of the greatest of Indian English novels. As an enactment of East-West confrontation and as a philosophical novel it stands unchallenged in the annals of Indian English fiction. Another Indian writer, Bhabani Bhattacharya continued the tradition of social realism in fiction. His novel *So Many Hungers* (1974) is a realistic study of the Bengal famine of the early forties. The Chinese invasion of 1962 forms the setting of Bhattacharya's *Shadow from Ladakh* (1966). Nayantara Sahgal is preoccupied with the political theme. Her novels *This time of the Morning* (1968), *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969) and *A Solution in New Delhi* (1977) contain some striking and easily recognizable portraits of leading political personalities. In the aspects of political theme Bhavani Bhattacharya wrote *Shadow from Ladakh* that dealt with the Chinese invasion of 1962.

The Indian English novel is now slightly less than a century and a half old, though hardly fifty years have elapsed since it came of age. During this short span it has certainly given to the world at least some major novels, which could only have been produced in modern India. Namely *Untouchable*, *The Guide*, *The Serpent and the Rope* and G.V.Desani's *All About H.Hatter* (1948).

With the publication of Salman Rushdie's *The Midnight's Children* (1981) and its booker Award Indian English Fiction received global attention. It created awareness among the creative writers of the tales that India has to tell. As Rushdie states in *The Midnight's Children*, "There are so many stories to tell..... An excess of intertwined lives, events, miracles, places, rumours, so dense a commingling of the improbable and the mundane"(4). Another important aspect to which Rushdie draws our attention is the interaction of historical and individual forces. In the 1930's the Indian English novelist was more concerned with national and political and social problems but the novelist of the 1960's shifted the focus to the individual's quest for

personal meaning and his existential problems and social relationships. In the 1980's, there is a further discernible change with Rushdie's *The Midnight's Children*, novelists were inspired to take up the relationship between national issues and the individual. The research project is about political and cultural relevance, in the works of Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh, that compels to study the biography of dynamic writers, Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh.

### SALMAN RUSHDIE :

Ahmed Salman Rushdie was born on June 19, 1947, in Bombay, India, the only son among Anis Ahmed Rushdie and Negin Butt's four children. His father was a businessman who had been educated at Cambridge University in England. Rushdie's childhood was happy and he was always surrounded by books. Rushdie remembers wanting to be a writer at the age of five. He was sent to England at the age of fourteen to attend Rugby, a private school. His fellow students tormented him because he had no athletic ability and moreover he was an Indian.

Rushdie later attended Cambridge, as his father was a University of Cambridge educated lawyer turned business man, and his experience there was much more positive. His mother Negin Bhatt was into the profession of teaching. He received his Master's degree in History in 1968. After a brief career as an actor he worked as a free-lance advertising copywriter in England from 1970 to 1980. The experience of expatriation, which he shared with many writers of his generation who were born during the Third World, is an important theme in his work.

Rushdie's first published book, *Grimus* (1975), was classified as science fiction by many critics. It is the story of Flapping Eagle, a Native American who is given the gift of immortality and goes on a journey to find the meaning of life. The book received positive reviews but it did not bring financial benefit. Rushdie continued working as a part-time ad writer for over five years which took him to write *Midnight's Children*. He quit his job after finishing the novel without even knowing if it would be published.

Released first in the United States in 1981, *Midnight's Children* is in part the story of a baby who was not only the result of an extramarital affair but who was then switched at birth with a second child from a similar situation. The hero is also caught

between the two great Indian religions, Islam and Hinduism. Finally, he spends his life moving back and forth between the Indian republic and Pakistan. The book received rave reviews in the United States and was a popular and critical success in England. Rushdie followed this up with *Shame* (1983), the story of a Pakistani woman, Sufiya Zinobia, who blushes so hotly with embarrassment at her nation's history.

Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988) opens with the survival of two Indian men who fall out of the sky after their jumbo jet to England is blown up in midair by terrorists. These two characters then gain divine and demonic powers. Rushdie's habit of using the atrocities of history—especially involving religion—made *The Satanic Verses* a book of frightening precognition, another character in the novel is a writer sentenced to death by a religious leader. The title of the novel refers to verses from the Koran, which were removed by later Islamic historians, describing a time when the Arab prophet Mohammed the founder of Islam, briefly changed his belief in a single god and allowed mention to be made of three local goddesses. This was considered offensive and an insult to Islam by the Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who issued a fatwa, or religious order, calling for Rushdie's death. Rushdie went into hiding and received round-the-clock protection from British security guards. Rushdie's wife for thirteen months, author Marianne Wiggins, went into hiding with him when the death threat was announced. She soon emerged and announced that their marriage was over.

Khomeini's death threat extended not only to Rushdie himself, but to the publishers of *The Satanic Verses*, any bookseller who carried it, and any Muslim who publicly approved of its release. Several bookstores in England and America received bomb threats, and the novel was briefly removed from the shelves of America's largest book-selling chains. Two Islamic officials in London, England, were murdered for questioning the correctness of Rushdie's death sentence on a talk show. Many book-burnings were held throughout the world.

Rushdie's *The Jaguar Smile* (1987) was his first attempt at non-fiction and was primarily about Nicaragua. Much unlike his previous works, the book presented an account of the first-hand experience and research at the scene of Sandinista political experiments. In 1990 Rushdie released the fantasy novel *Haroun and the*

*Sea of Stories*(1988), written for his son by his first marriage. That same year Rushdie publicly embraced Islam and apologized to those offended by *The Satanic Verses*. He made several appearances in London bookstores to autograph his newest work. But even after Ayatollah's death, his successor, Iran's President Hashemi Rafsanjani, refused to lift the death sentence. Rushdie continued to appear in public only occasionally, and then under heavy security.

His next couple of works includes a collection of essays, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*, released in 1991, and a collection of short stories, *East, West* released in 1994. Rushdie continued to live an isolated life. He remarried, however, and became a father for the second time. Occasionally he made radio appearances, but they were usually unannounced. Rushdie's novel entitled *The Moor's Last Sigh* was published in 1995. This book drew angry reactions from Hindu militants in India. In 1998, as part of an attempt to restore relations between Iran and England, the Iranian foreign minister, while repeating criticism of *The Satanic Verses*, announced that Iran had no intention of harming Rushdie or encouraging anyone to do so. The relieved Rushdie said he would end his nine years of seclusion.

In 1999, Rushdie published *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, the story of a famous singer lost during an earthquake. Rushdie described it as "a novel of our age" in an interview with CNN's Jonathan Mann. In April 2000, Rushdie created a sensation by visiting India, his first visit to his birthplace since he was four years old. In November 2001 Rushdie told the Manchester Guardian that most Muslims' view of Islam is "jumbled" and "half-examined." He criticized Muslims for blaming "outsiders" for the world's problems and said that they needed to accept the changes in the modern world to truly achieve freedom.

In 2001, came Rushdie's next piece of work, *Fury* which was followed by *Step Across This Line: Collected Non-fiction 1992-2002* in 2002. In the latter, Rushdie acknowledges his appreciation and respect for the Italian writer Italo Calvino and the American writer Thomas Pynchon, among others. While each of these books appealed to the senses of the readers, it was the 2005 released *Shalimar the Clown* that zoomed or escalated the string of commercially successful and critically acclaimed novels by Rushdie even more. In 2010, he came up with the novel, *Luka*

*and the Fire of Life*. Two years thence he released a memoir of his days in the hiding under the title, *Joseph Anton: A Memoir*. Same year, Rushdie became one of the first major authors to embrace Booktrack, a company that synchronises eBooks with customised soundtracks, for his short story, *In the South* (2009).

Rushdie is a great philanthropist. He has for long been an active member of the advisory board of The Lunchbox Fund, a non-profit organization that provides daily meals to students of township in Soweto of South Africa. He has also been a member of the advisory board of the Secular Coalition for America, an advocacy group representing the interests of atheistic and humanistic Americans in Washington, D.C. Rushdie is the founding patron of the Ralston College, a new liberal arts college that has adopted as its motto a Latin translation of a phrase *free speech is life itself*.

Salman Rushdie received numerous awards for his outstanding contribution in the field of literature.. *Midnight's Children* was bestowed with the Booker Prize and *Best of the Bookers*, while *Shame* won France's Prix du Meilleur Livre tranger award. It was also a close competitor at the Booker Awards. *The Satanic Verses* won the Whitbread Award, despite the great controversial havoc worldwide. *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* won the Writers' Guild Award, while *Shalimar the Clown* successfully managed to reach as one of the finalists for the Whitbread Book Awards.

Rushdie is a Fellow of the British Royal Society of Literature. Additionally, he holds the honorary doctorates and fellowships at six European and six American universities. Rushdie is an Honorary Professor in the Humanities at M.I.T, and Distinguished Writer in Residence at Emory University. He is the Distinguished Supporter of the British Humanist Association and a Distinguished Fellow in Literature at the University of Anglia. He holds the rank of Commander de Arts et des Letters, France's highest artistic honour. In *The Times* list of *The 50 Greatest British Writers* since 1945, Rushdie is placed on the 13th position. From 2003 until 2005, Rushdie served as the President of PEN American Center. Additionally, he was also the founder of the Pen World Voices Festival. In 2007, Rushdie received a Knighthood when Queen's Birthday Honours. What's more, Rushdie became a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and was named a Library Lion of the New York Public Library.

Rushdie first tied the nuptial knot in the year 1976 to Clarissa Luard. The couple was blessed with a son named Zafar in 1980. The alliance however did not last long as the two separated in the year 1987. Following the divorce, Rushdie went into the wedlock with American novelist Marianne Wiggins in 1988. This too did not work out as the two separated in 1993. Rushdie married Elizabeth West in 1997 and fathered a son, Milan in 1999. The two divorced in 2004. Indian American actress cum model Padma Lakshmi was Rushdie fourth wife. They got married in 2004 and shared a cordial relationship until Lakshmi decided to end the same in 2007. He was romantically linked to Indian model Riya Sen in 2008 by the media but there has been no formal announcement by either.

In 1989, Rushdie was blessed with a second life as Mustafa Mahmoud Mazeh failed in his assassination attempt to kill the former. A book bomb loaded with RDX explosives exploded prematurely causing the death of Mazeh instead of Rushdie. Rushdie refrained from appearing in the Jaipur Literature Festival in January 2012 and cancelled his entire India tour citing security concerns as the primary reason. He however made an official appearance to the country in March same year. He is presently staying in New York City since 2000. He underwent an operation to correct ptois, a tendon condition that causes drooping eyelids. The condition was making it increasingly difficult for him to open his eyes. Salman Rushdie's writing style has a characteristic magic realism which mixes religion, fantasy, and mythology into more grounded reality. Due to his works, he has been compared to the likes of Peter Carey, Emma Tennant, and Angela Carter.

#### MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN :

Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) is a novel of magical realism revolving around India's independence. The novel is semi-autobiographical, though the main character and Rushdie stand-in has magical powers. Thirty years later of his birth, Saleem feels as if he is dying, so he decides to tell the story of his life to his lover, Padma. Saleem begins the story of his grandfather, Aadam Aziz who lived in Kashmir, India. In Saleem's story, Aadam is a doctor caring for a woman named Naseem, who becomes Saleem's grandmother. When Aadam is treating her, propriety dictates that she must stay behind a sheet.

The sheet was also a trick by Naseem's father, who wanted Aadam to fall in love with his daughter. It works, and he finally gets to see her face when she has a headache. Naseem and Aadam marry. They move to Amritsar, where Aadam witnesses Indian independence from British rule. These protests are violently suppressed and end with the protesters being massacred. After having three daughters and two sons, Aadam becomes a follower of an activist named Mian Abdullah. Abdullah is assassinated for his beliefs, and Aadam agrees to take in his assistant, Nadir Khan. Naseem labels Nadir as cowardly and protests his staying in their house.

Ultimately, Nadir Khan and Aadam's daughter Mumtaz fall in love. They marry, but even after two years, fail to consummate their marriage. Nadir Khan is found to be hiding at Aadam's and flees, leaving his wife behind. Mumtaz remarries Ahmed Sinai, a merchant. He decides to change her name to Amina and she and her husband move to the large city of Delhi. Amina is soon pregnant, and visits a fortune teller to learn about her future child. The prophecy about her child states that he will never be older or younger than his country. Due to some complications with Ahmed's factory being burned down by terrorists, he decides to move them to Bombay.

In Bombay, Mumtaz and Ahmed buy a house from an Englishman named William Methwold. One of their neighbours is an entertainer named Wee Willie Winkie who lives with his pregnant wife, Vanita. Unbeknownst to Willie, Vanita had an affair with Methwold and he is the father of her child. Both Vanita and Mumtaz go into labour and have their children at midnight, though Vanita does not survive childbirth. The midwife who has recently had an affair with a socialist, decides to switch the babies so that the poor baby can live a life of privilege and vice versa. Saleem is not truly the biological child of Mumtaz and Ahmed, but of Vanita and Methwold. The midwife becomes Saleem's nanny out of guilt.

Saleem's birth is given large press coverage, since it coincided with Indian independence. Saleem is strange looking, with a cucumber-shaped nose and blue eyes. One day, Saleem is punished for hiding out in the bathroom, where he accidentally witnesses his mother using the toilet. She forces him to be silent for a day, wherein he notices he can hear the thoughts of others. Ultimately, he realises he can also hear the thoughts of those children born in the same hour as him. He also finds out that they all

have powers; the strongest ones being born closest to midnight. Shiva, the child with whom he was switched at birth, is physically strong and gifted in fighting.

Saleem loses a part of his finger and is rushed to the hospital. When the doctors obtain his blood type, it is revealed that Saleem cannot be Ahmed and Mumtaz's biological son. Saleem's nanny admits that she switched the two boys at birth. Ahmed, now an alcoholic, becomes violent at hearing the news, which prompts Amina to take Saleem and his sister to the recently created nation of Pakistan to live with her sister. After Ahmed dies, the family moves back to Bombay. At this time, India is embroiled in a war with China. Saleem's large nose has been giving him trouble all his life, so he gets an operation to fix it. After the operation, he is no longer telepathic, but has an enhanced sense of smell and he can sense people's emotions, after India loses to China, the family moves back to Pakistan. There, his entire family is killed, save his sister Jamila, during a war between India and Pakistan.

Saleem loses his memory after being hit on the head. He ends up in the army, although he is not quite sure how he ended up there. Saleem witnesses many war crimes and barbarisms, and he escapes into the Bangladesh jungle. There, Saleem recovers some of his memory, but does not recover his name until he meets Parvati-the-witch, who is another one of midnight's children. She helps him recall his name. They retreat to a magicians' ghetto. Parvati wants Saleem to marry her, which he refuses to do. She then has an affair with Shiva, who is now a famous war hero. Shiva and Parvati have relationship troubles, and Parvati returns to the magicians' ghetto, pregnant and unmarried. Saleem agrees to marry her. Indira Gandhi, who is the prime minister of India, has begun sterilisation camps to decrease India's population. She also destroys the magicians' ghetto. Parvati dies after childbirth, and Shiva captures Saleem to take him to a sterilisation camp. There, all of midnight's children are sterilised, as to protect the prime minister from their powers. Gandhi does not win her first election.

All of midnight's children are set free, and Saleem heads out to find Aadam, Parvati's son. He finds him with a snake charmer he knew in the ghetto, and the three travels to Bombay. There, Saleem eats some chutney which reminds him of his nanny. He tracks down the chutney factory his former nanny owns, and there he meets



Padma. He decides to marry her, but is certain that on his thirty-first birthday, the anniversary of India's independence, he will die and explode into dust.

### HAROUN AND THE SEA OF STORIES :

*Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is a novel of political allegory. The novel opens in the sad city in the country of Alifbay, where Haroun Khalifa lives with his father, a famous storyteller, and his mother. One day, Haroun arrives home from school to learn that his mother has run off with his upstairs neighbor. This neighbor had often been critical of Haroun's father, Rashid, because he did not understand the usefulness of stories. In anger, Haroun assails his father for the uselessness of his stories. This crushes his father. Haroun finds it difficult to concentrate on schoolwork and so his father decides to take him on a storytelling job he is performing for some politicians in the Land of G and the Valley of K. When Rashid attempts to tell his stories, however, no words come out, and the politicians get very mad.

Haroun and Rashid board a mail bus bound for the Valley of K. It is driven by a parrot-looking man named Butt who stutters and speaks in riddles. Rashid makes a deal with Butt to drive them on the dangerous road between the Land of G and the Valley of K. Butt drives dangerously and Haroun is worried that he will die. When they reach the beautiful sights of the Valley of K, Rashid tells Haroun that it all reminds him of "khattam-shud," an ancient concept that means silence. When they reach K, Haroun and Rashid meet Mr. Buttoo, the politician, who takes them to his boat on the Dull Lake. As they depart on the lake, they are engulfed in a thick mist. The mist smells very bad and Haroun realizes that it is a Mist of Misery brought on by his father's foul mood. When the sea begins to rock, Haroun tells everyone to think good thoughts, and when they do, the sea calms.

Haroun and Rashid reach the yacht that will take them to their destination the next day. The yacht is very luxurious, but both Rashid and Haroun have difficulty in sleeping. Just as Haroun dozes off, he hears a noise in his bedroom. He finds an old man with an onion shaped head, which disappears as soon as he sees Haroun. The old man drops a wrench, which Haroun confiscates. The old man materializes and tells Haroun he is Iff, the Water Genie, and he must have the wrench to turn off the Story Stream for his father, Rashid. When Haroun protests, Iff tells him to take it up with

the Walrus in Gup City, Kahani. Haroun demands that the Water Genie take him there, and Iff reluctantly concedes in order to get his wrench back from Haroun. The Genie tells Haroun to pick a bird and give it a name and it will materialize. He pulls out a handful of tiny magical creatures. Haroun picks the Hoopoe and Iff throws it out the window and into the water where it balloons into a huge bird. They climb on its back and accelerate into space. The Hoopoe looks like Mr. Butt, so Haroun names it Butt, the Hoopoe. They are able to communicate telepathically. Butt, the Hoopoe lands on the Sea of Stories of Kahani, Earth's second moon, which moves so fast. It is undetectable by human instruments. It evenly distributes Story Water across the earth. They land in the ocean so that Iff can give Haroun Wishwater and hopefully bypass meeting the Walrus.

Haroun drinks the Wishwater and wishes for his father's storytelling to return. He can only focus on an image of his mother, however, and after eleven minutes, he loses his concentration. Iff then gives Haroun a cup of water from the Sea that contains a story. Haroun drinks it and then finds him looking through the eyes of a hero in a Princess Rescue story. As the hero climbs the tower to rescue the princess, he turns into a spider and princess hacks away at him until he falls to the ground. When Haroun wakes from his story, Iff tells him that someone named Khattam-Shud is poisoning the stories.

Haroun, Butt the Hoopoe, and Iff the Water Genie fly to the Land of Gup, where they meet Mali, the Water Gardner, and the Plentimaw fishes. The entire land is preparing for war. The Chupwalas have stolen Princess Batcheat from Gup. In addition, they have polluted the Sea of Stories so that many do not make sense anymore. Prince Bolo, General Kitab, and the Walrus announce their plans for war to the Pages of the Guppee Library (or, army). They bring in a spy with a hood over his head. When the hood is removed, Haroun sees his father. Rashid tells everyone that he transported to Kahani and was in the twilight strip when he saw the Princess Batcheat captured. The Chupwalas have come under the spell of Cultmaster Khattam-Shud who wants to sacrifice her to Bezaban, an idol to silence. Prince Bolo and General Kitab declare war on Chup and Rashid offers to guide them to the Chupwala encampment. One of the soldiers in the army, Blabbermouth, takes Haroun to his room. They become lost and Haroun knocks the hat off Blabbermouth's head. Long

hair falls out and Haroun sees Blabbermouth is a girl. She then entertains him with a juggling act.

The army sails towards Chup, chattering about the causes for the war in a way that Haroun thinks might be mutinous. They enter the land of Darkness and land on the beach. They explore the interior and come upon a dark warrior fighting his own shadow in a kind of seductive dance. The man realizes he is being watched and comes to find the trespassers. The shadow begins to speak. It croaks out unintelligible words until Rashid realizes the warrior is speaking in an ancient gesture language. Rashid interprets the warrior's talk. His name is Mudra and he had been second in command in Chup. He is now fighting against Khattam-Shud in order to bring peace back to Chup. Mudra agrees to help the Guppees defeat Khattam-Shud.

Haroun volunteers to spy for the army because of his love of stories. He, Iff, Butt, the Hoopoe, Mali, and the Plentimaw fishes begin to trek towards the Old Zone. The water becomes so poisonous that the fish cannot go on. The remaining crew is suddenly ambushed and captured in nets. They are taken to a giant, black ship. On the deck are cauldrons of poison. To Haroun, it looks like everything is impermanent, like a shadow. Khattam-Shud appears and he is a tiny, weasly, measly man. Haroun realizes that this is Khattam-Shud's shadow that has detached from its owner. The Cultmaster tells them that stories are inefficient and useless and that is why they are being destroyed.

The ship's hull is full of darkness and machines too complicate to describe. The Cultmaster shows them where they are building a great Plug to seal the Story Source at the bottom of the Sea. Haroun sees roots growing through a port window and Mali appears, latching onto the generators and breaking the machines. Haroun breaks free, puts on a protective wetsuit, and dives down into the Sea where he sees the Plug being constructed. He returns to Butt, the Hoopoe and takes out a vial of Wishwater given to him by Iff. He drinks it and wishes that the axis of Kahani would spin normally. A few minutes pass and then the entire land is bathed in sunlight. All of the shadows on the ship begin to fade away and soon everyone is free and the poison is destroyed.

In Chup, Khattam-Shud sends an ambassador to the Guppee army. The ambassador begins to juggle and pulls out a bomb. Only Blabbermouth's quick action

keeps everyone from being blown up, but it is revealed that Blabbermouth is a girl in the process. Bolo tries to fire her, but Mudra asks her to be a part of his army because of her bravery. The battle between the army commences. Because the Guppees have had such open and honest communication, they fight as a team. The Chupwalas, because of their silence, distrust each other. The Guppee army overwhelms the Chupwala army. As the battle ends, there is a great earthquake and the moon begins to spin. The statue of Bezaban falls and crushes the real Khattam-Shud. Peace is declared and everyone receives a promotion within their rank. Haroun prepares to leave and is told that he must see the Walrus.

In the Walrus's office, Haroun learns that it is all a joke and that he is not in trouble. All his friends are there with him. The Walrus tells him that for his bravery he is to be given a happy ending to his story. Haroun doubts that this is possible, but he wishes for his city to no longer be sad. He wakes up back in the Valley of K where his father is preparing his political story. As he stands up to give it, his father tells the story of *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*. It is a story that the crowd loves and they turn against their autocratic leader, Mr. Buttoo. When Rashid and Haroun return home, it is raining and they walk through it getting soaked. All of the people in the sad city are dancing and Haroun asks for the reason. They claim that the city has remembered its name, Kahani, which means "story." Haroun realizes that the Walrus has put a happy ending into the raindrops. When he arrives home, he finds his mother there, telling them that she made a mistake in running off with Mr. Sengupta. The next day, Haroun awakes to find it is his birthday and his mother singing in another room in the house.

#### AMITAV GHOSH :

Amitav Ghosh was born in Calcutta and grew up in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. He studied in Delhi, Oxford and Alexandria and is the author of *The Circle of Reason*(1986), *The Shadow Lines*(1990), *In An Antique Land*(1992), *The Calcutta Chromosome*(1995), *Dancing in Cambodia*(1998), *The Glass Palace*(2000), *The Hungry Tide*(2004), and *The Ibis Trilogy*, consisting of *Sea of Poppies*(2008), *River of Smoke*(2011) and *Flood of Fire*(2012). His most recent book, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, a work of non-fiction, appeared in 2016.

Amitav Ghosh received many prestigious awards and loyalties for his works. *The Circle of Reason* was awarded France's Prix Médicis in 1990, and *The Shadow Lines* won two prestigious Indian prizes the same year, the Sahitya Akademi Award and the Ananda Puraskar. *The Calcutta Chromosome* won the Arthur C. Clarke award for 1997 and *The Glass Palace* won the International e-Book Award at the Frankfurt book fair in 2001. In January 2005, *The Hungry Tide* was awarded the Crossword Book Prize, a major Indian award. His novel, *Sea of Poppies* (2008) was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize 2008 and was awarded the Crossword Book Prize and the India Plaza Golden Quill Award.

Amitav Ghosh's work has been translated into more than thirty languages and he has served on the juries of the Locarno and Venice film festivals. His essays have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New Republic* and *The New York Times*. They have been anthologized under the titles *The Imam and the Indian* and *Incendiary Circumstances*. *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, was given the inaugural Utah Award for the Environmental Humanities in 2018.

Amitav Ghosh holds two Lifetime Achievement awards and four honorary doctorates. In 2007 he was awarded the Padma Shri, one of India's highest honours, by the President of India. In 2010, he was a joint winner, along with Margaret Atwood of a Dan David prize, and 2011 he was awarded the Grand Prix of the Blue Metropolis festival in Montreal. In 2018 the Jnanpith Award, India's highest literary honour, was conferred on Amitav Ghosh. He was the first English-language writer to receive the award. In 2019, *Foreign Policy* magazine named him one of the most important global thinkers of the preceding decade. Amitav Ghosh's most recent novel, *Gun Island*, is due to be published in 2019.

Amitav Ghosh was born in Calcutta on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1956 to Shailendra Chandra Ghosh and Ansali Ghosh. His father Shailendra was at first a Lieutenant Colonel in the army and later a diplomat. Ghosh grew up in East Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Iran and India. He attended the Doon school in Dehradun and then he received B.A. Honours from St. Stephen's College, Delhi University in 1976 and M.A. Sociology from Delhi University in 1978. He received a diploma in Arabic from the Institute Bourguiba des Langues Vivantes, in Tunis, Tunisia in 1979, and then D.Phil (Ph.D.) in Social

Anthropology from St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford University in 1982. As part of that course, in 1980 he went to Egypt to do field work in the village of Lataifa.

Amitav Ghosh worked for a while as a Journalist for The Indian Express News paper in New Delhi. Since then he has been a visiting Fellow at the Centre for social sciences, at Trivandrum, Kerala 1982-83, a visiting Professor of Anthropology at the University of Virginia 1988, the University of Pennsylvania 1989, the American University in Cairo 1994 and Columbia University 1994-97 and distinguished Professor of Comparative literature at Queens college of the City University of New York 1999-2003. In the spring of 2004, Amitav was visiting Professor in the department of English at Harvard University. He spends part of each year in Calcutta, but lives in New York with his wife, Deborah Baker, an editor at Little Brown and Company, and their Children, Leela and Nayan.

In 1984, a momentous year for India, there was separatist violence in the Punjab, a military attack on the Sikh temple of Amritsar, the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, there were riots following the assassination, and there was the gas disaster in Bhopal. It was as if George Orwell's infamous date for the apocalypse had been set with India in mind. Many people's lives were irrevocably shaken by these events and, it seems, Ghosh's was one of them, "Looking back", and Ghosh writes, "I see that the experiences of that period were profoundly important to my development as a writer" (*The Ghosts of Mrs. Gandhi, The Imam and the Indian* 45).

As a youngster, Amitav Ghosh was greatly influenced by the stories of partition, Independence and the World War-II. These stories and anecdotes of such epochal events related by his parents, family members and neighbours made an indelible impression on his mind. Recalling his childhood, Ghosh admits that "his mother's stories were very appealing, as they had a straight forward, compelling plot line and, in Mahatma Gandhi, an incomparably vital and endearing protagonist" (*New Yorker* 104). Memories about his mother, in an article in the New Yorker, Amitav Ghosh said: "My mother grew up in Calcutta, and her memories were of Mahatma Gandhi, non-violence, civil disobedience, and the terrors that accompanied partition, in 1947" (*New Yorker* 104).

The major influences on Amitav Ghosh were the stories of his father, which dealt with the World War-II (1939-1945) and the Indian soldiers of the British Indian

Army who fought against the Germans and the Japanese. About his father, Ghosh said: “My father came of age in a small provincial town in the state of Bihar. He turned twenty one in 1942, one of the most tumultuous years in Indian history. That was the year the Indian National Congress, the country’s largest political party launched a nationwide movement calling on the British to quit India: It was when Mahatma Gandhi denounced the Raj as a “person that corrupts all it touches.” And in that historic year of anti-imperialist discontent my father left home to become an officer in the British colonial army in India. Ghosh is also influenced by Proust in his conception and delineation of time in the novel. It is ‘the inseparableness of us from the past,’ particularly, which he shares with Proust. In Indo-Anglian fiction the division of Bengal and suffering caused by partition is first highlighted by Amitav Ghosh in *The Shadow Lines*. It is mainly portrayed through the grandmother’s story.

His first novel, *The Circle of Reason* (1986), follows an Indian protagonist who, suspected of being a terrorist, leaves India for northern Africa and the Middle East. Blending elements of fable and picaresque fiction, it is distinctly postcolonial in its marginalization of Europe and postmodern in its nonlinear structure and thick intertextuality. *The Shadow Lines* (1988) is a sweeping history of two families (one Indian and the other English) that are deeply shaped by events following the departure of the British from India in 1947. *The Circle of Reason* and *The Shadow Lines*, both written in English, were widely translated and gained Ghosh an international readership.

*The Calcutta Chromosome: A Novel of Fevers, Delirium, and Discovery* (1995) represented Ghosh’s first foray into science fiction; this densely layered novel offers an alternate history of the discovery of the parasite that causes malaria. His subsequent novels include *The Glass Palace* (2000), a familial history centred on Burma (Myanmar) between its occupation by the British in 1885 through its independence after World War II and into the late 20th century, and *The Hungry Tide* (2004), set in Bengal and featuring American and Indian characters. With *Sea of Poppies* (2009)—a novel that describes individuals on the Ibis, a ship on the seas of South-East Asia carrying coolies (indentured labourers) and opium—Ghosh turned away from his earlier novels’ formal experimentation and towards a more traditional form of storytelling. *Sea of Poppies* was the first book in the Ibis trilogy, which takes

place shortly before and during the first Opium War. The historical series also included *River of Smoke* (2011) and *Flood of Fire* (2015).

Ghosh also wrote *In an Antique Land* (1992), a book that straddles several genres—travel writing, autobiography, memoir—and blurs fiction and nonfiction. In it Ghosh described his experiences in a rural Egyptian village in the early 1980s, when he went there as an academic researcher, and in the late 1980s, when he returned there. His nonfiction works include *Dancing in Cambodia, at Large in Burma* (1998), *The Imam and the Indian* (2002), and *Incendiary Circumstances: A Chronicle of the Turmoil of Our Times* (2005).

### SEA OF POPPIES :

*Sea of Poppies* (2008) tells the intertwining stories of several people who find themselves aboard the Ibis, a former slave ship, in the early 19th century. The principal characters are aboard the ship under varying and more and less desirable circumstances, and employing varying levels of deception. The novel takes place shortly before the First Opium War, and its major themes are of imperialism and colonialism under a backdrop of drug smuggling and human trafficking by the hands of the British in India and China.

*Sea of Poppies* is made up of three parts namely Land, River and Sea. The first part begins with Deeti, who has a vision of the Ibis while working on her poppy farm hundreds of miles inland. Deeti's husband is an opium addict and a member of a powerful family in the region; when he dies, assuming she has nothing left to offer and concerned about her options, Deeti decides to die on a window's pyre. However, Kalua, a low-caste ox-cart driver, saves her at the last moment, and the two run away together. Meanwhile, Zachary Reid joins the Ibis in Baltimore as his first voyage; due to a series of mishaps, by the time he reaches Calcutta, he is the only remaining member of the original crew and the acting captain, taken under Serang Ali's wing. Jodu, a Muslim boatman, returns to Calcutta to find Paulette, with whom he was raised; however, when the Ibis destroys his boat, he asks Paulette to ask Zachary to get employment for him on the ship. Lastly, Neel Halder, the Raja of Raskhali, sees the Ibis arrive and meets with Benjamin Burnham to discuss his debts. When he



refuses one final time to relinquish his lands to Burnham, Burnham brings him up on exaggerated forgery charges.

In the second Part, Deeti and Kalua continue to travel downriver, remaining hidden as much as possible. They eventually make their way to Chhapra, but after seeing Bhyro Singh and overhearing that they are being hunted, they decide to sign up as indentured servants in Mauritius to escape. Zachary, meanwhile, begins to ingratiate himself into gentlemanly life in Calcutta; Burnham et al take a liking to him, though the first mate of the voyage dislikes him almost from the start, and nearly kills him at the end of the section. Jodu becomes familiar with the ship and manages to gain the respect of the rest of the crew, who initially dislike him, as he is a freshwater boatman. Paulette realises that she must escape Calcutta and the Burnhams; she initially asks Zachary to get her on the ship, but when he declines, she hatches a plan with Baboo Nob Kissin instead to be brought on board disguised as a Bengali woman, under the pretence of traveling for an arranged marriage. Neel is sentenced to seven years of labour in Mauritius and the loss of his lands. He is transported to jail to await his departure, where he meets Ah Fatt, an opium addict who is to be transported with him.

Part three takes place almost entirely at sea, as various storylines come together. Deeti and Kalua discover upon boarding that Bhyro Singh is on the ship; they manage to elude him, or so they think, for much of the journey, but discover near the end that he is aware of their presence on the ship. He begins to exact his revenge on Deeti; although Kalua is able to rescue Deeti, one of Bhyro's guards falls overboard in the process, and Kalua is charged with murder. While being flogged for the separate crime of rescuing Deeti in Ghazipur, Kalua manages to break free from his restraints and kill Bhyro, after which he is sentenced to be executed by Chillingworth.

Zachary, meanwhile, begins to fall into his role as second mate, sparring frequently with the first mate, Crowle. Through conversation, Zachary discovers that Serang Ali was a pirate. Zachary confronts Ali, who agrees to disappear in Port Louis. Crowle, meanwhile, discovers Zachary's race and attempts to blackmail him into mutiny; however, Zachary declines. Jodu's flirtation with one of the migrant women, Munia, results in Bhyro Singh severely beating him. Paulette, meanwhile, reveals herself first to Jodu, accidentally, then purposely to Zachary after discovering his race

and realising that Zachary is the only person on the ship who might understand her own multiple identities. Neel and Ah Fatt grow close, but this is disrupted by Crowle, who convinces Ah Fatt to urinate on Neel in exchange for what he believes to be opium.

In the final chapter, as Zachary and Crowle argue, Ah Fatt sneaks in and kills Crowle in revenge for his actions. Zachary runs above board in time to watch Serang Ali, Jodu, Kalua, Neel, and Ah Fatt disappear on a stolen longboat, heading to Singapore. On deck are Baboo Nob Kissin, Paulette, and Deeti, the last of whom he knows, even though he has never met her.

#### DANCING IN CAMBODIA AND AT LARGE IN BURMA :

*Dancing in Cambodia, At Large in Burma* (1998) by Amitav Ghosh is based on his visit to Cambodia and Burma originally appeared in *Granta* and *The New Yorker* – provide ample evidence of that. They deal with a part of the world that gives the lie to easy homilies about 20<sup>th</sup> century progress and well-being. Though tucked conveniently in a dusty corner of most people's consciousness, Burma and Cambodia have become over the decades synonymous with misery, deprivation, suffering, and the abuse of human rights. But once they were also known for other things. For example, the land of Pol Pot's killing fields was once best known in Europe for the sheer grace and luminosity of its dancers: among its great admirers was the peerless Rodin, who was so captivated by the adolescent dancers on their first visit to France that he followed them around, sketching them and indulging them. Moving the narrative back and forth adroitly, Ghosh recounts Cambodia's colonial past and his own travels through its civil war-damaged present. He goes looking for the stories behind Pol Pot and his aides, and unearths tales of great sadness, bewilderment and nullity. He also finds tenuous connections between winsome palace dancers and ideological mass murderers. But all this is very subtle and nuanced – no heavy handed conclusions, no thin-stretched deductions. Good novelists, after all, possess the gift of doubt. In contrast, a newspaper reporter would have summed up all of Cambodian history and civilisation in 800 words.

The piece on Burma is no less enthralling. A British colony of wealth and dynamism, its future collapsed in one short morning in 1947, when on the eve of

attaining independence, General Aung San, the 32-year-old undisputed leader of Burma, was shot dead, along with several of his aides. In the ensuing years, Burma descended into crippling civil wars and eventually brutal totalitarian regimes, becoming one of “the most impoverished countries in the world’s fastest developing region”, ‘a byword for repression, xenophobia, and civil abuse’.

Ghosh, in 1980, met General San’s daughter at Oxford, and he goes back to meet her when he visits Rangoon. She has, since the late ‘80s, become a global symbol of peaceful resistance, with a Nobel Peace Prize in her cupboard. But meeting Aung San Suu Kyi is only part of Ghosh’s attempt at understanding Burma; more impressive still is his visit to rebel guerrilla camps on the Thailand border. He treks through inhospitable jungle, experiences artillery shelling, and – the unexpected magic of travel – encounters an expatriate Sikh, Ko Sonny – Mahinder Singh – commanding a guerrilla contingent. Here again, Ghosh keeps his narrative shorn of all glibness, providing no reassurances of optimism or easy analysis. The book proves just one thing – the coloniser or the dictator cannot kill the people. Even in impossible situations civilisations and culture and the spirit of the people survive and live. In this sense, the book is very satisfying. A nation lives in its culture and art and not in Governments.

The novels of Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh and their collections of essays deal with multifarious themes. They are very much interested in anthropology, journalism, comparative literature, politics, cultural studies etc. Their works are bound to be of contemporary values, relevant to different disciplines of study. This research project aims at attempt to analyse his fiction in the select works in terms of cultural and political relevance in the present society worldwide. They will be discussed in particular in the following chapters.

## **CHAPTER – II**

### **POLITICAL RELEVANCE**

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M.K. Naik in his learned article, “The Political Novel in Indian Writing in English” also tries to define the political novel. He considers it to be a novel which either has a strong ideological leaning or one which depicts political events: “A piece of fiction devoted to a presentation of political ideas, or a species of fiction, in which action, characters and setting are all firmly grounded in politics” (6).

William Walsh rightly points out that the ‘huge purpose’ of Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* is ‘the personification and realisation of Indian life’. The novel is a piece of ‘fiction – fraction’ by one born in India but settled abroad who tries to recreate his homeland, mixing memory and desire, fact and fantasy, reality and vision, time and timelessness (69).

#### **MIDNIGHT’S CHILDREN :**

“At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will wake to life and freedom.” (Stanley Wolepert, 2004). 1947 was a year of inconceivable chaos and shock for the Indian people. As Lord Mountbatten carved up the sub-continent in his haste to secure a position of political indifference for the British towards the impending civil war, hundreds of thousands of Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus were being subjected to the most macabre of tortures and death. Still more were left with no idea of whether their homes now fell into Indian or Pakistani territory. At the time, this was of no consequence compared to the constant threat of savage revenge attacks from opposing religious factions. The terror and deep suspicion which permeated the bloody birth of India and Pakistan were to become the new nations’ recurring nightmare.

The trauma of Partition threw into question whether Jawaharlal Nehru’s vision of a ‘New’ India could possibly survive. The apportioning of blame and bitter anger at what had been allowed to happen was directed with full force by the media at key political figures which now assumed responsibility for the implementation of peace and progress. The next three decades did nothing to assuage fears of further

bloodshed, and incredulity towards the grand promises of the future became a complete loss of faith.

In 1981, a novel as grand in scope and substance as those promises was published. *Midnight's Children*, written by Salman Rushdie, exquisitely allegorised the legacy of Partition to create a commentary addressing its reality. By accident of birth, the story's protagonist, Saleem, is born at midnight on August 15th 1947 – the moment of India's Independence, and so he is “handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country”[3]. The novel's conceptualisation of Saleem as India itself is the book's central premise, and Rushdie's most forceful accusation regarding the cause of the country's continual political victimisation. As soon as he is borne from his mother's womb (a metaphor for the relative comfort of British rule), Saleem is under immense pressure to ‘end up meaning...something’[4]. His subsequent authorial quest for such meaning leads him to the construction of a self-centered past in which he alone assumes responsibility for key events in national history. This can be interpreted as Rushdie's critique of India's idea of itself as central to its failure.

The importance of nationalism in India's struggle to gain independence from the British was paramount because it united the masses in common purpose. Through strengthened self-definition, it became easier to project the idea of ‘other’ onto their rulers. For the Indian people, however, a unified identity was hard to conceive because of the country's inherent multitude of varying languages, cultures and religions. Much of the coloniser's hegemonic success relied upon the internalisation of its definition of ‘Indian’ by those it sought to dominate. In so doing the population of India began to categorise itself according to the simplified British view of Indians – through religion. The Indian Nationalist Movement saw its greatest weapon against Empire as the fore-grounding of religious identity. This required new interpretations of ancient texts and of historical events, many of which had not been recorded in writing, but passed down orally through the generations. As religious identity became more clearly defined, a growing chasm appeared between not only the Indian and the British, but between Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus themselves.

Rushdie's scepticism towards nationalism and the ultimate (un) reality of nation itself as little more than myth is a fundamental theme in *Midnight's Children*.

Just as India attempted to define itself as a united nation which incorporated all its constituent diversities, Saleem tried to unify “the so-called teeming millions, of masses and classes alike [which] jostled for space within my head”[168]. By right of birth, he had inherited the magical ability “to look into the hearts and minds of men”[200].

Saleem’s self-conscious reconstruction of his past is Rushdie’s theory of how ‘nation’ is formed as an ideological tool. As noted by Abdulrazak Gurnah in his Themes and Structures in *Midnight’s Children*, Saleem is absent from his own history for one hundred and sixteen pages of the novel; it actually begins with the story of his grandfather. According to Timothy Brennan in his seminal work *Salman Rushdie and the Third World*, the marking of a distant “point of origin”[Timothy Brennan, 1989] plays a key role in the formation of national identity:

This zero point or starting point is what allows ritual repetition, the ritualisation of memory, celebration, commemoration – in short, all those forms of magical behaviour signifying defeat of the irreversibility of time [Timothy Brennan, 1989].

Throughout the narrative, Saleem makes repeated references to the legacy left to him by his forefathers, including his extraordinary olfactory powers and the “superb silver spittoon, inlaid with lapis lazuli”[45]. By also ‘filling in the gaps’ of a history in which he is ultimately found to be uninvolved, Saleem situates himself in a present which is firmly rooted in the past. The representation of time in the novel emphasises the creative and therefore artificial nature of history. As highlighted by Brennan, the narrative is constantly interrupted: “We are...always being shown ‘the hands holding the strings’ (72), are having the metaphors cut short by on-the-spot explanation, are being directed to the future or the past, the beginning or end of the book, instead of being ushered on to ‘what-happened-next’”[Timothy Brennan, 1989]

This constant, non-linear shifting of time is important for two reasons. The first is that it illuminates the selectiveness of writing; the juxtaposition of events from different time periods puts them in an altogether different context than when presented chronologically, thus revealing much about the author’s intentions. In Saleem’s case, his purpose is to place himself as a central character in his story with strong genealogical heritage. The second is that it shows the reliance of the historian

upon the inaccuracy of memory, despite the distortion it must inevitably undergo if the memory is not first hand.

Rushdie deliberately presents Saleem as an unreliable narrator in order to show the fragility of 'nation' as a concept; that although it has the power to '...rouse unlike peoples in dramatically unlike conditions in an impassioned chorus of voluntary co-operation and sacrifice'[Timothy Brennan, 1989], it is fundamentally a construct. The myth of nationhood is further exposed through the Children of Midnight themselves, of whom Saleem and his nemesis Shiva are both members. The Conference signifies the five hundred and eighty one men and women who were to become members of the new Indian parliament. That they all possess some form of supernatural power according to their proximity of birth to the hour of midnight emphasises the impossible promise they carry for the realisation of national fulfillment. But as Gurnah points out, that promise was inevitably broken:

...corruption and cynicism could not allow [them] to survive. Nehru's great ambition for post-independence India begins to disintegrate almost as soon as India is founded, in the partition violence and in the language marches [Abdulrazak Gurnah, 2007].

After three Five Year Plans, the end of the Nehru era and India's conflicts with Pakistan and China, the most frightening moments of the country's fledgling history arrived. Under the leadership of Indira Gandhi, her father's vision of a free and democratic India was forgotten. After her party and the people realised the transparency of her image of democracy, they saw the emergence of her true "inclination and conviction as a dictator"[Stanley Wolpert, 404]. Having been found guilty on two out of fifty two charges of campaign malpractice during previous elections, the Prime Minister declared that India was in a state of emergency. This period was to last almost two years, during which time Gandhi proved her true nature. Depending on whose reports were to be believed, anywhere from "a few thousand [to] fifty thousand"[ Stanley Wolpert, 399] strike leaders and protesters were imprisoned, the press was meticulously censored and opposition parties were banned. Perhaps the most shocking violation of human rights imposed by her was the wholesale demolition of slum areas and the enforced sterilisation of "men with two children or more, especially in crowded...towns"[ Stanley Wolpert, 405].



Rushdie's scathing representation of Indira Gandhi in *Midnight's Children* belies an anger felt by the masses at the time:

...green and black the Widow's hair and clutching hand and children  
mmff and little balls and one-by-one and torn-in-half and little balls go  
flying green black her hand is green her nails are black as black.[288]

Saleem is unable to describe her as anything other than the monster of nightmares, and the absolute failure of the legacy of Partition is made clear. He and the majority of the other Children of Midnight are rounded up and forcibly subjected to sterilisation; the parliamentary members they signify are rendered impotent, unable to wield their governmental powers. Despite the hopelessness of Rushdie's representation of the Emergency, he still has faith in yet another positive vision of India. Saleem's wife at the time, Parvati the witch, is pregnant, and her long, agonising labour lasts thirteen days, the amount of time between Gandhi's indictment and her announcement of the Emergency. Aadam Sinai is borne from the coupling of two the most powerful of *Midnight's Children*, Parvati the Witch and Shiva. He is offered as India's new promise, as are all the other children whom Shiva has fathered:

We, the children of Independence, rushed wildly and too fast into our  
future; he Emergency-born, will be is already more cautious, biding his  
time; but when he acts, he will be impossible to resist[594].

Although *Midnight's Children* consistently exposes the idea of nationalism and nation as myth, Rushdie implies that hope is to be found in the new generation of Indian people who, with the benefit of hindsight and caution, will be able to generate a counter-myth of their country. Acknowledgement is made of the defensive power of nationalism, as long as careful consideration of its contrived nature is taken into account. Yet the novel ultimately displays a distinct cynicism towards the possibility of a new vision based on collective 'imagination' which can realise a free and tolerant human reality. Despite the meticulous and exquisitely skilful creation of a narrative which continually sheds new light upon a myriad of contemporary issues, Rushdie failed to make any mention whatsoever of Gandhi's National Movement and "rushes from Amritsar in 1919 to Agra in 1942"[Timothy Brennan, 1989]. In so doing, he poignantly makes his clearest statement regarding the detrimental consequences of nationalism.

*Midnight's Children* is an allegory of modern India and a family saga presented against a historical and political background. It covers the major issues of political events of modern India, Pakistan and Bangladesh and also an attack on the rulers of three countries. The incidents actually happened in the life of Rushdie are reflected in the novel like that of the perforated sheet. The novel deals with the destinies of two of the children. It sketches the life history of three generations. In the novel, the protagonist Saleem Sinai who works in a pickle factory of Mrs. Braganza is associated to the important historical and political events and it is found that there is interlink between the nation and the life of the protagonist. It represents an account of the poor and the exploited sections of the society. Through this novel, Rushdie endeavours to recreate his past. So the account of his life is made to coincide with the time of the National Emergency Movement and its final conclusion.

*Midnight's Children* reveals a tension between a quest for heroism, identity and individuality and also the decoy of politics. The novel adopts the old technique i.e., it is the first person narrative and starts with the protagonist, Saleem Sinai's proclamation of his celebrated moment of his arrival, which coincides with the Independence of India on 15th August, 1947. It is denoted as a great time as India proclaimed its independence from Britain and 1001 children are born with supernatural powers as gift. The birth of the protagonist, Saleem Sinai in Dr. Narlikar's Nursing Home bears resemblance to the Christian nativity. His identity as the son of a rich Muslim family is the mistake committed by the nurse Mary Pereira. She exchanges the baby of a rich family with the baby of a poor family. The Christian reference in this incident is connected to the incarnation. So, his life makes the word of Indian history.

In the novel, when Saleem speaks of potential mothers, it implies that he could have born to any mother. Thus, the exchange of babies dismisses the reality of family roots. He says with Padma as : "Meanwhile in the old house on Cornwallis Road, the days were full of potential mothers and possible fathers"(63). So, Saleem becomes a representation of India. His birth symbolizes the birth of nation. This is portrayed as a historical representation. His auspicious hour of his birth is a challenging one. He was the victim of Mary

Pereira's act of love with her lover Joseph who hated the British. Saleem born with blue eyes and French nose in the midst of great celebration. This stage, it is relevant to remember the speech of Jawaharlal Nehru on the eve of India's independence as Jawaharlal Nehru made his historic speech in Parliament and called upon the nation to begin the process of building India into a strong nation. "A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of the nation, long suppressed finds utterance." (156) Thus, here India is visualized as a soul awaiting birth and in quest of potential parents. This subsist several interpretations but the fact was that a new, modern nation was born. Even though it was time the country where it entered into a new phase but Saleem treated it as the Age of Darkness, Kaliyuga where the dharma stands on a single leg. This statement shows that in spite of being a Muslim he is well up in Hindu legends. At this instance the narrator states :

history, in my version, entered a new phase on 15th August, 1947 – but in another version, that inexplicable date is no more than one fleeting instant in the Age of Darkness, Kaliyuga, in which the cow of morality has been reduced to standing, teetering on a single leg (269).

The protagonist, Saleem opens the novel with the story of his grandfather Aadam Aziz. He was hailed from a Kashmir and graduated in Medical Science in West Germany. He praises Kashmir as a place of incredible beauty and was still pristine like as the period of Mughal Empire. At this point, Kashmir is not under problematic situation like as today. It is free of the soldiers, camouflaged trucks and military camps and jeeps and without firing. He rejected the primitive and ancestral ways in favour of modernity. In the novel, Aadam Aziz who appeared very much likes Nehru in many aspects. For instance both are from Kashmiri background and had their education in a foreign country. But soon we learn that Saleem is not Aadam's real grandson and has not inherited his prominent nose from him. The novel is a curious mixture of Saleem's life as well as the history of the nation. It includes the historical events like Quit India Movement, Cabinet Mission, Muslim League Activity, Riots, Five Years Plan, Pakistan War, Liberation of Bangladesh and Stealing of Sacred Relic of

Hazratbal Mosque. The novel indicates the national events which have realistic description. For instance when the novelist is representing the National Movement at Amritsar as :

It is April 7th, 1919, and in Amritsar the Mahatma's grand design is being distorted. The shops have been shut. The railway station is closed, but now rioting mobs are breaking them up. Doctor Aziz, leather bag in hand, is out in the streets, giving help wherever possible. Trampled bodies have been left where they fell. He is bandaging wounds, daubing them liberally with Mercurochrome, which makes them look bloodier than ever, but at least disinfects them. Finally he returns to his hotel room his clothes soaked in red stains (39).

Aadam Aziz parents died in 1919 when the Indian regiments returned home from the World War I. He got a job as a doctor at Agra University and married Naseem Ghani – the girl behind the perforated sheet which was incidentally a part of the dowry. Aadam Aziz tryst with the Indian National Movement takes place at Amritsar and had long lasting repercussions in his life. The day he reaches to Amritsar he saw people were doing hartals and when the mob turns violent setting fire to the Railway Stations and the Government properties, General Dyer steps into inflict the revenge in the most brutal manner albeit after a few days the Britishers surrounds the peaceful agitators who collected at Jalianwala Bagh from all sides. Aadam struck amongst the innocents when Dyer's men were firing and saw people slumping to death. In the stampede even he was run over and lay on the ground with his bag from Heidelberg – the doctori attache under his chest whose clasp had dug deep into his chest leaving a scar which would not go until his death and it was a bruise which triumphantly turned him into an Indian. He was moving around with Mercurochrome bandaging the wounded and he decided to continue with greater fervour and jumped into the national movement. This event filled in him a patriotic fervor and made him Indian. It was filled with the new faith of nationalism. When he returned to his room at the hotel he asks his wife, Naseem Aziz to come out of the life of purdah and be a prospective Indian woman. Naseem Aziz is a loving and

dutiful wife but she cannot compromise with her orthodoxy to which she draws a flak leaving Dr.Aziz disappointed.

Saleem supervises the work in a pickle factory during the daytime. He preserves his memory to prevent it from the corruption of time by reducing it to writing at night. Padma, who works in the same pickle factory with Saleem, is an active listener and also devoted as Saleem's caretaker. She is strong liked as down-to-earth as Saleem is weak and dreamy. Saleem falls back two generations to tell his story to Padma and comes to 1942 when Mahatma Gandhi launched Quit India Movement. Saleem describes about his family who settled in Agra and he also narrates the tragedy of the nationalist Muslims who opposed the partition and placed their hopes on the concept of plurality and religious tolerance. The British Government introduced a rule of divide and rule policy for the communal disturbances. But the nationalist Muslims as the optimism epidemic that spread like wild fire and was caused by one Mian Abdullah who popularly known as the humming bird because of his strange habit of humming as he took great delight in his work. He had united hundreds of Muslim youths and invited the leaders of the dozens of Muslim splinter groups to form a loosely federated alternative to the dogmatism and vested interests of the Muslim League members and formed the party named Free Islam Convocation that opposed the partition. The first convocation was in Lahore and second held at Agra in summer of 1942. Nadir Khan Alias Qasim Khan, a communist and Amina's first husband and the personal assistant to Mian Abdullah as well as a bad poet met the humming bird and Dr.Aziz at the second convocation and discussed about politics and poetry and played the game of hit the spittoon. At this stage, Mian Abdullah was murdered by the hardcore Muslims. Hearing the hum of Mian Abdullah thousands of pie dogs ran to the sport in their Aries and tore the murderers into pieces. This grotesque incident was described by Saleem in a fantastic language as:

Six new moons came into the room, six crescent knives held by men dressed all in black, with covered faces. Two men held Nadir Khan while the others moved towards the Humming bird (57).

Saleem has appeared anxious about his historical inconsistencies in the chapter “At the pioneer cafe”. He profoundly sentient of how fantastically and incredibly his depiction sounds to the cynical, realistic Padma. After he emerges from his fever-induced dream, it becomes especially important for Saleem to assert the veracity of his story. Saleem encounters Shiva and came to know that he is the biological son of Ahmed and Amina Sinai who had to bear the brunt of this unjust world for the doing of Mary Pereira. Shiva had become the leader of a notorious gang in the Bombay’s underworld. He did not accept the leadership of Saleem as he too was born on the stroke of midnight. He wanted the joint leadership of the conference by the virtue of his birth. This started a rivalry between Shiva and Saleem, which was going to have far reaching consequences both in their lives as well as in the life of the nation.

Shiva became a representative for the force of the evil, which posed a threat to the notions of liberal freedom represented by Saleem. Shiva was used by the ruling Congress party to rig the elections of 1957 in Bombay which resulted in Kasim Khan’s defeat but the Communist Party emerged as the single largest opposition party in the Parliament. When Saleem met with an accident he came to know the truth that he is not the biological son of his parents. After his recovery, Saleem left the hospital and he was sent to his Uncle Hanif and Aunt Pia’s home for a while. In a while, Saleem returns home to his parents, Hanif commits suicide. When the family bemoan on Hanif’s death, Mary plead guilty of changing children Saleem and Shiva after the delivery. Saleem’s entire family moves to Pakistan after India’s military defeat China. His younger sister, the Brass Monkey, becomes the most famous singer, Jamila in Pakistan. During the war between India and Pakistan in 1965, at the verge of devastate stage, Saleem’s entire family save Jamila and Saleem and dies in the span of a single day.

During the air foray’s, Saleem gets hit in the head by his grandfather’s silver spittoon, which erases his memory entirely. Relieved of his memory, Saleem is reduced to an animalistic state. He was anesthetised against feelings as well as memories. This numbness is the reason he does not register any sensation when his fellow soldiers subject him to a strong electric current and he is called as Buddha because they could feel an air of great antiquity around him though he was only

twenty-four years old at that time. He finds himself conscripted into military service, as his ardent logic of whiff makes him an exceptional tracker. Despite of the fact that he doesn't perceive accurately how he came to join the army, he presumes that Jamila sent him there whereas in the army, Saleem assists to subdue the freedom movement in Bangladesh. After by standing a number of carnages, he runs away into the jungle of Sundarbans with three of his fellow combatants. When Saleem leaves the jungle he finds Parvathi – the - witch, one of *Midnight's Children*, who strikes a chord of his name thereafter he recuperates all of his memory except his name and she helps him escape back to India.

In the novel, Rushdie makes an attempt to link the fictive autobiography of an individual to the history of a nation. It is a creative rewriting of history which denies any opposition between history and fiction and substitutes official records with a comprehensive account of the historical process. He referred Indira Gandhi as to the mother of emergency and she is remembered and recalled as a widow who signifies the drying up of emotions, harshness, cruelty and centralization of all powers. She reigned supreme over others and held her sway. Saleem says :

We the magical children of the Midnight were hated, feared ,  
destroyed by the widow who was not only the Prime Minister of India  
but also aspired to be Devi the mother Goddess in her most terrible  
aspect, possessor of the Shakti of the gods, a multi-limbed dignity  
with a center -parting and schizophrenic hair (612).

Like Saleem, his son Adam also carries the disturbances of personal appearance of his father legacy. On either side of his head flab protuberances like sails, ears so huge that when his head popped out they thought for one moment that it was the head of a tiny elephant. The child refuses to cry for a long time and it is thought that he is dumb. Another abnormality is that he possesses a navel which sticks out instead of in and finally the first word that he utters is mysterious is Abracadabra. Like his father, he is also mysteriously handcuffed to history as he is the biological son of Shiva and Parvathi-the-witch and Saleem raises Aadam as if he were his own child. He was born exactly on the day when emergency is proclaimed by Indira Gandhi in the year 1975.

At the end, Saleem's final prophecy spills out in a stream of he recuperates all of his memory except his name. Imagining his future, Saleem sees himself falling distant on his birthday and falling down into millions of crumbs of grime, just as his grandfather Aadam fall down into grime in his moment. Certainly, Saleem's birthday is the birthday of his nation's liberty. Falling down into dust becomes a representation of fatigue and accord. Saleem can capitulate himself, dissolving into an icon or metaphor for his nation, as he fall apart into as many pieces of grime as there are people in India.

#### HAROUN AND THE SEA OF STORIES :

In *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* Salman Rushdie has shown a decisive predilection for fantasy over nimesis so as to catch up with our chaotic times, and to give some kind of meaning to the evasive nature of reality. The novel articulate the basic aesthetic position on which the author has based his entire oeuvre; it is a suspicion of the literal and the realist, and a faith in the epic-fabulist mode that does more justice in narrating the dream-like wonder of our waking world. Life is fantastic and, more often than not, stranger than fiction. These events in the past, however, serve to underscore the ability of reality to continually overtake our imagination, which has troubled writer more particularly those in the third world but has indelibly shaped the character of their work.

The novelist has struggled to render a reality that has become increasingly unreal. In fact, the novel is engaged in a fight for the fictional and discovering imagination amidst the ideas and emphases of this bewilderingly changing time. While World War II raised new questions about the limits of language and perception, the 1960s witnessed the fears of the Vietnamese war and the freaks of decolonization, and the 1980s marked a sense of insecurity and unrest among the third wordlist novelists in Afro-Asian and Latin American countries, forcing them to experiment more freely with alternatives to naturalism. Of late, most novelists of the Indian subcontinent seem to have embraced the kind of a phantasmagorical writing known as 'magic realism'— a narrative technique so assiduously used in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* that made what Salman Rushdie is today. The convergence of cultures and literatures of the Indian subcontinent and those of the Latin American countries has been possible



largely due to the creative mixture of cultures and races of different origins that gives these two regions their beautiful diversity, range, and depth that can come only from such a variegated milieu. Beyond many common social concerns there is a deeper bond between both the subcontinents: certain shared patterns of imagination and expression – a juxtaposition of the beautiful and the grotesque, a mixing of times and transposition of spaces, an aura of the magical and the surreal that envelops the reality, the employment of polyphony and of multi-dimensional images and polymeric metaphors and above all, an attempt to convert history into myth through the magic of language and imagination.

In his essay *The Location of Brazil* Rushdie theorizes on the iconoclastic function of imagination in bringing down the myth of certainties that realism tend to weave so carefully. He insists that imagination can prove handy to challenge the totalitarian principles of domination and subjugation. Equally brilliantly he argues that imagination can become a sheer iconographic power that could redraw better maps of reality, giving meanings to life and experiences. Despite its pervasive power of manipulation, imagination in fact is a process of celebration, even of liberation, that could bring order into the chaos. The metafictional comment of this sort in his numerous essays and interviews are a constant reminder of the need of the artist to control and order our ‘dreaming self’; Rushdie tells thus:

The idea – the opposition of imagination to reality, which is also of course the opposition of art to politics – is of great importance, because it reminds us that we are not helpless; that to dream is to have power.

It is suggested that the true location of Brazil is the other great tradition in art, the one in which techniques of comedy, metaphor, heightened imagery, fantasy and so on are used to break down our conventional, habit-dulled certainties about what the world is and has to be.

Unreality is the only weapon with which reality can be smashed, so that it may subsequently be reconstructed (122).

One finds good reasons to believe in the theory that Rushdie subscribes to, especially at a time when present day reality seems to have turned increasingly unreal, resulting in a crisis of correspondence between the signifier and the signified, the moment and the metaphor.

In its struggle to capture, metaphorically, the sweep and chaos of contemporary reality and strike a 'form' that could impose certain structures on our inchoate experience, Rushdie's novels often make a hotchpotch of forms and mix up all such extra ingredients that render them the flavours and fiestas that make novel reading entertaining and intellectually satisfying. However, while conjuring up whole causalities, climates, creatures, and customs in a thin air of honour and suspect, Rushdie often struggles to maintain his position: *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* beautifully captures the suspects of present day reality which resemblances a dream or a nightmare or both together. But while exploring the possibility of bringing in a radical reformulation of language, form, and ideas in his fiction, Rushdie realizes that nothing could be more enabling than the idea of openness to the 'new', the 'marginal', and the 'ambiguous'. A stance such as this seems to have gradually shifted the entire debate from the controversy between conventional and experimental, authenticity and mimicry, center and margin, towards exploration and celebration of the second part of these dualities.

*Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is a brilliantly contrived parodic-allegory, spectacularly ambitious, funny, satirical, but at the same time compassionate. Rushdie's art in this novel is really allegorical in its most sophisticated garb, very effectively hiding his motives yet vividly demonstrating his apprehensions about the bruised political sensibility of contemporary world, and showing his immense faith in the regenerative power of imagination as well. Using fantasy as a narrative mode Rushdie goes on to tell in this novel a story about stories, narrated through the adventures of a boy Haroun who undertakes a journey to 'Kahani' - the Earth's invisible moon - in order to restore his father's gift of the gab. The allegorical core of the narrative points to the essential tension between those who celebrate the beauty of imagination and those who feel threatened by its energy. While writing the story for his son, Rushdie was also writing for himself; his first task was to please the youngling's love for story and then to find out more of what his father was trying to tell him. Rushdie admits, James Fenton reports, "I began to devise the yarn that eventually became Haroun, and felt strongly that if I could strike the right note it should be possible...to make it of interest to adults as well as children" (James Fenton, 1991).

In fact, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* catapults from a domestic tragedy to a crisis of imagination within a harrowing culture of living permanently under totalitarianism's terrible capture of reality. On the surface, Haroun appears a lively and wonderfully inventive comic tale with an updated Arabian Nights background. It closely follows the classic narrative pattern where the hero travels to strange lands to lift a spell on his native country or cure his father of a fatal ailment. As appropriate to children's story, Rushdie's young hero Haroun is only eleven; he is the son of the famous storyteller Rashid who is also known as the Shah of Blah or Ocean of Notions. And the storyteller is able, like Orpheus, to command the fascinated attention of the creatures of the fairyland, and even the politicians happen to find his stories really useful, not for their falseness, but because of it:

Nobody ever believed anything a politico said, even though they pretended as hard as they could that they were telling the truth. (In fact, this was how everyone knew they were lying.) But everyone had complete faith in Rashid, because he always admitted that everything he told them was completely untrue and made up out of his own head. (7)

The unmistakable suggestion here is that the magic of storytelling begins after its fictiveness is confessed, for the storyteller's imagination, even though sounds propagandist, is still a better alternative to destroy the politicians' blatant act of falsification of reality. Furthermore, it suggests an unstable ground on which political consensus can be forged, hinting at a shared set of counterfactual wishes and admitted lies that open the real world up to political action. The affliction of speech, which is central to the book, is paralleled by the affliction of the country where Haroun lives— "a sad city, the saddest of cities, a city so ruinously sad that it had forgotten its name", where sadness is said to be "manufactured and packaged" and "hung over the city like bad news" (1). Haroun lives with his once-happy family, then moves into the valley of K where he travels with his father at the invitation of Mr. Buttoo whose unpopular government was trying to use stories to win the ensuing election. But the story typically unfolds the pattern of luck "running out without the slightest warning" (5) and the Shah of Blah is found facing the gravest crisis of his life. His wife Soraya is infatuated by a thin, whiny neighbour Mr. Sengupta who accuses Rashid Khalifa of diluting the gravity of

reality: “What are all these stories? Life is not a storybook or joke shop. All this fun will come to no good. What’s the use of stories when they aren’t even true?”(7). After she runs off with the clerk, her story teller husband loses his gift of the gab and could only croak, like a stupid crow, "ark, ark, ark" (14); and Haroun gets “stuck in time like a broken clock”, as Miss Oneeta puts it, due to “pussy-collar-jeecal [psychological] sadness” (11). In the novel the migrant writer merges two narrative modes— fantasy and fable— not just for moral, aesthetic, political, artistic or intertextual concerns, but for revealing a fundamental organizing principle by showing a set of apparently fictitious characters and situations that compulsively define the author as well.

The novel seems to insist that just as the fantasist constructs fantasy, the fantasy can also be used to construct a portrait of the fantasist. The dedication of the novel to his son (Zafar) and its typographical patterning suggests how Rushdie portrays himself into the text as the storyteller: the allegorical relationship between the storyteller (Rashid Khalifa) and the writer (Rushdie) is really too strong to lose sight of the fantasy or fun elements in the tale. Both the fathers— fictive and real—have suffered the loss of voice, and both the sons—Haroun and Zafar— are expected to rescue their father’s powers; while the one does through sheer power of imagination, the other is expected to do it by reading and reordering. Thus Rushdie clearly decimates the demarcations between fantasy that uses the supernatural and fable, which can bring magical to its fold quite naturally. Moreover, he poses a crafty question that relates to the space occupied by the fantasist within his fantasy by merging biography, romance, politics in the story, creating a delightful fantasy that testifies the power of the ‘dreaming self’. The dedication in acrostic verse thus very much forms part of the text: Zembla, zenda, xanadu ; All our dream-worlds may come true. Fairy lands are fearsome too. As I wander far from view Read, and bring me home to you. The second line relocates the book at the level of a wish-fulfillment fantasy whereas the biography part reminds us that the text is not only the site for mutual reclamation of father and son, but it is also a political arena for contesting coercive forces and an ethical space for denouncing the insubstantiality of evil that only children’s stories can make with impunity.

The novel is from this matter-of-fact reality that Haroun begins his sojourn into the imaginary not just to restore his father's brilliant power of storytelling but also to find an answer to the nagging question of the adult world—"What's the use of stories when they aren't even true?" In the course of his adventure into the earth's invisible moon, Haroun arrives just as this fantasy world reaches a crisis: the Ocean of Stories, where streams of brilliantly colored water flow together in a liquid tapestry, is being polluted by a misanthrope Khattam-Shud, the "Prince of Silence and the Foe of Speech" (65), who turns the ocean's brilliant colours dull and gray. The crisis in the imaginary realm threatens the real because the real world is already suffering a crisis: the names of places have been lost and with them is lost the power of people that makes them feel secured at home. In Haroun as in all his major novels Rushdie pits the dictator against the artist as an attempt to establish that the stories though factually incorrect are conceptually true, and therefore, intrinsically threatening to the dictator. Moreover, he puts the tyrants with their exact doubles who try to get control over the faculty of imagination: Mr. Sengupta who shows his hatred for stories, doubts the need and efficacy of imagination to recreate reality, and asks similar question as Khattam-Shud does—"What's the use of stories when they aren't even true?" When he finally confronts the tyrant, Haroun asks, "'But why do you hate stories so much'? 'Stories are fun...'. The Cultmaster sneers back— 'The world, however, is not for Fun'. 'The world is for Controlling'", and reveals his diabolic design to destroy all stories that thrive on imagination and defies every essential definition:

Your world, my world, all worlds, they are all there to be Ruled. And inside every single story, inside every Stream in the Ocean, there lies a world, a story-world that I cannot Rule at all. And that is the reason why (146 - 147).

The Ocean of stories, where streams of brilliantly colored water flow together in a liquid tapestry, where wonderful creatures like the water genies and plentimaw fish incessantly swallow, digest, and excrete the story waters in ever new and intriguing patterns, suggests a brilliant metaphor to valorize Rushdie's preference for the plurality of voices, privileging polyphony over an enforced unity of silence. And it is replicated in the title that invokes at least two traditions of narrative cycles—the Arabian Nights from western Asia and an

eleventh-century compendium of stories *Katha-Sarit-Sagar* from a Kashmiri poet Somadeva. It is not really difficult for readers to see that the abstract elf-renewing attributes of the narrative becomes concrete when the plentymaw fish constantly swallow the waters into their many mouths and spew out new ones, incorporating bits and pieces of the old stories. Moreover, this has been an interesting metaphor for the playfulness and regenerative power of fancy. At a time when the author's real life was pushed into a realm where the fictive became literal, he needed the relatively safe space of a children's book to make his statement about freedom and laughter, magic and reality. But the fairytale incandescence with which the literal ocean is turned into a metaphoric sea of stories—streams of different colours constantly weave in and out of each other as liquid tapestry—is achieved by Rushdie by replicating the narrative tradition of *Katha-Sarit-Sagar* and the *Arabian Nights*. As an active participant of the universal cultural hotchpotch, it was easy for Rushdie to weave such a cultural matrix. And given to the origin of his ancestry in the valley, it appears quite logical that he turns nostalgically to Kashmir or 'Kache-Mer' that literally means "the place that hides a Sea" (27).

...even though he was full of a sense of hopefulness and failure the magic of the Ocean began to have an effect on Haroun. He looked into the water and saw that it was made up of a thousand and one different currents, each one is a different colour, and weaving in and out of one another like a liquid tapestry of breathtaking complexity...the Ocean of the Streams of Story was in fact the biggest library in the universe. And because the stories were held here in fluid form, they retained the ability to change, to become new versions of themselves, to join up with other stories and so become yet other stories; so that unlike a library of books, the Ocean of the Streams of Story was much more than a storeroom of yarns. It was not dead but alive (58-59).

Although the title of the novel reechoes Somadeva's anthology of fables, in content, however, the text is closer to Satyajit Ray's allegory *Goopy Gayen Bagha Bayen* and Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies*. All these storytellers use fantasy for children as a means to celebrate art, articulation, and life over suspicion,

silence, and death. While Kingsley campaigns for the freedom of the human heart at the height of the Industrial Revolution, Ray and Rushdie campaign for freedom of the human imagination in a world where fundamentalism often threatens to destroy freedom of expression. Like the battle between Jhundi and Shundi in Ray's text, Rushdie turns his book of fun-talks into a freedom-talk, and its climax is attained in the battle between the Guppies— inhabitants of a wonderful land of story (Gup) — and the Chupwalas who have lost their speech and live in the land of eternal silence. "Gup is warm and Chup is freezing cold," tells the novel, "... Guppees love the ocean, Chupwalas try to poison it. Guppees love stories and speech, chupwalas, it seems, hate these things just as strongly" (111). In contrast to the brilliant excitement and optimism that reverberates Gup city, a death-like silence prevails around the 'Land of Chup', a place of shadows of books that wear padlocks and tongues torn out, where the Cultmaster Bezaban imposes strict adherence to silence and servility on the zipped-lip Chupwalas. 'Chup' city is dark, freezing cold, and silent as shadow, nonchalantly exposing the vows of silence and the habits of secrecy that makes its inhabitants suspicious and distrustful of each other.

Rushdie delights his young readers especially in the Indian subcontinent by sheer inventiveness of the names of characters: Butt and Iff, the King Chattergy - comically split into 'chatter' in English and a 'ji' in Hindi, Princess Baatheat and Prince Bolo, and Blabbermouth, all are associated with the prolixity of speech in the Gupee society. Even their soldiers are called 'pages', and they are organized in 'chapters' and 'volumes' and wear 'laminations' on their body. When the infantry meets under the leadership of 'no problem' General Kitab, there is a loud rustling of 'pages' until order is established through proper 'pagination' and 'collation'. On the contrary, the land of Chup on the dark side of Kahanni is full of negative names suggesting silence— the field of Batt-matkaro, the cult-master Bezaban, the arch-villain Khatam Shud and so on. Evidently, the struggle between them is also the struggle between life and death, between clean air and pure water on the one hand and a polluted landscape and an acid sea on the other. As such, the story may be a parable of art and its detractors but it is ingeniously enriched with contemporary ecological concerns linking the restoration of creativity with saving the ocean from pollutants.

Rushdie's marvelous achievement in the story also lies in his sustained use of myth as a creative mode. His art expounds a contextual continuity with the best efforts of Indian literature by using literary myths taken from The Ramayana. Prince Bolo's army of the 'Gupees' against the Cultmaster Bezaban finds a mythic parallel with Ram's army, comprising monkeys and bears, in his battle against Ravan. The use of the mythic mode shows that the novelist not only grapples with some fundamental questions about good and evil, but he is also able to explore into the possibility of a kind of self-realization. Myths have timeless significance to literature because they illustrate essential principles of storytelling by helping modern man rediscover a new meaning and pattern of life in the light of past experience. Despite their remoteness from contemporary reality, myths provide amazing opportunity to go into the 'roots' to discover the dignity of human identity. In their battle, the Guppies enjoy a decided advantage of possessing multiple voices: Iff, the Water Genie communicates in telepathic mode; the plentimaw fish Goopy and Bagha speak in rhyming couplets; Mali the Floating Gardener speaks in quatrains; Butt, the Hoopoe's sentence is punctured with 'but, but', and General Kitab's speech is invariably marked by innocuous oaths. While Prince Bolo uses the clichéd rhetoric of romance, Princess Batcheat communicates through execrable love songs – all contributing their bit to a lively din of heteroglossia. In fact, all their "arguments and debates, all that openness, had created powerful bonds of friendship between them" (172). It is not just the verbal play that delights the young reader, but the eccentricities of these characters and the amazing exploits of the young hero, the old-fashioned tale whose barehanded bravery to save his father merges into the apparatus of a science-fiction quest in which the secret of moving a planet has to be discovered.

Khattam-Shud's poison factory is with its devices of "converting mechanical energy into electrical energy by means of electromagnetic induction" belongs purely to the realm of science fiction. Moreover, Haroun is aided by a bird with a brain-box with memory-cell and command module; he has a 'bite-a-lite' torch to illuminate his path. But ultimately what saves him, rescues Princess Baatcheat and purifies the ocean is not technology or science-fiction strategies, but a bottle of 'wish-water' of pure fairytale variety. The power of this magic potion could finally combat all the "immense supercomputers and gigantic gyroscope that had controlled"



the movement of the planet; and finally this wish-water from the magic world vanquishes the science fiction world because “it possesses a force beyond power to imagine, let alone control” (159). The story provides an interesting idea that if the real world is full of magic, the magic world could also be equally real and fearsome. But equally truthfully, it also suggests that if reality of the mammoth myth of shadowiness is to be encountered, it can be done only through freedom and imagination. “Imaginative truth,” Rushdie says in his non-fiction *Imaginary Homelands*, “is simultaneously honourable and suspect...” but it is still preferable to the ghetto mentality of avoiding reality. It is, in fact, a choice of “shadow-become-human rather than man-grown-shadowy” (140). During his interaction with Khattam-Shud, Haroun realizes that the terrible Cultmaster is nothing else but a shadow the solidity of which melts like “ice-cream left in the sun” or like butter or cheese softening in the heat, exposing ultimately the insubstantial nature of evil. Coming as a great relief as Haroun’s ‘wish-water’ makes the moon move and helps the light of the sun fall on its dark side, Princess Baatcheat is rescued, and the ocean is saved. But the fable of the battle is framed by two other stories— of the family and of the state. Gup’s victory over Chup has to be re-enacted in these two frame stories also in order to keep the children happy. Thus an interweaving of the stories is attempted through pairs of identical characters like Sengupta and Khattam-Shud, Butt the bus driver and the Hoopoe bird with a mechanical brain. Further, a conjunction of incidents such as the wish-water that enables Haroun to make miracles happen— Kahani resuming its lunar movement, the well-spring of stories being unplugged, and Rashid’s gift of the gab restored; the story that had got blocked at the political rally in the valley of K gets finally told at the end.

The novel, however, offers another model of the connection between real and imaginary. As Haroun returns home and finds his mother singing in the rain, he recognizes the rain as synthesized happy endings pouring down from the sea of stories. “It isn’t real”, he insists, “It’s all fake. People should be happy when there’s something to be happy about, not just when they get bottled happiness poured over them from the sky” (196). It makes readers feel that ‘bottled happiness’ can’t replace real happiness and imagined worlds cannot replace actual ones. But given to the growing danger, individually as well as collectively, that people find themselves slipping into a fragmented, story less condition, the

loss of the capacity for narrative will no doubt amount to the ultimate disempowering of the human subject. So it is urgent that men should make a choice, and it is between “shadow-become-human” or “man-grown-shadowy”. The great idea that Haroun exudes is the great irony of narrative, which lies in empowering some while disempowering others and, that concocting imaginative stories is central to human identity. Thus *Haroun and the sea of Stories* is a wonderful story in the light of political relevance in which Rushdie gives more importance to the human identity. He presents the Eastern and the western politics vividly as he had personal experience with politics of the world.

### SEA OF POPPIES :

Amitav Ghosh is known as a novelist with an extraordinary sense of history, myth, politics and place. “Amitav Ghosh always researches and brings together the social, cultural and political events of the past, the far-past, the present and future” (Indira Bhatt & Indira Nityanandan, 14). His fiction seems directly informed by contemporary academic debates about historical as well as anthropological elements. “Ghosh has a distinctive style of writing that synthesises the imagination of a writer with the insightful detaining of an anthropologist. He takes up the obscured events in history and transcends the boundaries of fiction/nonfiction by sprinkling over them the colors of his imagination” (Ravi Bhusan and Daisy, 134).

My aim is to focus on political relevance in terms of post colonial aspect. Amitav Ghosh skillfully links politics with the socio-economic themes of 19<sup>th</sup> century in his master-piece *Sea of Poppies*. He projects the forced cultivation of opium as a cash crop in Bihar and Bengal for Chinese market, its disastrous consequences and transport of first batch of Indian Diaspora through the ship Ibis. He synthesises his imagination with the insightful detaining of an anthropologist taking observed events in history to sprinkle the colours of fiction/non-fiction into his writing. *Sea of Poppies* like a travelogue becomes an important socio-political document that draws its raw material from history, sociology, anthropology and politics. It traverses the dark path of Indian colonial history by exposing the shrewd business acumen of British, who scrapped India of its riches and Chinese of their discretion by poisoning them with opium. Opium wars were fought in 1839-42 between British East India Company and a weakened China under the Qing Dynasty, to acquire ‘free trade’ of Opium across

the huge market of China for British merchants. Ibis, the ship originally 'blackbirder' in America was used to transport slaves from Africa, but after the abolition of slavery, the schooner is sold to British shipping company Burnham Bros, in Calcutta to transport indentured labourers to British colonies in the Caribbean Islands. Even the captain Mr. Chillingworth is an opium addict, first mate Mr. Crowley is a rogue and second mate is a mulatto freedman, Zachary Reid the leader of lascar, and Serang Ali, has 'a face that would have earned the envy of Genghis Khan' (14).

*Sea of Poppies* is the first volume of what will be the Ibis trilogy. The Ibis is the name of a vessel carrying the characters of the story, which is symbolically, narrated under three symbolic parts namely 'Land', 'River' and 'Sea'. Land symbolises social, political and economical strife of people for survival which passes on to River symbolising flowing or running after the dreams those which become impossible and difficult to attain on the rough surface of vast unknown Sea. The main characters are included Deeti, an ordinary village woman, a mulatto American sailor named Zachary Reid, an Indian rajah/zamindar called Neel Rattan Halder, and Benjamin Burnham, an evangelist opium trader. The story is set prior to the Opium Wars, on the banks of the holy river Ganges and in Calcutta. The author compares Ganges to the Nile, the lifeline of the Egyptian civilisation, attributing the provenance and growth of these civilisations to these selfless, ever flowing bodies. He portrays the characters as poppy seeds emanating in large numbers from the field to form a sea, where every single seed is uncertain about its future. The novel is an epic saga with multitude of characters in love-hate relationships, "detailed description of opium production" in north east India by British Trade Company, the period of the 19th century seafaring and picturing life in 1830's Calcutta. Imperialism seems to be beautiful and deadly like the poppy flowers. Both Calcutta and Ibis are polyglot communities, where people speak pidgin, Bhojpuri and mingled English Bengali. Language works here as a major technique to unite or divide people and confuse or clarify situation. It is set just prior to the opium wars which devastated Indian Economy as well as society at large.

The story begins with Deeti, a simple pious lady, caring mother and an efficient housewife. Married to Hukum Singh, a crippled worker in the Ghazipur Opium Factory, the unfortunate Deeti figures out that on her wedding night, she was

drugged with opium by her mother-in-law, so that her brother-in-law could consummate the marriage in place of her 'infertile' husband. This brother-in-law is the real father of Deeti's daughter Kabutri. When her husband dies, Deeti sends Kabutri to stay with relatives. Deeti took almost certain to meet her doom when she chooses to go through with the 'sati' ritual (immolation on her husband's funeral pyre), but then Kalua, the low caste ox man from the neighboring village, comes to her rescue. The couple flees and unites. This is not acceptable to their fellow villagers. In order to escape the anger of Deeti's in-laws, she and Kalua become indentured servants on the Ibis. Some other stories do add to the plight of the main character in the novel. Zachary Reid, an American sailor born to a slave mother and white father, receives a lot of attention. He is looked down by Whites and hated by Asians and Orientals. His neglected identity made him sadistically cruel and wicked. He took pleasure in cruel flogging of Kalua, and brutally punishes other people on board. He has been on the Ibis since the schooner started her arduous journey, and hopes to die with it. Neel Rattan Halder, a wealthy 'rajah' whose dynasty has been ruling the Zamindari of Rakshali for centuries, is cleverly confronted by Mr. Burnham with the need to sell off his estates in order to pay for the debt he had incurred when trading opium with China was at the height of the opium trade. He is being cheated and robbed of his riches by the British as it was the trend of the Empire.

*Sea of Poppies* also highlights Paulette, a French orphan, who had also grown up in India. Paulette's upbringing in India has also made her feel more at ease with Indian manners, food, and clothing than with Western ones. France being the rival of British Empire made Paulette's life hell and she disguises herself to escape to a new life through Ibis. As the stories merge, each carrying its share of joys and sorrows, the Ibis becomes a shelter to those in destitution. After much strife, conspiracy and bloodshed on board the Vessel, Neel, Ah Fatt, Jodu, Serang Ali and Kalua manage to escape, unaware of the destination the sea waves will carry them to. The stories of the novel interweave various myths, beliefs, languages, cultural and historical elements to portray true picture of the then respective society. The two broad themes of the novel are: during nineteenth century, the compulsory cultivation of opium as a cash crop in Bihar and parts of Bengal for the Chinese market and its disastrous consequences, and the origins and transport of the first batch of Indian Diaspora. Ghosh protagonists are the neglected subjects of the colonial enterprise instead of powerful White masters

unlike Rudyard Kipling and E. M. Forester. The process had started in 1834 resulting into the creation of a distinct set of people bonded with the force of adversity that they had faced together. In Amitav Ghosh's 'Sea of Poppies', the first part of the Ibis trilogy, it is Paulette who tells Deeti that they were "ship-siblings—jahajbhais and jahajbahens—to each other"(527).

In the novel, *Sea of Poppies*, Ghosh portrays how immigrants were looted upon by the white men: "The Dhangars" are always spoken of as more akin to the monkey than the man. They have no religion, no education and in their present state, no want beyond eating, drinking and sleeping; and to procure which, they are willing to labour". The indentured labour was badly needed in the mono-cropping plantation economies of the various colonies of the European imperial prowess, Mauritius was one such economy. More than one million people crossed the black waters for a few paid labours in various colonies. More than seventy five percent of them came from the Bhojpuri speaking North India. The novel is set in the 1830's when the Chinese rulers banned the opium trade, leading to opium war and conquest of Hong Kong by the British. Deeti moving out of Bihar ( Ghazipur) sees, "hundreds of ....impoverished transients many of whom were willing to sweat themselves half to death for a few handfuls of rice....driven from their villages by the flood of flowers that had washed over the countryside" ( 298). The description of the sudden opium factory at Ghazipur is based on a realistic account published in 1865 by its one time superintendent, J.W.S Mac Arthur. The scene at factory evokes horror and pity like Dickens as:

bare bodied men sunk waist deep in tanks of opium, tramping round and round to soften the sludge. Their eyes were vacant, glazed and yet somehow they managed to keep moving, as slow as ants in honey, tramping, treading (94-95).

The duffadar tells Kalua: "caste doesn't matter...all kinds of men are eager to sign up-Brahmins, Ahirs, Chamars, Telis....they be young and able-bodied and willing to work" (302). The Masters not only exploited the natural resources of the country but also the human resources to their fullest. Even Raja Neel Rattan understands humanity under adverse conditions, ".... To take care of another Human being - this was something Neel had never before thought of doing, not even with his son, let alone a man of his own age, a foreigner" (300).

*Sea of Poppies* depicts how the small farmers and agricultural labourers in colonial India were forced by circumstances to be coolies and deported in Mauritius and other places. The portrait of the Bhojpuri woman Deeti who had the vision of the Ibis in the very beginning of the novel is a typical example of such oppressed farmers. The novel shows how after losing her husband, who served in the opium factory and whose land had been forcibly used for opium plantation, Deeti is ready to die in her husband's Pyre only to save herself from the lust of her brother-in-law, but is rescued by a lower class or caste man Kalua, who marries her by eloped in secret and then takes her to the ship to be coolies in some other land. Earlier poppies were grown in small clusters between the fields that bore the main winter crops such as wheat and the farmers liked to use poppies seeds as luxury items. As per the sap, it was left to dry to get hard 'akbari afeem' which the farmers could sell to local nobility and were also free to keep some amount for personal use during illness. But now the 'chandu' opium was made and packaged in the English factory for business and the farmers who supplied the poppies were ill paid and were not even allowed to keep some parts of the harvest with them for free selling or for personal use. Having done a lot of research on poppy plantation, Ghosh shows how the unwilling farmers were forced to plant poppy and face loss: "It was no use telling the white magistrate that you hadn't accepted the money and your thumbprint was forged"( 30).

Here is a detailed description of colonial oppression by compelling the Indian farmers, poor and illiterate, to harvest crops in their own land for the benefit of the British businessmen who had support of judiciary with them. After Deeti came in contact with other indentured labourers she came to know that everyone's land was in hock to the agents of opium factory, and that every farmer had been served with a contract, the fulfilling of which left them with no option but to strew their land with poppies. And when the harvest was over the farmers found that the little amount of grains they could bring home would not be able to feed their families and that they were destined to plunge deeper into debt (91). Amitav Ghosh also reveals the plight of the workers inside the Opium factory-the hazards faced by them and the insecurity of their dangerous job- in this book. *Sea of Poppies* also reveals that export of opium to China was brain child of the British and the American businessmen, and thus the myth of China's hunger for opium since antiquity is broken. In the dinner party offered by the landlord Neel Ratan Mr.Doughty proudly proclaims:

the yen for opium would still be limited to their twice-born if not for the perseverance of English and American merchants. It's happened almost within living memory-for which we owe a sincere vote of thanks to the likes of Mr. Burnham (112).

In this regard, Mr. Doughty commented at this point: "Johnny Chinaman thinks he can return to the good old days, before he got his taste for opium. But there's no going back." (112).

They play politics even in religion. The religious sentiments are exploited for profitable trade by Mr. Burnham, "Jesus Christ is Free Trade and Free Trade is Jesus Christ" and explained, "if it is God's will that opium be used as an instrument to open China to his teachings" (116). Their hypocritical humanism is exposed through Mr. Doughty's remark, "...indeed, humanity demands it, and we need only think of the poor Indian peasant-- what will become of him if his opium can't be sold in China?" (260). Colonisers "divide and rule" mind-set exploits natives to utmost for their huge capital gains. Historically, the novel is set just prior to the Opium Wars and revolves around the British involvement in India and their trade practices exporting opium from India to China. Since trading began with China in the sixteenth century there was a high demand for tea, silk and porcelain in Britain. But due to the low demand of the European commodities in the East, Britain had a large trade deficit with China and had to pay for its imported goods with silver.

In 1773, the governor-general of India, Warren Hastings, decided to establish an East India company opium monopoly in Bengal, encouraging Indian peasants to plant huge swathes of poppies and then illegally exporting the exceptionally high quality opium to China to counter Britain's deficit. The opium trade took off rapidly, and the flow of silver began to reverse. Despite several attempts by the Chinese authorities to curb the trade, by the 1820, China imported 900 tons of opium from Bengal annually, enough to supply 12.5 million smokers. Chinese society was crippled and the whole economy disrupted. Eventually what started as a trade dispute twice erupted in war. China's defeat forced the government to tolerate the opium trade, opening up several ports to foreign commerce and yielding Hong Kong to Britain. This humiliation at the hand of foreign powers contributed to the downfall of the Qing dynasty in 1949 that China's opium pandemic estimated at some twenty

million addicts was finally brought under control. Ghosh also reveals the damage done by British colonial rule and the devastation wreaked upon the Indian Economy, as well as society at large.

*Sea of Poppies* traverses the least treaded path of Indian colonial history by exposing the shrewd business acumen of British, who scrapped India of its riches and Chinese of their discretion by poisoning them with opium:

Come the cold weather, the English Sahibs would allow little else to be planted; their agents would go home to home, forcing cash advances on the farmers, making them sign asami contracts. It was impossible to say no to them (29-30).

As a result, the fertile lands of the Gangetic plain bloom only with poppies, beautiful but deadly, denying the farmers the traditional crops to sustain them, and indebting them to money lenders and land owners or compelling them to sign the 'girmity'. They have no control over their opium produce either, because it is produced by the company-run factory at arbitrary prices. One gets taxonomy of the various types of opium and their effects, an account of what life in both mid 19th century Calcutta and its hinter-land might have been like. With the help of the character of Kalua Ghosh describes the caste system in nineteenth century India: "in Kalua lived Chamarbasti, a cluster of huts inhabited only by people of his caste. To enter the hamlet would have been difficult..." (53). Moreover, Ghosh also points out the low living standard of low caste people through Kalua: "...not look like a hut at all, but had more the look of a cattle-pen ..." (53). Ghosh imagines and captures the helplessness of the poor lives of rural India, hellish life of opium factory workers, the violence and conspiracy on ship and the diverse culture of an India in the mid –nineteenth century.

In real life also there were so many innocent women who deceived by highly rich people like Nawab Sahibs of Soudi or Kuwait or Zemindars in the Indian history right now. Even now –a-days also incidents like this are happening that are being watched and observed by newspapers and TV Channels. The same situation had happened once upon a time in the reigns of Kings and Kingdoms. This is nothing but history through interface the fiction. He also clarified the British policy of 'divided and rule' according to which the class of Indian people that helped the British to continue Colonial rule in their country must be supported by the British. Thus, Ghosh



has analyzed this mindset of the colonisers and also exposed the various ways of exploiting the natives to enrich their coffer. The Colonial rulers exploited not only this subaltern class but also the well-off Indians, the landlords in particular, who had unshakable faith in the Company's policy and a high regard for the Queen's rule. It was due to their ignorance of reality that the well-off persons like the landlord of Rashkhali, Neel Rattan Halder, were trapped by the British businessmen and got ruined. Neel Rattan was financially exploited by Burnham and being accused of forgery, he was sent to a Jail across the black water, as a part of capital punishment.

Then the British judiciary system was far from impartial is once again proved in his case. When Neel Rattan saw that Mr. Justice Kendulbushe was going to preside over the trial, he doubted his impartiality, as he was well aware of the Judge's friendship with Mr. Burnham. Moreover, the result was according to his anticipation. The Judge passed upon him the sentence of the law of forgery and explained to him that it was a crime of the utmost gravity. The Colonial pride is expressed in every word uttered by the Judge. Actually with him, we also meet, in Alipore Jail, another convict awaiting deportation. The man is Ah Fatt, the illegitimate son of a Parsi trader in Canton and a Chinese woman, and a living witness to the terrible human wreck caused by the Opium trade. Forgery was a hanging offence-a measure which played no small part in ensuring Britain's present prosperity and in conferring upon her the stewardship of the world's commerce. Moreover:

if this crime proved difficult to deter in a country such as England, then it is only to be expected that it will be very much more so in a land such as this. How is society to Judge a forger who is also a man of education, enjoying all the comforts that affluence can bestow, whose property is so extensive as to exalt him greatly above his compatriots, who is considered a superior being, almost a deity among his own kind?...would it not be the duty of this court to deal such a man in exemplary fashion, not just in strict observance of the law (235-37).

Neel Rattan was taken across the black water in the ship the Ibis where he had to suffer such humiliation as could never be dreamt of by a man of his status. He was to stay with a man who lay unconscious, making the place full of shit and urine and Neel had to cleanse the place as sweepers do. Gradually, however, he developed a

sort of friendship with his cell-mate, Ah Fatt, who had been so much addicted to Opium during his first meeting with Neel Rattan that he was almost senseless at the time. Both Neel Rattan and Ah Fatt were harassed by the first mate who took sadistic pleasure in inflicting torture on them in unthinkable ways and towards the end of the Novel both of them are seen escaping in a boat along with Serang Ali, Jodu and Kalua. Kalua killed Subedar Bhyro Singh -the man who engaged for looking after the indentured labourers, happened to be a relative of Deeti's husband and he whipped Kalua in public apparently to punish him for eloping with a woman of upper class. Actually, for taking a revenge on him after his failure to pervert sex relationship with Deeti. Moreover, Deeti embodying a self burdened by patriarchal and well- sediment caste regulations.

Ghosh seems to have escaped the persistent stink of self marketing, promotions and willful co-modifications that has pursued other contemporary Indian writers. Colonialism has culturally and economically amalgamated Indian ethos and milieus with the selfish European sensibility resulting into political overtones, hypocritical society and the birth of "girmityas", who gathers on Ibis in search of their futures. Babes Nob Kissin, a mysterious passenger comments on Ibis, "The Ibis was not a ship like any other; in her inward reality she was a vehicle of transformation travelling through the mists of illusion towards the elusive, ever-reseeding landfalls that was truth." Amitav Ghosh fiction demonstrates a concern with migrants, refugees and displaced persons dramatically unite on Ibis putting aside their rigid cultures and identities; thus History makes sense of modernity, articulating modern themes of novel i.e. rationalism, enlightenment, liberty, the individual, state, civil society, the democracy and struggle for survival .The novel reveals the damage done by British devastation which has wreaked upon the Indian economy as well as the society at large. Amitav Ghosh depicts an era of agricultural scandal; burgeoning western demand for profitable but inedible crops which is causing starvation in the subaltern world till date. Thus Ghosh vividly portrays the political reality in terms of opium wars, colonial oppression and the British Judiciary system in his *Sea of Poppies*.

#### DANCING IN CAMBODIA, AT LARGE IN BARMA :

Cambodia got international attention in April 1998, when the Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot died of heart attack at the age of 72. He grew up in a prosperous

farming family in Kompong Thong province – the heart land of the then French protectorate. He studied radio electronics in Paris, when he received a scholarship in 1949. His political career took off when during the 1950s he sealed the ranks of the fledgling under-ground communist party and became secretary-general in 1962. Pol Pot came to power in 1975 and set about transforming the country into his vision of an agrarian utopia by emptying the cities, abolishing money, private property and religion and setting up rural collectives.

Pol Pot became notorious by ruthlessly trying to impose his vision of a perfect society. He was considered the architect of Cambodia's brutal killing field's regime from 1975 to 1979. He has been held responsible for the deaths of two million Cambodians to turn the country into an agrarian Maoist Utopia. After Pol Pot's death the president of the USA, Bill Clinton remembered his informy and spoke a time to remember his murderous reign of terror and to pursue justice against other Khmer Rouge Leaders who share the guilt" (The Hindustan Times, 18 April 1998). The death of the deposed tyrant has aroused in international hue and cry. It led to many pertinent queries about Pol Pot's motives, his politics of social engineering and the milieu in which he perpetrated one of the worst genocides in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Answers to all queries and an understanding of the factors which led to Pol Pot's politics of isolation are found in Amitav Ghosh's *Dancing in Cambodia, At Large in Burma*. Amitav Ghosh blends fact and observation to create an important work of politics.

Amitav Ghosh aptly reconstructs the cruel experiments of pol pot and the misery imposed on the ordinary people. Cambodia and Burma both the countries which practised the politics of extreme isolation in the recent past. As a politically alert observer, Amitav Ghosh tries to comprehend the social scenario during regime of isolation. His conversation with the associates of Pol Pot helped him to describe the cruelties of the late dictator. He describes how this Khmer Rouge defector in 1992 told United Nations Officials about the indoctrination he had received at political camps:

As far as the Vietnamese are concerned, Whenever we meet them we must kill them, Whether they are militaries or civilians, because they are not ordinary civilians but soldiers disguised as civilians. We must

kill them whether they are men, women or children, there is no destruction, they are enemies(22).

Amitav Ghosh astutely suggests that Pol Pot's proximity to the "elicit, racially exclusive influence on some aspects of their political vision"(21). He shows how terror was essential to the exercise of power by Khmer Rouge leaders like Pol Pot and Khieu Samphan. He presents the mindset of such brutal leaders, who consider terror and cruelty as a morally cleansing weapon: "It (terror) was an integral part not merely of their coercive machinery, but of the moral orders on which they built their regime." (44). He shows that Pol Pot's hero was Robespierre. The aspect of Robespierre which Pol Pot admired was aptly described by the prescient playwright Buchmer Quoted in this Book, "Terror is an emanation of virtue" (44). Ghosh documents the assassination of Hou Yuon and Hu Nim who served as Minister of Information, because their "moderate views were sharply at odds with the ultra-radical, collectivist ideology of the ruling group"(42). There is a clear description of the torture chambers at Tuol Sleng in Phnom for another example of the cruelty of the Pol Pot regime.

Amitav Ghosh relates Cambodia's civil war to contemporary politics. He expresses the view that "Cambodia's was not a civil war in the same sense as Somalia's or the former Yugoslavia's, fought over the fetishism of small differences: it was a war on history itself, an experiment in the re-invention of society" (9). Ghosh learns the story of King Sisowath and princess Soumphady's Journey to France in 1906 through Chea Samy, a sister-in-law of Pol Pot and a teacher at the school of Fine Arts in phnom Penh in 1993. The interview with Chea Samy reveals her connection with royal palace and Pol Pot. It is learned that when the Khmer Rouge seized power shown no favours:

They were sent off to a village of 'old people', long-time Khmer Rouge sympathizers, and along with all the other 'new people', were made to work in the rice-fields. For the next couple of years there was a complete news-blackout and they knew nothing of what had happened and who had come to power : it was a part of the Khmer Rouge's mechanics of terror to deprive the population of knowledge (12).

Chea Samy came to know that her brother-in-law Pol Pot was the leader of the party, when in 1978, some party workers stuck a poster on the walls of their communal kitchen. Propaganda, the creation of a personality cult and other such techniques to consolidate Khmer Rouge's mechanics of terror. Amitav Ghosh skillfully documents of the politics of isolation by the Khmer Rouge and its consequences.

Amitav Ghosh shows that the passion for dance and music symbolized the politics of resurgence in Cambodia. It gave the beleaguered Cambodian people an identity and certitude, a badge of authenticity. He sums up this mood as "a kind of rebirth : a moment when the grief of survival became indistinguishable from the joy of living" (45). In Cambodia the temple is used as a political symbol. As a symbol of resurgence it is also woven into the flags of political parties which contested the 1993 general elections. In this complex Amitav Ghosh cleverly reveals how the magnificent edifice of Angkor Wat becomes a symbol of national pride and how a national monument can have so much meaning and hope for an entire population.

"Dancing in Cambodia" is a compact socio-political analysis of the impact of French colonization of Cambodia, the aftermath of decolonisation and its subsequent humiliations and fantasies. The aesthetic nature of the Cambodia population is revealed by their fascination for art and dance, which could not be suppressed when during the ravages and cruel social engineering of their oppressive ruler, the late Pol Pot. Dance becomes the Central Metaphor. Amitav Ghosh uses the non-linear narrative technique. The technique shows the impact of the past on the present milieu in Cambodia, struggling to seek an identity as an independent nation. The opening section of "Dancing in Cambodia" on the glories of Angkor Wat reveals an important political message. As an anthropologist, Amitav Ghosh, analyses how this magnificent lost twelfth century Cambodian temple, discovered by French explorer Henri Michael in the nineteenth century, "is a monument to the power of the story" (48). He shows that this restored architectural wonder is a unique powerful symbol. This reflects a phase of decolonization, confusions, uncertainties and a vigorous glorification of the past. He uses the narrative technique of a story told by a monk to recall the glory and restoration of Angkor Wat.

Amitav Ghosh uses the linear narrative to depict the struggle for democracy in Burma. He shows the clash between the forces of Orthodoxy and status quo as

represented by the military Junta ruling as State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) and forces of change seeking democracy, headed by Aung San Sun Kyi who is a Nobel peace prize winner and her followers. She spearheaded a peaceful non-resistance mass movement to restore democracy and civil liberties in her country, despite house arrest, mass arrests of her followers and string out surveillance. This last section, “At Large in Burma”, has strong political overtones. Ghosh relates Suu Kyi’s predicament of house arrest to the postmodern dilemma. He says:

In the postmodern world, politics is everywhere a matter of symbols, and the truth is that Suu Kyi is her own greatest political asset. It is only because Burma’s 1988 democracy movement had a symbol, personified in Suu Kyi, that the world remembers it and continues to exert pressure on the current regime (military Junta). Otherwise, the world would almost certainly have forgotten Burma’s slain and dispersed democrats just as quickly as it has forgotten many others like them in the past (72).

This is a political comment by Amitav Ghosh as it reveals the frequent double standards of the developed nations who profess to uphold the values of democracy, freedom of speech and liberty for people of all races, but for the sake of political or economic convenience, support dictatorial regimes.

Besides the obvious struggle for democracy and freedom, this section also reflects several other crucial aspects of contemporary politics. Amitav Ghosh raises several questions about development by implication. Later in this section, the position and role of minorities in a decolonized, newly independent country is also raised. His questions become relevant in the aftermath of the blood-bath of Bosnia Herzegovina and Serbia. The desire of national minorities or ethnic groups to seek independence, a political phenomenon which has increased in the 1990s is reflected in this book, by the struggle of the Karens for independence. It is learnt that the Karen army had been fighting against dire odds for fifty years:

Many regarded the war against SLORC as a direct continuation of the war against the Japanese. Some Karenni families had been at war for three generations, and many of their fighters had spent their entire lives in refugee camps (80).

Amitav Ghosh makes no political comment, he does not glorify the heroic struggle by the ethnic minority, the Karens against the ruling Burmans. He says that the struggle of the Karens raises a fundamental question about how ethnic minorities can be accommodated in a multi-cultural democracy. He recalls an anecdote by Thailand's monarch King Bhumibol who said that if Burma became democratic it would have the same effect it had in Bosnia. He rightly says, "If this was so, what did it mean for the prospects of democracy in multi – ethnic societies?" (75).

Amitav Ghosh cleverly depicts the marginalization of an Indian migrant in the Burmese civil war as it is an eminently postmodern encounter. Ko Sonny is a regimental Commander with the Karenni insurgents. His real name is Mahinder Singh. "His family had been settled in Burma for three generations. His parents were born there; his father was Sikh and his mother Hindu"(77). His plight is due to youthful idealism. When he was studying physics in the University of Rangoon, he championed the cause of Karenni and other minority students. He was arrested in 1988 and after his release, he escaped to the border because of police harassment. Sonny's plight is similar to many student dissidents caught in the throes of civil war. Their hopes and aspirations of a normal career have subsided and they are now full time insurgents.

Amitav Ghosh shows the social impact of such commitment to a cause, through the misfortunes which have occurred to Sonny. Sonny's girl friend, a Burmese in Rangoon, gave up waiting for him and married someone else. In 1994 his mother died of a heart attack and he came to know about it 11 months later. After years of fighting, he has limited options and income. The alternatives are either to join the underworld in Thailand or remain in the jungle. The only hope is restoration of democracy and a process of national reconciliation launched by Aung San Suu Kyi, the only figure who has strong support from ethnic Burmans and minorities like the Karenni, Kachens and Karens. The human cost of insurgency is cleverly shown by Amitav Ghosh in this gripping narrative. Ghosh narrates that "all boundaries are artificial" (87). He says that "Burma's best hopes of peace lie in maintaining intact the larger and more inclusive entity that history, albeit absent – minded, bequeathed to its population almost half a century ago" (87).

Thus Amitav Ghosh presents truly the politics of Cambodia as well as Burma. There is much political relevance to the present society vividly depicted in “Dancing in Cambodia At Large in Burma”. Politics of the past reflect the society abundantly. Through this allegorical political work Amitav Ghosh gives a message for all multi – cultural, multi-racial nation states striving for existence in the postmodern world as well as to bring out the change in the attitude of the people to pave the way for peace and progression of each individual of the nation states.



**CHAPTER – III**  
**CULTURAL RELEVANCE**

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In the cross-culturalisation of Indian society they have the “Liberal use of Indian world, creating local colour” (Naik, 106). Taslima’s definition of Culture foregrounds that, as an inevitable part of human life of a particular society, Culture is something ‘adorable’, ‘beautiful’ and ‘acceptable’. It must not repel others. Murders, bloodshed, hatred must not be part of Culture. At the same time, suppression, domination and intimidation should not be considered Culture. So she speaks outrageously, “I love my Culture, my food, my music, my clothing but I never, never accept torture as being part of Culture” (2002: 1).

#### **MIDNIGHT’S CHILDREN :**

Cultural text like fiction can be considered as a representation of socio-political realities through lens of culture. The Emergency era in Indian history was a turbulent sociopolitical reality. It was subsequently reflected in Indian English Literature. Salman Rushdie’s “*Midnight’s Children*” is an interesting cultural representation of this era. It is my humble attempt to bring out to cultural reality through cultural memory. Cultural memory is an operational tool used in the study, have been defined and theorized by various thinkers such as Jim Collins, Hannah Mockel-Rieke, Linda Hutcheon, Wolfgang Muller-Funk, Marianne Hirsch and Janet McDonnell. These thinkers have explored aspects such as narratology of cultural memory, cultural memory as a pastiche, gender in cultural memory, oral history in cultural memory, documentation of cultural memory and collective memory. Hannah Mockel-Rieke in “Introduction: Media and Cultural Memory” examines the relevance of the discourse on memory in media studies and cultural criticism. She explains how cultural memory resists the effect of received history.

Wolfgang Muller-Funk, in his article, "On a Narratology of Cultural and Collective Memory" explores the narrative of cultural memory. He also discusses the significance of autobiographies and narratives in the making of cultural memory.

Narrative strategies of Literature, architecture and film that enhance cultural memory too are discussed in this study. Cultural memory is a concept introduced the archaeological disciplines by Jon Assmann. He defines cultural memory as the “Outer dimension of human memory”. The concept of cultural memory thus corresponds to studies of other forms of memory in society, which have shown how even personal recollections by individuals. Concerning the past of their own lifetime. Cultural memory is made of literary works, cultural practices, monuments, historiography and conversational remembering. These wide ranges of manifestations make cultural memory or intricate site. It was first conceptualized by Mauric Halbwachas early as 1925, who was trying to establish stimulating dialogue between psychology, history, sociology, and literary studies. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nunning, in the *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* explain the scope of the term cultural memory, relating it to many aspects of identity and mental processes as:

... cultural memory studies is not restricted to the study of those ways of making sense of the past which are intentional and performed through narrative and which go hand in hand with the construction of identities although this very nexus (intentional remembering, narrative, identity) has certainly yielded the lion’s share of research in memory studies so far. The field thus remains open for exploration of unintentional and implicit ways of cultural remembering ( See Welzer, this volume) or of inherently non narrative, for example Visual or bodily, form of memory.(Erll and Nunning , 2008).

Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* creates a cultural memory of a history of India during the Emergency era that is extremely heterogeneous and diverse, replete with stories, images and ideas- a multifarious hybrid history. Thus, the narrative addresses the political and social problems of modern India and questions established by re-visiting the past of India, and rewriting one’s own history, one which allows for the infinite variety of experiences, cultures and perspectives that make up our world, Rushdie’s novel clears up a place in the historical record for the suppressed and silent voices of history. *Midnight’s Children* is a panoramic book spanning a period of seventy years in India’s modern history. Rushdie born and brought up in the multi -cultural city of Bombay, recreates the vitality and eclectic

culture of urban India, with reference to the early decades of the century to the mid-seventies. William Walsh points out, “The novel is a piece of ‘fiction - faction’, by one born in India but settled abroad who tries to recreate his homeland, mixing memory and desire, fact and fantasy reality and division, time and timelessness ” (Walsh, 257).

Considered to be an autobiography of the narrator -protagonist, Saleem Sinai, the novel is also the history of India during the period of the action. Though it contains within it many of the major political events between 1947 and 1978, it is unlike the historical novels written by earlier writers of historical fiction as the events in the novel are not recreated but merely recorded, not interpreted but merely inserted into the fabric of the narrative. The 552 page novel of epic proportion looks at the Indian subcontinent through the eyes of a young man born at the stroke of the hour of Indian Independence. Saleem Sinai, the narrator protagonist, is the embodiment of a supreme moment of history, a crystallisation of an evolving mood, a distillation of a vision, nostalgic, critical and philosophical. Saleem is one of the *Midnight's Children*, born between 12 midnight and 1:00a.m. in the night of August 14 -15, 1947, the hour of the nascence of free India. Midnight is the point of time where past and future coalesce in the present and there is liberation from the clock time. Midnight is also the province of fantasy which is a dreamlike recreation of the actual world. The opening of the novel marks the element of fantasy, “I was born in the city of Bombay... once upon a time...” (3). Saleem’s life is the history of the country, “I had been mysteriously handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country ” (3). Out of a total of such thousand and one children born at midnight, 420 die and 581 survive up to 1957. This is the story of these children whose privilege it was to be both masters and victims of their own time, “The children of midnight were also the children of time: fathered, you understand, by history”(137).

Rushdie also mobilises the memories of his characters in his narratives to create a collective consciousness that resist amnesia. The novel along with the story of these *Midnight's Children*, is also the story, that encapsulates the experience of three generations of Saleem Sinai’s family, living first in Srinagar then in Agra, and then in Bombay, before its final migration to Karachi. Saleem Sinai describes the story of three generations to his girl friend, Padma. Sitting up at night in a pickle factory

telling his story to Padma, Saleem flaunts his capacity to hold our attention. He is gifted with supernatural power of entering other people's minds. He says:

And there are many stories to tell, too many, such an excess of intertwined lives, events, miracles, places, rumours, so dense a commingling of the improbable and the 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 (4).

Novel can be considered as an important mnemonic and cultural memories of a political and social insensitivity during Emergency era. As a piece of Mnemo history novel captures in a cultural form certain important details of history which are otherwise obscured or forgotten. In this sense, a novel contributes to the cultural memory of the society, memories such as the partition, the atrocities committed during Emergency era and corruption in India. The main event in the novel is at the stroke of midnight, while India awakens to life and freedom, Vinita, the wife of Wee Willie Winkie, a poor entertainer, gives birth to a baby boy in the Narlikar Nursing Home. The baby, is actually the illegitimate child of Vinita and William Methwold. At the same instant, Amina Sinai too gives birth to a baby boy, in the same nursing home. But the babies are switched over (swapped) by the nurse Mary Pareira. Mary had been ditched by her lover. In this jilted state, Mary performs an evolutionary act. She exchanges the two babies, giving the poor and illegitimate child(Saleem) a life of privilege and condemning the rich -born child (Shiva) to poverty. Saleem grows up in the luxury of the Sinai household, while the real Sinai baby, Shiva, grows up in the slums. Having been born at a crucial moment of history, Saleem claims a place at the centre of things. In surprisingly numerous ways, India, seemingly becomes synonymous to Saleem Sinai and Saleem Sinai to India. The very time of his clock ridden, crime - stained birth, handcuffs him to Indian history. The action of the novel traces Saleem's antecedents, childhood, adolescence, growth into full adulthood and finally imminent disintegration. He seems to be a symbol of newly independent India, full of promise and high expectation.

In Book Three, Saleem moves in time from 1965 to 1970. He has lost his memory and has become a citizen of Pakistan. One day when Saleem and other soldiers are passing through a jungle, Saleem is bitten by a snake, which brings back

his memory. Another important event in the novel is Parvati's labour pains start on June 12, 1975, the day the Allahabad High Court found Prime Minister Indira Gandhi guilty of two counts of campaign malpractice during the elections of 1971. The thirteen days of Indira Gandhi's political career following this verdict going through protracted labour pains. At midnight of June 25, 1975, just as Parvati brings forth her child, Indira Gandhi brings forth her brainchild – Emergency Rule. The deaf and dumb state of Ganesha, Parvati's son, refers to the censorship of Press in India. Sanjay Gandhi's meteoric rise to power in 1976 is highlighted through two of his projects – clearance of Delhi slums and pavements and mass vasectomy camps to reduce population. Saleem describes the horrors in several passages referring to the Widow's hand and in pathetic, funny or horrifying reference to his own ectomisation. There are elaborate constructions of interlocking metaphors in this novel and all are built on one basic principle – the provision of an alternate view of history. For example, there is an extended use of the metaphor of black and white:

The Mother of the Nation had white hair on one side and black on the other; the Emergency, too, had a white part — public, visible, documented, a matter for historians — and a black part which, being secret, macabre, untold, must be a matter for us (421).

The last historical event mentioned in the novel is the election of 1977, when Indira Gandhi's Congress was defeated by the Janta Party. But Saleem does not foresee any permanence in a party led by a wheel -chaired J. P. Narayan and Morarji Desai. The novel ends with the bleakest prophecies for his son; and for future generations:

yes they will trample me underfoot ... reducing me to specks of voiceless dust, just as, all in good time, they will trample my son who is not my son, and his son who will not be his ... until a thousand and one midnights have bestowed their terrible gifts and a thousand and one children have died because it is the privilege and the curse of *Midnight's Children* to be both masters and victims of their time ... and to be unable to live or die in peace (533).

*Midnight's Children* is the novel that reflects multi culturalism. It is a landmark in the history of Indian English novel. The narrative technique of the

novelist in *Midnight's Children* is in first person. It is told from Saleem Sinai's point of view and the reader understands the history of Indian Independence, partition and all that follows through his eyes. He is left with a powerful stylistic and thematic statement in how human freedom is futile in many points. It is this "interdependence of history and human fate that the protagonist exclaims; Why, alone of all the five hundred million, should I have to bear the burden of history?" (457). It is interesting to note that the narrative is spread along a wide span of the time and space covering almost whole of the twentieth century with action being reshuffled at various points of space from Kashmir, Agra, Bangladesh, Pakistan and West Bengal and Southern part of India. A large part of the narrative is centered on Bombay and Delhi also.

The realization of the action of novel along such a vast span of time and space makes it obligatory for the narrative to include the elements of multiculturalism. The action which is a perpetual escape begins with Kashmir with seemingly uniform culture dominated by Muslim ethics. But in the backdrop of Muslim background, the narrator fuses the elements of multiculturalism. The landscape with primitive beauty of Kashmir is delineated with the 'temple of Sankara Acharya, a little black blister on a khaki hill' that 'dominated the streets and lakes of Srinagar' (5). The boatman Tai, who 'has seen the mountains being born,' is another very important character that foretells the advent of multicultural elements in the narrative. 'I saw that Isa,' he claims, 'that Christ when he came to Kashmir, and predicts the prominence of multicultural elements in the narrative that acquire shape and form in the coming phases of the narrative. The death of Tai 'who was infuriated by India and Pakistan's struggle over the valley,' is strongly supportive of the multiculturalism which at this phase of the narrative can be taken to be biculturalism. Tai 'walked to Chhamb with the express purpose of standing between the opposing forces and giving them a piece of his mind' (42).

It is obvious that the action of the novel in the first part of the narrative is set in the backdrop of the natural beauty of Kashmir and the Dr. Adam Aziz is the first protagonist of the novel who renders shape and form to the action of the novel. The first major event of the novel is the gradual fragmentation by making hole

in the perforated sheet that is used as veil to cover the Muslim girl. The making of holes for diagnosing the ailments of the Naseem, the daughter of the landlord. The perforated sheet is delineated with a number of metaphorical implications. On one hand, it symbolically represents the fragmented vision of the author and on the other hand, it serves the purpose of parody which in one of the most important aspect of the technique of narration of Salman Rushdie in all his novels.

It is further noticeable that the gradual perforation of the sheet eventually leads to the reconciliation of the landlord. 'The story of the perforated sheet got out too,' the narrator tells Padma, and the 'lady wrestlers were evidently less discrete than they looked.' It is noticeable that the dissolution of the myth is further ratified when the narrator says that 'women giggled behind their palms...' (30). The symbol of perforated sheet invites another interpretation from the point of view of multiculturalism. The introduction of the perforated sheet structures the milieu of unicultural milieu in the introductory part of the novel and through the element of parody, Rushdie makes clear that a single culture structuring the background for the novel like this ceases to suffice and the reconciliation of the landlord confirms the invasion of multicultural elements in the narrative. The image of the perforated sheet is recreated with Jamila Singer. The symbol of the perforated sheet is recreated but with the piercing figurative implication as the symbol now is set in the fanatic society of Pakistan. The vulgarization touches the peak when Saleem and Jamila realize that 'they were not truly brother and sister' and the 'blood in his veins was not the blood in hers' (387).

The elements of multiculturalism acquire more space in the narrative with the Ahmad Sinai's escape to Bombay; the city that makes the cultural metaphor of Indian. The escape of the protagonists from Kashmir to Agra and then to Bombay, gradually intensify the scope and possibility of multiculturalism in the novel. Ahmad Sinai ignores Alia's relationship with Nadir Khan and marries her. 'Time for a fresh start,' Ahmed tells Alia, 'throw Mumtaz and Nadir Khan out of the window' (81). The 'fresh start' indicated by the protagonist father refers to the making of the new world which can aptly be defined in terms of synthesis of many cultures. The birth of the protagonist itself is a pronounced testimony of multiculturalism. He is the son of Wee Willie Winkie and his wife Vanita whose actual father is Mr. Methwold. He is



exchanged with the child of Ahmed and Amina Sinai by the midwife Marry Pereira to please her communist lover Joseph. Thus the birth of the protagonist itself marks the beginning of the multicultural identity of the protagonist. The identity crisis of the protagonist which he shares with the author is delineated in natural correlation with the idea of multiculturalism. There is a continuous fragmentation of the identity of the protagonist and this fragmentation is realized in the backdrop of multicultural locale of the action. The most conspicuous revelation of the crisis of identity is taken place through the multicultural elements pervading the narrative. It has been discussed earlier that Saleem is an illegitimate son of a Hindu mother and a Christian father and he is brought to the parental care of a Muslim couple. Thus in the time of birth only Saleem has two fathers and two mothers and these four different parent figures belong to three major ethnic groups of India. Marry Pareira is another mother figure associated with the protagonist. Thus the parenthood of the protagonist is itself designed in the chiaroscuro of multiculturalism. Further, as the narrative advances, we come across a number of parent figures in the life of the protagonist. Saleem himself confesses that “‘giving birth to parents has been one of his stranger talents. He also reveals that ‘he had more mothers than most mothers have children’” (291). He also admits that ‘all his life,’ he ‘consciously or unconsciously’ has ‘sought our fathers’ (508). It is thus clear that the delineation of the character of Saleem Sinai itself owes its metaphorical magnificence to the elements of multiculturalism. Saleem’s nuptial conjugation with Parvati the witch is another very prominent use of multiculturalism in the novel. Parvati, as the name suggests, is a Hindu woman and Saleem is a Muslim man. “I married Parvati-the witch on February 23rd 1975, the second anniversary of my outcast’s return to magician’s ghetto” (483).

The secondary characters in the novel provide a great scope and opportunity of the inclusion of multicultural elements in the narrative. The characters form a pattern of parallels and contrast and people the world of the novel. In the first and second part of the novel, there is slow and gradual advancement from unicultural background to multiculturalism. The secondary characters are delineated with the inherent metaphorical significance. The contrast of Mian Abdullah and Nadir Khan is a brilliant example of delineation of the characters in parallels and contrast. Mian Abdullah represents the progressive Muslim mind set whereas Nadir Khan shows the

narrow Muslim mind set prone towards Zinnah. The characters like Lifafa Das, Alia, Emerald, S.P. Butt, and Zohra people the world of the novel. They make a microcosmic representation of new India definable in terms of multiculturalism. The secondary characters acquire new shades and complexion in the second and third parts of the novel. They are delineated with rich metaphorical shades of metropolitan culture. The characters like Mr. Methold, Wee Willie Winke, Vanita demonstrate completed independence from the pre-existing parameters of a unicultural world. They also bring the fragrance of Christian culture contribute to the multiplicity of the culture. The family of the film magnet, Homy Catrack introduces Persian culture in the narrative. Commander Sabarmati is another important character from the point of view of multiculturalism. He is delineated with the obvious distinction with the world of civilians, thus introduces a new culture. *Midnight's Children* is thus a novel which is thickly forested with the characters belonging to every domain of India's cultural domain.

Rushdie delineates a number of *Midnight's Children*, born at the first hour of India's independence from the Crown. They are delineated with supernatural fantasy. There was a "“beggar girl’ called Sundari whose ‘beauty’ was so ‘intense’ that it blinded ‘her mother and the neighboring woman who had been assisting at her delivery’” (236). A boy from Kerala had the ability of stepping into the mirrors and re-emerging through any reflective surface in the land. There is a Goanese girl who enjoys the ‘gift of multiplying fishes.’ A boy from Vidhyas ‘had been the cause of wild panic and rumors of the return of the giants.’ A midnight’s child from Kashmir is born with the uncertainty of his ‘original sex’ and ‘by merging in the water,’ he could ‘alter’ his ‘sex’ (237). It is remarkable that Rushdie doesn’t associate any ethnic group in delineating these *Midnight's Children* and makes use of supernatural fantasy to dissolve the regional distinctions and creates a multicultural milieu.

Shiva is the Hindu character who offers a direct contrast to the protagonist Saleem Sinai. He represents destructive and coercive force that aims at restoring the dominance of the Hindu culture. The fear of the protagonist on his first confrontation with Shiva aptly shows the premonition of fear. Saleem recollects: “When I first introduced myself to Shiva, I saw in his mind the terrifying image of a short rat-faced youth with filled down teeth and two of the biggest knees the world

has ever seen” (262). He endures a long suspension and returns to the narrative as a grown up, ruthless young man, Major Shiva the war hero. The myth of Shiva draws natural parallel with the character of Shiva in the novel. Shiva in the narrative is also a destructive force. The metaphorical implications of the character of Shiva draw a sharp contrast with the protagonist. Saleem’s submissiveness and cowardice draws a sharp contrast with the Shiva’s aggressiveness and ruthlessness. Shiva soon becomes a complex metaphor; on one hand he represents the nuclear power which embodies the possibilities of the holocaust, and, on the other hand, he rises to represent the growing fanaticism of the majority and consequently a threat to the very idea of multiculturalism. The two metaphorical implications are fused in the narrator’s query to himself. He asks himself: “was Shiva’s arrival into my life truly synchronous with India’s arrival, without prior warning, at the nuclear age?” (486).

Rushdie juxtaposes Saleem’s sexual impotence with the ruthless and aggressive sexuality of Shiva. He is responsible for “strewing bastards across the map of India” but he ‘suffered from the curious fault of losing interest in anyone who became pregnant’ (488). He takes away the wife of Saleem and impregnates her. Adam Sinai is the son Saleem Sinai and Parvati the witch is owes his birth to the sexual vigour of Shiva the metaphor of atrocities and destruction. Shiva’s identification with Lord Shiva, the figure of Hindu mythology, makes him a strong metaphor of the growing Hindu sectarianism responsible for grave deteriorations in the status of the minorities in India. Saleem, thus represents the humiliation of minorities as against the metaphorical suggestion of ruthlessness of the Hindu majority in India. Shiva’s character thus becomes a threat to growing multiculturalism which goes against Rushdie’s much nurtured ideals of a pluralistic society. It is clear that the advent of Shiva is a threat to the ideals of multiculturalism in the Indian socio- political set up and what begins at the close of the *Midnight’s Children*, according to Rushdie is the most unfortunate part of the socio- political history of India since the publication of the novel.

The advancement of the narrative from the first to the last page of the book illustrates various phases of the growth and development of multiculturalism of the Indian society. Rushdie locates the glory of India in terms of multiculturalism that are of defining significance in the thematic network of the novel. Thus, Rushdie presented

multitude views in terms of cultural reference in his outstanding novel, *Midnight's Children*.

#### HAROUN AND THE SEA OF STORIES :

*Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is a complex allegory for many problems of society that Rushdie felt prevalent at the time. The novel is a tale about a boy, Haroun, and his story-telling father, Rashid, who travel to a moon, Kahani, that orbits the Earth at so quick a speed that no Earthling has been able to detect it. This moon is the source of all of Earth's stories, which actually run together in a giant ocean. Haroun and his father have traveled there, with a reluctant but polite water genie, to reinstate his father's story-telling subscription. Along their travels, however, Haroun and Rashid find themselves caught in the middle of a controversy between the two peoples of Kahani: Guppees and Chupwalas. The Chupwalas, it appears, under the leadership of the dreaded Kattam-Shud, have kidnapped the Princess of Gup, Batcheat, and have started to poison the sea of stories, hoping to eradicate stories from the world forever, favoring absolute silence instead. Haroun embarks upon a quest to save the sea, Batcheat, and the Guppees and the Chupwalas of Kahani as well. This is an allegory advocating freedom of speech and of literature is, of course, an undeniable fact.

*Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is an allegory of cultural confrontation, borders, exclusion, and identity. In other words: *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* "achieves a good deal more than a...retelling of Rushdie's suffering under the fatwa and... it clearly continues the political and aesthetic concerns of his earlier work" (Köing, 53). *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is a novel where Rushdie posits reconciliation and cooperation of culturally dissimilar peoples because he believes that communication and harmony between all cultures can lead to the world. Rushdie sees the migrant as the bringer-together of peoples to help in creating this world. Rushdie sets up the moon Kahani as a place of cultural purism and disparity. Rushdie illustrates Kahani as a segregated and very culturally tense moon almost as soon as Haroun sets foot on it. Iff, the Water Genie who brings Haroun to the strange new land, explains how the planet has been perfectly divided into two segments: north and south. On the one hand, the north side belongs to Guppees. Thanks to the Eggheads of Gup and a Process Too Complicated To Explain (or P2C2E), the Land of Gups is bathed in

perpetual light. They have found a way to control Kahani's orbit so that the sun will forever shine on their half of the moon at all times.

The Guppees are the people whose talk is valuable indeed, for some creatures such as the Plentimaw Fish, shark-sized angelfish born with multiple-mouths, not talking is considered a horrible offense to whoever the listener may be. The Guppees exercise complete freedom of speech, such freedom that even on the way to battle with the Land of Chup, Haroun notes that everyone was talking and debating with each other about whether the decision to go to war was a right decision and not all are in favour. Haroun describes the talk as sounding "mutinous" but notes:

such was the freedom evidently allowed the citizens of Gup, that the old General seemed perfectly happy to listen to these tirades of insults and insubordination without batting an eyelid (104).

Opposing the Land of Gup, the Land of Chup basks in perpetual silence. Instead of traditional speech, communication is conducted purely through a complicated sign-language art called Abhinaya that uses combinations of gesture, eye movement, and foot placement to transmit messages. Also, the people of Chup are always cloaked in darkness. Their eyes have white pupils, grey irises, and black on the remaining surface of the eyeball. They are entirely blind in bright light for, starkly opposite to the Guppees' eyes, Chupwalas see by the reflection of darkness from objects, instead of the reflection of light. Because they are always in the darkness, the Chupwalas have learned to communicate and cooperate with their shadows. Each Chupwala's shadow serves as a sort of sidekick and friend. Recently, select Chupwalas have even learned to disconnect their shadows from themselves in order to make it possible for a single person to be in two places at once.

Rushdie clearly intended for these two peoples and their lands to stand in binary opposition to each other. Conflict between these two starkly opposite peoples seems inevitable. It is tempting to read that conflict as a colonizer or colonized struggle. Undeniably, there are hints that Rushdie set it up as such. After all, the Guppees are implicated in creating boundaries between their land and the land of the Chups. After all, it was the Guppees' Eggheads that stopped the sun from setting on them and rising on their opposing peoples. Also, Rushdie mentions a wall that the Guppees erected in order to more concretely divide the two lands:

In between the two lies the Twilight Strip, in which, at the Grand Comptroller's command, Guppees long ago constructed an

unbreakable and also invisible Wall of Force. It's good name is Chattergy's Wall... (66).

Chattergy's wall is probably a clear reference to Hadrian's Wall, a small but very long barrier built at the command of Emperor Hadrian in order to clearly denote Roman Territory. The wall was not enough of a defense to have held back any invasion efforts from those living outside of Roman territory. Its purpose was more to physically mark the edge of Roman territory, imposing boundaries between Roman insiders and "foreign" outsiders, than to provide protection. Clearly, the Guppees have intended a similar purpose with Chattergy's wall. It is also difficult to ignore the fact that the Guppees, the potential colonizer, are the lighter-skinned of the two peoples; the people of Chup keep their skin a darker green. Also, it is possible to read Kattam-Shud's attempt at poisoning the ocean as a way for the colonized to rise up and rebel against the tyranny of the colonized. It is not surprising, then, that many critics have made the assumption that Rushdie is writing a tale about colonialism: "Consequently, it can be argued that, in a postcolonial light, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* exposes the physical and psychological damage caused by the tyranny of colonialism and imperialism" (König, 56). While it is possible to say that Gup is the colonizer and Chup is colonized, and while this argument is important and should not be ignored. It is believed that Rushdie was not trying to tell a decolonization tale, or at least that he wasn't mostly telling a decolonization tale, but rather a desegregation tale: a tale where two purist countries get out of their own way and end up embracing a profitable multiculturalism. The relationship between Gup and Chup is less about colonization than it is about separation. One would expect, if *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* were purely a decolonization tale, that Gup would exercise more control over Chup, seeking to take-over and eradicate Chup's starkly opposite culture in favour of their own. Instead, it seems that separation is the only goal. The Guppees do not want anything to do with the Chupwalas; they are content to live separately and forget the others. The wall is there to denote a boundary and reinforce the division.

Instead of depicting one side as an evil colonizer and the other as the righteous colonized, Rushdie is critical of both the Guppees and the Chupwalas for both peoples have engaged in cultural purist ethics. Whether or not it was the Guppees that instigated the final separation between the two worlds, both sides have embraced their differences and would much rather stay separated than engage with each other. Neither side feels they can learn anything from each other until Haroun, an outsider, a

migrant, shows them that this is not so. Haroun doesn't help to beat back the "evil" Chupwalas, nor does he sympathize with the Chupwalas and vow vengeance on the colonizing Guppees; instead, by the end of the novel he will have proved to the people of Kahani that intercultural exchange and communication can be profitable, while segregation and separation is limiting and unrewarding. Haroun is definitely a migrant character, though not a migrant character that is typical of Rushdie's hybrids. He is sort of both a first- and second- generation hybrid. He is not really a first-generation migrant for he doesn't stay in Kahani for more than two or three days, but he does start to pick up on the practices of some Guppees and utilizes them without realizing it right away. For example he finds himself arguing and debating with the Gups as they travel toward war, even though he finds the practice puzzling: "'Nonsense,' said the Water Genie, 'Adjectives can't talk.' 'Money talks, they say,' Haroun found himself arguing (all this argument around him was proving infectious)" (103). Also, he finds himself beginning to speak like those around him, more than once stammering "but but but" just like his Hoopoe friend, or restructuring his sentences as the Water Genie structures his:

'Advanced or not,' Haroun retorted, 'you've made a mistake this time, you're up the spout, you've got the wrong end of the stick.' He heard himself beginning to sound like the Water Genie, and shook his head to clear it (44).

Obviously, he is not technically a second-generation migrant either because his father and mother have never lived on Kahani. However, Haroun's father has imparted knowledge of Kahani, the Sea of Stories, and his story telling prescription onto Haroun for years. For example, whenever Haroun asked his father where the stories he told came from "... [Rashid] would narrow his (to tell the truth) slightly bulging eyes... and stick his between his lips while he made ridiculous drinking noises, glug glug glug.... 'From the great Story Sea,' he'd reply. 'I drink the warm Story Waters and then I feel full of steam.... It comes out of an invisible Tap installed by one of the Water Genies,' said Rashid with a straight face. 'You have to be a subscriber.'" (4) Haroun has grown up with these stories much in the same way that second-generation migrants grow up with their parents' stories of homelands. In this way, Rushdie has made Haroun a migrant of all types; he grew up displaced and remains displaced. Haroun's hybridity and displacement are shown in other ways as

well. Haroun and his father are painted as outsiders in their own town, a city so said that it has forgotten its own name, located in the country of Alifbay:

And in the depths of the city, beyond an old zone of ruined buildings that looked like broken hearts, there lived a happy young fellow by the name of Haroun, the only child of the storyteller Rashid Khalifa, whose cheerfulness was famous throughout that unhappy metropolis (1-2).

It's a sharp contrast to paint Haroun and his father as happy in such a morbidly unhappy location. The contrast is made within the very first page of the story as well! Rushdie wasted no time in making Haroun stand out in a crowd. This outsider status clearly applies to his entire family. Rashid is the cheeriest man in the metropolis and Haroun's mother, Soraya, sings songs daily. Even Rashid, though he is not just another face in the crowd himself, notes that there is something truly special about Haroun in particular. He constantly says to his son: "There's more to you, young Haroun Khalifa, than meets the blinking eye" (5). Additionally, Haroun, though he picks up on various practices and ends up leading a cultural revolution, is clearly an outsider of both communities of Kahani as well. He's never been to the moon before, and naturally the customs there seems strange and outrageous to him. He must depend upon Iff the Water Genie and Butt, the Hoopoe to explain the strange new practices and conventions that he sees.

Haroun often finds the ways of the Gupees and Chupwalas equally frustrating and interesting. So while it isn't possible to say that Haroun fits into a "typical" hybrid modality Haroun is definitely a displaced boy. He fits in neither with his own people in Alifbay as they are in the beginning of the novel, nor does he fit in with the people of Kahani for more obvious reasons. He is caught somewhere in the middle. The only place he does feel at home is among his family members, who are other hybrid or outsiders in their own way. Ultimately, Haroun is an outsider looking into Kahani. It is this very migrant or outsider that eventually allows Haroun "to identify the true cause of the conflict and find a solution that eliminates the root of the problem, namely, the polarization itself on the moon" (Köing, 56). Because he has never really fit in anywhere, because he has always been, in one way or another, an outsider, Haroun has an ability to see things very independently, without the weight



of bias from growing up immersed in any culture. Indeed, he is resistant to both cultures of Kahani, refusing to fall in with any one culture, and makes judgments upon both exactly as he sees fit: He is quick to point out when Guppee points of view don't make sense "That's totally illogical" (69), in response to a quip about Haroun's lack of education about the moon from Butt the Hoopoe. He is also brutally honest about his perceptions of the leaders of Guppee, refusing to see them for anything but what they are: It was easy to identify General Kitab, a weather beaten old gent with a rectangular uniform made of finely-tooled gold inlay leather... then there was the Speaker that is, the leader of the Chatterbox, a plump fellow who was even now talking unstoppably to his colleagues on the balcony; and a frail, small white-haired gentleman wearing a circle of gold and a tragic look. This was presumably King Chattergy himself as:

The last two figures on the balcony were harder for Haroun to identify. There was a young and at present extremely worked-up fellow with a dashing but somehow foolish look to him (Prince Bolo...); and lastly, a person with a hairless head of quite spectacular smoothness and shininess, bearing on his upper lip a disappointingly insignificant moustache that looked like a piece of a dead mouse (76).

Haroun doesn't paint the Land of Gup, the land of light, freedom of speech, and stories in an always favourable light, as is shown from the example above. He never painted any Guppee as perfect or glorious or righteous when describing them but instead told us exactly what he saw, even if that made the Land of Gup and the Guppees less impressive to readers. Indeed, sometimes he seems almost annoyed with the amount of chatter that goes on in Gup, while, to the Guppees, an always talkative land is virtuous. In other words, Haroun is not sucked in by the Guppees and their culture simply because he's there or because he believes that they are the "good" side of the moon. Even when he meets this supposedly "evil" side, the land of the Chupwalas for the first time, he notes that these constructed binaries are "not as simple" (111) as they appear. He begins to understand that the Chups themselves are not evil, but are, instead under the power of an evil man. His concern isn't to understand anything as impressive, good, evil, etc, simply because he's heard that there is a good side and a bad side of Kahani. Indeed, he didn't get involved with the war between Gup and Chup to save the Princess, to side with Gup, or to specifically

oppose the Chups. He got involved in order to keep the Water Genies from cancelling Rashid's story water subscription, and because he sees value in the telling of tales. Tale telling, after all, is one of the few activities in Alifbay that gives the people any joy, a fact Haroun would have been made very aware of as he travelled with his father during his story telling journeys.

Haroun has no other goal than to understand the truth as he sees it and not to let himself to get caught up in either of the binary oppositions. The reason he can resist these binary oppositions is because he can avoid indoctrination by any one homogenous group. He has always seen and must always see, multiple perspectives living as an outsider. This gives him an edge over "insider" Guppees and Chupwalas who have never had to look beyond their own understanding of the world: "Haroun becomes a leader who makes decisions independently, and his solution to the crisis indicates that he has not succumbed to the rigid, black-and white...worldview" (Köing, 55-56). Just as Haroun judges both cultures by what he sees using his independent objective migrant view point, he also points out that a relationship between Chup and Gup could be very profitable for both sides if they would only let go of their grasps on their binary oppositions to see the potential in communication, if for no other reason than they might actually find each other interesting. The thought of the degree to which these binaries have been constructed begins to baffle him as:

Gup is bright and Chup is dark. Gup is warm and Chup is freezing cold. Gup is all chattering and noise, whereas Chup is silent as a shadow. Guppees love the Ocean, Chupwalas try to poison it. Guppees love Stories, and speech; Chupwalas, it seems, hate these things just as strongly.... But it's not as simple as that," he told himself, because the dance of the Shadow Warrior showed him that silence had its own grace and beauty (just as speech could be graceless and ugly); and that Action could be as noble as Words; and that creatures of the darkness could be as lovely as the children of the light. "If Guppees and Chupwalas didn't hate each other so," he thought, "they might actually find each other pretty interesting" (111).

Haroun's hybridity, and the consequential objectivity that hybridity gives him, sets into motion the transition of Kahani as a world of segregation to a world of

cultural pluralism. But it isn't Haroun alone that gets this transition going. Other outsiders or hybrids also aid this change. For example, it is Rashid who serves as translator between Mudra and the Guppees. Upon first meeting Mudra, the Guppee army is wary of him, believing that he wishes them harm. They believe that he is advancing towards them saying "murder, murder." It is Rashid who can see past the surface of what the Guppees believe is happening, past the binaries and the preconceived notions of Chupwalas and see what is actually happening: "'It's the hand movements,' Rashid answered... 'He has been using the Language of Gesture. As for what he said it wasn't "murder," but Mudra. That's his name. He's been trying to introduce himself!'" (115). Mudra also aids the transition. He is certainly not a hybrid but an outsider in his own community. Rashid informs the Guppees that "Mudra is no longer an ally of the Cultmaster's [Kattam-Shud]. He has become disgusted with the growing cruelty and fanaticism of the Cult of the tongueless... and has broken off relations with Kattam-Shud" (116).

Mudra becomes the first friendly contact with the Guppees, working with them to eliminate a common enemy. It is with this exchange that both groups, at the very least the Guppees, see that communication and interaction can actually be the answer instead of segregation and binarism. This exchange is obviously profitable, for working together, Mudra and the Guppees devise a tactical plan to destroy Kattam-Shud. This successful encounter is symbolic of various endeavours that Rushdie believes will become possible when different peoples speak to, and seek to understand, each other. And let us not forget who it was that made it possible: a hybrid, Rashid. Without him, Prince Bolo, leading the army, may have tried to fight him or set his army upon him because Bolo knew that Chupwalas were evil, and therefore he knew that Mudra was trying to kill them. It took a hybrid's objectivity, the hybrid's ability to think in multiple perspectives, to show the Prince and several Guppees a new truth.

Blabbermouth, the unusual page of the Chatterbox, also helps with the transition from segregation to integration. Rushdie wastes no time in marking her as an outsider in her community. She is a girl breaking the rules of Gup in order to do a boy's work as a page. Additionally, Blabbermouth, an outsider, is very interested in and finds beautiful Mudra: a Chup!: "– By the way,' she added, blushing slightly,

‘isn’t he something? Isn’t he wicked, awesome, sharp? – Mudra I mean” (120). She can look past her people’s indoctrination with the idea that all Chupwalas are evil and judge for herself what she finds in her first encounter with a man of the Chup, and she finds that she likes him, and wants to stay by him. It is Blabbermouth that Mudra find perfectly fit to serve as an Ambassador for the new Kattam-Shud-free Chup. He takes her into his employ to learn the language and the customs and serve as a communicator between the two lands in order to expand upon the newly amalgamated world. Clearly, even without Haroun, the hybrid or outsider or non-purists in this story play important roles in bringing an end to the segregation of the Guppees and Chupwalas. Each of them, when they have stepped outside of their own community, or because they were never a true part of any community, are able to see past cultural stigmas and instead see things as they really are.

There is possibility for a new and improved world, one free of cultural isolation and instead full of interaction and integration, and fruitful for a relationship between the two lands of Kahani. It is Haroun’s ability to step outside of the center of the problem, to see the big picture that ultimately enables him to destroy, once and for all, one of the sources of Kahani’s problems. Haroun uses Wishwater to stop the P2C2E that keeps the moon orbiting in a way that restricts the sunlight to Gup and darkness to Chup. This wish, has astronomical effects: Haroun’s fairy tale wish has a “sci-fi” effect: as the Moon starts to rotate, sunlight destroys the shadow world, undoes Ayatollah “black magic” (160), and breaks “the ropes...woven out of shadows” (161). when “The coastline of the land of Chup” is “lit up by the evening sun for the first time (164). Haroun, literally, breaks down the greatest barrier between Gup and Chup and, in doing so, unifies the entire moon in an even distribution of sunlight and shadow. Haroun blurred the lines between the two lands; he made the boundaries between them more fluid and permeable. Haroun could have made a great many wishes. He could have wished that Kattam-Shud gives up, and that the Chupwalas remain forever and quietly on Chup, never to bother the Guppees or the Sea of Stories again. He could have wished for the ocean to be free of pollution forever. He could have wished for the Guppees to win the battle on Kattam-Shud’s castle. He could have wished for an endless supply of unpolluted stories for his father, and for a quick getaway from Kahani as the battle waged. But he didn’t.

Haroun understood that the source of the problem between Gup and Chup was the division itself, and Kattam-Shud. Gup and Chup, because of their divisions, have simply grown into two very different cultures. Before, the light barrier prevented any sort of cultural exchange. Each world was equally “real,” but each valued something different. Also, such an implication implies that there was a triumph of Gup over Chup, or as if the Chupwalas in total were destroyed instead of a few power-hungry evildoers. Haroun’s actions and the subsequent reorbiting of the moon should not be read as a triumph over any one side. Gup, the light or democratic or speech side, does not “win” anything since it was their super technology that was destroyed. After all, it was their technology was keeping the problem alive in the first place. According to Mudra, Chup was under the rule of a tyrant at the time of the poisoning of the Sea of Stories and the kidnapping of the Princess, a tyrant with whom the people of Chup were growing increasingly frustrated. Therefore, there can be no winning or losing for Chup and Gup in a war against each other person, only against Kattam-Shud. Rather, both sides won and lost something: what both sides lost was a segregated and uniform culture, and, in doing so, won the benefits of plurality. In the end, it was never that one side is evil and the other is not. It’s that neither side really understands the other, and this misunderstanding and inability to gain further understanding is the problem.

Haroun and the other hybrids serve as key players in the paving of a path toward communication and understanding because they, having stepped outside of their own communities or because they have always been between one, have had to learn to function with multiple perspectives of the world and its experiences. Also in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, Rushdie seems to indicate that a transition from cultural segregation and purism to integration and pluralism is powerful and inevitable:

If Haroun had been in Gup City at that moment, he might have enjoyed witnessing the consternation of the Eggheads in P2C2E House. The immense super-computers and gigantic gyroscopes that had controlled the behaviour of the Moon... had simply gone crazy, and finally blown themselves apart. ‘Whatever is doing this,’ the Eggheads reported to the Walrus in consternation, ‘possesses a force beyond our power to imagine, let alone control (159).

Rushdie is giving his readers a message. A transition in the world is coming, integration will take place, and all boundaries we have set between us must and will break. This is a change “beyond our power to imagine, let alone control.” As more and more people in this world fall between boundaries and cultures, and we must say that there will be more for that is the only option for a world growing increasingly more connected via technologies and international business enterprises, the boundaries themselves may become obsolete entirely, or at the very least, will become more fluid. Our very own “super computers” and “gyroscopes” that draw lines, that create concepts of “us” and “them” will eventually go berserk and blow themselves apart. All of the world will eventually be equally basked in sunlight and in darkness. According to Rushdie, the breaking of boundaries will lead us to a nation that doesn’t define itself by those boundaries, but instead seeks to incorporate and interweave different strands of culture to create a nation that is richer for its diversity. It is no coincidence that hybrids and outsiders instigate the transition of *Kahani* from a place of segregation to a place of fruitful interaction. Rushdie was deliberate in this choice. Clearly, he sees hybrids and outsiders as the leaders in creating the ideal world he envisioned in *The Moor’s Last Sigh*. They are able to see outside and beyond cultural norms, values, and practices, and are more easily able to understand issues objectively and to make connections than those who are culturally singular. Therefore, hybrid migrants or other outsiders must be the ones to lead the world to transition for that very reason. There is no one else who can. In order to help the world make the first steps toward cultural pluralism, one must, according to Rushdie, make the choice to step outside, or to think outside, (or must already be outside) of their cultural predispositions, to really see things from another’s point of view, to deliberately become an outsider in order to gain the ability to make these connections.

Haroun’s description of the Sea of Stories is rich with implications that everything is better, healthier and alive when diverse individuals are allowed to incorporate among themselves freely. The Sea of Stories is beautiful because of the intermingling colours. Better, yet, each story remains separate but permeable. Stories “weave in and out” of each other and, in doing so, create new stories from them. The story sea becomes richer and richer with narratives as these boundaries are permeated. In other words, “The story sea... represents the idea of a nation that is redefined in each moment of its existence and is able to incorporate new strands into the national

narrative as they become part of the on-going performance of national life” (Teverson, 461). Teverson also makes the connection between Rushdie’s *Sea of Stories* and cultural boundaries and purism. ...the borders and boundaries we have erected around the stories of different peoples and nations are permeable.... It is in this respect that the story sea as an image of Rushdie’s hybrid sources comes to reflect one of the dominant arguments presented in the plot of *Haroun* - that the establishment of strict and impermeable boundaries between different cultures gives a false impression of the ‘purity’ of each culture and prevents cultural groups from discovering that their respective social narratives provide as much of a basis for dialogue and communication as they do for segregation and separation” (Teverson, 458). In this way, the *Sea of Stories* reinforces Rushdie’s ideas. Rushdie is trying to show us how beautiful a world such as one that functions like the story sea, like Aurora’s art and how much more improved such a world is when boundaries are permeable, and different factions intermingle. Rushdie seems to ask us to think of the possibilities, think of what we, as humans different but equal, might accomplish if only we learned to talk to each other, and to not fear “otherness.” Thus Rushdie truly presents true culture in his novella *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*. He aptly placed cultural relevance in the novel.

#### SEA OF POPPIES :

*Sea of Poppies* is based on historical setting of colonial rule in India and to fulfill its need of supply of opium to china. The novel primarily deals with opium was a crucial event in world history and is set in an era of agricultural scandal when western demand for profitable but inedible crops like poppy caused starvation in the subaltern world. This novel is set in India in 1838 on the Anglo Chinese opium wars 1838-43 and 1846 -60. The novel re-enacts the history of their problems and position in the society, their dislocation, the anguish of departure from their motherland and the way they confronted the issue of identity. Ghosh in his novel has penetrated the issue of identity of characters that are related to their personal, socio-political, cultural and national arena. It covers all the mentioned concepts of identity and deals with the issues of identity and covers the aspects of identity that an individual comes across in his social, political and cultural context. In the novel he has projected the identity transformation as they are in constant quest for identity, rather than lamenting on

situations and facing identity crisis. He has also projected the colonial impact over the characters.

The story of *Sea of Poppies* unfolds in North India and the bay of Bengal in 1838 on the eve of British attack on the Chinese port known as the first opium war set in 1838 just before the opium war (1839-1842) and encapsulates the colonial history of East. In the novel, Ghosh assembles the sailor, passengers and mariners from different corners of world for the ship Ibis, a slaving schooner new converted to the transport of coolies and opium of China. In bringing his troupe of characters to Calcutta into the open water, Ghosh provides the reader with all manner of stories and equips himself with the personal to man and navigate an old fashioned literary three-decker.

*Sea of Poppies* is reconstructed the first wave of history of Indian diaspora. It is a remarkable novel for its portrayal of imperialism and the migration of the indentured labourers of North India specifically to Mauritius. The eradication of slavery in 1833, in the British Empire stopped the supply of the cheap labour for the plantation of the new trade regulation by the empire of China. In such historical improvements, the transportation and the recruitments of indentured workers from India became a commercial venture for the Britishers of imperialism. The workers had to sign an agreement called as 'girmit' in the North Indian language; so they were called as 'girmityas'. *Sea of Poppies* is a saga of the 'girmityas' those who were the first Indian diaspora. Amitav Ghosh highlights the different diasporic elements in the early Indian diaspora through his novel. The main aspect of the novel is loss of homeland, national and cultural identity because of the migration and how the labourers try to form a new identity in a foreign land, exemplified by the slave-schooner Ibis. He points the ship Ibis in a womanish image when Deeti thinks that "at the start, that they were all kins now; that their rebirth in the ship's womb had made into a single family" (432).

*Sea of Poppies* is a commentary on socio cultural evolution of Indian diaspora, a saga of struggle by the destitute and wretches of colonial India and the dispassionate account of the India peasantry forced into opium cultivation. It is a novel in relation to diasporic sensibility and reconstruction of identity. The idea of diaspora as migration and colonisation signifies a collective trauma, a banishment where one dreams of



home but lives in exile. The Ibis which was earlier a slave ship is being refitted to take a large group of 'girmityas' or indentured migrants to Mauritius. On one level it is a vessel to transport the 'girmityas' from India to the plantation colony of Mauritius but on the other, it is a microcosm of the plantation colony itself. Paul Gilroy in his work "The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double consciousness" (1993), has called the labour ship on the way to plantation colonies "a living micro-cultural, micro-political system in motion". Deeti's description of the Ibis that "as a vessel that was the mother-father of her new family, a great wooden 'mai-baap' an adoptive ancestor and parent of dynasties to come"(356-57) is suggestive of their new adoptive homeland, the plantation colony of Mauritius. In the novel, almost all the character feel the sense of place. In fact, they long for locality where they had come from. The ship becomes an alternate place for people to form their new identities and new communities as well. The colonial sense of place gives an impression in the present to alter the notion of place and history of place at present. Travel exposes new places and helps, the passenger to chronicle new histories. In connection with this, Robert Dixon rightly says the fact of Ghosh:

Amitav Ghosh has been able to move freely in this writing between anthropology, history and fiction is symptomatic of the extent to which traditional boundaries between those disciplines have themselves broken down.

The characters on ship experience new place and events comparing it with the past in the present in a different location.

Diaspora refers to the displacement of a person. Generally "at the heart of the notion of diaspora is the image of a journey. Diaspora is clearly not the same as casual travel. Nor do they normatively refer to the temporary sojourns. Paradoxically diasporic journeys are essentially about setting down, about putting roots 'elsewhere'" (Brah, 443). Diaspora identity refers to the issues of identity related to diasporas people. In literary terms place and identity play significant roles, as it is the place that normally renders identity and reinforces vehement nationalistic passion. Place includes landscapes, language, environment, culture etc. Identity is the way in which an individual or a group defines itself with these constituents of place. The importance of it can be traced in self conception social mores and national understanding.

Neel Rattan Halder, a wealthy rajah whose dynasty has been ruling the 'zamindari' of Rakshali for centuries; is confronted by Mr. Burnham with the need to sell off his incurred when trading opium with china at the height of the opium trade has come to a standstill, as a result of the resistance shown by the Chinese authorities he is left with no money to clear his loan when Mr. Burnham proposes to settle the load for Halder's 'zamindari' is his family's ancestral property and selling it would mean dependents living in his house and 'zamindari'. He is tried for forgery but it is a sham trial orchestrated by Burnham and his cronies. The court punishes him by sentencing him to work as an indentured labourer for seven years in Mauritius. It is then that he meets 'Ah Fatt', a half-Chinese; half-Parsi opium addict from canton, his sole companion in prison since the two will eventually be transported together on the ibis. Paulette Azad Baboon ob Kissin move because of their choice Lascars and others move for economic reasons and Neel, the king moves due to colonial injustice. Their events and situations of life act as a catalyst for their movement be it any global notional or personal reasons.

*Sea of Poppies* deals with the first wave of Indian diaspora, referred as an old diaspora. Though this aspect of Diaspora has been somewhat ignored in the corpus of diasporic writings yet Ghosh has made an effort to depict a true picture of it. As an anthropologist and historian, he takes help of historical records, lexicographers, linguists, historian and document to present the picture of the indentured diaspora of nineteenth century India. In the novel, Ghosh presented the reason of their displacement and their way of handling this "In Sea of Poppies.....Ghosh records the political and socio-economic conditions that led to the mass migration of impoverished Indian peasant as indentured labourers to the Mauritius island. Indentured immigration created a diaspora of Indians that is spread all over the world"(Mathur, 5-6).

The majority of the characters of novel show an extra-ordinary ability of coping with situation and the new place. The characters make effort for identity reconstruction or transformation to suit with the new place. As Stuart Hall in his book says "diaspora identities are constantly producing and reproducing themselves a new, through transformation and difference"(438). They are highly adoptive as well as adaptive and adjust very well with the new place and role. "It is this ability to relocate

to new spaces and adapt to these spaces that gives a verge Ghosh's characters. They belong to a new group of people unfettered by the burden of "otherness" and wonderfully blessed with the diasporic hope equipping them with a rare strength to fight with anxiety" (Bhattacharya, 133).

Diasporic writing are related with two kinds of migration the one that is forceful as in case of indentured labour occurred during late 18th and 19th centuries, or willingly to seek better prospects in life and career Prof. Maker and Paranjape, in his essay, "Displaced Relations: Diasporas, Empires, Homelands" (2001) argues that : "to first category belong all those migrations on account of slavery or indentured labour, while the second would encompass the voluntary migrations or businessmen and professionals who went abroad in search of fortune"(8). Migration becomes a new identity to the characters in the novel as Deeti is termed as 'Kabutari-ki ma' on the ship. She is a symbol of the labourer caught up as 'Karl Mark' puts it in his book *Capital* (1906) the "transformation of feudal exploitation into capitalist exploitation". Earlier the common people were exploited by feudal system, now they are under the grip of exploitation of British colonialism.

Amitav Ghosh has tried to depict women's search for identity and their right to live a life freedom and dignity. In his novel women are strong, they travel and take decisions to live an independent life. They are not controlled by men. They are individuals with freedom and progress. The culture of diaspora is global in the sense it generates its own culture beyond the ethnic boundaries. In diaspora moving across the boundaries is symbolically crossing the boundaries. At one place Neel is told that "when you step on that ship, to go across the Black water, you and your fellow transporters will become a brotherhood of your own; you will be your own village, your own family, your own caste"(314). On the ship the passengers from various sections had a story of exploitation, torment and deprivation at the back. The place their origin has never been the place of their self satisfaction but the diaspora place that is ship becomes their place of living together and self-development. The social interaction during these sea voyages begins a process of rebuilding ethnic and cultural identities. The class or gender subalternity in diaspora does not confirm a lack of identity rather they reconstruct a new identity and a new life full of self respect and dignity.

In the novel Ghosh has shown the rebellious approach of those people who boarded the Ibis and leave behind their identities in terms of caste, religion etc. And adopt of new identity of the oppressed-a new community takes birth. In this context of Binarism Saumani writes:

Amitav Ghosh within the text *Sea of Poppies* have been successful in exposing the crude reality of caste binarism existing within the social structure. The distinction of Ghosh's vision lies in investigating the full humanity of the dehumanized subalterns and he finally takes the ground to construct their identity that can enable them to make spaces in the main stream of caste best oppressive mechanism of social order (Saumani, 2015).

The diasporic Hindu is no longer a Hindu happening to live abroad, but one deeply transformed by his diasporic experiences. Parekh Bikhu, a political theorist, in his article "Some Reflection on the Indian Diaspora" (1993) says:

Indian diaspora groups evolved distinct identities that mark them of both from each other and their counterparts in India leading to the creation of little and large 'Indians' each with a distinct history, social structure and mode of self-conception all over the world.

Though Amitav Ghosh admits that the overseas Indian diaspora is an important force in world culture and its culture is increasingly a factor within the culture of the Indian subcontinent, he does not encourage his sentimental pursuits in India.

In *Sea of Poppies* Amitav Ghosh attempts to portray the coming together of diverse cultures and the elimination of all boundaries "shallow and unjustifiable" (Tiwari, 48) between people. Like any other post-colonial writer history is re-interpreted and the "dilemmas of diaspora that are engendered in the margins of history are foregrounded in Ghosh" (Bose, 237). In his novels there is therefore a diversity— of cultures, languages, histories, people, and places. The labour migration increased enormously in India during the British rule. Earlier, labours usually migrated from village to village individually or in gangs for work but the warfare and natural calamities forced larger bodies of people to leave their homelands and move to faraway lands for their livelihood. "These movements have uncovered more instances of contact than of insulation in the histories of nations that interrogate essentialist

notions of self, community and nation”(Roy, 33). The indentured workers belonged to the poppy growing regions of India and were given a meager amount for their labour while the profits were made by their colonial rulers. They become victims of the capitalist exploitation.

*Sea of Poppies* brings India, China, Britain, and North America together in the port of Calcutta where from the process of migration of the indentured labourers starts on the deck of the Ibis, a transport ship destined for Mauritius. The small stories of a variety of characters such as, the fallen Raja called Neel, fugitives like Deeti, Kalua, and Paulette are connected to the global history of colonialism and opium trade. The story exposes the unleashing of political, economic and social injustices during the colonial rule. Then, the story proves to be more about the movement, border-crossings, and heterogeneous encounters of its characters. The Indian farmers were forced to grow poppy instead of useful crops which led to widespread poverty and starvation. In 1780, the first shipment of opium arrived in China and within three decades the trade increased turning millions of Chinese into addicts. The British encouragement of Indian peasants to illegally cultivate and export opium to China although met with resistance from the Chinese authorities who made much attempts to stop the trade that eventually erupted in war twice. China’s defeat forced the government to open up several ports to foreign commerce and the humiliation at the hand of foreign powers contributed to the downfall of the Qing Dynasty in 1911, and it wasn’t until Mao’s ruthless Communist revolution in 1949 that China’s opium pandemic was finally brought under control.

The novel shows the importance of lascars in the oceanic trade which continued until the 1940s. The term ‘lascar’ is believed to be derived from the Persian lashkar, meaning an army, a camp or a band of followers and dates back to the early 1500s when it was used by Portuguese explorers to describe the sailors they encountered abroad. They came to be employed more and more on the British merchant ships for their cheap labour. Lascars used to be recruited by native ‘serangs’ who acted as a medium of communication between the European and lascar crews onboard ships. *Sea of Poppies* is set essentially prior to these Opium Wars. The novel hints at the Opium war when Mr. Doughty says, “The trouble, you know, is that Johnny Chinaman hinks he can return to the good old days, before he got his taste for

opium. But there's no going back – just won't hoga"(112), which is elaborated in the sequel to the novel, *River of Smoke* which focuses on the opium war which took place between the British and Chinese Government specifically the Qing Dynasty during the year 1839-42.

*Sea of Poppies* primarily focuses on Deeti who comes from a remote village in Eastern India. Beginning with Deeti's "vision of a tall-masted ship" (1), the story unfolds to describe her plight. Her village is close to the town of Ghazipur. It is winter and like everybody else in the village she is worried about "the lateness of her poppy crop" (1). A simple lady and a caring mother, Deeti is married to Hukam Singh, a crippled worker in the Ghazipur Opium Factory. On her wedding night she is drugged with opium by her mother-in-law and Kabutri, Deeti's daughter, is "fathered not by her husband, but by Chandan Singh, her leering, slack-jawed brother-in-law" (39). She became suspicious when her husband showed no interest in her afterwards and who "usually remained in a state of torpid, opium-induced somnolence by the time he fell on his bed" (36). The use of opium had left him for nothing. After the death of Hukam Singh, Deeti is about to meet her doom when she chooses to go through with the sati ritual, but then Kalua, the ox man from the neighbouring village, comes to her rescue and the two flow "away from the flaming pyre, into the dark of the night" (178) to become indentured servants on the *Ibis*. These indentured labourers with different religions, castes, customs and beliefs form their own multicultural society. They come across others who are also travelling as indentured labourers as well as lascars and sailors. As the novel progresses, characters like Jadu, Paulette, Deeti, Kalua along with some others get together and plan to escape from the ship in which they succeed.

*Sea of Poppies* exposes the relentless devastation wrought by the opium trade and the degradations of the indentured labourers. The indentured labourers were no better than the slaves and "the experience of enslavement, transportation, or voluntary removal...eroded" their "valid and active sense of self". (Ashcroft et al, *The Empire Writes Back*, 9). While removing them out of their countries they are rooted out of their country, people and home, culture and history. *Ibis* becomes a "gathering of people in diaspora: indentured, migrant, interned"(Bhabha, 2007) where we find English sailors like Mr. Crowle, Mr. Doughty and the American Zachary Reid and

Indian lascars like Serang Ali and Subedar Bhyro Singh. From pawn brokers like Baboo Nob Kissin to the indentured labourers it becomes a gathering of people of different professions and classes, common village people, English merchants, Indian and Bengali lascars, zamindars, prisoner opium cultivators, prisoners, policemen, American sailors, coolies, sahibs, uprooted from their cultures and homes they create their own society and “develop their own distinctive cultures which both preserve and often extend and develop their originary cultures” (Ashcroft et al, 70). The characters try to reconstruct their identities in the new world they find themselves in. The protagonist, Deeti becomes Aditi as:

She did not feel herself to be living in the same sense as before: a curious feeling, of joy mixed with resignation, crept into her heart, for it was as if she really had died and been delivered betimes in rebirth, to her next life: she had shed the body of the old Deeti...and was free now to create a new destiny as she willed, with whom she chose” (178).

The migrants on Ibis become ‘jahaz-bhais’ and ‘jahaz-bahens’ to each other. The bonds that the migrants develop between each other is a denial of the rigid distinctions and differences towards the formation of a human society in which diversity becomes the most important and defining factor. Thus Ghosh skillfully interlinked cultural hybridity with migration and identity in his novel *Sea of Poppies*.

#### DANCING IN CAMBODIA AT LARGE IN BURMA :

Amitav Ghosh’s *Dancing in Cambodia at Large in Burma* begins with an anthropological description of the sea-journey of King Sisowath along with his entourage of several dozen princes, courtiers, officials and most importantly a troupe of nearly hundred classical dancers and musicians from the royal palace at Phnom Penh. For the king, the journey that started on 10 May 1906, at two in the afternoon, aboard a French liner called Amiral-Kersaint, was the fulfillment of a lifelong dream and desire to visit France. For others it was a cherished opportunity to step out of their own land and to stage the first ever performance of Cambodian classical dance in Europe, at the exposition colonial in Marseille, an immense fairyland of an exhibition centered on the theme of France’s colonial possessions. The ‘colonized’ situation of

the dancers is sensitively portrayed in these tantalizing snippets of information of which the Marseille newspapers were often full:

it was said that the dancers entered the palace as children and spent their lives in seclusion ever afterwards; that their lives revolved entirely around the royal family; that several were the king's mistresses and had even borne him children; that some of them had never stepped out of the palace grounds until this trip to France(3).

However, *Dancing in Cambodia*, like other great narrative works, may be read from a variety of perspectives and thematic levels: it may be considered as the narration of a series of encounters, but also as a collection of old and contemporary travel accounts, and even as a narrative essay on the “victims of history” or as an anti-colonial manifesto. *Dancing in Cambodia* opens with a double encounter, fraught with consequences. It was the enthusiastic encounter of colonized ruler with the colonizer of his own country, during the acme of the Orientalist vogue, with the “lithe, athletic women” (3), whose androgynous beauty fascinated common people and even artists like “the great Rodin...into ecstasies over the little virgins of Phnom Penh, whose immaterial silhouettes he drew with infinite love, recognizing in their spontaneity the “infancy of Europe” (32).

Accompanying these smart dancers, as their supervisor and head, was the eldest of the King's daughters, Princess Soumphady, whose royal manners and style of dress had an electrifying effect on the Marseillais Crowd. Though she admired very enthusiastically the clothes and hats of the French women, yet she politely declined the suggestion to wear clothes like those. This was perhaps an indication of the sense of pride that she and other Cambodian women felt about their distinctive attire suited for their variety of dances. Ghosh learns the remaining story of King Sisowath and Princess Soumphady's 1906 journey to France through Chea Samy, a sister-in-law of Pol Pot and a teacher at the School of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh, in 1993. The car-journey with his friend Molyka who was a mid-level Civil servant and a poised, attractive woman in her early thirties was quite a hazardous one, as it was four months before the countrywide elections to be held under the auspices of United Nation's Transitional Authority in Cambodia. The personal interview and encounter with Chea Samy reveals the latter's connection with the royal palace as also with the renowned



revolutionary Pol Pot who never showed any favours to his relatives during the period of his rule. Amitav Ghosh describes the situation thus:

Chea Samy was working in a communal Kitchen at the time, cooking and washing dishes. Late that year some party workers stuck a poster on the walls of the Kitchen: they said it was a picture of their leader, Pol Pot. She knew who it was the moment she set eyes on the picture. That was how she discovered that the leader of the terrifying, inscrutable ‘Organization,’ Angkar, that ruled their lives, was none other than little Saloth Sar (12-13).

After ‘breaking’ of Cambodia by the Vietnamese in 1979, the country became “like a shattered slate: before you could think of drawing lines on it, you had to find the pieces and fit them together”(14). In the post revolution period, when the ministry of culture launched an effort to locate the trained classical dancers and teachers who had survived, one of the well-known surviving dancers described their sensitive position in these words: “I was like a smoker who gives up smoking. I would dream of dance when I was alone or at night. You could get through the day because of the hard work. It was the nights that were really difficult; we would lie awake wondering who was going to be called out next. That was when I would dance, in my head”(14-16). As if to reinforce the significant role of culture and art in the process of national reconstruction even in the most trying circumstances, Amitav Ghosh tells the readers:

Like everyone around her, Chea Samy too had started all over again--- at the age of sixty, with her health shattered by the years of famine and hard labour. Working with quiet, dogged persistence, she and a handful of other dancers and musicians slowly brought together a ragged, half-starved lunch of orphans and castaways, and with the discipline of their long, rigorous years of training they began to resurrect the art that Princess Soumphady and Luk Khun Meak had passed on to them in that long-ago world, when King Sisowath reigned. Out of the ruins around them, they began to create the means of denying Pol Pot his victory (15-16).

Shifting the narrative back and forth, Ghosh highlights the problems of Cambodia's colonization by France as also the rise of Pol Pot, Khmer Rouge, other minority groups resorting to Guerrilla war-tactics, and attack by Vietnam, through the strategies of contrast and comparison. Thus the complexity of the political, social, economic, cultural and ethnic problems gets concretized with the help of analytical portrayals of Norodom Sihanouk, Minister Thiounn and his grandson Thiounn Mumm, Pol Pot and his brother Loth Sieri, King Sisowath, Son Sann, Hun Sen, Khieu Samphan, Rodin at all. In spite of all the political turmoil and chaotic-anarchic situations, one thing that kept the spirit of the 'nation' alive in Cambodia is its rich cultural heritage of music and dance. This becomes evident from the vivid description of the cultural festival that was held in Phnom Penh in 1988 amidst the destruction of social, economic, cultural and political fabric of the country:

But people flocked to the theatre the day the festival began. Onesta Carpane, a Catholic relief worker from Italy was one of the handful of foreigners then living in Phnom Penh. She was astonished at the response: the city was in a shambles; there was debris everywhere, spilling out of the houses on to the pavements, the streets were jammed with pillaged cars, there was no money and very little food- 'I could not believe that in a situation like that people would be thinking music and dance.' But still they came pouring in, and the theatre was filled far beyond its capacity.... When the first musicians came onstage, she heard sobs all around her. Then, when the dancers appeared, in their shabby, hastily made costumes, suddenly, everyone was crying; old people, young people, soldiers, children— 'you could have sailed out of there in a boat.'... They could not stop crying; people went through the entire length of the performance (45).

Thus, Amitav Ghosh cleverly documents the history of isolation by the Khmer Rouge and its consequences through the opening section of this book. Moreover, using examples from history, Ghosh shows that no previous regime had made such systematic and sustained attacks on the middle class. Ghosh also related Cambodia's civil war to contemporary politics. He too expresses the view that "Cambodia's was not a civil war in the same sense as Somalia's or the former Yugoslavia: it was a war on history itself, an experiment in the re-invention of society"(9).

Conversing with people who relate anecdotes about their family history, is another device used by Ghosh to convey his impressions. It also gives the discourse, for the form of a story. For instance, Ghosh learns the story of King Sisowath and Princess Soumphady's journey to France in 1906 through Chea Samy, a sister-in-law of Pol Pot and a teacher at the school of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh in 1993. The interview with Chea Samy reveals her connection with the royal palace and Pol Pot. And also, the French painter Rodin gives a human dimension to the unfurling of the socio-political history of Cambodia from May 1906 till 1993. The dates are significant, as in 1906 Sisowath and a hundred classical dancers set sail from Saigon to stage the first ever performance of Cambodian classical dance in Europe, at the exposition Colonial in Marseille. The year 1993 is very significant as it was the year that countrywide elections were held under the auspices of the UN's Transitional Authority in Cambodia known by its acronym, UNTAC. The elections, the will-power of the people during duress and their supreme love for music and dance represent the possible resurgence and redemption of Cambodia. Amitav Ghosh cleverly shows that despite the political turmoil and prevailing anarchy, the spirit of the nation is maintained by its rich cultural legacy. This is evident from a vivid description of a cultural festival held in Phnom Penh in 1988. That's how, towards the end of the first section of his book, Amitav Ghosh shows that the passion for dance and music symbolized the politics of resurgence in Cambodia. The author sums up this mood as "a kind of rebirth: a moment when the grief of survival became indistinguishable from the joy of living"(45).

Ghosh compiles a collection of three essays to weave culture, history and politics. The first essay *Dancing in Cambodia* appeared in a shorter version in *Granta*, 1993. It contains four sketches by French artist Auguste Rodin from his encounter with the Khmer dancers who are the subject of Ghosh's essay. Ghosh connects two historical encounters in this essay. The first encounter begins with a novelistic tale of a 1906 trip to France by King Sisowath and his entourage including a young troupe of Khmer dancers and musicians from the palace of Phnom Penh. The second is Ghosh's quest for the remnants of this ancient art in the early 1990s in a country that was devastated by one of the worst holocausts of "the Pol Pot Years". The irony is that some of the closest family members of Pol Pot or Saloth Sar, as he was known amongst friends and family had to undergo the same ordeal as thousands of others.

They were sent off to a village of 'old people', long-time Khmer Rouge sympathizers, and along with all other 'new people', were made to work in the rice-fields.

Ghosh interviews a number of people who provide living testimony to the interconnectedness of these two narratives. Among them a famous dancer Chea Samy has firsthand knowledge of King Sisowath and his daughter Princess Soumphady. Chea Samy was taken to the palace in 1925 at the age of six to be trained in classical dance under the supervision of the Princess. She is also Pol Pot's sister-in-law. Palace revolution and French connection are motifs that run throughout the essay.

With the help of his interpreter, Ghosh locates Pol Pot's ancestral village in the province of Kompong Thom and speaks to some of his relatives who seem just as grief stricken and befuddled as anyone else in Cambodia. Ghosh diagnoses the madness of Khmer Rouge and assesses the human and cultural loss of 1975-79. The Khmer Rouge period refers to the rule of Pol Pot, Nuon Chea, Ieng Sary, Khieu Samphan and the Khmer Rouge Communist Party over Cambodia, which the Khmer Rouge renamed as Democratic Kampuchea. The four year period witnessed the deaths of approximately two million Cambodians through the combined result of political executions, starvation and forced labour. It is commonly known as the Cambodian Holocaust or Cambodian Genocide.

King Sisowath, an eccentric old man, after his trip to France issued a document recording his thoughts on his voyage for the benefit of his subjects. It was cast in the guise of a Royal Proclamation but ironically enough Ghosh says, "it was in fact a kind of essay in travel writing" (41). The King stated in the document that his greatest concern was with the improvement of his country's industry and agriculture and in the future would be "to make his kingdom prosperous, to develop its intellectual resources and to increase the wealth of its people" (36). Ghosh criticizes that the lessons of statecraft that King Sisowath has learned appears to have been learned from "Napoleon and Bismarck rather than Rousseau and Montaigne" (35). Further the King wanted to implement Western political rhetoric to the iron fist of realities. He wanted to inform his people that "Emulation is the only means of turning resolutely to the path of progress" (36). Ghosh observes the King's attraction to the West as an attraction to technological modernity. The King forgot everything about his plans after his return from France. The only significant contribution of the King in

his lifetime was the founding of a high school where Cambodians could be educated on the French pattern. John Thieme comments:

King Sisowath and Pol Pot may seem polar opposites, but with their common experience of palace life and their enthusiasm for certain, albeit different, aspects of French culture, they emerge as curiously twinned. Ghosh documents these connections neutrally, but he does comment at one point that coups usually begin in the courtyards of the palace (267-268).

In the period of reconstruction after Pol Pot's fall, the return to normality is associated with an art form that has palace associations: Cambodian Classical dance. Ghosh's essay represents dancing as far more than a traditional Cambodian performing art; it becomes a trope for the indestructibility of the middle class culture threatened with extinction during the Pol Pot era. The essay ends with an "epiphany" in Phnom Penh in 1988, a moment when grief and joy commingle, as classical music and dance are performed once again for the first time. Thieme further avers:

It reminds the reader that, then, the humanist conclusion is not so much championing subaltern survival, but the resilience of an educated class threatened with extinction by a Western inspired regime, which has declared war on the intelligentsia (268).

The second essay in this collection titled *Stories in Stone* appeared in *The Observer* magazine in 1994. It focuses on the iconic significance of Angkor Wat, a twelfth century Cambodian temple. Angkor Wat is 'awash in stories' old and new, and not only those depicted in its magnificent bas-reliefs. Ghosh describes this building, the largest single religious edifice in the world, as "a monument to the power of the story" (48) principally because it is encrusted with religious iconography, and also because its own history as a building, is heavily overlaid with the biographies of Kings and other potentates. Ghosh makes a sharp observation about the paradox – the glory and the decline. Ghosh writes:

For many people, around the globe, Angkor Wat is uniquely powerful symbol of the romance of the lost civilizations; of ancient glory, devoured by time. But for Cambodia it serves as a no less vivid symbol of modernity (49).

Ghosh's illustration of the proliferation of images of the Angkor Wat in a range of commercial context is not, however, simply evidence of the extent to which tradition and modernity overlap; it is a striking instance of a modern appropriation of an older tradition, which he sees as ending the humanist possibilities of earlier belief-systems (Thieme, 268). Ghosh uncovers two more stories apart from the official story of the Wat's discovery. The most powerful of the myths that surrounded Angkor is the legend of its accidental discovery by the nineteenth century French explorer Henri Mouhot. As per his discovery it had been abandoned in 1431 until it was discovered by him in 1860. Ghosh spoke to a monk at Angkor Wat, the Ven Luong Chun, who explained that the temple had never been abandoned; monks had continued to use it down the centuries as a place of worship. Ghosh asks, "So to whom then was the monument lost?" Certainly the Buddhist Sangha was well aware of its existence and to the nobility of Cambodia and Thailand. It was only to Europeans, then that Angkor, was a 'discovery' but as the colonial masters of the country they were able not only to rewrite the complicated narrative of the monument's past, but also to recast the actual structure to accord with their telling of the tale. Ghosh writes:

... the French discovered a mirror for themselves of the imperial state  
 ... For an entire generation of Cambodians ... it becomes the opposite  
 of itself; an icon that represented a break with the past – a token of the  
 country's belonging, not within the medieval, but rather the  
 contemporary world (53).

In the second story, the shadow of the 'Pol Pot years' is evident. Ghosh's new found acquaintance Kong Sarith, who had been there, then, had no previous connection with Angkor Wat unlike the monk. The stories told by the Cambodian conservation worker Kong Sarith, were all familiar to Ghosh, the tales told by a grandmother, others in the manner of texts. Angkor Wat the magnificent temple with seven carefully graded tiers, with its breathtaking symmetry, harmony, vastness, the entire structure within structure evoking its imaginary. Buddhist monks with flowers and meditation and the curious tourist with camera are both facts related to this magnificent structure which is in the process of renovation. The land got devastated during Pol Pot's regime with so much violence and bloodshed while thousands of smiling Buddha images abound anywhere and everywhere and the peace loving

religion has enveloped the nook and corner of the country. This paradox is brought out imaginatively through Ghosh's dialogue with the elderly monks. The present as elsewhere, wants desperately to tear itself away from its past.

The third essay, the last piece in the collection, *At Large in Burma* portrays Ghosh's three meetings with Aung San Suu Kyi, winner of Nobel Peace Prize, *in absentia*, in 1991. This essay appeared in *The New Yorker* in 1996. It brings alive the recent history of the country from the death of Aung San in 1947 to his daughter Suu Kyi, who struggles for the restoration of democracy in Burma. Ghosh begins his essay with General Ne Win, Burma's longtime dictator who seized power in 1962, who closed the country to the outside world for three decades. Ghosh's uncle who lived in Rangoon had to flee from there in 1942 to escape Japanese Army described Burma as a "Golden Land". Ghosh's first encounter with Suu Kyi was more than a meeting. In 1980, Ghosh and Suu Kyi were students at Oxford. Ghosh remembers her as being a 35 year old "leading a life of quiet, exiled domesticity on a leafy street in North Oxford, bringing up two sons, then aged seven and three, and writing occasional articles for scholarly journals"(65). Ghosh interviews her during his two visits to Burma in 1995 and 1996.

Burma had been the most developed country in the region. Now it was one of the most impoverished countries in the region and suffered from repression, xenophobia, and civil abuse. General Aung San led the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League to a great victory in 1947 election and Burma's future changed the day he was assassinated before he could take office. As the leader of the independent movement, he was able to bring together various minority groups which inhabit Burma. After his death, civil war broke out, with a vast communist uprising; tensions between the different groups escalated. General Aung San became Burma's most pervasive icon. According to Ghosh's nostalgic aunt and uncle, Burma was very friendly and hospitable to strangers but General Ne Win switched off the lights to make Burma an island away from the rest of the world.

Ghosh provides insights into an Asian country that has been particularly isolated from the outside world in recent years, again doing so through the medium of telling individual stories (Thieme, 268). While in Burma, Ghosh visited the Karenni, one of the small groups, who are seeking some form of independence for the past

fifty years. They had been chased into ever diminishing nomadic lives by the military. Ghosh writes, "There are five major Karenni refugee camps and together they form a miniscule, tight-knit nation-on-the-move, consisting of some six thousand people" (82). Ghosh asks this question: "What does it take to sustain an insurgency for fifty years, to go on fighting a war that the rest of the world has almost forgotten?" (80) Their problem is not still solved. Ghosh flew to the border of Mae Hong Son when he heard that fighting had broken out on the Thai border, between the Burmese Army and the Karenni. He met Karenni insurgents, many of whom were students, fighting the Burmese Army. Ghosh's visit is an attempt to understand the independence struggle of (one of Burma's many minorities) the Karenni's. Many of those involved in the conflict have forgotten the source of grievances. The irony continues when tourists visit refugee camps to see the Karenni's long-necked "Giraffe Women," oblivious of their history of their "tragic histories of oppression, displacement, and misery, into counterfeits of timeless rural simplicity" (81). Ghosh's interest lies in assessing what "freedom" means to the Karenni and whether the "putative nationalities" (86) around Burma's border would gain the status of a separate state. His consideration of this issue makes him revisit the central motif of *The Shadow Lines* and he writes:

Burma's borders are undeniably arbitrary, the product of a capricious colonial history. But colonial officials cannot reasonably be blamed for the arbitrariness of the lines they draw. All boundaries are artificial; there is no such thing as a 'natural' nation, which has journeyed through history with its boundaries and ethnic composition intact. In a region as heterogeneous as South East Asia, any boundary is sure to be arbitrary. On balance, Burma's best hope for peace lies in maintaining intact the larger, and more inclusive entity that history, albeit absent-mindedly bequeathed to its population almost half a century ago (87).

Henrik Ibsen in his play *Enemy of the People* (1882) makes a profound observation through Mr. Stockmann, one of the prominent characters that 'the majority is never right'. Ghosh underscores this fact in *At Large in Burma* by pointing out that the rights of the minority should not be trounced by an alarmingly powerful majority. It is an intensive study and powerful expression of Ghosh's in-camera observations



along the broad spectrum of three generations of Burmese way of life. The war of minorities reflects an attitude. It conveys a hidden agenda of power politics. Ghosh in his reflections on Aung San Suu Kyi based on attending her gate side meetings says:

There were people like me, members of the world's vast . . . who took it for granted that there are no heroes among us. But Suu Kyi had proved us wrong. She lived the same kind of life; attended the same classes, read the same books and magazines, got into the same arguments. And she had shown that the apparently soft and yielding world of books and words could sometimes forge a very fine kind of steel (71).

Ghosh finds in her "the personification of Burma's democratic resistance to military rule" (65). Rushdie and Ghosh simultaneously provides a window on one of the world's most closed and real cultured societies and on the other hand their writings deal with their unique method of illuminating national and communal issues by relating to personal stories.

**CHAPTER – IV**  
**COMPARATIVE STUDY**

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### **COMPARATIVE STUDY**

Salman Rushdie and Amithav Ghosh intersperse their narratives with incidents from the pre-independence struggle and the partition holocaust. The new techniques in these novels do not present incidents and events of history in chronological order. Current events bring to focus events of the past. So artistically is the new and old synthesized the events of the past come alive, making it a living experience. Salman Rushdie is deeply concerned with politics of the sub-continent. In an interview given to Gordon Wise, Salman Rushdie calls himself “A fairly political animal”. His presentation of politics is innovative.

Niel Ten Kortenaar comments, “Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* is commonly read as a national allegory giving imaginative form to India and its history”(41). This aspect can be seen when Rushdie puts into *Midnight’s Children* virtually(all of 20<sup>th</sup> century history) the Jallianwala Bagh incident, Quit India movement, the cabinet mission, the Muslim league and its role in partition of the country, riots and bloodshed subsequent to independence, the five year plans, re-organization of Indian states, language riots, the war with China, the theft of the sacred relic from the Hazratbal Mosque in Kashmir, the wars with Pakistan, the liberation of Bangladesh and finally the emergency. There are also other events which show the typical Indian co-existence of discordant elements –religious fanaticism juxtaposed with secular ideals.

Rushdie’s analysis of the three wars – Indo-China war of 1962, Indo-Pakistan wars of 1965 and 1971 are characteristically innovative. His approach to the depiction of the individual’s place in a nation at war throws up an interesting array of possibilities. During the Indo-China war, the Sinai family was in Pakistan then, except for Ahmed Sinai who had refused to move from Bombay. On the afternoon of 9<sup>th</sup> September, 1962, Amina Sinai was busy trying to cut her verrucas out of her feet with a sharpened nail file and elsewhere in New Delhi, Krishna Menon, the then Defense-Minister was reacting equally sharply, threatening to cut off the Chinese in the Himalayan front by the use of force if necessary. A telegram informing her about her husband’s heart attack brought the Sinai family back to Bombay on 16<sup>th</sup> September,

1962. Ahmed Sinai in his hour of despair and loneliness was very worried about the Chinese invading India. Back in Bombay after a gap of four years, Salman tried to convene the midnight children's conference in a personal attempt to tackle a national emerging Neeraja Mattoo remarks, "The emotional integration of the family echoes the fervor of the country's apparent emotional integration in the face of Chinese aggression"(66).

Simultaneously on October 20, there was an unprovoked attack by the Chinese army leading to a complete annihilation of the Indian forces at Thag La Bridge. The juxtaposition of the defeat of the Indian army and that of Saleem Sinai is significant. Rushdie seems to suggest that it was not so much the defeat of the Indian army but a weakening of the basic fabric of the nation due to divisive forces. Undeterred by the crushing attack, Saleem tries to convene another conference between 20<sup>th</sup> October and 20<sup>th</sup> November. But the midnight children started fleeing from him, just when in the high Himalayas, Gurkhas and Rajputs fled in disarray from the Chinese army. Thus the most decisive moment of the war is presented in ludicrous Juxtaposition with the inflammation of Saleem's sinus. Amina gave away gold bangles and emerald earrings for 'Ornaments for Armaments' programme (*Midnight's Children*, 473).

As the Indians headed blindly towards a military debacle, Saleem too was nearing a catastrophe of his own. While his nasal passage was in state of acute crisis, the Indians had attacked under cover of artillery. From 14<sup>th</sup> November, Nehru's 73<sup>rd</sup> birthday, the great confrontation with the Chinese forces had begun, but the Indian jawans were routed in Walong. November 20<sup>th</sup> was a terrible day; just when everyone feared that things would get worse, on 21<sup>st</sup> November, the Chinese suddenly ceased hostilities and announced cease fire, bringing much relief in New Delhi. Coincidentally, Saleem's sinus too is cleared on the same day. It takes away from him his prized possession, the power to tune into the midnight children. However he realises that the loss has been compensated with the acquisition of an equally powerful sense of smell.

The active-metaphorical mode of connection is brought into focus through two incidents that happen to Saleem but exemplifying something deeper in a larger connection. The mutilation of Saleem's middle finger during the fight with his classmates in the course of school party, which results in a loss of blood, seems to

suggest the blood spilled over the issue of Kashmir. In a larger context, it would also suggest the dismemberment of the nations on various other issues. The incident of mutilation occurs when Mr. Zagallo gives Saleem a monkish tonsure during the course of a human geography class. The demented school teacher however draws a brilliant connection between Saleem's face and the map of India. The boldness on Saleem's head seems to suggest the problem of Kashmir, an indicator that it may separate from the country through the process of virulent attack both from within and without.

Partition is the common theme in the novels of Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh. Both Rushdie and Ghosh vividly portrayed the effect of partition on India and Pakistan. The effect of partition does not stay with 1947 but its tentacles have spread across effecting generations ahead. The tremors still reflected in the minds and lives of the people. It touched peoples' lives in unprecedented and very deep ways. The memories of partition still haunted them. Thus a few aspects of partition of how families separated, friendship bore across borders, how they acquired strength, and how their strength in the midst of violence changed their lives, how the newly acquired freedom intertwined the personal life to public life had to be probed into. In order to explore some of the above aspects and probe those areas which directly or indirectly influenced on the sudden and total breakdown of long standing intra community network alliance, a new body of historical fiction emerged on the literary context. In this context the contemporary writers chose to re-examine the theme of partition in the novels, are examination that is deeply rooted in the concern of the present.

Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh represent a new school of Indian creative writers who gave a new direction to the use of English by departing from the tired conventional models and their preoccupation with the theme of partition. They are deeply concerned with the issues of identity crisis, alienation and a sense of belonging in a divided nation. The on-line work is indeed a powerful commentary on the divided nation and the migrant living. In the novel *Midnight's Children* Rushdie has portrayed in considerable dilemma of saleem Sinai and other midnight children in partitioned India. Rushdie in the novel highlights the multiple displacement leading to multiple identities of an individual, by doing so Rushdie puts forward the

genealogical confusion as they struggle to construct their identities. In fact Rushdie combines facts with fantasy to accomplish Saleem's goal of finding meaning and identity in a chaotic violent world.

Rushdie through his main protagonist Saleem moves forward and brings the saga of pre-independence and post-independent India and recaptures the past glory of unified India and woes of amputated nation. Through the device of locking and unlocking together the destiny of man and the nation in the character of Saleem, Rushdie projects the loneliness and rootlessness which looms all over. Further Rushdie in *Midnight's Children* concentrates mainly on the after effects of partition and brings to light how the leaders knowingly mixed the identities of people pushing them into ambiguity in their personal as well as public lives of the two states.

Unlike Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh in his novel *The Shadow Lines* voices the impact of borders on the people and show its effects in the years ahead. As Ghosh in the novel unveils the specific dilemma and traumas of individuals in a partitioned nation also traces the problems faced by the individual in relocating their identities. Ghosh in fact focuses not much on the borderlines but on the implications of lines drawn between nations and its enforcement on the ethnic community living on the either side of a political divide. He displays the violence in a divided nation and the role of rumours and riots. In other words, Ghosh conveys the absurdity of drawing lines, which arbitrarily divided people while their memories remained undivided. Moreover, Ghosh in the grandmother's plight subtly poses Queries about contemporary lives and identities in partitioned India and highlights the struggle of people fighting to cope to survive and build a new. Both Rushdie and Ghosh reject the very concept of drawing lines and they project the aftermath of partition, quest for roots and belongingness in a divided nation.

The novels of Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh are noticeable for a fine blend of fantasy and realism. Rushdie's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is a conflict between a pluralist and tolerant society and a monolithic and intolerant political order in the guise of fantasy. The Guppees, a wonderfully various community of talkative creatures, have to defend themselves against the depredations of a monomaniac cartoon villain, Khattam Shud, who is trying to destroy their story sea because he sees it as a manifestations of a world ideas he is unable to control. Rushdie dramatises a

struggle between the 'superabundant, heterogeneous' Bombay of his childhood and the idea of 'Mumbai' pedaled in the 1980's and 1990's by the Shiv Sena.

Haroun depicts the representatives of pluralism, the Guppees, Managing with the assistance of the intrepid young Haroun, to defeat the tyrant Khattam shud, and to preserve their multi-form society and its impressively various 'story sea'. Meanwhile, Rushdie's depiction of the contemporary political scenario, of which the historical narrative is paradigmatic, expresses the fear that tolerance of cultural diversity in India will be increasingly eroded in coming decades. Haroun is a utopian fantasy, demands the relatively artificial aesthetic convention of a happy ending. The optimism of Haroun is not characteristic of Rushdie's political philosophy, but emerges against his own inclination. Rushdie cares most about, namely, 'the values of pluralism and multiplicity and being many things and not being narrow, not defining your culture or yourself too narrowly'. (*Conversation with Salman Rushdie*, 207). In Haroun this is done directly, through a depiction of triumphal overcoming.

Haroun, in the space of its two hundred pages, duplicates the narrative complexity of the story sea. It depicts by drawing freely upon a range on narrative pre-texts, including European, Middle Eastern and Indian fairy tale, pop music lyrics, English children's classics, Indian Cinema, Persian poetry, Political allegory and science fiction. Rushdie is seeking to make about cultural identity, namely that it is not determined by one influence alone, but develops through a complex process of hybridisation and exchange; the communal segregation, cultural supremacism, walls of force, apartheid and such like are falsifications of the historically verifiable, mongrel nature of human community. In Haroun Rushdie is effectively carrying some of the formal optimism of the earlier novella into the later 'grown up' work.

Political implications are conspicuous in the works of Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh. The works are perceived as the study of material conditions of post colonial experience. They espouse post modern idealism and elucidate the political realities. A. N. Kaul's essay *A Reading of Shadow Lines in The Shadow Lines* (1998) aptly justified this perspective. He has argued that the novels of Ghosh are the categories of human experience as metaphors of contemporary political realities. John Mee in his article "The Burthen of the Mystery" praises the anthropological imagination of Ghosh, which has espoused the idea of space and

time. Thoroughly examining the divisiveness of nationalism, the works of Ghosh scrupulously examine the enactment of divisive forces of racism, imperialism and class exploitation from the perspective of Indian nationalism. Another critic Robert Dixon in the essay *Travelling in the West* has argued that *In An Antique Land* and *The Shadow Lines* Ghosh has presented an untheorized and utopian belief of humanity. He characterizes Ghosh's writing as an ambivalent tension between liberal humanism and post modernism. Apart from the post modern response to the works of Ghosh, his works are also projected as an abdication of political responsibility or refusal to confront harsh political realities. This perspective is based on the premise that politics requires an active intervention into the affairs of the world. But what is at stake for Ghosh is viable political praxis. In the context of globalization, Ghosh's works have accelerated multiple contradictions inherent in post modernity projecting his politics as ambivalent. His politics of ambivalence stand in odd with an activist vision of politics. The significance of Ghosh's politics of ambivalence is in the way it offers us a means of revising what politics might mean in a globalised, post colonial world.

In *The Imam and the Indian* and in *In an Antique Land* of Ghosh as well as, we see the exploration of history. Ghosh subscribes to the values of their own culture. The emotions and passions are linked with their past. These people along with the people from the shared past history from "Composite Communities". In *The Glass Palace*, Ghosh showed the search of Jaya, Raj Kumar's grand-daughter for her uncle Dinu. She seeks to reconstitute her grandfather's history and also the history of Aung San Suu Kyi through Dinu. She visits Burma and peeps into past of her uncle Dinu. Jaya comes to acknowledge the girlhood and the typical motherhood, looking for her son's safety after the sudden demise of her husband in an accident. Experiencing "others" the children of migrants bear the burden of carrying the past. We are shown through Jaya's retrospection and scanned Psyche that these children carry with them the past history of "origin" of their parents and grandparents and are treated as a secondary citizen even though they are born and brought up here. Jaya feels shattered when she goes on to search for her uncle Dinu from corner to corner in Burma, when she meets him at once shading their faces "green with broken eye shadow", to different ideas for collecting memories with each other. She is called by name, are you Dinu? I am your niece, daughter of your



own brother Neel granddaughter of Raj Kumar and Dolly your parents. Thus, Jaya faces an identity crisis as her identity is defined in terms of the past history of her parents and grandparents.

In the novel *The Glass Palace* along with the discussion of colonial rulers and their subjects Queen Supayalath carries on a discourse that unruly depicts 'cruel politics'. If the Indian princes constitute the other in the power game between the British and themselves, it is Queen Supayalath who is symbolic of woman as the other in human relationships. As living in Burma Jaya is brought into light by the skills of her research. The journey of Jaya's research from her childhood to maturity is full of enriching experiences. Post-colonial criticism has initiated significant changes in the discourse of nationalism of colonised countries. It offered genuine criticism of the evolution of the feeling on Nationalism. It has projected the idea that Nationalism has emerged to check the growth of capitalism and Industrialisation. Ernest Gellner in *Nations and Nationalism* (1983) observed that Nations are not inscribed into the nature of things. Nations are like planned things. They are like constructed buildings. The very idea of the nation is considered to be a myth. Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (1983) argues that nations are imagined political communities. The essential symbols like national flag, national bird, national animal, national anthem that stood for the significance of nationalism are all prepared cultural artifacts by the so-called pre independent national leaders.

Post-colonial criticism has also revealed the very cultural strategy involved in identifying the land of the nation with the body of the women. This is intentionally schemed to incite the sentiments of the common people. The occupation of their land is projected as the molestation on the dignity of their woman. The colonial occupation is interpreted on these lines only to invite the participation of the common people in the so-called struggle for independence. It is pertinent to observe that in the larger struggle for Independence the very crucial aspect of the Independence of women is excluded. It is from this perspective Partha Chatterjee in his influential book *Nationalist thought and colonial world* (1986) considers nationalism as a derivative discourse. He considers that idea of Nationalism is in complicit with the elite sections of the society. Post-colonial criticism has also

revealed how the nature and subjectivity of women's life is exploited by the national leaders in their struggle for freedom. Particularly Mahatma Gandhi is understood to have exploited the subjectivity of Indian womanhood in his methods of staging hunger strike, non-cooperation and non-violent demonstrations. Gandhi has exactly employed the nature and psyche of Indian womanhood. Post-colonial criticism has revealed the ways in which the subjectivity of Indian womanhood is exploited like Deeti in *Sea of Poppies* only to further undermine the social positions of Indian women and Gandhi is no exception in the scheme of Indian patriarchy.

The women protagonists in these novels are the representatives of post-colonial critique of Indian society. Deeti, Munia, and Paulette in *Sea of Poppies* and Dolly and Uma in *The Glass Palace* are the apt representatives of post-colonial critical spirit. The life related to the mother and daughter weaves between the pre-independent and post Independent India presenting the glimpses of usable past and unusable past. The holocaust during the times of partitions strongly signifies the inglorious past. The post-independence situation which Jaya constructs her life to the level of challenging the intellectual hegemony of researcher is nothing but the obliteration of all the imposed social roles. The self-affirmation that Deeti exhibits the true colour of colonial intrigues the multiplied gender inequality and discrimination.

Moreover, the theme of *Sea of Poppies* perfectly suits the post-colonial propositions as it presents the position of Indian women in pre-Independent and post-Independent situation of India. The colonial and the social displacement of Indian nobility and the kingly class in *Dancing in Cambodia, at Large in Burma* is well crafted within the post-colonial critical framework. One of the protagonists in *The Glass Palace* Jaya displays the required wisdom to understand British colonialism better than the other male characters. In the male dominated culture of *The Hungry Tide* and *Sea of Poppies* Piya and Deeti, win the legitimacy to inherit the rule purely on their own. In this process, they overcome the conventional hurdles of Kabutri, the daughter of Deeti and Tutel, son of Fokir considered as the natural heir to Fokir and heiress to Deeti. Princess Soumphady becomes the true representative of Indian Culture by ably implementing the dancing lessons and principles of ruling the nation after the King Sisowath. Enacting the conventional role of wife and mother as well

as, Deeti upholds the dignity of the Indian culture by disallowing the cunningness, cruelty and perverted intrigues of Chandan Singh who is a colonial representative. She also realizes that the ultimate legitimacy to rule the nation rests with the “people” and obliterates the patriarchal authority. The way Deeti registers protagonism is the way, which unravels the intrigues of conventional images and symbols meant for manufacturing the so-called pseudo nationalism. Post-colonial criticism of the nationalism of colonised nations finds sagacity in the very interpretation of Amitav Ghosh’s *Sea of Poppies*.

Colonialism had condemned millions to a life of subservience and dispossession. At this juncture, the anti-colonial nationalisms promised a new dawn of independence and political self-determination for colonized people. In the twentieth Century, the myth of nation has proved highly potent and productive during several struggles against colonial rule. Under the development of created constructed myths, the nation became highly mobilised as a powerful symbol, which anti-colonial movements used to organize against colonial rule. The colonial rule has dismantled the political structures of many nations and the worst hits were the countries of the South Asian region. Many countries had become the British colonies. In the South Asian regions, it was India, Burma and Malaysia that suffered from the colonial oppression. These countries are known for their rich cultural heritage, richest natural resources and abundant wealth.

The British intrusion into these lands in the name of business exemplified the strategy of colonialism. However, the intrusion into the serene lands had no effect on the part of the commoner. In fact, the commoner thought that the colonial rule came as a liberating agency from that of the monarchical rule, which they are facing. Especially in Burma, the commoner had developed an aversion towards their King Thebaw and the Queen Supayalat. *The Glass Palace* reveal the aversion of the Burmese crowd towards their superior authority. “Through all the years of the Queen's reign the townsfolk had hated her for her cruelty, feared her for her ruthlessness and courage” (34). The looting of the King's palace by the Burmese Public clearly shows their aversion. When the British had seized Thebaw from power, it was the public who has to lend the support through difficult phase of time. Instead of that, they turned against him and they indulged in looting their own

King's Palace. The King has failed as a good ruler. That was the reason why they considered the British as the liberating agency. It is here the question of state comes into light. In the countries, which are governed by the state, people develop a sense of looking after the well-being of each and every individual. This tendency provides source of revenue for its people and sets the standards of living. By doing so, the state gains a perfect control over its people and the social hierarchy runs with perfection. But if the state fails in providing livelihood and other necessities for its people, it loses control over them and hierarchy gets dissolved.

The British intrusion into Burma had changed everything. Thebaw lost his power and so the Queen. Their own people had looted their palace. It was a huge humiliation for the royal couple. They never noticed the growing unrest in the public of their rule. When the British came into the land the crowd seized the opportunity to sneak into the palace. Until the British arrival, no commoner in the country had dared to enter into the palace. They knew that it would result in summary execution. But now everything has changed. The King and the Queen were thrown out of power. The Queen's reaction when she saw the mob inside their palace shows her impotence. The King and the Queen along with trusted servants were shabbily been discarded from the country to a remote coastal village in India. No one in the country felt sorry for their eviction from the country. It was the colonial rulers ploy in exiling the King's family from their own land in order to erase them completely from the public memories. Earlier, the Indian Mughal King, Bahadur Shah Zafar too was exiled in the same manner. The colonial rulers exiled him to Rangoon from India.

The colonial rule has a huge affect on the members of the elite group in Burma as well as in India. Prior to the British occupation, they had a strong food hold in the country. But now they have lost their grip on the soil. In order to raise their voice against the colonial rule their number is limited and they needed the support of all the people. Until then, they never considered the other people and the social hierarchy had created a great abyss between them and the subaltern people. "Many once colonised nations have struggled with the internal differences that threaten the production of national unity" (McLeod: 2000). The term 'Subaltern' is used to signify the many different people who did not comprise the colonial elite. The colonial elite includes, the lesser rural gentry, impoverished landlords, rich peasants and the upper middle class peasants.

The production of a unified imaginary community became nationalism's greatest strength. The nationalist elite claims that their 'modern' attitudes are coterminous with 'popular consciousness' and enjoy the support of the people, deemed to be a unified singular entity sharing the same political aims. The myth of the nation functions as a valuable resource in uniting people to raise their voice against the pangs of colonialism. It worked against the differences created out of gender, racial, religious, dialectical and cultural differences. It is obvious that the British occupied Burma and India resulted in creating a sense of Nationalism. Prior to the British arrival, there were differences in people. However, the arrival of the British has changed everything. The internal differences were set aside and the idea of nation had been created. In Paul Gilroy's Words, opines:

...through elaborate Cultural, ideological and political processes which culminate in feeling of connectedness to the other national subjects and in the idea of a National interest that transcends the supposedly petty divisions of class, region, dialect or caste (1993:49).

Ghosh's *Dancing in Cambodia, At Large in Burma* is the third essay in the book. *At Large in Burma* is another study of the 'self' of Aung San Suu Kyi. She is reflected on the author's three meetings. The way Suu Kyi has constructed her 'self', fashioning herself to the circumstances of Kings of Burma and the British is similar to the life of Queen Elizabeth who made her 'self' as the ultimate image of England. Suu Kyi learns the required intrigues to rule her nation almost undaunted by the destruction of her family life. Imbibing the Machiavellian spirit, she disallows the dominance of British, as well as her father's opponents, by conquering the barrier of gender. Suu Kyi's personal history becomes the history of her nation.

Amitav Ghosh is occupied the prominent place after Rushdie in Indian English fiction. He is the only writer who reflects the truth of Indian reality. He bears numerous responsibilities in the world of literature. He executes with admirable aplomb as an anthropologist, sociologist, novelist, essayist, travel writer, teacher and slips into global responsibility for establishing peace as an ambassador. He has become the colossal central socio literary figure with a substantial body of work drawing the global attention. He has become the only negotiator to mediate

the core social and cultural problems of India and other colonised nations. All his major works have enjoyed immense academic attention across the globe and it has invited and produced a great amount of literary criticism. All the post colonial and post modern predicaments are wrestled to demonstrate a high level of self consciousness which continues to interrogate the social, philosophical, cultural issues of the world in all its relevance and freshness. His works have initiated the emergence of critique of nationalism and universalism. His intellectual insights, conceptual, theoretical and textual experiments have engaged and interpreted the complex colonial and post colonial situations. They have established a peculiar paradox of reading and appreciation eloquently responding to the post colonial and post modern issues of evolution and transformation of the world. Making his debut with *The Circle of Reason*, he has produced the ground breaking novels till today with *River of Smoke* that interrogate the history of humanity with discursive discourses. His non fictional writings are equally challenging and stimulating offering philosophical and cultural elucidation on different themes such as fundamentalism, history of the novel, Egyptian culture and literature.

The critical reception on Amitav Ghosh marks a notable divergence of interests between the criticism of Indian subcontinent and the western academy. Criticism from Indian academics mostly concentrated on the novels *The Shadow Lines*, *The Calcutta Chromosome* that dealt with the questions of national identity and communalism in the sub continent. There is a note of dissent from the Indian academics as they positioned themselves on the base of traditional Marxist criticism. However, these novels had enormous impact on the much debated post colonial issues of nationalism, identity and the fabricated cultural myths that inflate pseudo nationalism. The extant criticism on Ghosh's work has exposed significant socio cultural representations. One of the concerns is the representation of gender which has become the subject of much critical debate. The theme of *The Shadow Lines* is perceived for the inversion of passive male characters at the expense of active female characters. The novel in all its satirical representation critiques nationalism from the perspective of Gender. This is precisely a counter argument for the novel's gender politics. In all his other novels there is relatively little debate about the representation of gender and other issues of sexuality. But as a matter of academic speculation, women have become very significant presences in all his

other works. Examining this aspect, James Clifford in the article “The transit lounge of culture” says that we hear little from women in other novels, but it is only in *The Calcutta Chromosome* the women figures emerge as central organizing principle ( *Times Literary Supplement* 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 1991). Mangala as the subaltern leader attempts to subvert the discourse of science articulating an alternate mode of knowledge. *The Glass Palace* and *The Hungry Tide* presented detailed and individualized women characters than Ila and grandmother of *The Shadow lines*.

All the major works of Ghosh resonate with the preoccupations of contemporary society and culture marshaled under the framework of post modernism. Ghosh exhibits an interest in the nature and philosophy of language, textuality and the discourses in which human perception and experience is invariably shaped. For Ghosh the question of “identity” is implicated in the representations of “Self”. To him identity does not stand alone but it is derived from inborn “essence”. Moreover, it is “fashioned” by language and representation. From this perception, “identity” has acquired the status of fiction interrogating the material consequences that influence the actions of humans. The texts of Ghosh interrogating the equivalence of fiction to unreality represent the correlative view that “identity” is unstable and fluid. The very notion that fiction is untrue is part of the system of knowledge initiated by the intellectual revolution of early modern Europe. As this is deeply implicated in colonial culture, elucidating the intellectual legacy constitutes the central concern of Amitav Ghosh. Negating with the “meta” or “grand” narratives of progress of civilization, Ghosh has focused on the fragments of human experience that are excluded from the grand designs of civilisation. The generic multiplicity and indeterminacy of his works, splices the contrapuntal formation, which are associated with popular culture.

Ghosh’s extraordinary oeuvre portrays a balanced portrayal of warm location and terrifying dislocation. This is predicated on the consciousness of one losing the precious lived sense of place as a catalyst for the emergence of novel. Ghosh had evinced a great faith in the evolution of the novel. To him, the novel bears the writers perception and responsibility in a most appropriate manner. The novel according to Ghosh has been universal from its evolution. It creates a space for cross cultural reading and experimental ideas and styles. It is one form of literature

founded upon “a myth of parochialism”. It is from this vantage point, Ghosh takes upon the responsibility of using history as a tool for fictional representation. The imagination of Ghosh is a product of specific histories of the subcontinent and necessarily diasporic and post colonial. He unveils himself as a world traveler and reveals the identity of every place with subtle presentations. Cutting across autobiographical resonances, Ghosh permeates academic antecedents-history, sociology and anthropology. With all his historical research pursuits, he is concerned with Indian/South Asian diaspora in different regions of the world. He is intrigued by the inherent fracturedness of diasporic identity. Analysing the space with reference to history, he travels between cultures and lands with the power of imagination. He retrieves the history of India, Bangladesh, England, Egypt, Burma, Malaya in his novels. Reiterating the journey of imagination of the West Indian novelists such as Wilson Harris, Derek Walcott, Ghosh reinvents the ways of subverting the colonial injustices. He interrogates the burden of colonial past that weighs heavily on migrant post colonial generation. In all honesty, he churns out a glimpse of “final redemptive mystery”. The retrieval of imagination with the objective of subverting the grand colonial history is employed meticulously by Ghosh in his works.

Ghosh makes an intellectual exploration into the history of marginalized and the contexts of nationalism, internationalism, migrancy, violence and communalism. He constantly looks for the ways to render history into fiction and often posits fiction against history. Exploring the human predicament, he finds the individuals and characters asserting and liberating themselves from the burden of history. His sensibility of unveiling the nuances of history, sociology and culture makes him distinctive apart from the bunch of Indian novelists. The Diaspora and displacement are the keys to understand the thematic concerns of Ghosh. They direct us to explore the contemporary perplexities in hyphenated identities. The dilemmas of diaspora engendered in the margins of history are foregrounded in Ghosh’s fiction. The historical research and exploration becomes secondary to some extent. Arun P. Mukherjee in *Oppositional Aesthetics: Readings from a Hyphenated Space* is concerned with reading the novels of Ghosh as oppositional to the dominant literary and cultural ideologies of Euro America. But Ghosh’s intellectual exploration of the major and marginalised cultures is seen as



representation of aesthetics. However, if one accepts the moot point that fiction is a representative of human history, one can trace the genesis of humane historian. Ghosh as a humane historian travels between cultures and negotiates for a “third space” in social studies. In the contemporary clash of binaries of nationalism, globalisation ushers in the erasure of culture and articulates the absence of culture emphatically. So, when the cultural interaction is confined to exchanges between national cultures, the inhabitants of the third space oscillate between the dominant cultures.

Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin White masks* (1952) and *Wretched of the Earth* (1967) and Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture & Imperialism* (1993) are considered to be the promulgators of *Post-colonial criticism*. These seminal works have strongly recommended the reclamation of the past of colonized nations only to subvert the hegemony of the colonial nations. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith & Helen Tiffin’s *The Empire Writes Back* (1989) with a broader cultural circumscription of all the colonized nations provided a strong base for *post-colonial criticism*. This is further continued and consolidated by Gayathri Spivak Chakravathy In *Other Worlds: Essays in cultural Politics* (1988), Homi K.Babha’s *Nation and Narration* (1990) and *Location of Culture* (1994). These works have interrogated the identities of colonialism. The concocted colonial identities of Nation, Nationality, and National representations are interrogated and the male cantered perspectives are demolished. All the novels that examined for the article engage in the critical negotiation of past history by Amitav Ghosh. The presentation of past history is with ambiguity. The ambiguous nature of past history has revealed the dichotomy of the past history as glorious and inglorious which interface fiction. The usable past becomes the glorious past and the unusable past becomes the inglorious past.

All these novels need to be examined in understanding the dichotomy of “Colonialism”. It needs to be examined in relaxation to “internal colonialism” and external colonialism. India is a country, which suffered from “Internal colonialism” since the beginning of its civilisation. It continues to suffer from “Internal colonialism” even after the demise of colonial period. Women in India are the victims of “Internal colonialism” as well as the external colonialism. The

victimisation of women in ‘Internal colonialism’ went on unabatedly in silent acceptance. *Post-colonial criticism* has also revealed and questioned the patriarchal mechanism in victimising women by creating the passive images of contemporary women. The protagonists in all these novels are the victims of internal colonialism. It is only with post-Colonial criticism the issues of confrontation dealt by these works can be deciphered. The protagonists in all these novels in the process of liberating and defining themselves tried to establish alternative roles. The protagonist in *Sea Of Poppies* is confronted by the horrifying future carrying the burden of innocent past life in India. There is a juxtaposition of the life spent in India and the life being lived in the northern Bihar. In the process of living in northern Bihar, she obliterates the conventional images of motherhood. *Sea of Poppies* of Ghosh perfectly presents the juxtaposition between the pre-colonial India and *post-colonial India*. The very transformation of the protagonist from a submissive domestic life is rendered in all its appreciation. This obviously presents the radicalization in the very construction of social identities and positions. The social maturation in the character provides a space in which the pre-colonial constructions of Nation and Nationality are interrogated.

All the novels of Amitav Ghosh have cross-cultural interactions. The definition of culture itself is divided in its significance, since the term is open to a variety of interpretations. (Raymond Williams *Culture and Society*, 1780-1950.254). But as Gerald Graff and Bruce Robbins observes:

the conflict between culture in the anthropological sense and culture in the normative sense leads to a thrifths way of using the term, one that refers neither to a people’s organic way of life nor to the normative values preached by leading intellectuals but to a battleground of social conflicts and contradictions (255). (Gerald Graff and Bruce Robbins *Cultural Criticism Redrawing the Boundaries*, ed Stephen Greenblatt and Giles Gunn. 1996:421).

It is this living experience of cultures that from the ‘textual sites’ of Amitav Ghosh’s *The Imam and the Indian*. In his work, he foregrounds the experiences of a colonial domination forced to confront her marginalization within his own (Indian) culture, while attempting to forge an identity with in alien (American, England)

culture, both of which are entrenched in patriarchal ideology delineating Ghosh's attempt at negotiating the cultural and ideological divides. Amitav Ghosh provides for the contradictory interactions of culture, ideology, and identity on behalf of post colonialism. Amitav Ghosh's *The Imam and the Indian* also portrays multicultural theme. The characters are caught in the web of multicultural entanglements. Living with objectivity and compassion these immigrant characters mostly struggle for identity and commitment to life in the multicultural milieu of Afganistan, Bengal, Khabul, Burma and the beyond. We find most of the first generation migrants facing cultural dilemma and trying their best to retain cultural identity and cultural practices in their beliefs and values. John McLeod in *Beginning Post-colonialism* observes, "these beliefs, traditions, customs, and values along with their possessions and belongings" are carried by migrants with them when they arrive in "new places". The clash between their values and beliefs of their own culture and concept of "home" and their beliefs baffle in old Egypt when Ghosh went for research. However, among the second generation these emotional links are loosened as we see in the life styles of old Egypt's villagers. The natural school of criticism that comes to the fore to analyse the themes of Amitav Ghosh's novels are under colonial literary criticism. It has circumscribed the contemporary Indian fiction.

Thus Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh presented multifarious themes under post-colonialism in between the past and present with history interfacing contemporary issues and methods of narration on the same line.

## **CHAPTER – V**

## **CONCLUSION**

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Politics and culture have always been conspicuous in Indian English novelist. This compulsive obsession was perhaps inevitable since the genre developed concurrently with the climatic phase of colonial rule, the strings of national sentiment and its full flowering in the final stages of the freedom movement. The Indian English developed at a time when the consciousness of being a part of politics was a national phenomenon. The intense emotional stirring of a people invited in the effort to break free from the shackles of foreign rule made individuals unusually conscious of being a part of a momentous political movement. Politics is linked with multifarious subjects like History, culture, social, language and creativity. Political forces have tremendous effect on almost all things in the world today. According to writer Allen:

Contemporary novels are the mirrors of the age, but a very special kind of mirror that reflects not merely the external features of the age but also its inner face, its nervous system, coursing of its blood and the unconscious promptings and conflicts which sway it(18-19).

The novels of Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh are mirrors of this kind, establishing a dynamic interaction between the individual and multifarious forces of politics. Uma Parameswaran emphasises this aspect with particular references to Rushdie: what Rushdie has done in *Midnight's Children*, is to recognize and demonstrate that the Indian situation in the perfect metaphor for characteristically 20<sup>th</sup> century questions about politics, history, culture, social, language and creativity. Rushdie's view in *Midnight's Children* is certainly macrocosmic India, because of its size and complexity and the fecundity of its myth and cult is the ideal metaphor for the night of the individual.

Salman Rushdie has been very often compared to European and Latin American writers like Gunter Grass, Louis Ferdinand Celine, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and American writers like Saul Bellow, Norman Mailer, Philip Roth and John Barth. While it is possible to note the affinities between Rushdie and these writers to rank him with post modernist writers in purpose and style, he differs them in significant ways. Rushdie's language and imagery in *Midnight's Children* are an outcome of the

mingling of three cultures in the Hindu, the Muslim and the Western Christian. Most distinctive, however, is Rushdie's use of symbols and metaphors which carry different meanings to the Indian readers because the linguistic, historical and social codes employed by Rushdie are more familiar to them than the western readers. A reader makes sense of the text by constantly relating meaning to cultural, social and historical contexts. The Indian reader can easily grasp references that come his way while reading *Midnight's Children*.

However, Rushdie has employed a series of symbols and metaphors which have dual meanings, one for the Indian reader and the other for the western. In the interview given to contemporary authors, Rushdie says that one of the, "hardest things to do with the structure of the book was to create images of symbols which have resonances for Indian readers" (Rushdie, *Interview* 1984:414). Since *Midnight's Children* derives its strength from both western and Eastern traditions, Rushdie saw to it that the book had, "dual reverberations in it" (Rushdie, *Interview* 1984:415).

One of the principal aims of Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is to ask whether the first generation of independent Indians lived up to Nehru's hopes for the newly created nation state or squandered their opportunities. The answer the novel gives is ambivalent. On the one hand, the image of India that emerges is a broadly affirmative one that emphasizes the nation's 'talent for non-stop self-regeneration' (*Imaginary Homelands*, 16). On the other hand, specific unfolding political developments led Rushdie to paint a much gloomier picture. India, the world's largest democracy, is shown lurching into fratricidal wars with Pakistan, losing its democratic rights at the hands of manipulative political leaders and fragmenting into violently opposed communal factions. The Nation's allegorical representatives, meanwhile – the *Midnight's Children* – fail to find a meaningful role for themselves as a secular, multi-faith institution, and end up imprisoned, mutilated and, finally 'Sperectomised' – drained of the hope that the Nehruvian idea of India had initially fostered. These were not, as Rushdie later argued, optimistic times, and the novel, as a political assessment on Indian affairs, reflects that lack of optimism.

*Midnight's Children* ends, however, with the hope that the children of the children of Independence will make a better job of it. 'We, the children of Independence', as Saleem notes in the penultimate episode, 'rushed widely and too

fast into our future', the next generation 'Emergency – born, will be is already, more cautious, biding (its) time' (*Midnight's Children*, 410). *Midnight's Children*, in this respect, may be said to conclude in pessoptimistic spirit: pessimistic, to the extent that its narrator, Saleem, has failed in his efforts to redeem the nation and must end his days in a state of pathetic decline; optimistic to extent that Saleem sees, in his young son Adam, the lineaments of a future hope.

Born at the dawn of Indian independence and destined, upon his death, to break into as many pieces as there are citizens of India, Saleem Sinai manages to represent the entirety of India within his individual self. The notion that a single person could possibly embody a teeming, diverse, multitudinous nation like India encapsulates one of the novel's fundamental concerns: the tension between the single and the many. The dynamic relationship between Saleem's individual life and the collective life of the nation suggests that public and private will always influence one another, but it remains unclear whether they can be completely equated with one another. Throughout the novel, Saleem struggles to contain all of India within himself—to cram his personal story with the themes and stories of his country.

Politically speaking, the tension between the single and the many also marks the nation of India itself. One of the fastest growing nations in the world, India has always been an incredibly diverse. Its constitution recognises twenty-two official languages, and the population practices religions as varied as Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, and Buddhism, among many others. Indian culture is similarly hybrid, having been influenced by countless other cultures over the millennia of its development. At the same time, however, maintaining India's sprawling diversity in a peaceful fashion has often proved difficult. India's division into the Islamic nation of Pakistan and the secular, but mostly Hindu nation of India—a process known as Partition—remains the most striking example of the desire to contain and reduce India's plurality. In *Midnight's Children*, the child Saleem watches as protestors attempt to do divide the city of Bombay along linguistic lines, another attempt to categorise and cordon off multiplicity.

Saleem, a character who contains a multitude of experiences and sensitivities, stands in stark contrast to the protestors who demand their own language-based region, the strict monotheism of Pakistan, and Indira Gandhi's repression of

contradictory dissension. His powers of telepathy allow him to transcend the barriers of language, while he himself—with his English blood, poor background, wealthy upbringing, and eclectic religious influences—reflects India's diversity and range. The Midnight Children's Conference that he convenes is, in its initial phase, a model for pluralism and a testimony to the potential power inherent within coexisting diversity, which is a natural and definitive element of Indian culture. In *Midnight's Children*, the desire for singularity or purity—whether of religion or culture—breeds not only intolerance but also violence and repression.

Factual errors and dubious claims are essential aspects of Saleem's fantastic narrative. He willfully acknowledges that he misplaced Gandhi's death, an obviously seminal moment in India's history, as well as willfully misremembers the date of an election. He frets over the accuracy of his story and worries about future errors he might make. Yet, at the same time, after acknowledging his error, Saleem decides to maintain his version of events, since they appeared to occur to him and now there can be no going back. Despite its potential historical inaccuracies, Saleem sees his story as being of equal importance as the world's most important religious texts. This is not only his story but also the story of India. The errors in his story, in addition to casting a shadow of doubt over some of what he claims, point to one of the novel's essential claims: that truth is not just a matter of verifiable facts. Genuine historical truth depends on perspective—and a willingness to believe. Saleem notes that memory creates its own truth, and so do narratives. Religious texts and history books alike stake their claim in truth not only because they are supported by facts but also because they have been codified and accepted upon, whether by time or faith. The version of history Saleem offers comes filtered through his perspective, just as every other version of history comes filtered through some alternate perspective. For Saleem, his version is as true as anything else that could be written, not just because this is the way he has arranged it, but because this is the version he believes.

Salman Rushdie's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is the lightest and most accessible book. It was written for Rushdie's son after Rushdie was separated from him for a significant period of time. Although this book could technically be categorised as a book for young adults, it tackles important societal problems and has themes that are relevant to people of all ages. This fantastical story follows Haroun as



he journeys into a mythical land. The story begins in a sad city where Haroun's father, Rashid, tells stories to the people. However, as is bound to happen, something goes terribly wrong. Haroun's once happy family becomes unhappy as his mother leaves his father for another man. Rashid and Haroun leave so that Rashid can go tell stories for someone else, but it is quickly discovered that Rashid is losing his storytelling abilities. His stories, which were once so magical and entertaining, are losing their charm. As Haroun's father is sleeping one night, Haroun hears a mysterious noise in the bathroom. He goes to investigate and discovers Iff the Water Genie, a fantastical being that Haroun is not quite sure what to do with, trying to turn off the storytelling tap that gives Rashid his amazing stories.

Haroun insists that Iff the Water Genie takes him to the magical land, Kahini, Earth's second Moon, where all these stories are coming from so that he can get his father's storytelling abilities back. Haroun and Iff discover that Kahini has become contaminated by darkness and the stories are beginning to get polluted. What were once happy tales of rescuing princesses become terrifying stories of failure involving huge spiders and death. Haroun must save this land from the terrible pollution that has begun to occur with the help of a few trusty companions, including Iff the Water Genie, Mali the Floating Gardner, and two Plentimaw Fishes. All these companions are fantastical creatures found in Kahini. The story involves other strange, funny characters including, but not limited to, Snooty Buttoo, the Eggheads, and the Walrus.

*Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is entertaining, to say the least. It is filled with puns and wordplay. The whimsical style and the mix between the English and Hindustani languages makes for a fun read. It has elements of a fairy tale, and echoes books such as *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll and *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster. Like many Rushdie books, it includes elements of magical realism, the importance of identity, and the messy thing that is politics. However, it also deals with the meaning and importance of stories and storytelling and how those affect us in our lives, and how important they are to our identities. The story tackles the idea of the power of hope and the importance of a little adventure every now and then.

Although it is not a hard book to understand, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is a children's tale that is relevant to people of all ages. Adults can enjoy it just as much as a kid and the messages are just as important whether you're ten, ninety, or

anywhere in between. The book is a quick, enjoyable read with just the right amount of humour, wit, and interesting characters that bring the story to life.

*Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is a brilliantly contrived parodic-allegory, spectacularly ambitious, funny, satirical, but at the same time compassionate. Rushdie's art in this novel is really allegorical in its most sophisticated garb, very effectively hiding his motives yet vividly demonstrating his apprehensions about the bruised political sensibility of contemporary world. *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is a political arena for contesting coercive forces and an ethical space for denouncing the insubstantiality of evil that only children's stories can make with impunity. It is from this matter-of-fact reality that Haroun begins his sojourn into the imaginary not just to restore his father's brilliant power of storytelling but also to find an answer to the nagging question of the adult world. The crisis in the imaginary realm threatens the real because the real world is already suffering a crisis: the names of places have been lost and with them is lost the power of people that makes them feel secured at home. In *Haroun* Rushdie pits the dictator against the artist as an attempt to establish that the stories though factually incorrect are conceptually true, and therefore, intrinsically threatening to the dictator. Moreover, he puts the tyrants with their exact doubles who try to get control over the faculty of imagination.

In *Haroun and Sea of Stories* Rushdie campaigns for freedom of the human imagination in a world where fundamentalism often threatens to destroy freedom of expression. He turns his book of fun-talks into a freedom-talk, and its climax is attained in the battle between the Guppies – inhabitants of a wonderful land of story and the Chupwalas who have lost their speech and live in the land of eternal silence. In contrast to the brilliant excitement and optimism that reverberates Gup city, a death-like silence prevails around the 'Land of Chup', a place of shadows of books that wear padlocks and tongues torn out, where the Culmaster Bezaban imposes strict adherence to silence and servility on the zipped-lip Chupwalas. 'Chup' city is dark, freezing cold, and silent as shadow, nonchalantly exposing the vows of silence and the habits of secrecy that makes its inhabitants suspicious and distrustful of each other.

In his ambitious new novel, *Sea of Poppies* Amitav Ghosh attempts to fill in the blanks left by the archives. Set partly in Bengal, the scene of Grierson's inquiry, and drawing on accounts the Englishman left, it opens in 1838 on the eve of the Opium Wars. In 1883, the British government sent the accomplished linguist Sir George Grierson to look into alleged abuses in the recruitment of indentured servants from India known as "coolies" who ended up on ships bound for British plantations throughout the world. In his diary, Grierson wrote about an encounter with the father of one female coolie in a village along the Ganges, noting that the man "denied having any such relative, and probably she had gone wrong and been disowned by him." The historical record provides only a trace of this woman: a name, a processing number, a year of emigration. A former slave ship called the *Ibis* has been refitted to transport coolies from Calcutta to the sugar estates of Mauritius, and for hundreds of pages we watch as its crew and passengers are slowly assembled until it finally gets on its way. The first in a projected trilogy, *Sea of Poppies* is big and baggy, a self-styled epic with colossal themes and almost a dozen major characters, including the son of an American slave, the orphaned daughter of a French botanist and an Anglophile raja. But a majority onboard are Indian peasants from the opium-producing countryside, forced by famine or scandal to seek a new life elsewhere. Devoted to reinvention, Ghosh's plot focuses on one of these villagers: Deeti, a widow who assumes another name and the lower caste of a new love as they escape together on the *Ibis*.

The coolies who inspired *Sea of Poppies* didn't have that power. Unlike Grierson, they didn't leave diaries behind; after all, they couldn't even write. So where does that leave those who would tell their stories? Ghosh is forced to imagine them, based on the limited sources available, but he does so with the instincts of an anthropologist more than a novelist. With the aid of out-of-print dictionaries, he recreates esoteric dialects. His characters are often incomprehensible to one another, which makes for occasional comedy, but too often they're also incomprehensible to his readers. And his penchant for meticulous detail — the innards of an opium factory, the organization of a coolie ship — impedes the progress of his various plots and subplots. Ghosh obviously wants to make the novel a literary excavation, digging up the stories of people lost to history, but in the process his characters themselves often seem like artifacts.

Deeti, for one, is hard to believe in. And not just because Ghosh gives her a back story as overwrought as the script for a Bollywood movie: wedded to an opium addict too enervated to consummate their marriage, impregnated in lieu by his brother and resigned to die on her husband's funeral pyre until rescued by a hunky untouchable, with whom she elopes. Many of the women who fled India as coolies were indeed upper caste widows, but there were no brawny heroes to snatch them from their fates. They simply left, alone — an act dramatic enough for that time and place that it shouldn't need the enhancements of pulp plotting.

Deeti's weakness as a character may stem from Ghosh's desire to be an archaeologist of the powerless. That's a noble ambition, but it turns Deeti into little more than a skeleton on which to hang a history. And she has a mystical quality that nags. Wading in the Ganges at the novel's start, she envisions a ship "like a great bird, with sails like wings and a long beak." Though she has never before laid eyes on a schooner like the Ibis, she somehow knows that it is coming for her. At the novel's close, lying one night on the deck of this same vessel, she holds a poppy seed between her fingers. "Here," she tells her lover, "Taste it. It is the star that took us from our homes and put us on this ship. It is the planet that rules our destiny." These are pretty lines, but they don't bring true. Ghosh still seems to be chasing Deeti's ghost in the archives. Gaiutra Bahadur is working on a book inspired by her great-grandmother, who left Calcutta on a "coolie" ship.

Said condemns the Western powers for manipulating tariff laws using the markets of West Indies for their benefit. It is obvious that Britain and other European powers misused law and order — both Civil and Criminal of these pre-colonial states to establish trade and whenever any resistance came, used brutal force to conquer it. Amitav Ghosh shows in his *Sea of Poppies* that the people of Ghazipur are reduced to slaves: rich, poor, younger or old are equally the victims. The Indian farmers growing opium had no options but to become indentured labourers. On the board ship, they were treated as badly as the negro slaves of Africa in the Transatlantic trade. The major difference here is that even their own country men did nothing to stop the cruelty inflicted on them.

Ghosh attacks the avaricious and cunning nature of English men in *Sea of Poppies*. The foundation of British imperialism was greed and lust for wealth. The

whole of South-East Asia became its victim. The Indian Subedar feels no moral compunctions in ill-treating his brother because the police officials of the imperial era were taught to be ruthless to the 'Coolies'. The police which should have looked after the welfare of the public became a pawn in the hands of the British and the Indians who joined the force tortured the innocent people to satisfy their masters. The plight of Jadu is worse than a Negro slave in Mauritius because he has been reduced to a position worse than animals. Workers of both the continents had similar fate: to accept slavery or to get killed ruthlessly.

A prison is meant to keep the offenders under control, but the colonial state used it to torture the innocent natives and treat them worse than beasts. British made a lot of profit from opium. They called it 'amazing gift'. The fact that people of India and China were ignorant of the consequences of opium trade. Even they misused Christianity, which was the religion for universal love, to promote colonial agenda as well as opium trade – which leads to death and destruction, dramatically opposite of what Christianity stood for. Ghosh bitterly criticised the British and has hammered the point home that the slogan 'Civilising Mission' propounded by the British was a lie. The British reduced the Indians and the Chinese to slaves. It is proved beyond doubt that the slavery was practised in both India and China along with Africa.

Ghosh's capacity to find patterns in apparently unconnected events is at its best in *Dancing in Cambodia*, which links the 1906 visit of Cambodia's King Sisowath, his entourage, and a troupe of Cambodian classical dancers, to France, with the recent history of the country decimated by the Khmer Rouge Revolution. Ghosh interviews a number of figures who provide living testimony to the interconnectedness of these two narratives. They include a famous dancer, Chea Samy, who has first-hand knowledge of King Sisowath and his daughter Princess Soumphady as a result of having been taken to the royal palace in 1925, at the age of six, to be trained in classical dance under the supervision of the Princess. She is also – and as a matter of fact manner in which Ghosh records this makes the revelation all the more chilling – Pol Pot's sister-in-law. Palace revolution and the French connection are motifs that run throughout the essay.

Pol Pot was himself taken into the palace at the age of six. Pol Pot appears to have been radicalised during his time as a student in Paris. He particularly admired

Robespierre, basing the ideological purity of his genocidal regime on the French revolutionary's belief in the virtue of Terror. Similarly, the grandson of King Sisowath's Palace Minister, Thiounn, becomes a central figure to a generation of Cambodian students in Paris and one of his prote'ge's is Pol Pot. For the most part Ghosh documents these connections neutrally, but lest they be missed, he does comment at one point that coups usually begin in the courtyards of the palace. King Sisowath and Pol Pot may seem polar opposites, but with their common experience of palace life and their enthusiasm for certain, albeit different, aspects of French culture, they emerge as curiously twinned.

In the period of reconstruction after Pol Pot's fall, the return to normality is associated with an art form that has palace associations: Cambodian classical dance. The text represents dancing as far more than a traditional Cambodian performance art; it becomes a trope for the indestructibility of the middle-class culture threatened with extinction during the Pol Pot era. The essay ends with an "epiphany" in Phnom Penh in 1988, a moment when grief and joy commingle, as classical music and dance are performed once again for the first time. On this occasion, then, the humanist conclusion is not so much championing subaltern survival, but the resilience of an educated class threatened with extinction by a Western-inspired regime, which has declared war on the intelligentsia. "Stories in Stones" considers the iconic significance of Angkor Wat, reputedly the largest religious edifice in the world, as a symbol of Cambodian identity. The essay wryly reflects that its omnipresence as a talismanic object pervades virtually every area of the nation's life - except religion.

Ghosh's illustration of the proliferation of images of the Wat in a range of commercial contexts is not, however, simply evidence of the extent to which tradition and modernity overlap; it is a striking instance of a modern appropriation of an older tradition, which he sees as eroding the humanist possibilities of earlier belief-systems. *At Large in Burma* provides insights into an Asian country that has been particularly isolated from the outside world in recent years, again doing so through the medium of individual stories. Here the central figure is the leader of the country's democratic movement and winner of the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize, Aung San Suu Kyi, whom Ghosh first met while a student in Oxford in 1980 and whom he now interviews during two visits in 1995 and 1996. At one point he mentions having been brought up

to believe that the public and the private should be kept separate, with the corollary that it is wrong to reduce political movements to their leaders, but he finds Aung San Suu Kyi the personification of Burma's democratic resistance.

So, in addition to providing a window on one of the world's more closed societies, the essay becomes another instance of Ghosh's characteristic historiography method of illuminating national and communal issues through personal stories, though, as in *Dancing in Cambodia*, it departs from his earlier focus on subaltern experience. *At Large in Burma* also contains a section in which Ghosh travels to the Thai border is an attempt to understand the independence struggle of one of Burma's many minorities, the Kanenni. Naipaulian ironies emerge when tourists visit refugee camps to see the Kanneni's long-necked giraffe woman, oblivious of their history of oppression and displacement and unaware that they are commodified versions of the rural simplicity they supposedly represent.

Ghosh's own perspective is, of course, much more complicated and again centrally concerned with the impact of modernity. His main interest lies in trying to assess what freedom means to the Kanneni and whether the putative nations around Burma's borders would be better off as separate states. His consideration of this issue revisits the central motif of *The Shadow Lines* and he once again comments on the arbitrariness of borders drawn by colonial officials and the inevitable artificiality of nations. His conclusion in the case of the Kanneni, and the sixteen or so other potential nation states around multi-ethnic Burma's borders, is that they would not benefit from being separate countries. So, like so much of Ghosh's work, this part of the essay presents a self-contained micro-history of a group, which can also be read as a metonym for a larger global debate. It holds a mirror up to late twentieth-century cultural theory on the nation state, which both reflects and reverses commonly held assumptions when it suggests that in the case of the Kanneni the historical borders are probably best left unaltered.

Both Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh dealt with many different issues related to state, nation and worldwide in almost all of their novels. Among them political and cultural issues are taken much importance. The issues which are dealt in the works of both Rushdie and Ghosh are very much conspicuous in the present society in terms of political and cultural relevance. Recently in India Pulwama attack

is the best example for border politics between India and Pakistan. Pulwama attack is of the deadliest terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir in which forty Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel were martyred. The Pulwama attack happened on February 14, 2019, when a Jaish suicide bomber rammed a vehicle carrying over 100kgs of explosives into their bus in Pulwama district. The attack also left many critically wounded. After the Pulwama attack the Government of India daringly abrogated 370 Article and took another daring step on Ladak (located in the northern part of the Indian subcontinent and a part of the larger region of Kashmir which has been the subject of dispute among India, Pakistan and China since 1947) on 6<sup>th</sup> August, 2019 passed the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act in the Parliament, enacting the division the state of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories to be called Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir and Union territory of Ladak. The issue may lead to another conflict and commotion between India and Pakistan. Thus Rushdie and Ghosh are the real heroes as they not only present the real problems of society but also aware the society of the world on different issues and problems and also they endeavour to connect the people of different regions, religions, castes, creeds and cultures together and make them living cordially and peacefully under the umbrella of Globe.



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