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ÚSTAV ANGLISTIKY A AMERIKANISTIKY

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.

(Zkoumání Rushdieho vypravěčské techniky v jeho románech *Hanba* a *Půlnoční děti*, její použití k vytvoření sociálního komentáře o politické situaci v Indii a v Pákistánu, a zařazení Rushdieho literatury do post-koloniálního kontextu.)

BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

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Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a pouze na základě uvedených pramenů a literatury.

V Praze dne 14. Ledna, 2008

I declare that the following B.A. thesis is my own work for which I used only the sources and literature mentioned.

Prague, 14, January, 2008

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Preface

This BA paper discusses how Salman Rushdie makes use of the narrative strategy of magical realism in his novels *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*, to create a picture of and a commentary upon the culture and politics of India and Pakistan in the 20th century, taking into consideration the use of multiple perspectives - individual, universal, historical. Rushdie's literature and narrative strategy are also discussed in light of how they are deployed to illuminate post-colonialism and its associated dilemmas.

Chapter 1 – An Introduction to Salman Rushdie and his Work

Salman Rushdie is an Indian-born author, who now lives permanently in the United Kingdom and whose novels are written in English. Rushdie was born in Bombay on 19 June 1947¹, to Muslim parents. Two of his most significant novels are *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* (his second and third novels, respectively). When reading these it is of significant importance to be aware of his background, as well as of the political histories of India and Pakistan in the twentieth century. This is because of the mixed cultural, literary, political and religious impulses which have formed a part of his life and are greatly reflected in Rushdie's writing. Also, one must be aware of the connection of the Indian subcontinent to Great Britain as this relationship also affects Rushdie's writing and most concretely, places him in the category of *post-colonial* authors.

Rushdie was born into an affluent Indian family and was brought up "in a very Anglophile and Anglocentric way".² His father took a law degree at Cambridge University, which meant that he came from the upper class of Indians who were able to be educated abroad. Rushdie himself was also educated at an English school in Bombay, and then attended secondary school in England – Rugby.³ When Rushdie writes about India, it is from the point of view of his unique knowledge and experience – the perspective of anglicised and upper class Indians. Unsurprisingly, many of the characters in Rushdie's novels also receive an education abroad and come from the upper classes of Indian society.

¹ D.C.R.A. Goonetilleke. *Salman Rushdie*. (Hampshire and London: MacMillan, 1998). 1.

² Goonetilleke, 2.

³ Goonetilleke, 2-3.

Rushdie's father was a barrister who later became a businessman, and his mother was a teacher. Both of them had been previously married, which again shows their fairly liberal views on life, views which they passed on to their son.

Rushdie was born two months before India declared independence from the British Empire and before India and Pakistan split into two separate countries. The political, religious and cultural events in India and Pakistan during and after partition have greatly influenced Rushdie. He has ties to both of these countries, because his family was Muslim and had decided to stay in India and not move to Muslim Pakistan after the split. Rushdie did live in Pakistan briefly after he finished his University studies, but was disgusted by the censorship rules he encountered when working for Pakistani television: at one point, he wanted to produce Edward Albee's play *The Zoo Story*, but was banned from even using the word "pork"⁴ – and he then moved back to England after a short time, where he lives to this day.⁵

In England (London) Rushdie worked for a time in an advertising agency and then as a copywriter in the firm *Ogilvy & Mather*.⁶ His first novel, *Grimus*, was published in 1975⁷ and met with relatively little success. In 1976 he married a British woman, Clarissa Luard and travelled to India and to Kashmir with her, thereby personally experiencing the tumultuous period which the then-prime minister Indira Gandhi called a 'state of emergency'⁸. After Rushdie returned to England, he started working part-time in order to devote more time to his writing.⁹ In 1979, his son Zafar was born, and in 1981, with the support of his friend and colleague Liz Calder, his

⁴ Goonetilleke, 4.

⁵ Goonetilleke, 4.

⁶ Salman Rushdie. "Introduction". *Midnight's Children*. (London: Vintage, 2006.) x.

⁷ Published by J.D. Gray, 1975.

⁸ Goonetilleke, 5;16.

⁹ "Introduction". *Midnight's Children*. x - xi.

second novel *Midnight's Children* was published¹⁰. This novel was met with huge success and won the prestigious Booker Prize in the same year. In 1993 it went on to win the so-called Booker of Bookers, being chosen as the best book to have won the Booker Prize in the past 25 years.

After the immense success of *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie found little problem in getting his third novel, *Shame*, published in 1983¹¹. Although both *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* are written in English, they are set almost exclusively in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh (in *Shame*, the narrator is situated in England, but the events nevertheless take place on the Indian subcontinent). While *Midnight's Children* is set around the story of the life of the main character and narrator of the book, Saleem Sinai (his life being a parallel to the life of India in its early years of independence), *Shame* deals with the lives of a number of characters and intertwines their lives with events on a national political level. Both the novels are complex and can be read on a number of different levels[C1]. *Midnight's Children* is on one level a picaresque novel, on another it is a criticism of Indian and Pakistani politics, on yet another level it is a post-colonial and post-modern novel dealing with issues of identity. *Shame* can be read as the personal story of three Pakistani families, as scathing criticism of Pakistani politics and society, as a criticism of dictatorships and suppression on a global scale, and, like *Midnight's Children*, as a post-colonial and post-modern novel. What can generally be assessed is that *Midnight's Children* tells the parallel stories of the development of Saleem Sinai and of the country of India, as both of them are born at exactly the same moment and their destinies and paths seem to be inextricably linked. *Shame*, being without a central character, is focused on the lives of three families: those of Omar Khayam Shakil and his three

¹⁰ Goonetilleke, 20.

¹¹ Goonetilleke, 46.

mothers, of Iskander Harrapa and his family, and of Raza Hyder and his family. These people form the elite of the newly formed country of Pakistan and help to shape the course which the country takes thereafter.

Salman Rushdie has often talked about the influences on his writing, and the cultural variety of these, as well as the growing popularity of post-colonial literature (of which he is a major representative) has made it an interesting topic among his critical reception.

It has been said of Rushdie that he “allied himself to the non-realist, alternative tradition in Western fiction”,¹² and he himself counts Günther Grass, James Joyce and Gabriel Garcia Marquez among his greatest influences.¹³ He seems to be heavily influenced by Grass’s *The Tin Drum*,¹⁴ especially in the novel *Midnight’s Children*. Both novels are versions of the picaresque, i.e. they have a central character who is morally ambivalent, and the novels concentrate on telling the life-story of this character in “episodic form”.¹⁵ In *Midnight’s Children*, this character is Saleem Sinai, who was born in Bombay at exactly the same second as India gains its independence from the British Empire. *The Tin Drum* and *Midnight’s Children* also both share the motif of multiple parentage. This motif appears also in *Shame*, indicating that the question was one which interested Rushdie and which he found useful enough to employ more than once. In *Midnight’s Children*, Saleem can be seen to have (at least) three fathers: Ahmed Sinai, who is married to his mother and whom Saleem believes to be his father for 11 years; Wee Willie Winkie, the husband of Vanita (who is later found to be Saleem’s biological mother (her baby

¹² Goonetilleke, 17.

¹³ Goonetilleke, 17.

¹⁴ “The Tin Drum Book Notes Summary”. *Book Rags*. 24. November, 2007.

<<http://www.bookrags.com/notes/ttd/SUM.html>>

¹⁵ “Picaresque,” *The Hutchinson Encyclopedia*, 1999 edition.

and that of Ameena Sinai were swapped in the hospital)); and William Methwold, who had an affair with Vanita and therefore is, in fact, Saleem's biological father. In *Shame*, Omar Khayam Shakil is brought up by three mothers – three sisters who share such a close bond, that no one ever finds out which one of them actually was Omar's biological mother - and Naveed Hyder is probably the daughter of Bilquis and Sindbad Mengal, although this is never admitted and she is brought up as Raza's daughter. [C2]

As with Joyce, experimentation with language is an integral part of Rushdie's work. The stream-of-consciousness narrative mode, developed by the group of writers who came to be known as the modernists at the beginning of the 20th century, (which included James Joyce) is one which Rushdie makes use of. Inner dialogue, a technique forming the basis of the stream of consciousness narrative mode, is employed frequently in *Midnight's Children* and also in *Shame*, although to a lesser extent in the second novel.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez's writing style was a great influence on that which Rushdie uses. The narrative technique both these writers choose to employ in their work is that of magic realism. Marquez can be seen to be the pioneer of this style in modern literature, in his 1967 novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.¹⁶ In 1982, Marquez won the Nobel Prize for Literature, so at the time when Rushdie was writing both *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*, he was one of the most influential writers of the time.

Magical realism is a blend of fairy-tale elements with realistic actions and events. It places realistic, mundane situations side-by-side with supernatural ones, as if supernatural events were normal and natural parts of every-day life. On one hand,

¹⁶ "García Márquez" *The Hutchinson Encyclopedia*, 1999 edition.

both *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* are based on historical dates and occurrences, intertwined with the personal experiences of a small group of people. On the other hand, many extraordinary things happen to these people – things which could not occur in reality. For example, in *Shame*, Sufiya Zinobia turns into a monster who roams the streets at night and tears people's heads off. Often, the unrealistic occurrences in Rushdie's novels tend to directly influence or shape the course of history. If we stick to the example of Sufiya Zinobia, the fact that she turns into a monster brings about the downfall of her father, Raza Hyder, who in the novel represents erstwhile Pakistani president General Zia ul-Haq. Often, the narrative strategy of magic realism brings about the connection between history and imagination in Rushdie's work.¹⁷

Rushdie says that during his childhood, his main literary influences were the film version of "The Wizard of Oz"¹⁸, but also the tales of the Arabian Nights.¹⁹ Looking at these curious and early influences, one can already see the coexistence in Rushdie's life between the East and the West: the Arabian Nights being a distinct part of Eastern folklore and tradition, whereas the Wizard of Oz is part of American Hollywood culture. This combination of cultural influences becomes evident in Rushdie's symbolism as well as in his narrative strategy.

Rushdie was not only influenced by the American film industry: He grew up in Bombay, which at that time had its own huge film industry and produced more films per year than did Hollywood.²⁰ This is now known as Bollywood. In his writing technique, this cinematic influence can be discerned in the incorporation of

¹⁷ The further functions of magic realism will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

¹⁸ "Out of Kansas". *Step Across this Line*. 3-33.

¹⁹ Goonetilleke, 1.

²⁰ Goonetilleke, 2.

“cuts, close-ups, juxtaposition”²¹ - e.g. in *Midnight’s Children*: “Close-up of my grandfather’s right hand: nails knuckles fingers all somehow bigger than you’d expect. Clumps of red hair on the outside edges. Thumb and forefinger pressed together only by a thickness of paper. In short: my grandfather was holding a pamphlet.”²² This quote illustrates how Rushdie starts with an extreme close-up, so that even the minutest details (the hairs on Aadam’s fingers) can be seen. He slowly zooms out, until the image becomes clear and the viewer (reader) can see the actual item he is holding. In this instance, the effect created is that of a build-up, which finally focuses our attention on the pamphlet – the pamphlet being of significant importance as it is propagating Indian independence and the scene is taking place in Amritsar just before the massacre (which took place in April 1919).

The narrative mode Rushdie uses in the novels *Midnight’s Children* and *Shame* is that of traditional Indian oral story-telling, which uses commentary and digression as major tools.²³ Also, influences from Sanskrit poetry and Indian myth can be found in his novels. D.C.R.A. Goonetilleke has identified a Sanskrit category of prose called Akhyayikas, which combine elements of both fact and fiction, and which he thinks have influenced Rushdie’s writing.²⁴ Akhyayikas are “life stories”²⁵, and both *Midnight’s Children* and *Shame* trace the life stories of their different characters.[C3]

Rushdie is a representative of post-colonial literature[C4]. Ashford et al, in their study on post-colonial literature entitled *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), identify the post-colonial as “cover[ing] all the culture affected by the imperial

²¹ Goonetilleke, 2.

²² *Midnight’s Children*, 36.

²³ Goonetilleke, 18.

²⁴ Goonetilleke, 18.

²⁵ V.S. Bhaskara Panicker, “Kavyadarsa (Bharatheeya Kavyasastra: Part III)”.
<<http://narthaki.com/info/articles/art162.html>> June 24, 2006. January 12, 2008.

process from the moment of colonisation to the present day.”²⁶ Rushdie is a post-colonial author because although he writes of the Indian experience after the time of British colonialism, the events of the past and of the colonial time still greatly influence him and what he chooses to write about – hence the term ‘post-colonial’ (i.e. after the time of colonisation). I have decided in this paper to call him a *modern* post-colonial author, in order to make clear the distinction from those writers who wrote about the colonial experience during the time of colonialism – as were authors like Rudyard Kipling, E.M. Forster, Paul Scott and J.G. Farrell.²⁷

Although Rushdie was born to Muslim parents, they were not dogmatic and Rushdie was never a devout or orthodox believer in Islam. His liberal upbringing, together with his English (i.e. Western) education, meant that Rushdie was open to ideas and therefore able to look at the issue of religion as a whole (and Islam more specifically) in a critical manner. In his work, Rushdie expresses his critical stance on a number of issues: in both *Midnight’s Children* and *Shame*, Pakistan – a Muslim country – is represented as a society in which women are treated unequally (e.g. Jamila Singer in *Midnight’s Children*, who must be covered from head to foot when in public), or in which society is stuck in old and rigid ways (e.g. in *Shame*, Raza Hyder gains support in large part due to the bruise on his forehead, which shows that he prays fervently, therefore Pakistan is portrayed as a country in whose society religious belief is placed above a person’s abilities).

Later in Rushdie’s life, the fact that he openly mocked some Islamic practices and criticised aspects of Islamic society and religion in his novel *The Satanic Verses*

²⁶ Bill Ascroft et al. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. (London and New York: Routledge, 1989). 2.

²⁷ Dennis Walder. *Post-colonial Literatures in English: History, Language, Theory*. (Oxford and Malden: Blackwell, 1998) 88.

(1988)²⁸, lead to the Iranian Ayattolah accusing him of blasphemy against Islam and declaring a fatwa (death sentence) on him, which resulted in Rushdie having to go into hiding for a number of years. Throughout his career as a novelist, Rushdie has not refrained from bringing issues of concern to light and openly talking about them.

Rushdie's way of looking at politics has a lot in common with his way of looking at religion, in that it is critical, iconoclastic and stems from an upbringing which was, in large part, Western. To Rushdie, democracy and the upholding of people's civil rights are integral components of what any properly-functioning society should be doing. He is critical of any form of suppression, oppression or the denial of civil rights. The fact that Rushdie has witnessed and lived in different cultures and under different political systems seems to have taught him to value plurality, tolerance and to have imbued him with an affinity towards a 'democratic' outlook.

After this brief introduction to Rushdie's background, upbringing and literary influences, and also a brief introduction to the narrative style and the themes of two of his earliest novels, *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*, the rest of this paper will go into more detail, exploring what affects his chosen narrative style, language and imagery in the two novels create. Also, Rushdie's commentary on Indian and Pakistani society and politics of the second half of the 20th century will be discussed, as will his role as a modern post-colonial writer.

²⁸ "Rushdie", The Hutchinson Encyclopedia, 1999 edition.

Chapter 2 – Indo-Pakistani History in Relation To *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*

Although Rushdie chose to live in England, his work is highly referential to the Indian subcontinent: *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* both take place there, predominantly in India and in Pakistan. Many aspects^[S6] of the novels may seem like those of a fairy-tale, due to Rushdie's deployment of magical realism as his principal narrative strategy. However, criticism of religious, political and cultural aspects of both India and Pakistan are clearly serviced by this strategy and are a crucial element of his fiction. By writing about events in India and Pakistan, Rushdie reasserts his links to these countries and a close personal interest in what goes on there.

Both *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* lean heavily on historical events and history (or even historicity) is an important theme for them. This chapter will therefore aim to outline some important aspects of modern Indian and Pakistani history (colonial as well as post-colonial) in relevance to how Rushdie incorporates these into his narrative strategy in the two novels *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*.^[S7]

The British came to India in the 17th century, empire emerging as an accidental by-product of commercial and trading interests; the East India Company was founded in 1600 by English merchants but it was not until the early 19th century, in large part due to a series of events which culminated in the Indian revolt of 1858,^[C8] that the British were forced to take total control of India to protect their commercial interests. At this point, the British East India Company was dissolved and India was placed directly under the rule of the British crown, Queen Victoria thereby becoming its Empress. In 1885, the Indian National Congress was founded,

in support of Indian nationalism,²⁹ at which stage both Hindus and Muslims were working together for a unified India free of British rule.

In 1906, the All-India Muslim League was established, planting the seeds for the future partition of India and the creation of Pakistan. Although the whole of India was fighting together to gain independence from Britain, a split was developing, one based on sectarian differences between Hindus and Muslims.³⁰

During WWI, many Indian troops fought for the British, and after the war the sense that Independence had been earned, was felt more strongly than ever.

Midnight's Children actually begins during WWI in 1915 in Kashmir, with Saleem's grandfather Aadam Aziz, who has returned to his homeland after having spent five years studying medicine at University in Germany. Aadam Aziz represents a group of wealthy Indians who were increasingly exposed to Western education and social mores. On his return from Europe, Aadam soon realises that he cannot go back to the same way of life that he led before: he has changed, and now feels as if he is stuck somewhere between India and Europe, "caught in a strange middle ground"³¹. These feelings are illustrated primarily by Aadam's altered religious beliefs: he is neither able to believe, like his family and Indian friends, or to disbelieve, like his anarchist friends from Germany.

On the day when WWI ends, Aadam sees the face of his patient, Naseem Ghani, for the first time – up until that point he had only seen parts of her through a perforated sheet, when treating her for different ailments. Aadam falls in love with Naseem and they later marry. The fact that they see each other for the first time and fall in love on the day of the end of the war is significant; both events being happy

²⁹ "India", The Hutchinson Encyclopedia, 1999 edition.

³⁰ Lars Blinkenberg. *India-Pakistan: the history of unsolved conflicts*. (Odense: Odense University Press, 1998), 32.

³¹ *Midnight's Children*, 7.

ones which signal the time for a new start, but neither of them turns out exactly the way they are expected to. After the First World War, Indian politicians felt that because so many of their people had died in the war for the British, the British government would have to grant India – if not total independence – at least a much larger degree of autonomy and power than they had previously had. However, these dreams are soon shattered, as are Aadam's: After a very short time, Aadam realises that Naseem is a conservative, traditional Muslim woman whose ways he will never change. The two events – marriage and the end of the war - both represent hope of a new and open future, and both rapidly descend into disillusionment, when this hope encounters a strong reactionary force, i.e Naseem in one case, the British in the other. Rushdie juxtaposes personal experience with national and global events, thereby exposing them to comparison and contrast as conjoined phenomena.

Another national event endowed with intimate resonance in *Midnight's Children*, is the Amritsar massacre of 1919^[C9], when British troops fired at a crowd of peaceful protestors, resulting in the death of 379 Indian civilians.³² Aadam and Naseem Aziz happen to be in Amritsar at the same time, and are witnesses to a lot of civil unrest. Aadam goes out into the streets and gets mixed up in a crowd of demonstrators. He suddenly feels the urge to sneeze, which he does, thereby spilling the contents of his bag. As he bends down to retrieve these, British soldiers fire on the crowd, bringing about the bloody massacre. Aadam is saved by luck. His feelings about this event can be seen as representative of the general Indian sentiment of the time: he says that what happened at Amritsar “turned [him] into an Indian.”³³ This is significant because it shows that the Amritsar massacre was one of the few events which brought Hindus and Muslims together to fight against one common enemy –

³² “India”, The Hutchinson Encyclopedia, 1999 edition.

³³ *Midnight's Children*, 47.

the British; and that from this time anti-British sentiment pervaded over Hindu-Muslim disagreements.

After Amritsar, Aadam and Naseem move to Agra, where they have five children. Aadam is in contact with a group of pro-Indian Muslims, lead by Mian Abdullah, the so-called 'Hummingbird'. Abdullah represents those Muslims who were in the National Congress and favoured an independent, united India. His assassination could be read as representing the death of hope for a united India, as conflicts between the National Congress and the Muslim League boiled over, resulting in the partition of India, at the same time that the country became free of British rule.

The name Pakistan was coined in 1933 by a Muslim Indian student in England named Choudhay Rahmat Ali. In Urdu, the word Pakistan means 'pure nation',³⁴ although, at this time most Indian Muslims were only intent on achieving political representation within an independent India rather than pursuing the racial or religious agenda implied in the Urdu title. This was not enacted until 1940, when the Muslim League, led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, called for the partition of India into two separate countries³⁵ along divisive lines based upon religion, resulting in a Hindu India and a Muslim Pakistan.

The growing animosity between ordinary Hindus and Muslims is alluded to in *Midnight's Children* where a crowd of Muslims attack the Hindu man Lifafa Das, a peepshow box performer, because of his religion. The verbal abuse they hurl at him ("Hindu! Hindu! Hindu!" / "Mother raper! Violator of our daughters!"³⁶) is an illustration of the irrationality of the hatred between these two religious groups and

³⁴ "Pakistan", The Hutchinson Encyclopedia, 1999 edition.

³⁵ "Pakistan", The Hutchinson Encyclopedia, 1999 edition.

³⁶ *Midnight's Children*, 98.

also of how deeply-rooted this hatred had become. This animosity is also present from the other perspective, Hindu against Muslim: when Ahmed Sinai's warehouse gets burned down, simply because he and his partners are Muslims. By showing the reader acts of violence committed by both religious groups, Rushdie points to the fact that the conflict was two-sided and that both Hindus and Muslims behaved aggressively. Rushdie often likes to show both sides of the coin, reminding his readers that every story has (at least) two sides to it. In the novel *Shame*, this can be seen for example in the character of Raza Hyder. On one hand, he seems to be a ruthless autocrat, who ousts Iskander Harappa and then has him killed, so that he himself can take power. On the other hand, we see the love he has for his daughter, and also the grief he shows for his wife when she dies. Rushdie demonstrates that although we may be presented with a certain view on history and past events, there are always other factors lurking beneath the surface, and we must be cognisant of this, especially when considering the past. His narrative strategy, which includes much narratorial comment, is often not completely reliable, directly posing a question to the reader: what is truth in regard to history?³⁷

In the novel *Midnight's Children*, the central event is the birth of Saleem Sinai, which occurs exactly at the stroke of midnight on August the 15th, 1947 – the precise moment of India's independence from Britain. Saleem and India are both 'born' at exactly the same time and most of the novel traces their parallel existences: infancy, youth, problems and mistakes. Saleem and India have a syzygy in the novel. Saleem and with him the Midnight Children represent of a whole generation of Indians who grew up together with India. When Saleem is born, he receives a letter from the Prime Minister of the newly born Indian nation, Jawarhal Nehru, in which

³⁷ This is discussed further in Chapter 3.

his life is predicted to be “a mirror of our own”³⁸ (i.e. India’s). As a child of the new-born nation, his fate becomes inextricably linked with that of India.[C10]

Rushdie himself has written that he “tried, in [his] novel *Midnight’s Children*, to set against a scrupulously observed social and historical background – against, that is, the canvas of a ‘real’ India – [his] ‘unrealist’ notion of children born at the midnight moment of India’s independence...children who were in some way the embodiment both of the hopes and flaws of that revolution”.³⁹ Rushdie superimposes Saleem’s personal history over India’s national history to emphasise the nation’s development. This strategy energises Rushdie’s fiction and enables him to draw parallels which are often much more expressive than the mere citation of historical fact can be[C11]. For example, later in the novel, when Saleem is forcefully sterilised, the reader experiences it with him, which creates much more empathy and distress in the reader than if the sterilisation programme had been mentioned and presented in terms of mere figures of how many were sterilised. The ‘magic’ of magic realism is that Rushdie can always fall back on the fictional narrative to ameliorate dry historicism or over-ardent political commentary or satire. A magical realistic narrative such as Rushdie’s is a vehicle for picking out the absurdities and commonalities in life without the curtailing demands of purely realistic fiction and incorporate a much higher and more effective level of criticism and commentary than realist literature does.

Saleem Sinai is not actually born until around 150 pages into *Midnight’s Children*. This is important because the reader becomes aware of the fact that all events have a history and a past – all people and all events come about as the results of previous events. In a sense Rushdie is toying with chronological and narrative

³⁸ *Midnight’s Children*, 167.

³⁹ “Influence”. *Step Across this Line*, 71.

linearity much as Lawrence Stern does in *Tristram Shandy*^[C12] – his narrative does not follow a linear chronology, but foreshadows, jumps between past, present and future and often digresses. History and its currents and counter-currents pervade the novel – it starts with Saleem’s grandfather and describes the lives of three generations, until the infancy of Saleem’s son, with whom history will continue. Examples like the recurrence of Aadam’s large nose on Saleem (even though Saleem is biologically not his grandson) or the continuing re-emergence of the perforated sheet and the spittoon, serve as links between the generations and as stitches holding the narrative together.

After Indian independence from the British and the partition of India and Pakistan, the Sinai family decides to stay in Bombay, although many Muslims at the time living on Indian territory moved to Pakistan, and vice versa. This huge two-way migration was caused in part because of a need felt by the people to contribute to the building up of an ethnically homogeneous nation; on the other hand, for many it was a decision based on the danger presented by racial violence, animosity, and many religious killings.

As well as being interlaced with events which reflect the social climate of India of the time, important political events are mentioned in *Midnight’s Children*. One of these is the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. The reader and a theatre audience depicted by Rushdie learn of this momentous event simultaneously and experience it as one. Gandhi had led India to independence, and was one of the most important and well-loved figures in modern-day Indian history. Interesting to note here is the Muslim reaction, before it is made known that the assassin was a Hindu.

Amina's brother says that "if a Muslim did this thing there will be hell to pay"⁴⁰, illustrating again the animosity between Hindus and Muslims and the fear of violence both groups of people lived in from each other at the time.

The language riots of the 1950's also crop up in *Midnight's Children*. Firstly, when Doctor Narlikar meets his death as a result of being crushed by marchers, and secondly when Saleem bickers with a group of children who speak differently to him. In *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie has made Saleem's argument with the children the actual spark of the language riots, suggesting again the intertwined nature and parallelism of Saleem's development with that of India.

Even though India gained its independence from Britain, it still kept up close relations with its former colonial master and Westernising influences on Indian life, politics, culture and business continue to grow. Rushdie represents these influences through the change in Ahmed Sinai's skin colouration: as a Western-style businessman he tries business venture after business venture, and at the same time he grows commensurately paler, indicative of his increasing Westernisation. At the beginning of the novel, the same thing had already happened to the Rani of Cooch Naheen, who went white in blotches when she adopted Western political ideas and a Western intellectual way of life, one contrary to "other Indian princes"⁴¹.

Amina Sinai, Saleem's mother, moves with her two children to Pakistan at the end of the 1950's, where they stay for four years. They live with Amina's sister, Emerald, and Emerald's husband, Major Zulfikar. As a favourite of the Major, Saleem comes into contact with a number of important Pakistani politicians and political events, the most important being the imposition of martial law in the 1950's

⁴⁰ *Midnight's Children*, 196.

⁴¹ *Midnight's Children*, 56.

and the coup of Ayub Khan over Iskander Mirza⁴². In this part of the novel, the dates and events mentioned do not concur precisely with established history. What Rushdie may be aiming at here is firstly to illustrate the inaccuracy of historical narrative, by introducing in a narrator who is often unreliable.⁴³ Secondly, the fact that Rushdie is not one hundred percent accurate historically has the effect of slightly distancing his narrative from absolute historical fact: although he very obviously uses events from Indian and Pakistani history, he may also be illustrating that some of them can be seen as paradigmatic rather than parochial and also serves to foreground them as performative. This becomes a far more explicit tool in *Shame*, which, although based on events in Pakistan, is actually an analysis of human behaviour in a certain environment and of a certain background. As the narrator of *Shame* writes: “The country in the story is not Pakistan, or not quite. There are two countries, real and fictional, occupying the same space, or almost the same space. My story, my fictional country exists, like myself, at a slight angle to reality. I have found this off-centering to be necessary.”⁴⁴

The events of *Shame* occur in a certain place and time, because of the history of that place up to that time. Because of the way in which Pakistan came into being, and because of the violence and inability of its people and its leaders to create a democratic and peaceful nation, and because of the strong fixation on religion even in politics, dictatorships, coups and wars were able to exist in it. However, the narrator highlights that this is possible anywhere in the world: that it is not restricted to only Pakistan^[C13], but rather that the process of historical determinism shares common features irrespective of the individuals they affect.

⁴² Story of Pakistan, “Iskander Mirza”, *Eteam*. June 1, 2003.

<<http://www.storyofpakistan.com/person.asp?perid=P015>> January 12, 2008.

⁴³ This issue will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

⁴⁴ Salman Rushdie. *Shame*. (London, Vintage, 1995). 29.

In 1965, Saleem in the novel *Midnight's Children* loses his memory and joins the Pakistani army in its fight against India (in the war in which India supported East Pakistan and which led to the partition of Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh). Saleem gets lost in the Sundarban jungle with three young soldiers. His fellow soldiers are young and filled with hate – one could even say they are brainwashed. Rushdie points out the irrationality of the soldiers and highlights the fact that their fanaticism was something both extremely dangerous but also necessary for the politicians. Young radical fighters are something which is seen all over the world, although the stereotype now (rather unfairly) casts them as belonging to the Islamic world. Young people have become radicalised by religion and by their leaders, and are often exploited in the name of such causes, as is the case in Rushdie's fiction. The futility of the deaths of these soldiers is expressed by each one of them dying a pointless and pathetic death. The dying wails of the young soldier Shaheed, which are heard by a whole town over the local public address system, can be read as a projection of the feelings of despair and helplessness which the author himself feels about the deaths of these so-called warriors of God, who in fact die futile deaths; the cause they believe in actually being empty.^[C14]

The dangerous political and social climate in Pakistan in *Midnight's Children* is also illustrated by the disappearance of Jamila Singer (Saleem's sister), after she starts to speak out against the Pakistani government. Opposition was not tolerated, and anyone who spoke out against the government was silenced.

The theme of undemocratic and inhumane political acts as well as that of censorship is one which Rushdie explores in *Shame*: Rani Harappa makes a shawl depicting her husband's many crimes and the way in which he got rid of any political

opponents or enemies. The narrator notes that there was “not enough scarlet thread on earth to show the blood”⁴⁵. Rushdie also satirises Islamic fundamentalism in politics, using the character of Raza Hyder. Raza passes religious laws and uses religion as a tool for the suppression of civil rights. Rushdie pursues such themes to their absurd limits in order to demonstrate their ridiculousness. A prime example is when Raza gets rid of impartial lawyers and judges (because there is danger that they will not do what he wants), and replaces them with his own religious placemen, “on the sentimental grounds that their beards reminded him of his deceased adviser”⁴⁶. Of course this is a ridiculous premise upon which to choose a judiciary and hereby Rushdie illustrates with a humorous example a much less humorous fact: in many places in the world, politics and politicians do work in exactly such ridiculous ways. Rushdie often employs irony as part of his narrative strategy to emphasise the irrationality of religious political regimes.

At the end of the second book of *Midnight's Children* (overall it is split into three), Saleem becomes disillusioned with life. At the beginning of the novel and when Saleem is born, there is hope for India, great expectations for the new nation being born. However, by end of book two of the novel, hope is noticeable by its absence. A series of conflicts, wars and murders have tainted India since its independence, and there seems at this point to be only despair. Again, Saleem's situation mirrors that of the country. Also contributing to the general sense of despair is the fact that Saleem is in Pakistan, whose society and politics he sees to be an “infinite number of falsenesses, unrealities and lies.”⁴⁷

⁴⁵ *Shame*, 195.

⁴⁶ *Shame*, 248.

⁴⁷ *Midnight's Children*, 453

In 1966, Indira Gandhi, the daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru, became Prime Minister of India. In 1975, after being found guilty of electoral corruption, she implemented her so-called *state of emergency*. It was during this time that Rushdie spent a number of months in India, saw what was happening there and found a large quantity of material to include in his upcoming book – *Midnight's Children*.⁴⁸ The character of the Widow in *Midnight's Children* represents Indira Gandhi. The sterilisation process which all the Midnight Children are forced to undergo is a direct allusion to and heavy criticism of Sanjay Gandhi's forced sterilisation policy of the mid-1970's, and the clearance of the slum where Saleem is staying is an allusion to Sanjay's slum-clearance programme.⁴⁹ At this point in the novel, Rushdie's own despair at the political situation is projected onto the character of Saleem Sinai.

Although it would seem that there is no hope at the end of the novel, *Midnight's Children* does not end on a wholly pessimistic note. In 1975, Saleem's son Aadam Sinai is born and with him, there seems to be hope for the future, and therefore hope for India's future. The first generation is lost, they had tried and failed, but the second generation of Indians can learn from their mistakes, like little Aadam can from his father's mistakes.

For Rushdie, the critical view is one he takes in both the novels. In both *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*, he scrutinizes events, politics and human behaviour in India and Pakistan, and subjects them to criticism. He doesn't conclude with the fact that one country is somehow better than the other, although he evidently has a closer relationship to India. However, in his novels Rushdie criticises and highlights

⁴⁸ "Introduction", *Midnight's Children*. ix

⁴⁹ "Indira Gandhi". Indiaxroads. <<http://www.ceeby.com/people/IndiraGandhi.cfm>> 2003. January 12, 2008.

that which seems corrupt and unintelligent to him - be it anywhere in the world - using the strategies of magical realism, irony and juxtaposition.

A high level of political criticism is evident in both *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*, and it is apparent that Rushdie openly disapproves of the treatment of women in Pakistan and of the strict religious form of the Pakistani government. The character of Jamila Singer in *Midnight's Children*, who changes from Saleem's tom-boy sister (the Brass Monkey) to a demure Pakistani singer, never showing her face, is a strong illustration and satire of how Pakistani women are treated and an ironic comment on the fact that they accept this treatment. Rushdie brings things like this to the extreme, in order to illustrate their ridiculousness and his disapproval of them.

In the novel *Shame*, Rushdie's criticism is aimed mainly at the politics of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and his successor General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, and at the undemocratic nature of Pakistani politics as well as the encroaching dangers of religious fanaticism. He uses the technique of setting the personal perspective side-by-side with the public one, thereby leading the reader through the lives of Iskander Harappa and Raza Hyder. Although Rushdie does not stick to exact historical facts in his writing, the comparison to Bhutto and Zia-ul-Haq is undeniable. However, unlike in *Midnight's Children*, the characters and places in *Shame* do not have historical names and are therefore more representatives of certain types of politicians than actual real representations of the historical figures themselves. D.C.R.A.

Goonetilleke [C15] writes that:

Rushdie does not intend his major characters, Raza Hyder and Iskander Harappa, to be portraits of Zia-ul-Haq and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, respectively. They are freely modelled on the originals so as to make them fully fictionalised characters

in novels, yet they are identifiable with the real historical figures and this, too, is intended.⁵⁰

Much more than *Midnight's Children*, *Shame* is a novel, which although modeled on the events of a certain country, points to the dangers of all similar regimes throughout the world.

What has been illustrated in this chapter is the integral importance of history and historicity to Rushdie's theme and narrative strategy in his novels *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*. The notion of history pervades the novels and highlights the central role which it plays in all our lives. By illustrating the interconnectedness of historical events with the lives of ordinary people, Rushdie creates an awareness in his readers of their own responsibility towards studying the past and learning from it: we are all shaped by the history of our ancestors and in the same way our acts will shape the world our children will live in. We should therefore not be mute bystanders, but always try to see what is wrong with the world and how we can work towards changing it – and highlighting what he sees to be wrong in the world is exactly what Rushdie does in his novels.

⁵⁰ Goonetilleke, 56.

Chapter 3 – Narrative Strategy in *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*

Rushdie's fiction is characterised as post-modern^[S16], and the narrative style he uses in the novels *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* is that of magic realism. 'Magic realism' is a term which was coined by the German art historian Franz Roh in 1925.⁵¹ In German, the original term is 'Magischer Realismus'. The use of the term as a literary concept was started predominantly in Spain and Latin America from the 1930's onwards. Magic realism as a narrative strategy in fiction interweaves unusual and irrational motifs and occurrences with every-day reality: it is "a fantastic situation realistically treated".⁵²

The novel *Midnight's Children* starts with the following words: "I was born in the City of Bombay...once upon a time."⁵³ and *Shame* starts out on similar lines: "In the remote border town of Q...there once lived three lovely, and loving, sisters."⁵⁴ Both novels start out like a fairy-tale, but this is just an illusion, as both of them deal with stories of extreme historical, political and social assessment and criticism. Under the magical and fairy tale-like exterior lies a narrative which is in fact about harsh realities.

The function of magical realist fiction in the 20th century has often been to create political commentaries. The fact that political and social situations are presented under the cover of an alternative reality leaves the question of reference open and makes magical realism an ideal narrative strategy for political satire and criticism. The narrator/authorial persona of *Shame* mentions this when he says: "But

⁵¹ "Magic realism". <http://www.seattleschools.org/schools/hamilton/iac/magic/magic_primer.pdf> 10. January, 2008

⁵² "Magic realism". The Hutchinson Encyclopedia, 1999 edition.

⁵³ *Midnight's Children*, 3.

⁵⁴ *Shame*, 11.

suppose this were a realistic novel! [S17]It would have done me no good to protest that I was writing universally, not only about Pakistan. The book would have been banned, dumped in the rubbish bin, burned. All that effort for nothing! Realism can break a writer's heart."⁵⁵

The[C.K.18] narrative strategy of magic realism enables an author to allude to people and to situations obliquely and therefore to be more free in his/her expression. A good example of this in the novel *Shame* is when Talvar Ulhaq is able to foresee that Naveed Hyder is extremely fertile and therefore marries her, sleeping with her once a year on her most fertile day, and each year to the day exactly one child more than the year before is born, until they have so many children they are unable to count them. Rushdie uses this unrealistic tale as a criticism of the treatment of Pakistani and Muslim women, and the fact that they are seen and treated as nothing more than machines for the production of children, which crushes their personalities. Naveed, who as an unmarried girl is full of life, is unable to cope with the role she is assigned in marriage - as nothing but a child-bearer - and commits suicide. Her suicide symbolizes the death of Muslim women's individualities upon marriage. By expressing criticism about the situation of Muslim women through satirising it in this way, the author highlights the problem without explicitly mentioning the reality.

Rushdie has commented on the desired effect which he aims for with the use of the narrative style of magic realism, saying that "[he] think[s] of fantasy as a method of producing intensified images of reality"⁵⁶. What he means is that, often, because reality is so close to us, we are unable to see what is wrong with it – we accept things the way they are and do not question them. For Rushdie, this is something which is very wrong with society, and he himself aims to question

⁵⁵ *Shame*, 69, 70.

⁵⁶ Goonetilleke, 17.

everything and to force his readers to do the same thing. With the use of magic realism, he is able to create a counter-reality, one which is modelled on our reality but which, by means of exaggeration and by the intermingling of the supernatural with the realistic, is able to open up the reader's mind to see and to question what may be wrong with what the author is presenting to him. This then helps the reader to learn how to question the daily events which occur around him/her.

Two of the main characters of the novel *Shame*, Iskander Harappa and Raza Hyder, are modelled on the Pakistani leaders Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and General Muhammad Zia ul-Haq. On one hand, the many parallels between the real people and the characters in the book create the effect of realism. On the other, many events which shape the events of these people's lives are highly fantastic. For example, Raza's regime is brought down by his daughter who turns into a monster. Her character is an embodiment of the consequences of shameful behavior.

Sufiya Zinobia is the first child of Raza and Bilquis Hyder to survive, and as such she should have been - in the very patriarchal society in which the novel is set - a boy. The fact that she is not fills her parents with shame. However, their reaction in turn brings shame on them: Sufiya Zinobia is their child, and the way they treat her is shameful. Sufiya Zinobia becomes an embodiment of the shame of her parents and all those around her and this shame is manifested by her burning skin. Although Sufiya Zinobia is mentally retarded, she has special abilities and a heightened feelings which make her feel the shame around her - and when those around her act shamelessly (for example when Naveed and Talvar's secret affair is discovered, even though Naveed is betrothed to Haroun, or when Omar sleeps with the Parsee nanny because Sufiya - his wife - is unable to sleep with him) Sufiya vicariously expresses their absent shame. As the novel progresses and one shameful act follows another,

moving from a personal scale to a political and national one - with Raza's deposition of Iskander and Iskander's subsequent assassination - Sufiya has to take on a greater and greater burden, finally turning into a complete and uncontrollable monster. The role of the character of Sufiya Zinobia in the novel *Shame* is that of pointing out that the shameful acts for which their performers do not feel the shame they should, will always have consequences somewhere and on someone, and also that shamelessness always leads to more shamelessness. In a society where things are hidden away, not talked about, or where politicians and those of high standing in society act selfishly and autocratically, there will always be consequences – murder will lead to further murders, and corruption will breed more corruption^[S19]. The consequences may be suppressed for a long time, just like Sufiya Zinobia's shame and rage are suppressed by the drugs given to her by Omar - in the end, however, too much shameful behavior and a lack of conscience will lead to an eruption of these suppressed feelings. In creating the unrealistic character of Sufiya Zinobia, Rushdie seems to be warning against the very real and shameless behavior of politicians and leaders of society, because this behavior will have dire consequences on the ordinary people, who have to bear the brunt of it. Again, Rushdie 'treats a fantastic situation realistically' and thereby makes the reader search under the surface and begin to see his meaning.

The story of the novel *Shame* takes place in the 20th century, mostly during its second half. However, the narrator also uses a different calendar than the Western one. According to the Hegiran (Islamic) Calendar, which he uses, the events take place in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. By superimposing these two different time-frames, Rushdie helps to create a kind of timeless zone, in the same way that the location where the events take place, although very obviously modelled on

Pakistan, is also a non-existent country (which the narrator suggests may be called Peccavistan - a country of sin⁵⁷). This contributes to the fantastic elements of the novel and highlights the fact that the warnings of the novel are true for all people and societies throughout the ages. It is also significant because it emphasises that Pakistan in the 20th century is in many respects stuck in the middle ages.

The use of magical realism can often have the Brechtian “Verfremdungseffekt[C.K.20]” (English: alienation effect) by its destabilisation of the reader. This is achieved by combining the two different spheres of fantasy and reality in a way which seems natural, whereas of course rationally the reader knows that the fantastic events are realistically impossible or very improbable. This opens up new ways of perception for the reader and creates the need for him/her to think, which enriches the reading experience. In both of Rushdie’s novels *Midnight’s Children* and *Shame*, the alienation effect is also created by a large number of authorial or narratorial comments and digressions. The narrators of both the novels often question the information they present, which creates feelings of uncertainty in the reader. The narrator is obviously one who cannot be wholly trusted, and this opens up the question of trust and truth in history as a whole. History is always narrated to us, and reading Rushdie’s work one starts to realise this and to realise the potential unreliability of historical accounts. As Saleem, the narrator of *Midnight’s Children*, says: “[Memory] selects, eliminates, alters, exaggerates, minimizes, glorifies and unifies also; but in the end it creates its own reality...and no sane human being ever trusts someone else’s version more than his own⁵⁸.” Throughout Saleem’s narration, we must be aware of the fact that the story is influenced by his way of seeing the world, what he himself was influenced by, and by his memory – just like every

⁵⁷ *Shame*, 88.

⁵⁸ *Midnight’s Children*, 292.

narrative is created by and therefore dependent upon its narrator. There are also a number of instances in *Midnight's Children* when Saleem realises that he has given the reader incorrect information, for example concerning dates. However, he himself says that this does not really make a difference to his story, and the reader becomes aware that had Saleem not mentioned it, the reader would have believed the dates to be correct. This highlights the fact that we are very often ready to believe what is presented to us by figures of authority (Saleem, as he is telling his own story, should be an authority on it). However, this blind trust is dangerous, because authorities can make mistakes and abuse their authority by purposely presenting false information. In *Shame*, insertions made by the narrator also prove that the narrator is not omniscient. Examples include "And then (the legend goes)"⁵⁹ or "I will not even guess at the name"⁶⁰. However, these comments are also used by the narrator as a method of absolving himself of all responsibility for his comments— he presents his narrative as legend or as gossip, distancing himself from it.

In *Midnight's Children*, another technique which Rushdie employs to alert the reader to the fact that what is presented should never be taken at face value, is in acts of revelation which then turn out to be empty. Aadam thinks that he sees God, when in fact it is probably the ghost of Joseph D'Costa. Saleem thinks the voices in his head are angels, when in fact they are the Midnight Children. Mary thinks she has seen Joseph's ghost, which turns out to be the old servant Musa. Although many things appear to be one thing, they turn out to be something completely different. We as the reader learn this, but the characters of the book do not – therefore, if they were telling their story, they would present it as truth. Again, this shows us that there are many ways of seeing and understanding reality, and as the novel deals with the

⁵⁹ *Shame*, 16.

⁶⁰ *Shame*, 20.

relationship between the personal and the historical and political, we could take this to another level and say that any historical or political situation can, and should, be viewed from a number of different angles, truth being entirely relative.

As has already been illustrated, Rushdie in *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* goes further than sticking to a purely magic realist narrative; his writing is characteristically 'post-modern'. According to Brian McHale, one of the characteristics of the postmodern in literature is self-conscious narration⁶¹, which can be found in both *Midnight's Children* and in *Shame*.

The narrators of both these novels are self-conscious in that they keep referring to their narrative, their reasons for writing it and to the writing process. In *Midnight's Children*, Saleem narrates his story to his partner Padma, but he also comments upon his relationship to Padma to the reader. He, the narrator, is not someone standing in the shadows of the narrative, but his present state and thoughts interweave with it. In the novel *Shame*, the voice of the narrator and that of the authorial persona (Rushdie) overlap at times. The voice of this narrator interrupts the flow of the story, offering comments and explanations about why he is writing, what he is writing and the reasons for presenting it in the way in which he does; as well as his own opinions relating to the subject-matter of the novel.

The set of ideas and techniques accepted under the heading of post-modernism have evolved from the aesthetic movement of modernism, which was at its height in the first three decades of the 20th century. Modernism in the arts rejected the old and accepted forms of expression as well as standards about what was considered to be appropriate subject matter. Modernist authors sought to lift up the

⁶¹ Noah M. Landow. The Literature and Culture of Pakistan. "Postmodern Style and Language in Rushdie's *Shame*". *Postcolonial Web*.
<<http://www.usp.nus.edu.sg/post/pakistan/literature/rushdie/srpostmod.html>> December 21, 2007.

author and his/her subjectivity, to experiment with new forms, to mix genres, and often produced fragmented pieces of work, asserting this fragmentation as being what they saw as the principal characteristic of the modern world.⁶² In many ways, post-modernism follows similar lines: it “favors reflexivity and self-consciousness, fragmentation and discontinuity (especially in narrative structures), [and] ambiguity.”⁶³ [C.K.21][C.K.22] In [C23] both *Midnight’s Children* and *Shame*, reflexivity is an essential component, much of the narrative is ambiguous, and fragmentation is a recurring motif as well as contributory to the discontinuity of the narrative structure.

In *Shame*, Farah Zoroaster [C24] sees her fragmented face in a set of broken, hanging, mirror pieces. Farah looking at her fragmented image is a symbol of the many-sidedness of a single human being. (Her surname also alludes to the ancient Persian prophet, who preached that there exists a constant battle between good and evil forces, which humans must choose from⁶⁴ – therefore even her name signifies the fragmentation of our inner selves and the continuous conflict between the forces which govern us). The characters of *Shame* are all ambiguous, none of them being just good or just bad. Each person is fragmented and different parts of him are shown at different times. In *Midnight’s Children* Aadam Aziz falls in love with his wife progressively, as he sees parts of her through a perforated sheet, and Amina Sinai also learns to love her husband bit- by- bit (i.e. in fragments). However, both Aadam and Amina find it difficult to love their spouses when presented with them as a whole. The implication this has is that fragmentation is something negative, and that we should try to see things as a whole and not judge them by fragments.

⁶² Dr. Mary Klages. English 2010: Modern Critical Thought. “Postmodernism”. *University of Colorado*. <<http://www.colorado.edu/English/courses/ENGL2012Klages/pomo.html>> April 21, 2003. January 10, 2008.

⁶³ <<http://www.colorado.edu/English/courses/ENGL2012Klages/pomo.html>>

⁶⁴ “Zoroaster” *Hyperhistory*.

<http://www.hyperhistory.com/online_n2/people_n2/persons1_n2/zoroaster.html> January 13, 2008

Fragmentation, in *Midnight's Children*, also occurs on a political level, with the partition of India, the subsequent partition of Pakistan, and the disorder and other splits occurring between the peoples within both countries. The structure of *Shame* is fragmented by authorial commentaries interjected into the narrative and in *Midnight's Children* Saleem's narrative is fragmented by interjections from the narrator, which are mostly directed at his companion Padma. Both of these have already been discussed, therefore here it is important only to identify that the technique of a fragmented narrative is post-modern in character and to highlight the fact that fragmentation in Rushdie's novels is not only an important part of the narrative structure but is also a recurring motif of the actual stories.

Modernist and post-modernist narratives do not focus on purely linear and chronological representations of events. Rushdie's narration in *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* does not follow a purely linear time frame. Instead, foreshadowing and the explicit forementioning of future events, as well as intermittent jumping between past, present and future – enable him to link one event to another, and to focus on the causal relationship of all events, despite their apparent fragmentation. Although both modernism and post-modernism see the world as fragmented, the post-modern view of fragmentation is not a negative one⁶⁵; rather, it is the celebration of pluralisms, accepting that people are different but equal. History and cyclicity are looked at to help explain this plurality. By using the technique of foreshadowing in his novels, Rushdie points to the connectedness of events and the fact that certain events in our lives lead to others. For example, in *Midnight's Children* the fact that Saleem and Shiva have such differing ideas about the direction in which the Midnight Children's Club should go, and about politics and life as a

⁶⁵ <<http://www.colorado.edu/English/courses/ENGL2012Klages/pomo.html>>

whole, is conditioned by the fact that they grew up in such different surroundings. Both are products of their respective histories, just as we all are.

An example of foreshadowing in *Shame* is when Raza and Bilquis's first child is strangled at birth by its umbilical cord, and the narrator comments: "An umbilical cord wound itself around a baby's neck and was transformed into a hangman's noose (in which other nooses are prefigured)"⁶⁶. The prefigured noose, the reader later learns, is that used when Iskander is executed after Raza takes over power. Raza and Bilquis's shamelessness starts when they lose their first-born son and are not able to love their daughter the way they should when she is born, and this shameful act leads to others, culminating in Raza's military coup and the execution of Iskander Harappa. The narrator connects the two deaths because he, as has previously been mentioned, wants to highlight that shameful behavior only leads to further such behavior – it becomes a continuous pattern.

Modernist authors are well-known for using the narrative stream-of-consciousness technique, "in which a writer presents directly the uninterrupted flow (i.e. using minimal punctuation⁶⁷) of a character's thoughts, impressions, and feelings, without the conventional devices of dialogue and description"⁶⁸. Post-modernist authors also make use of this technique in varying degrees, and Rushdie employs it to a certain extent in parts of the narratives of *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*. The concluding passage of *Midnight's Children* is written in stream-of-consciousness, when Saleem Sinai mixes together in one flow the important people and events that have shaped his life and looks towards the future, where he sees himself breaking into millions of pieces – literally into as many pieces as there are

⁶⁶ *Shame*, 82.

⁶⁷ My note (C.K.)

⁶⁸ "Stream of consciousness". The Hutchinson Encyclopedia, 1999 edition.

people in India – and thereby finally wholly becoming one with India. Stream-of-consciousness here allows him to greatly speed up the narrative, making it appear that Saleem is in great haste to finish his story, and pushing us along to the climax, which is his disintegration.

Another technique which Rushdie employs in his novels and which again fragments the narrative is that of parallel recounting; telling two events side-by-side, and simultaneously. In *Midnight's Children*, an example is when Amina Sinai goes to see Shri Ramram Seth the fortune-teller, which is set side-by-side with Ahmed Sinai finding out about his burnt warehouse. By telling a fragment of one event, then one of the other, and continuing to alternate them, the author manages to build up a double suspension and come to the climax of both situations at the same time. This technique is of course the stock-in-trade of modern blockbuster movie production, so the Bollywood influence may be recognised here.

Rushdie uses different techniques in his narratives to express criticism about political situations. In *Shame*, criticism of Pakistan is explicit, when it is the author narrating, or implicit as part of the narrative of the story. In the narrative, the tool used most often by Rushdie when criticising certain aspects of politics or of society, is irony. When describing Talvar Ulhaq's work as head of the secret police, the narrator says that "Clairvoyancy made it possible for him to arrest a future traitor before he committed his act of treason"⁶⁹. By using the magical aspect - Talvar's clairvoyant abilities – a logical reason is created for arresting someone without evidence. The reader is very much aware of the fact that even though in reality it is not possible for people to see into the future in such a way, there are regimes in the world where people are arrested and convicted for crimes even when there is no

⁶⁹ *Shame*, 178.

proof they have done anything wrong. Therefore, reasons which, in the world of magical realism, are logical, become absolutely illogical in our rational world, and thereby create irony wherein the act itself becomes ridiculous.

Irony is often used in *Shame* in reference to the religious explanations used by corrupt regimes to justify their acts. Examples of these include: “Now if they are holy words of God, they cannot be also barbaric”⁷⁰, - an argument presented as logical which, however is a logical fallacy - or “Those who fell in battle were flown directly, first-class, to the perfumed gardens of Paradise”⁷¹ – satirising leaders who use religion and a promise of ever-lasting paradise after death to justify sending their citizens to war.

In *Midnight's Children*, criticism of Indira Gandhi's politics is mostly implicit and disguised under the magical realist style – she is presented as the Widow, an ominous and all-powerful, but invisible dictator. In *Midnight's Children*, criticism is also often achieved through juxtaposition. India and Pakistan are juxtaposed through the way in which Saleem experiences them. He spends his innocent childhood years in India, where life seems to be easy, the future seems to be open and bright, and there is a plurality of people and beliefs (manifested in the Midnight Children themselves who are of many different religious and social backgrounds). However, Saleem spends his adolescent years in Pakistan, these years being filled with self-doubt. The religious intolerance of Pakistan contrasts sharply with the plurality of India, and the fact that he is unable to contact Midnight's Children from there symbolises disconnectedness from Indian plurality and that

⁷⁰ *Shame*, 245.

⁷¹ *Shame*, 77.

entire way of life.⁷² Another important juxtaposition in the novel is that of Saleem's birth with the birth of his son. Saleem is born at a time of optimism in India, a time when everything seems possible and hopes for the country and its people are high. However, his son is born at the time of 'The Emergency', when Indira Gandhi (The Widow) imposes a state of emergency after allegations of electoral corruption, when her son Sanjay is supervising the sterilisation programme and the violent clearing of the ghettos, and when the country has undergone a number of bloody wars with China and Pakistan. At the time of little Aadam Sina's birth, hope for India seems to be lost – the country seems to have wasted its chance. However, birth of a new life in itself symbolises hope, and even though India has gone through a rough time, the end of the novel is filled with some small hope that the new generation, if able to listen to the story of the old generation (Aadam symbolising the new and Saleem the old), may be able to learn from the past mistakes of their mothers and fathers.

Rushdie also alludes to different religions in the narrative of *Midnight's Children*. Saleem can be seen as an embodiment of the religious plurality and the religious history of India. The parents that bring Saleem up are Muslims, but he is living in the predominantly Hindu India, and Mary Pereira, his ayah, is a Christian. Also, his real father is actually William Methwold, so Saleem has British blood. The three different religions all play an important role in the formation of Saleem as a person, as do remnants of colonial times as well as new Western influences - just as they have played an important role in the formation of today's India.

The use of religious symbolism stemming from a number of different cultural backgrounds is a reflection of Rushdie's upbringing. His narrative technique is also influenced by both the East and the West: although employing the Western magical

⁷² Midnight's Children Study Guide. "Draniage and the Desert, Jamila Singer". Sparknotes. <<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/midnightschildren/section11.rhtml>> 2006. January 12, 2008.

realist technique, his narrative also includes elements of the Indian story-telling tradition. In *Midnight's Children*, Saleem is narrating most of his story to Padma; in *Shame*, the story is being narrated to the reader, who is reminded of this by the narrator's interruptions where he speaks directly to him. In the Hindu tradition, storytelling was used to teach people, mainly about religion⁷³: "The storyteller [was] looked upon as a teacher who [was] a scholar in ancient texts in Sanskrit and other vernaculars. He interpret[ed] the religious and mythological texts of the past to the present and future generations."⁷⁴ Rushdie's novels also aim to teach future generations, about history and about what they should be wary of in politics as well as how they should treat each other. In *Midnight's Children*, Saleem aims for his story to be passed on to future generations, just like oral stories used to be passed on. In both *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*, Rushdie's focusing on recent Indian and Pakistani history aims to teach future generations not to repeat the same mistakes that have already been made.

A last important narrative technique of Rushdie's which deserves mention is his employment of cinematic language. For example, the scene in *Midnight's Children*, when Saleem spies on Amina secretly meeting her ex-husband Nadir Khan, is presented as if Saleem were watching a low-grade movie – on a "dirty cinema screen". The setting is a sordid café, with dangerous edginess, because it is the meeting place of the communist party. Saleem describes himself watching the lovers, saying he "concentrated on the cigarette-packet, cutting from two-shot of lovers to this extreme close-up of nicotine." The lover's hands are described as "enter[ing] the frame", and then Saleem announces that he "left the movie before the

⁷³ "Origins of Storytelling". *Internet School Library Media Center*. <<http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/storyorigins.htm>> January 10, 2008.

⁷⁴ Tradition of Story Telling in South India. *Harikatha*. <<http://www.carnatica.net/harikatha1.htm>>. January 10, 2008.

end”.⁷⁵ [C.K.26] The fact that cinematic language is used here makes it feel as if the situation seems somehow unreal to Saleem, as if it were not really his own mother he was looking at but just a pair of lovers in a film. The Bollywood industry and cinema play an extremely large role for Indians, and one can once again see that Rushdie was influenced by cinematic techniques when growing up in Bombay.

As has been illustrated in this chapter, Rushdie’s influences in his narrative style are fairly mixed. In *Midnight’s Children* and in *Shame*, he combines techniques, styles and symbols from both Eastern and Western tradition. Additionally, his writing is distinctly post-modern in its structure and narrative style, which are fragmented and thereby reflect the pursuit of the modern human being to find coherence in an increasingly plural and incoherent world. His work combines the personal with the historical and the political, and to achieve this he often employs the narrative technique of magic realism, which creates forceful satire of, and warnings against, the vices of small-mindedness, dictatorship and political dogma.

⁷⁵ *Midnight’s Children*, 301.

Chapter 4 – Rushdie as a Post-colonial Author

The second half of the 20th century has seen the world change in very drastic ways. Mass media, improved methods of communication and travel, and immense technological advancements have led to demographic changes, to globalisation, and to the increased knowledge of other parts of the world by a large number of the global population. [C27]Civil rights movements in South Africa and America; feminist movements and the emancipation of gay communities in the West have led to a greater acceptance of individual rights, and to the growing acceptance of plurality in our societies. Our societies have also become increasingly multi-ethnic. A very important change in the 20th century has also been the decolonisation of the third world, which has affected an extremely large part of the world's population.

With decolonisation, there emerged the increasing need for former colonial peoples to assert their place in society and in history. Often, this assertion has been manifested by a re-discovery of national heritage. However, the years (sometimes even centuries) spent under colonialism also form a part of their history, and therefore their new sense of identity has been formed by the acceptance of the mixture of ancient heritage in their country together with that of their colonial history.

In many ways, features of post-modern and modern post-colonial literature overlap; both of them explore the place of the individual in today's world and focus on the plurality of history and of experience. As well as being a distinctly post-modern author, Salman Rushdie is also a modern post-colonial one – he is an Indian writing about the Indo-Pakistani post-colonial experience after the period of colonisation. To understand Rushdie's writing in the context of the post-colonial, one

must take a look at what characterises post-colonial literature. As this paper has focused on Salman Rushdie, who comes from India (colonised by the British) what will be discussed will be related to this specific colonial experience, and the coloniser's language being referred to will be English.

During the years of colonisation, stories of the colonised people were told in English and by the English. An example of this would be E.M. Forster's novel *A Passage to India*, where the focus is on the coloniser's experiences in India, and the indigenous population is viewed through the coloniser's eyes only. The feeling which emerged for the colonised people from this type of writing was that their history was written by somebody else, and that it was therefore not truly theirs. This is the major reason why modern post-colonial literature focuses so largely on history and on past events: those who were formerly colonised feel that now it is their turn to show the true cultural and historical heritage of their people. As Denis Walder puts it, the former colonised people aim at "overturning the assumption of cultural and racial inferiority imposed by the colonizers and accepted by the colonized"⁷⁶. In other words, modern post-colonial literature is concerned with the former colonised people telling their own hi/story[C28], and presenting to the world a true picture of their culture, aiming to celebrate it for its differences rather than cast it as inferior for them. In the novels *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*, Rushdie does just this. Franz Fanon, one of the major theoreticians of post-colonialism, describes the time of colonialism as "a denial of all culture, history and value outside the coloniser's frame", which he terms "a systematic negation of the other person"⁷⁷. The colonised people ("the other") were suppressed not only politically, but also culturally, and

⁷⁶ Walder, 11.

⁷⁷ Walder, 40.

after the coloniser left, the phenomenon of ‘writing back to the Empire’ (Rushdie’s term) emerged.

English was, according to Ashcroft et al, “the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power [was] perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of 'truth', 'order', and 'reality' bec[a]me established”⁷⁸ by the coloniser during the period of colonialism. Many post-colonial writers, including Salman Rushdie, retain the use of English in their writing, but reform the language and fit it to express an indigenous way of thinking and way of life. The main reason for this is that only the use of the English language enables true ‘writing back to the Empire’.

60 years after India’s independence from Britain, the English language still retains significant status in India. Firstly, it is the international language of trade and commerce, and secondly the great diversity of the Indians themselves means that English has, since colonial times, functioned as a common language . Salman Rushdie’s novels are written in the English language, because he attended English schools for his entire life and also for the practical reason that he has written and published his novels in England, where he permanently resides. As has also been mentioned, Rushdie has said that he aims to write ‘back to the Empire”, i.e. back to England as the center of Indian colonisation: he is the colonised writing back to the coloniser. By using the English language, he is able to do this in a way which would be impossible had he written in an Indian language – he is able to be understood by the coloniser by using the coloniser’s own language. He uses the coloniser’s own means of expression to portray the *real* Indian experience to him, by incorporating Indian cultural, religious and mythological influences in his narrative.

⁷⁸ Ashcroft et al, 7.

Rushdie has written that: “India...possesses one of the largest and most dynamic bourgeoisies in the world, and has done so for at least as long as Europe...What is new is the emergence of a gifted generation of Indian writers *working in English*.”⁷⁹ Looking at this quote in the context of Fanon’s “systematic negation of the other person”, one also feels that to Rushdie, his choice in writing in English (and thereby addressing a mainly English audience) is a matter of pride: he wants to show the colonisers that the country which they for so long viewed as inferior, in fact has a cultural heritage and richness of probably a greater scope than that of Britain, and this he can only do by using the English language.

One of the main themes Rushdie is concerned with in his writing is that of history – a theme important for all post-colonial writers. By exploring the history of his homeland, which includes pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial history, he illustrates that India and Pakistan have their own rich histories and thereby portrays their uniqueness. What is important is that he does this from the inside, as one who comes from the region. He is therefore not portraying Indian history as that of ‘the other’, as a culture viewed only in terms of its differences to Western culture. Indian history and culture is given its own specific space and value.

Rushdie’s focus on the fragmentation of knowledge and the fragmentation of narrative largely result from his position as a Muslim Indian born at the time of Indian Independence, who was educated in the West. This has been illustrated by highlighting the diverse cultural influences evident in his literary theme and style. Rushdie is a man who has at once been formed by all these different cultures, but at the same time has lost the ability to truly feel one hundred percent part of any single one – a feeling shared by many people in today’s increasingly mobile and mutable

⁷⁹ In Defence of the Novel, Yet Again. *Step Across This Line*, 57.

world, and especially by many citizens of the former colonised countries. Of the three countries that have shaped him, Rushdie feels least knowledgeable about Pakistan. This he illustrates in the novel *Shame*, writing that: “however I choose to write about over-there, I am forced to reflect the world in fragments of broken mirrors...I must reconcile myself to the inevitability of the missing bits.⁸⁰” In this light, Rushdie’s novels, even though they explore political, historical and universal themes, also gain a distinctly personal character. His novels are the products of his own plural cultural, social and literary influences and of his own point of view of what is important to discuss and highlight in today’s world.

Midnight’s Children and *Shame* are both novels dealing with historical, political and personal themes. Rushdie intertwines the personal level with events of national and global importance, using the narrative strategy of magic realism. By creating a magic world and superimposing it on the real world, he is able to incorporate a great deal of political and social criticism into his novels about India and Pakistan. Rushdie’s own background and influences are evident in his writing, as his themes, style, symbolism and narrative strategies are a unique blend of the East and the West. His writing is post-colonial and post-modern, through its syzygy: fragmentation and the dissolution of social identity on one hand coupled with the urgent search for identity and a person’s place in history on the other. In today’s world, where plurality is aggressively encouraged, the novels of Salman Rushdie may be seen as almost a manifesto of pluralism, assisting in the postcolonial project to wrest authenticity and authority from the grasp West, thereby validating other voices and other versions of history.

⁸⁰ *Shame*, 69.

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Resumé

Hlavním cílem této bakalářské práce je zkoumání vypravěčské techniky Salmana Rushdieho v jeho románech *Půlnoční děti* (1981) a *Hanba* (1983). K pochopení Rushdieho literární tvorby je důležité nahlédnout do jeho života a identifikovat podněty, které tuto tvorbu ovlivnily. Také historie Indie a Pákistánu hrají v jeho dílech důležitou roli. Příběhy *Půlnočních dětí* i *Hanby* se v těchto zemích odehrávají, proto se část práce právě touto historií zabývá. Nadále je Rushdieho tvorba charakterizována jako magickorealistickejší, postmoderní a postkoloniální, a tyto prvky jsou pomocí příkladů z *Půlnočních dětí* a *Hanby* ilustrovány.

První kapitola má jako hlavní cíl obeznámení s Rushdieho minulostí a jeho literární tvorbou. Rushdie pochází z muslimské rodiny a narodil se v stejném roce, kdy Indie získala nezávislost od Britského impéria a kdy došlo k rozdělení země na Indie a na Pákistán. Jeho rodina se navzdory své náboženské víře rozhodla zůstat v hinduistické Indii. Rushdie vyrůstal v Bombaji a později studoval v Anglii. V Pákistánu žil jen krátce, a jako dospělý se rozhodl zůstat v Londýně. Zde se také dal na spisovatelskou dráhu. *Půlnoční děti*, jeho druhý román, se stal bestsellerem a vyhrál prestižní ocenění Booker Prize. Dva roky nato vyšel jeho třetí román *Hanba*. Nejznámější z jeho románů jsou *Satanské verše*, kvůli kterým byla na Rushdieho íránským Ajatolláhem uvalena tzv. fatwa – trest smrti. Tato práce se ale bude zabývat jenom jeho druhým a třetím románem.

Na Rushdieho vypravěčské technice i na tématech a symbolech, které ve své literární tvorbě využívá se podepsalo jeho indické pozadí i jeho západní vzdělání. Mezi své autorské vlivy sám řadí Gabriela Garcíu Marqueze a vypravěčský styl

magického realismu, anebo Jamese Joyce a styl proudu vědomostí a myšlenek, který proslavil modernistické literární hnutí. Ovlivnil ho také Günther Grass. Grassův román *Plechový bubínek* a Rushdieho *Půlnoční děti* oba zkoumají život a vývoj jedné hlavní postavy. Dále se na Rushdieho tvorbě podílel vliv indické ústní vypravěčské techniky a indické kinematografie – tzv. Bollywood.

Druhá kapitola této práce se zabývá historií Indie a Pákistánu ve spojení s romány *Půlnoční děti* a *Hamba* a v souvislosti, jak historii obou států Rushdie ve zmíněných dílech používá a kritizuje. Obzvláště v *Půlnočních dětech* jsou dějiny důležitým tématem – hlavní hrdina a vypravěč tohoto románu, Saleem Sinai, se narodí ve stejném momentě, kdy Indie získává nezávislost od Británie. Jeho celý život se pak stává odrazem nebo paralelou vývoje nového indického státu. V románu se objevují historické osobnosti, které buď stojí sami za sebe, nebo fungují jako symboly. Tak například Mian Abdullah je symbol Muslimů, kteří bojovali proti vytvoření samostatného Pákistánu, a jeho vražda symbolizuje smrt této myšlenky. Na druhou stranu politici jako Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi anebo Indira Gandhi se v románu vyskytují a stojí sami za sebe – i když Indira Gandhi je většinou stylizovaná do neviditelné autokratky, které se říká pouze „Vdova“.

Když se Saleem narodí, jeho život se zdá být snadný a šťastný. V průběhu románu se mu život ale hodně zkomplikuje, a ke konci se zdá, že už v jeho životě neexistuje žádná naděje. Celá jeho rodina je mrtvá, jeho přátelé téměř také, on sám je vykastrovaný a životem zničený. Stejně bídně se na tom zdá být i jeho země: Po velkých nadějích při získání nezávislosti se hlavně kvůli politikům země dostane do válek, sociální podmínky pro mnoho lidí jsou velice špatné, a Indira Gandhi nastoluje stanné právo poté, co je obviněna z korupce při volbách. Zůstává tu však

malý kousek naděje, symbolizovaný narozením Saleemova syna Aadama. V něm spočívá naděje nové generace – pokud ona se poučí z činů té staré, je tu pro Indii ještě naděje.

Román *Hanba* se odehrává v Pákistánu a sleduje životy tří rodin: Omara Khayma Shakila a jeho tří matek, rodiny Iskandera Harappy a rodiny Razy Hydera. Iskander Harappa je volně modelován na někdejším pákistánském prezidentovi Bhuttovi a Raza Hyder na jeho následníkovi Zia-ul-Haqovi, který Bhutta svrhl a poté ho nechal zavraždit. V románu *Hanba* Rushdie promíchává soukromý svět hlavních postav s veřejným světem pákistánské nejvyšší politiky. V tomto románu je evidentní silná kritika pákistánských politických metod, jako je vraždění politických oponentů anebo teokratické praktiky. Rushdie ale sám tvrdí, že tímto románem nechce upozornit jen na politické praktiky v Pákistánu. Nazývá zemi, o které píše, Peccavistan – země hříchu. Naznačuje, že podobné praktiky se odehrávají i jinde ve světě a že bychom měli usilovat o to, aby tomu tak nebylo.

Velký důraz na dějiny a na historicismus v Rushdieho literární tvorbě slouží k tomu účelu, aby čtenář pochopil důležitý význam dějin. Všichni bychom si měli být vědomi kontinuity dění a dějin a měli bychom usilovat o to, abychom se na svět a na politiku dívali kriticky, protože naše počínání zase bude mít důležitý význam pro vytvoření světa, ve kterém budou žít naše děti.

Třetí kapitola této práce zkoumá Rushdieho vypravěčskou techniku. Rushdie je postmoderní autor, který používá vypravěčskou strategii magického realismu. Magický realismus spojuje nerealistické – až magické – prvky s každodenní realitou. Rushdie tuto techniku používá z velké části k tomu, aby vytvořil kritiku o politice a o společnosti. Velmi evidentní je tato funkce v románu *Hanba*, kde například postava

Sufiyi Zinobie bere na sebe hanbu těch lidí, kteří se chovají nestydatě – jak v osobním životě, tak v politickém. Tato hanba se projevuje v tom, že Sufiya rudne, až začíná její pokožka skoro hořet, a nakonec ji hanebné počínání ostatních pohltí natolik, že se z ní stane úplné monstrum. Rushdie vytvořením této postavy upozorňuje na to, že hanebné počínání bude mít vždy své následky. Toto varování míní hlavně proti politickým praktikám jako jsou autokracie anebo vraždění oponentů. Rushdie sám tvrdí, že magický realismus mu umožňuje vytvořit intenzivnější obraz reality.

Rushdie si ve svých románech také hraje s časem a s chronologií, podobně jako to už dříve dělal třeba Laurence Sterne ve svém díle *Tristram Shandy*. V románu *Hanba* používá Rushdie dva různé kalendáře – islámský a křesťanský – a spolu s faktem, že zemi ve svém románu nazývá vymyšleným jménem Peccavistan, vytváří dojem globálnějšího dosahu jeho kritiky. Jeho kritika se nevztahuje jen na Pákistán, ale je to varování pro lidi a politiky na celém světě.

Často magický realismus také vytváří brechtovský zcizovací efekt, tím že nelogická, nerealistická situace je prezentována jako realistická. Nadále Rushdie vytváří zcizovací efekt velkým množstvím vypravěčových vsuvek a komentářů, a také tím, že vypravěč mnohdy sám zpochybňuje pravdivost toho, co řekl, anebo dokonce upozorňuje na to, že se mýlil – příklad z *Půlnočních dětí* je, když Saleem čtenáře upozorňuje na to, že si popletl některá data a sledy událostí. Tím otevírá otázku pravdivosti výkladu dějin a zdůrazňuje fakt, že tyto výklady jsou vždy subjektivní. Měli bychom tudíž být velmi opatrní a nevěřit slepě všemu vyprávění. Rushdie opět po čtenáři vyžaduje, aby vše zpochybňoval a nic nebral jako dané. V

románu *Hanba* se zase vypravěč opírá o nevědomost, aby se zprostil zodpovědnosti za některé velmi kritické postoje vůči Pákistánu, které zde vyjadřuje.

V Rushdieho literární tvorbě se promíchávají prvky východní i západní kultury. V jeho vypravěčské technice se východní vliv promítá skrze starou indickou vypravěčskou techniku – Rushdie funguje jako indický ústní vypravěč, který interpretuje historické dění pro další generace. Saleem Sinai v románu *Půlnoční děti* předává svůj příběh svému synovi, který se z něho má poučit. V románu *Hanba* vypravěč často přerušuje děj a vsunuje vlastní dialog se čtenářem a vlastní myšlenky o tom, co, jak a proč píše.

Rushdieho romány jsou postmoderní fikcí. Postmodernismus vychází z hnutí modernistů ze začátku dvacátého století, kteří experimentovali s novými formálními i stylistickými formami, kladli důraz na hodnotu individuálního myšlení (na subjektivitu) a viděli moderní svět jako pustý a rozdělený. Fragmentace je prvek, který je velmi zajímavý i pro postmodernisty. Vidí ho ale v poněkud jiném světle než modernisté. Postmodernisté fragmentaci vnímají jako něco spíše pozitivního, a oslavují dnešní plurální svět. *Hanba* i *Půlnoční děti* mají fragmentovanou strukturu a fragmentace se v nich také objevuje jako důležitý motiv. Struktura je fragmentovaná hlavně velkou spoustou vypravěčských vsuvek a komentářů. Důležitými motivy fragmentace jsou například Farah Zoroaster v románu *Hanba*, která se vidí jenom po částech ve visících kouskách zrcadla, anebo Aadam Aziz v románu *Půlnoční děti*, který se s manželkou Naseem seznámí po částech skrz díru v prostěradle. Rushdie chce zdůraznit, že bychom neměli soudit věci podle jednotlivých částí, pokud nejsme obeznámeni s celkem – celek může být úplně jiný, než by se zdálo podle jeho nespojených částí.

Postmodernisté se často nedrží ryze lineárního vyprávění, a to se dá říct i o Rushdiem. Historie je pro něj důležitou součástí k porozumění světa, proto funguje jeho technika nastiňování a střídání minulosti, přítomnosti a budoucnosti ke zdůraznění toho, že dění nestojí jen samo o sobě, ale že všechny události kolem nás mají své příčiny i následky. Další postmoderní technikou vycházející hodně silně z modernismu, a kterou Rushdie do určité míry využívá, je metoda proudu myšlenek. Tím vyzdvihuje důraz na individualitu a subjektivitu.

Další důležitá Rushdieho technika, kterou používá hlavně ke kritice společnosti a politiky, je ironie. V románu *Hanba* mají postavy často úplně nelogické důvody ke svému jednání – například Raza Hyder si vybírá justici podle jejich vousů. Je to naprosto nelogický důvod a čtenář to ví – Rushdie tímto příkladem zdůrazňuje nesmyslnost spojení náboženství s politikou. Ironie mu často napomáhá k zdůraznění směšnosti určitých politických praktik.

V románu *Půlnoční děti* hrají také důležitou roli rozdílné náboženské a národní vlivy. Sám Saleem Sinai je Muslim, žije v hinduistické Indii a jeho chůva je křesťanka. Navíc Saleemův pravý otec je William Methwold - Brit - takže Saleem je jakousi syntézou různých náboženství, národů a jsou v něm i stopy vlivu kolonializmu. Protože Saleem reprezentuje Indii, tato jeho pluralita se dá chápat jako paralela k indické pluralitě – Indie je země, ve které žijí, a na jejichž historii se podíleli, lidé nejrůznějších národností, pozadí a náboženství.

Poslední kapitola této práce zkoumá Rushdieho literární tvorbu v kontextu postkoloniálním. Rushdie je Ind a píše o indických zkušenostech v anglickém jazyce. Za dob koloniálních také psali britští autoři jako například Edward Morgan Forster o indických lidech a zkušenostech, ale jen v souvislosti s tím, jak je vnímali oni a s tím,

v čem se indický život lišil od toho britského. Moderní postkoloniální autoři jako je Salman Rushdie se snaží bývalému kolonizátorovi a celému světu podat autentickou indickou zkušenost – indické postavy neslouží jen k tomu, aby tvořily protějšek těch britských, ale jejich zkušenosti získávají vlastní důležitou hodnotu. Svým důrazem na historii tomuto Rushdie napomáhá, protože zobrazuje jak bohatou a plurální historii Indie vlastně má.

Rushdieho tvorba je současně fascinující čtení, silná sociální a politická kritika, oslava plurality indického kontinentu, a vyzdvižení lidské subjektivní zkušenosti. V *Půlnočních dětech* a v *Hanbě* nám dokáže toto vše podat svým vypravěčským stylem magického realismu spolu s prvky ironie, ústní vypravěčské tradice, kinematografie, historie a vlastních zkušeností. V dnešním světě podporující pluralismus se Rushdieho romány dají číst skoro jako manifestace tohoto pluralismu.

