



Postcolonial Identity And Cultural Hybridity In Salman Rushdie's Later Works: A Literary Exploration

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ABSTRACT

This research article analyses postcolonial identity and cultural creolization in the later works of Salman Rushdie concerning *The Moor's Last Sigh*, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, and *Shalimar the Clown*. In this way, the study explores how Rushdie subverts the conventional understanding of identity and culture as fixed and stable categories that are determined by history and the world. To analyze how Rushdie's characters grapple with the hybridity of their identities in the postcolonial world, the article draws from postcolonial theory, especially the hybridity theories developed by Homi K. Bhabha. The study focuses on the development of identity in Rushdie's novels, and how his characters continue to be shaped by colonial and global forces. It also compares Rushdie's treatment of hybridity with other postcolonial writers, to show how he has contributed to the field through the use of magical realism and narrative techniques. The present research adds to the existing body of postcolonial studies by providing fresh perspectives into the representation of culture, history, and identity in Rushdie's novels. They stress the importance of hybridity as a concept for the analysis of postcolonial subjectivity in the context of modern global concerns. The article ends with an identification of directions for further research, with the author calling for more research on the ethical and political aspects of Rushdie's representation of hybridity and its relevance in contemporary globalized society.

Key words: Postcolonial Identity, Cultural Hybridity, Salman Rushdie

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Significance

Salman Rushdie is one of the most important writers of contemporary literature whose novels are concerned with questions of identity, culture, and politics. His literary works have been discussed in the context of postcolonial theory, and they deal with issues of identity and the concept of the 'third space' in a postcolonial society. It is in Rushdie's later works, however, that these themes are explored in a more complex manner, which offers the chance to study how postcolonial identity and cultural diaspora are depicted and developed in an increasingly interconnected world. The construction of postcolonial subjectivity through colonialism and the search for cultural subjectivity has been one of the major themes in Rushdie's novels. Cultural creolization, a term that describes the process of combining different cultural traits to produce a new form of identity, is evident in his later novels. This blending usually raises questions on the cultural and national integrity, which is the true picture of the modern cultural exchange. When it comes to the themes of postcolonial literature, it is important to understand how Rushdie addresses them to get an idea of the potential of literature in the modern multicultural world.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this research is to identify how Rushdie's later novels deal with postcolonial subjectivity and the concept of the New Ethnicities. Specifically, this study aims to:

- Analyze the Depiction of Postcolonial Identity:** Analyse how Rushdie describes the process of identity construction in the context of postcolonial societies, with an emphasis on the historical and the present.

2. **Assess the Impact of Historical and Political Contexts:** Assess the impact of historical events and political transformations on the themes of identity and hybridity in Rushdie's later novels.
3. **Contribute to Postcolonial Literary Criticism:** Present fresh insights into the author's contribution to postcolonial literature and underscore the relevance of Rushdie's works in the contemporary debate on cultural creolization and subjectivity.

1.3 Overview of Salman Rushdie's Later Work

The later works of Salman Rushdie, published after *Midnight's Children* and *The Satanic Verses*, are equally as concerned with the questions of identity and cultural displacement, but with a greater intensity and sophistication. His subsequent novels, such as *The Moor's Last Sigh*, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, *Shalimar the Clown*, *The Enchantress of Florence*, *Two Years Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Nights*, and *Quichotte* contain a multilayered story that explores the effects of globalization and migration.

1. **The Moor's Last Sigh (1995):** This novel focuses on the issue of the cultural and personal identity of a man who is in between the two worlds – the East and the West, tradition and the modern world which is also typical of Rushdie's works due to his interest in the post-colonial condition and the idea of the new hybrid self. [1]
2. **The Ground Beneath Her Feet (1999):** This novel, which is based on the mythical and real worlds, explores the relations between culture and change as well as the role of music in breaking cultural barriers. [2]
3. **Shalimar the Clown (2005):** This novel is based on the theme of political conflict in Kashmir and focuses on the consequences of political conflict on personal and cultural selves and the harm that political systems cause to individuals.
4. **The Enchantress of Florence (2008):** This work is devoted to the analysis of the historical and cultural interactions between the East and the West and shows that the past and the present are intertwined to form new cultural paradigms.
5. **Two Years Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Nights (2015):** A historical and at the same time, a mythological novel, this work is focused on the subject of cultural clash and integration through a story that is set in different cultural and time frames.
6. **Quichotte (2019):** A postmodern adaptation of the Don Quixote story, this novel explores current concerns of self, media, and cultural otherness in the age of globalization.

All these works help to understand the problem of postcolonial identity and cultural creolization, presenting different views on the nature of cultural contacts and the dynamics of identity in the postcolonial world.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory is an approach to understand the effects of colonialism on postcolonial societies and imperialism in the modern world. This theoretical approach aims to know how colonial pasts have influenced and are still influencing the cultural and social memory, organization, and text. In this way, the postcolonial theory helps understand the nature of postcolonial subjectivity and the interactions between cultural components in the literature which are the result of colonialism. The concepts that are central to postcolonial theory include colonialism, postcolonialism, orientalism, hybridity, and subalternity. [3] Colonialism is a historical process in which one country controls another, taking advantage of the latter's resources and enforcing its norms. Postcolonialism as a discipline of study, focuses on the impacts of colonialism on the societies that were colonized and how these impacts are reflected in the present culture, politics, and personal identity. Orientalism is a concept developed by Edward Said, which refers to how Western societies portrayed the Orient or the East as the other, barbaric, and in need of the colonial masters' civilizing influence. The concept of hybridity was developed by Homi K. Bhabha and it is a process of transculturation, which means that a new culture is formed from the clash and interpenetration of two or more different cultures. It is important for capturing the processes and changes of cultural selves in postcolonial societies. Last, subaltern, a term that Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak made well known, refers to people who are oppressed and who are silenced in the dominant historical and cultural discourses. These two concepts in combination constitute the framework of postcolonial theory, providing the means for understanding the issues of identity, culture, and power in the postcolonial context.

The major theorists in postcolonial studies have played a very important role in the development of postcolonial theory through their critical insights on representation, culture, and the question of the margins. Edward Said's *Orientalism* published in 1978, is a pioneering work that discusses how the Western world has continued to dominate Oriental societies through depicting them in the wrong perspective. In this respect, Said's critique focuses on the cultural dimension of imperialism and calls for a deconstruction of these images to subvert colonial discourses. In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Homi K. Bhabha develops the idea of 'hybridity' to analyze how colonial interactions produce new cultures that challenge the idea of cultural authenticity.

Bhabha's work is concerned with the processes of cultural encounters and the production of cultural intermediaries that disrupt the binaries and contribute to the understanding of postcolonial subjectivity. [4] Another well-known piece is Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988), which discusses the attempt of the oppressed to speak within dominant frameworks. Spivak's critique is to explain how subaltern subjects struggle to gain voice and subjectivity, and how it is imperative to consider the politics of representation in postcolonial societies. Her work is central to discourses on voice, representation, and power and provides valuable information on the politics of speaking on behalf of the subaltern. [5]

2.2 Cultural Hybridity

Cultural hybridity is the process by which different cultures mix to create new forms of identity; this is important in understanding the social existence of postcolonial societies and their interactions with the rest of the world in the postcolonial age. It is a cultural process that occurs when two or more cultural systems meet and create new and unexpected cultural forms, thus complicating the idea of a 'pure' or 'authentic' culture. However, it pays much attention to the dynamic and performed aspect of culture. This integration can be seen in several aspects, for example, language, where features from two or more languages are borrowed to form new languages or ways of speaking; culture where modern and traditional aspects are adopted to form new cultures; and in arts and literature where motifs and styles from different cultures are incorporated in the works of art and literature to give a blend of new ideas and perceptions. [6] Hybridity in postcolonial literature is a useful concept that helps to understand the issues of identity and cultural interaction. It enables authors to subvert colonial discourses by providing multiple and complex subject positions that do not conform to stereotypical images and thus represent postcolonial conditions. Hybridity also addresses the processes of cultural contact and change, focusing on how such encounters define the modern subject, and it assists in understanding how people and cultures build their subjectivities about colonial pasts and global presents. [7] This paper demonstrated how the concept of hybridity can be employed to discuss postcolonial topics and contribute to the understanding of identity and cultural interactions through the analysis of Salman Rushdie's works.

3. POSTCOLONIAL IDENTITY IN RUSHDIE'S LATER WORKS

3.1 Evolution of Identity in Rushdie's Novels

The later novels of Salman Rushdie also depict an intricate portrayal of postcolonial subjectivity, which is in itself a fluid and hybrid process in the postcolonial world. His novels depict characters who have to come to terms with colonialism, migration, and cultural creolization, which shows that identity is a process that is constantly in the making. Rushdie's characters are constantly in the position of being in between cultures, histories, and politics and are, therefore, in the process of constructing and re-constructing their identities. In this sense, Rushdie's narrative techniques and the character portrayals support the idea of the postcolonial subject as a subject in process, as a subject in the process of constructing his/her identity.

3.2 The Impact of Historical and Political Contexts

The historical and political backgrounds of the later novels of Rushdie are important in the construction of the characters' identity. The effects of postcolonialism, the division of India and Pakistan, the effects of globalization, and the politics of terrorism are some of the themes that define the process of identity formation in his novels. There is always an individual and social drama in Rushdie's novels that shows the internal and external battles of the characters in the context of history and politics. The connection between the individual self and the socio-political processes exemplifies how colonial and postcolonial processes make their imprints on the postcolonial self. By depicting these contexts, Rushdie not only comments on the colonial legacy but also on the possibilities and difficulties of existence in a world that is in a state of flux and struggle.

3.3 Key Novels and Characters of Postcolonial Identity

1. The Moor's Last Sigh - In *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995), Rushdie discusses the problem of postcolonial identity through the protagonist Moraes Zogoiby, or Moor, who is an example of the Indian man of the twentieth century. Moor's ancestry is a blend of Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and Jewish backgrounds, which is typical of Indian multiculturalism. When Moor narrates his family's history, the novel explores the processes of subjectivization in a postcolonial state and in a country that is divided along communal lines. The story is full of symbolism and imagery and it paints the picture of a conflicted and confused Moor, much like the history of the nation he belongs to. Moor's character allows Rushdie to explore the construction of individual and collective subjectivity in the context of history, culture, and politics.

2. The Ground Beneath Her Feet - *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999) presents a rather different view of postcolonial subjectivity through myth, music, and the contemporary world. The novel is a narration of the lives of Ormus Cama and Vina Apsara, two singers whose characters are defined by the Eastern and Western worlds. The novel is a multilayered story of the globalized world, which is presented through the characters' attempts to find their place in the new world. This shift of ground is used by Rushdie to represent the fluidity of identity in the context of globalization where people are constantly in a state of flux. The novel also addresses

the question of postcolonial identities and the influence of popular culture and globalization in the construction of the self about the past and present, the local and the global.

3. Shalimar the Clown - Shalimar the Clown (2005) explores the effects of political violence on self and community. In the context of the conflict in Kashmir, the novel depicts the tragic story of Shalimar, the Kashmiri performer whose identity is destroyed by the political events in his country. The novel can be seen as depicting the consequences of colonial past and nationalism on the lives of people in an explicit manner. Shalimar who starts as a happy-go-lucky artist turns into an angry man who becomes an assassin of the political leaders and this portrays how the political ideologies affect the postcolonial self. Rushdie employs the figure of Shalimar to show that trauma and political violence disrupt a person's identity and make it difficult to form a stable self-construct in the context of outside pressures.

4. CULTURAL HYBRIDITY IN RUSHDIE'S FICTION

4.1 Representations of Hybrid Cultures

The multiculturalism of Salman Rushdie's fiction is famous for its vivid representation of the multicultural reality of postcolonial societies. In his stories cultures are not fixed and do not exist in a vacuum; they are constantly evolving and coming into contact with other cultures, thereby producing new forms of identity. These are some of the ways that Rushdie's characters are hybrids, struggling with multiple cultural influences that define them. His representation of the hybridity of cultures denies the existence of the purity of cultural identities, and therefore, the world is a place where cultures interpenetrate each other. Thus, using language, symbols, and the plot, Rushdie conveys the concept of cultural creolization and shows how various cultures mix to create new, lively, and often conflicting cultures.

4.2 Interactions Between Different Cultural Elements

The interpenetration of different cultural strands is not merely a subplot but the plot itself and the characters' experience. These interactions are depicted as constructive and destructive and therefore create cultural forms while at the same time showing the clashes and tensions that come with cultural contact. The themes that are most characteristic of Rushdie's novels are the syncretism of the East and the West, the combination of the sacred and the profane, the historical and the postmodern. This interaction of the cultures is not only a sign of the postcolonial situation but also a representation of the world that has become globalized where cultural borrowing and lending are unavoidable and can often change the culture that is receiving it. These interactions are portrayed by Rushdie in a very effective manner to prove how cultural hybridity can be a source of both vitality and alienation.

4.3 Key Novels and Themes of Cultural Hybridity

1. Midnight's Children (1981) - Although not one of the later novels of Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* can be considered as a foundational work for comprehending his attitude to the concept of cultural hybridity. The novel is a biography of the Indian man Saleem Sinai whose life is intertwined with the history of postcolonial India. The story deals with the concept of Indian self-identity as a pluralistic, syncretic, and conflicted one, as the Indian subcontinent is a melting pot of cultural, religious, and linguistic strands. In the same way, magical realism defamiliarizes the real and the fantastic, which is an effective way of underlining the constructed nature of culture. The characters in *Midnight's Children* are a microcosm of India and the hybridity of the Indian culture; they represent the struggles of a country that was born out of cultural conflict.

2. The Satanic Verses (1988) - *The Satanic Verses* is easily the most polemical of Rushdie's novels and is a highly philosophical work on the question of cultural metamorphosis. The novel is composed of several connected stories, all of which raise questions about identity, religion, and cultural tensions. The protagonists, Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha struggle with the dilemmas of postcolonial existence and are at the same time both alienated from and enmeshed in the cultures of the two worlds. The book by Rushdie also depicts cultural hybridity in a rather ambiguous way, which shows that existence in a world where cultural barriers are blurring is not easy. The novel's setting of history, myth, and the modern world is a perfect representation of the postcolonial self in a world of multiple cultures, this shows the challenges and opportunities of the newly formed culture.

3. The Enchantress of Florence: A Novel (2008) - In *The Enchantress of Florence*, Rushdie is also interested in the question of cultural identity and the encounter between the East and the West during the Renaissance. The novel is a historical fantasy that blends Mughal India with Renaissance Florence and the story is steeped in the cultural, artistic, and philosophical borrowings between these two worlds. [8]The characters of the novel like the Mughal emperor Akbar and the mysterious woman known as the Enchantress symbolize the integration of the two cultures and the two worlds. Rushdie employs the novel to demonstrate that cultural creolization is a process that fosters the emergence of diverse and thriving forms of culture, although it is also a process that is accompanied by clash and conflict. For this reason, the novel is an important text for understanding Rushdie's approach to hybridity because of the density of cultural references and the themes of identity and power.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

5.1 Rushdie's Approach to Hybridity vs. Other Postcolonial Writers

Among the postcolonial writers, Salman Rushdie occupies a unique position due to the application of magical realism, the intricate plot, and the focus on history and mythology. Many postcolonial writers deal with the concept of hybridity and while Rushdie does so as well, his approach is a bit more complex as he interweaves the fantastic with the real giving the reader hybridity not only as a social and cultural phenomenon but as a cosmic one as well. For example, in *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie employs magical realism to depict the hybridity of the Indian subject and combines history with life stories in a manner that differs from other postcolonial writers who use realism. While hybridity is embraced by postmodern writers, Chinua Achebe and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o for instance, the two view hybridity about the conflict between the traditional and the colonial. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe portrays hybridity as an element of cultural disintegration and decline, and as a result, he paints a picture of colonialism as a disruptive force that undermines indigenous culture. Like Ngũgĩ in *A Grain of Wheat*, the novel also analyses the impact of colonialism on African subjectivity, though the author is closer to the realist representation of the social and political implications of the hybrid subject. Other voices are V. S. Naipaul and Arundhati Roy. A more pessimistic note is struck when Naipaul represents hybridity as a state of alienation and marginalization, as a postcolonial condition. While hybridity is depicted as a positive thing in *The God of Small Things*, Roy shows it as a positive and negative thing at the same time, especially where caste and family are involved. Rushdie's attitude is more positive and accepts the construct of hybridity and the possibility of multiple selves. He frequently depicts hybridity as a generator of creativity and innovation, though he does not deny that it can also create tensions. This puts him in a different position than other postcolonial writers who may pay more attention to the challenges and tensions associated with what it means to be in between.

5.2 Influence of Globalization and Transnationalism

The impact of globalization and transnationalism in Rushdie's work is seen in his depiction of characters and stories that are globalized, in the modern world. Migration, diaspora, and hybridity, concepts that are rooted in globalization, are recurrent motifs in Rushdie's novels. His characters are always in between, they are hybrids of different cultures and thus, they reflect the postmodern condition. For instance, in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, the main characters travel between continents, and their personalities and cultural backgrounds are influenced by transnationalism. Similarly, other writers of the postcolonial world also write about globalization, but the approach and the style may vary. Jhumpa Lahiri also writes about the diaspora and the struggle between the traditional and the contemporary in the world today, but her method is less political, concentrating on the individual and family aspects of transnationalism. Like them, though not strictly postcolonial, the works of Kazuo Ishiguro, particularly *The Remains of the Day*, also concern the issues of memory, identity, and loss in the global context, which, in his case, reveals the themes of displacement and longing. Globalization in Rushdie's works is not only the result of colonial history but also of the contemporary world; it is used as a background for the investigation of postcolonial hybrid identities. His narratives depict a world that is becoming more and more interconnected, and where identities are in a constant process of being constructed and reconstructed by global forces. This is in contrast to writers who may choose to highlight what may be regarded as the regional or specific impacts of globalization, that is, the impacts that may be seen in specific groups of people or specific societies. The aspect of transnationalism and globalization makes Rushdie's representation of hybridity even more intricate, and thus his work is not only pertinent to postcolonial studies but also to the studies of the impact of global cultural interactions on the formation of identities. [9]

5. CRITICAL AND SCHOLARLY RECEPTION

6.1 Major Criticisms and Interpretations

The works of Salman Rushdie have provoked various reactions from critics and scholars and one can find many rather contradictory opinions. His application of magical realism, postmodernist features, and the inclusion of taboo topics like religion and politics have made him a target of praise and criticism. The most significant controversy that was associated with Rushdie's works is the issue of religion, especially in *The Satanic Verses* (1988). People from religious backgrounds complained that Rushdie had offended religious sensibility by portraying religious characters and motifs. This controversy dominated most of the literary analysis of the novel, although some scholars stood up for it as an attempt to express religious and cultural identity, noting that Rushdie aimed to provoke people's thoughts and question dogmatic views. The second area of concern is the representation of postcolonial subjectivities in Rushdie's novels. Critics have claimed that his portrayal of hybridity is sometimes too optimistic, obscuring the struggles of people in the postcolonial world. Some of the critics have noted that Rushdie's characters are cosmopolitan, which makes readers from other classes feel out of place. Furthermore, his choice of English as the language of his novels has been accused of marketing his books to the Western world, which brings into question the relevance and originality of the novels in postcolonial literature. However, Rushdie's work has also been acclaimed for its imaginative range, verbal inventiveness, and historical and cultural concerns. Critics have praised him for his capacity to tell postmodern narratives that mirror the postcolonial subject in the postmodern world, and magical realism has been described as a tool that effectively captures the absurdity of life in postcolonial societies. His novels especially

Midnight's Children and The Satanic Verses have been acclaimed as pioneering works that have set the tone for the contemporary literature of the post-colonial world and have inspired a generation of writers and scholars.

6.2 Scholarly Debates on Identity and Hybridity in Rushdie's Works

The issues of identity and hybridity in Rushdie's works have raised much controversy among critics, especially those in postcolonial studies. Academic works have analyzed in detail how Rushdie's novels disrupt the conventional understanding of identity as a stable and fixed concept that is formed by cultural, historical, and personal factors. The first and perhaps the most significant of these is the question of what it means to be a hybrid. Following Homi K. Bhabha, a lot of critics have claimed that Rushdie's representation of hybrid subjects is a form of postcolonial resistance to colonial oppositions, including colonizer/colonized and East/West. This is because Rushdie's characters are always moving between different cultural realities, thus occupying the 'third space' that Bhabha talks about as the space of the emergence of new cultural subjects. This interpretation places Rushdie at the forefront of postcolonial writers whose novels provide a wealth of information on the issue of identity in the contemporary world. However, some critics have criticized the optimistic outlook of Rushdie's hybridity as a failure to pay attention to the politics of postcolonial societies.

Scholars argue that even as hybridity can be a strength and a resource, it is also a potential site of exclusion and splintering, for those who cannot assimilate into dominant societies. This debate brings out the struggle of hybridity as a force that can subvert oppressive systems and the struggle of living with multiple forms of existence, most of which are in conflict. There is also a scholarly discussion about how Rushdie writes history and the issue of memory in his work. Some critics have applauded his historical approach where they say that his novels offer a postcolonial reflection of colonial and postcolonial history from the perspective of the oppressed. Some critics, however, have accused him of sometimes using historical anachronisms and historical imagination in his writings in ways that can be misleading to the reader who is looking for history in its most accurate form. These debates are a good example of the richness of Rushdie's work and the controversies it has provoked. As with the representation of identity and hybridity, his work remains an object of critical discussion and analysis, which further proves the significance of his work and the problems it raises for readers and critics. [10]

7. CONCLUSION

In this research article, an attempt has been made to analyze Salman Rushdie's later works to understand postcolonial identity and cultural hybridity and how the novels depict the complex realities of a postcolonial society. In this context, the present work concentrates on *The Moor's Last Sigh*, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, and *Shalimar the Clown* to show how Rushdie uses hybridity as a leitmotif to deconstruct and reinvent the concepts of identity, culture, and history. His characters are usually complex and hybrid in terms of their cultural background and experience. The study showed that Rushdie's novels are set against historical and political backgrounds and these are used as the backdrop to address the issue of colonialism and globalization and their impact on individual and group identity. Compared with other postcolonial writers, it was revealed that Rushdie has his way of representing hybridity, focusing on the creative aspect of cultural fusion and using magical realism as a dominant trend. However, some people criticized Rushdie for the portrayal of religion and cosmopolitan characters in his works, but he is still important. His work on hybridity and identity has made a huge contribution to postcolonial studies and has provided new paradigms for culture, history, and politics. Rushdie's writing and the use of magical realism have influenced the younger generation of writers and scholars and have forced them to rethink the binaries and the division between cultures and nations.

The study points to the following directions for future research: Exploring the topicality of Rushdie's concerns, including immigration, diaspora, and cultural alienation, might help to understand the present-day world. Moreover, the comparison of Rushdie's attitude to the other postcolonial writers might show the difference in their points of view concerning hybridity and identity issues. Postcolonial literature could be expanded even more by searching for new voices of emerging writers from various areas. However, there is a need to critically analyze the ethical and political implications of hybridity as depicted by Rushdie. This way of thinking about cosmopolitanism and cultural hybridity might help to reveal how these concepts might also serve to mask power relations. In conclusion, it can be stated that further examination of Salman Rushdie's later novels is going to be highly fruitful and is going to bring significant insights to postcolonial studies as well as to other related disciplines.

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