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# HYBRID IDENTITY AND THE NARRATION OF NATION: A DIASPORIC STUDY OF SALMAN RUSHDIE'S THE MOOR'S LAST SIGH

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## ABSTRACT

As a postcolonial writer, Salman Rushdie's fictions are preoccupied with the imaginative construct of nation. Narration of conglomeration of cultures, hybridization of identity, diasporic interstitiality in the oeuvre of Rushdie, destabilizes and undermines the monolithic formation of nation. His works reflect fluidity of space, dynamism of identity, plurality of culture and cosmopolitanism. Rushdie is a proponent and an adherent of the ideology of multiculturalism, prevalent across worldwide scenario due to globalized phenomenon of Transnationalism. The post-colonial socio-cultural and politico-economic phenomena of globalization, Transnationalism, Multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism have dismantled perceptions of home and homelessness, root and rootlessness. Rootless home and homeless roots characterize the contemporary fluid world accessed by migrants and expatriates. My paper aims at investigating in Salman Rushdie's novel- *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995) how hybrid forms of culture and plural forms of identity problematize the homogeneous construct of nation.

KEYWORDS: Diaspora, Migration, Multiculturalism, Identity, Hybridity.

We have floated upwards from history, from memory, from time...As for me: I, too, like all migrants, am a fantasist. I build imaginary countries and try to impose them on the ones that exist (Shame, 87).

As a postcolonial diasporic writer, Salman Rushdie's primary preoccupation has been to dismantle dominant nationalist history, deconstruct rooted memory and to disorganize linear spatio-temporality. Unlike other diasporic writers who are conscious of the pangs of an expatriate because of his disentanglement and disorientation from the roots of his motherland, Rushdie offers a new perspective with a view to dissolving diasporic dilemmas in conceptualizing multiple roots for his migrants who in spite of his dispossession is engrossed in relocating multiple affiliations in his endeavour to harmonize the native socio-cultural background with the adopted socio-cultural, politico-economic environment. The involvement of the migrants towards assimilating the opposing and the conflicting results in an interstitial, fluid space which causes formation of hybridization of identity. The concept of heterogeneity and plurality in the construct of identity destabilizes and disorganizes the notion of homogeneous nation, the existence of geo-political boundary between nations and the respective socio-cultural-ethnic distinctions. The juxtaposition of real and fantastic elements in the thematic as well as technical texture of Rushdie's oeuvre is suggestive of his precepts regarding the imaginary aspects of real boundaries. He has secured a fluid world for his migrants who have multiple affiliations to conduct rootless mobility. In establishing the alternative affiliations as 're-rooting', Rushdie disorients and deconstructs the rootedness of home as he allots multiple homes to his expatriates and migrants. Rootless home and homeless roots characterize the contemporary fluid world inhabited by migrants and expatriates. The act of connecting and interpreting multiple homes or 'imaginary homelands' recompenses a migrant for his displacement and dislocation from his original native homeland. The prerogatives of postcolonial diasporic writers like Amitav Ghosh and Salman Rushdie have been to dismantle the dominant discourse of nationalist historiography and to dislocate the monolithic aspects of nation-state. Their constant effort has been to establish the plural and heterogeneous form of nation; for this the elements of resistance, revolt, rebellion and repercussions which the nationalist discourse did not consider as approving in the interest of monolithic rhetoric of nation are found narrated and referred to in the anthropocentric texts of Amitav Ghosh. Salman Rushdie's works reflect the globalized phenomenon of transnational communications and multicultural ideology. His cosmopolitan texts narrate multiplicity of cultures, fluidity of space and plurality of identity. The texts that adhere to the ideology of multiculturalism deny the cartographic divisions or any differences pertaining to caste, creed or religion. Rushdie's is a cosmopolitan world which dissolves all demarcations. Anshuman Mondal in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet and Fury: The Reinvention of Location* succinctly says:

"Rushdie's discourse on migration has thus shifted from an earlier affiliation with postcolonial theories of transnationalism and diaspora, both of which complicate and dismantle nationalist perspectives on belonging, home and identity, to a species of cosmopolitanism." (Mondal, 181)

Regarding the anti-colonial nationalistic feeling one can rightly deduce or infer that the sentiment of decolonization is the consequences of European official nationalism which had transmitted the political and cultural education to the native people of the colonies. The native population had received the lesson of nationalism from European imperialists who intended to homogenize the colonized people by means of monologic nationalism. Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* has suggested how the colonial masters had made use of the "three institutions of power" i.e.

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