

Caroline Kühnlová, **An exploration of Rushdie's narrative strategy in *Shame* and *Midnight's Children*, its usage to create a social commentary on the political situation of India and Pakistan, and placing Rushdie's literature in the context of post-colonialism.**

B.A. thesis

Opponent's review

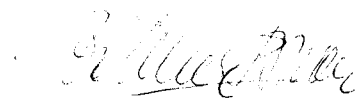
As the long title of the thesis suggests, Caroline attempts to tackle several different levels of Rushdie's early fiction: its reflection of the turbulent political development of India and Pakistan in their post-independence history, its complex narrative strategy and its position in the context of post-colonial literature. It is evident that for a thesis of some forty pages this goal is simply too unfocused, resulting in a number of partial comments but never arriving at any firmer conception. If fragmentation is typical of post-modern fiction, then a great amount of fragmentary information is also typical of this thesis.

I especially miss the following:

1. In the first chapter we are invited to Rushdie's work by way of introduction, but we actually never go beyond the 1980s (actually never beyond *Shame*, 1983). At least a brief mention of the author's further development would be useful, including some recent facts of his life (he's no more living in England, as Caroline claims on p. 2).
2. From Rushdie's later writings Caroline only uses three essays from *Step Across This Line* (2003). I think that it would be pertinent to use also some essays from *Imaginary Homelands* (1990), in which Rushdie makes some important political comments.
3. Caroline works with the terms "history" and "historicity" without specifying her sources. What are the recent conceptions of these terms? The same applies to narrativity – I miss some sources on narrative techniques (some research in these areas should be made as a preliminary step).
4. Rushdie uses his own terms such as "palimpsest" or "hybridity" to show the semantically multi-faceted character of the contemporary world. It would be useful to include them in the discussion and to show how he understands them. (E.g., his belief in how history is decided about by language strategies can be seen in his account of the rise of Pakistan, different from the official version.)

As it stands, Caroline's thesis is a set of not very congruent parts, showing a number of ideas she has about the two novels rather than a consistent development of these. It is not an M.A. thesis, indeed, but even for a B.A. thesis I would claim more. Due to the richness in partial comments I recommend the thesis for the defence but cannot suggest a better assessment than between **velmi dobře** and **dobře** (2-3).

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