Chapter-IV
Techniques

Salman Rushdie has a unique way of writing his works. He has broken down the old tradition way of storytelling technique and employed a new way of writing his novels called magic realism. This makes his works different from those of other Indian and non-Indian contemporary writers. The imaginative re-working of Indian history in a hybrid environment and the merging of old traditional mythology and folklore are the major themes of his works. The use of fantasy, symbols and metaphor along with the colloquial English of India is reflected in his oeuvre.

Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* is considered to be one of the best works of magic realism. It is a many faceted novel which invites autobiographical, picaresque narrative, a political allegory, a topical satire, a comic extravaganza and a surrealist fantasy. Rushdie uses a number of different literary techniques and styles in the narration of Saleem’s story. The language ranges from colloquial to powerfully lyrical. Saleem even makes use of a new set of literary terms that he has invented in order to explain his narrative.

Rushdie by employing different techniques and style writes a large and grand novel of India called *Midnight’s Children*. His technique can be divided into two major types of magic realism. First, the writer portrays the secret hidden present in the reality and secondly; the writer depicts the reality in a non-scientific way. The old literary techniques of mythology and styles of writing are insufficient
for the writer like Rushdie to define their historical works; therefore he uses a new independent hybrid technique called oral storytelling technique the “orality”. By the use of oral narrative technique, the narrator tells the story in the same manner, in which history is told and written.

Rushdie’s narrative technique has been influenced from the ancient *Panchatantra* collection of Indian stories. The structure of *Midnight’s Children* seems to be epic but its technique of storytelling is different from epic. According to an epic story, there must be a definite beginning, middle and an end, but there are no such elements present in magic realism, rather there are endless beginning and ends present in the novel. His method of storytelling is different, on the one hand he makes an attempt to follow the traditional epical stories and on the other hand he is inspired by the postmodern and postcolonial spirits of foreign writers. The weaving tales into tales, through the use of the weak connections of events is mostly present in traditional Indian technique of writing. Where as in *Midnight’s Children* Rushdie uses postmodernist technique to create a sort of “magic realism” that offers a complete vision of the multi-dimensional Indian reality. All these stories have oral features and it has got a listeners, it draws to attempts a certain basic structural motifs and patterns of narrative design underlying the Indian subcontinent during the period of independence and after Independence. The novel is held together by a pattern of interlaced motifs between Saleem and Padma.

Saleem Sinai the protagonist and the narrator of the story tells his family history to Padma that he has got so many stories to tell and his stories may leak into one another, they are all mixed up and confused. Padma is not an ordinary mistress and listener but she is the narrator’s counter self:
And there are so many stories to tell, too many, such an excess of intertwined lives events miracles places rumours, so dense of commingling of the improbable and mundane! I have been swallower of lives; and to know me, just the one of me, you’ll have to swallow the lot as well. (4)

The narrative structure of *Midnight’s Children* forces to recognize and expand critical analysis at two levels, the “frame narrative” and the “core story”. In first-person narrative the mature narrator in the frame narrative story tells of his youthful life experiences which become the core story. The mature narrator is Rushdie who tells his personal life experience that becomes the core story in the form of autobiography, along with a technique of magical realism. Being a metafictional text, *Midnight’s Children* deliberately foregrounds the operation of both frame narrative and the core story by giving equal time to the mature Saleem by allowing multiple interruptions and digressions by Padma. *Midnight’s Children* has a place for active narration and that reveals both plot and events with the frame story, it also brings out the difference between practical and real. The natural telling of the tale intermingles past, present and future story within the text.

Rushdie has been born in a subcontinent where the fusion of the past, present and even the future, creates almost timeless environment and culture. He finds it easy and natural to telescope all events into a timeless present: “I permit myself this one generalization: Americans have mastered the universe, but have no dominion over their mouths; whereas India is impotent, but her children tend to have excellent teeth” (251). As a postmodern writer, his sense of time in this novel is essentially repeated and *Puranic* (historical), where the movement goes forward
and backward according the narrator, because the reality is regarded as a
changeless, movement less, self-sustained structure.

Rushdie portrays the allegorical association between Saleem and India
which is simple and direct. Saleem and the nation are born exactly at the same
moment on the stroke of midnight on August 15, 1947 and the main events of
Saleem’s life are paired with the key historical moments of postcolonial India until
the late 1970:

I was born in the city of Bombay… once upon a time. No, that won’t
do, there’s no getting away from the date: I was born in Doctor
Narlikar’s Nursing Home on August 15th 1947. And the time? The
time matters, too. Well then: at night. No, it’s important to be more…
on the stroke of midnight, as a matter of fact. Clock- hands joined
palms in respectful greeting as I came. Oh, spell it out, spell it out: at
the precise instant of India’s arrival to independence, I tumbled forth
into the world. (3)

The nationalist allegory suggested by the core story begins from the very
first paragraph but its uncertainty damages the narration of the basic facts such as
Saleem date of birth. As an archetypal nationalist allegory, the development of the
individual is linked to the progress of the nation, the allegorical links between
Saleem and India are so exaggerated that the effect is comical. But a serious edge
to the tale enters very soon on the same paragraph. When Saleem describe himself
that “I had been my mysteriously handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubly
chained to those of my country” (3). At the same time Saleem’s birth has been
blessed by Prime Minister Nehru:
‘Dear baby Saleem, my belated congratulation on the happy accident of your moment of birth! You are the newest bearer of that ancient face of India which is also eternally young. We shall be watching over your life with the closest attention; it will be, in a sense, the mirror of our own’. (167)

Saleem sees his story with the story of India and his birth to the independence of India with equal importance. He says that there is a close link between him and India. His face resembles the map of India:

Baby-snaps reveal that my large moon-face was too large; too perfectly round. Something lacking in the region of the chin. Fair skin curved across my featured- but birthmarks disfigured it; dark stains spread down my western hairline, a dark patch colored my eastern ear. And my temples: too prominent: … Amina Sinai, immeasurably relieved by my single head, gazed upon it with redoubled maternal fondness, seeing it through a beautifying mist, ignoring the ice- like eccentricity of my sky- blue eyes, the temples like stunted horns, even the rampant cucumber of the nose. Baby Saleem’s nose: it was monstrous; and it ran. (169)

He is the self conscious narrator swinging between the past and the present, the historical and the personal. Throughout the novel, the past finds way to the present, just as Saleem’s personal forces and concerns find his selves mysteriously fake in national and political events. Midnight’s Children is the interplay between personal and public, past and present that remains fluid and dynamic.
Saleem has no stable identity, but he assumes many identities. Both action and character of Saleem repeatedly emphasize this theme, that show the numerous way in which identity is made to suffer. Rushdie’s complex narrative technique enables him to maintain the simultaneous identities that he has to assume as a human being and as a narrator. Saleem captures within himself, the ecstasy, expectations, tension and traumas of independence. And at the same time he is revealed by Rushdie as a pretense, mistaken, confused, fractured, fragmented, merged and superimpose, he is subjected to nothingness and reduced to animal level, totally lost, unfruitful and clean in his narration.

Saleem’s identity crisis undergoes repeatedly from generation to generation with the narrative of his grandfather to his grandson. The narrative begins in 1915 when Aadam, the grandfather of Saleem, returns from Germany:

Now, returning, he saw through travelled eyes. Instead of the beauty of the tiny valley circled by giant teeth, he noticed the narrowness, the proximity of the horizon; and felt sad, to be at home and fell so utterly enclosed. He also felt – inexplicably – as though the old place resented his educated, stethoscope return. Beneath the winner ice, it had been coldly neutral, but now there was no doubt; the years in Germany had returned him to a hostile environment. (5-6)

Alienation of the characters is summarized and described by the narrator in order to bring out their ideological and sociological background rather to individualise them. Saleem grandfather Dr. Aadam Aziz is being placed with certain historical, ideological, economic and political markers. Aziz is not “individualized” but
“represented” and he is “representational” rather than “individualistic”. Dr. Aziz is presented as follows:

Heidelberg, in which, along with medicine and politics, he learned that India – like radium – had been ‘discovered’ by the Europeans; even Oskar was filled with admiration for Vasco da Gama, and this was what finally separated Aadam Aziz from his friends, this belief of theirs that he was somehow the invention of their ancestors – ‘ . . . You alone we worship, and to You alone we pray for help . . . ’ – so here he was, despite their presence in his head, attempting to re-unite himself with an earlier self which ignored their influence but knew everything it ought to have know, about submission for example, about what he was doing now, as his hands, guided by old memories, fluttered upward,… (6-7)

The motif of alienating is prominent in the life of Aziz. When Dr. Aziz is asked to treat Naseem, the girl who is soon to become his wife, owning purdah, he is limited to treat only the ill part of the patient’s body that was revealed to him through a perforated sheet which was held up by two lady wrestlers. “So gradually Doctor Aziz came to have a picture of Naseem in his mind, a badly-fitting collage of her severally-inspected parts. This phantasm of a partitioned woman began to haunt him, and not only in his dreams” (26).

The portrayal of Aadam Aziz introduces the tensions after their marriage. Aziz comes to know his wife in her “unpartitioned” nature; he realizes how little reality calculates with his imagination. Though the images of perforated sheet Aziz’s alienating are brought out, the image of fragmentation is the connection
between the image of blood when he was hit in the nose and the image of the hole present in the nose. The symbolic meaning which is attached to the image of bleeding is emphasized by the ritual significance of the occasion:

In short: My grandfather had fallen in love, and had come to think of the perforated sheet as something sacred and magical, because through it he had seen the things which had filled up the hole inside him which had been created when he had been hit on the nose. (28)

The position left by the loss of blood is filled with the image of the girl.

The part of the body which can be seen by the doctor exposed through a hole in the sheet results in the falling of love with the patient. The irony which is exposed through the choice of the part of the body, becoming the inspiration for love, extends to the further portrayal of the relationships between the doctor and his wife. The supposed hidden beauty gets transformed into an ugly oppressor, who manages her family by the means of management. The character from a fairy tale, hidden from the stranger’s eyes by her envious father, turns out to be the monster. The play with the traditional images borrowed from fairy tales adds to the overall indeterminacy of the suggestions attributed to images. The fairy tale image of the large nose of Aziz has been described by Saleem as strengths and as beautiful:

Watches his ripping nose. It would have dominated less dramatic faces than his easily; even on him, it is what one sees first and remembers longest. ‘A cyranose, ‘Ilse Lubin said, and Oskar added, ‘A proboscissimus.’ Ingrid announced, ‘You could cross a river on that nose.’ (Its bridge was wide) My grandfather’s nose: nostrils flaring, curvaceous as dancers. Between them swells the nose’s
triumphal arch, first up and out, then down and under, sweeping in to
his upper lip with a superb and at present red-tipped flick. [...] Doctor
Aziz’s nose – comparable only to the trunk of the elephant-headed
god Ganesh. (9)

Saleem describes his grandfather’s nose to a positive attribute by
comparing it to Ganesh’s trunk. Ganesh is a Hindu God associated with wisdom
and luck and is known as the lord of Beginnings and Remover of obstacles. For
example in the riot at Amritsar his grandfather’s life was saved by his nose where
as thousands of other was march down by the military:

As the fifty-one men march down the alleyway a tickle replaces their
itch in my grandfather’s nose. The fifty-one men enter the compound
and take up positions, twenty-five to Dyer “s right and twenty-five to
his left; and Aadam Aziz ceases to concentrate on the events around
him as the tickle mounts to unbearable intensities. As Brigadier Dyer
issues a command the sneeze hits my grandfather full in the face.

‘Yaaakh -thoooo!’ he sneezes and falls forward, losing ‘his balance,
following his nose and thereby Saving his life (41).

The image of the perforated sheet mirrors the love story of the character
from generation to generation from Aadam Aziz to Nassem and from Amina to
Ahmed Sinai. Like her mother Amina decided her mind to fragment her husband in
order to fall in love with him, she systematically attempts to compose love, from
that fragmented personality of her husband but fails to complete her vision of love
with one part of her husband body:
To do this she divided him, mentally, into every single one of his component parts, physical as well as behavioural, compartmentalizing him into lips and likes … in short, she of fell under the spell of the perforated sheet of her own parents, because she resolved to fall in love with her husband bit by bit. … Each day she selected one fragment of Ahmed Sinai, and concentrated her entire being upon it until it became wholly familiar; until she felt fondness rising up within her and becoming affection, and finally love. (87)

The narrative begins in 1915 when Aadam, Aziz the grandfather of Saleem, returns from Germany:

Now, returning, he saw through travelled eyes. Instead of the beauty of the tiny valley circled by giant teeth, he noticed the narrowness, the proximity of the horizon; and felt sad, to be at home and fell so utterly enclosed. He also felt – inexplicably – as though the old place resented his educated, stethoscope return. Beneath the winner ice, it had been coldly neutral, but now there was no doubt; the years in Germany had returned him to a hostile environment. (5-6)

The beginning assumes significance in the light of the fact that Rushdie himself is an emigrant. The beginning, underlines the self-reflexive nature of the narrative. Aadam Aziz looks at the nature with narrowness rather than with its beauty. The gap that emerges is “the hole” in Aadam that remains till the end of the novel. Throughout the book, the narrator hints at stories developing out of other stories at a never – ending cycle. The end of one story begins another story; therefore ends are contained in beginning, beginnings in ends. In the beginning of novel Saleem
narrates about his death. He states it is time for him to fall apart. He is thirty one years old and does not have any hope of saving his life, he is counting his nights. He must work fast, faster than Scheherazade if he wanted to end his life meaningful.

Rushdie has written *Midnight’s Children* with the mythical motifs and reference. The mythical elements found are varied and are taken from all kinds of sources including Hindu, Greek, Pre-Islamic, Islamic, Sufi, Christian and Persian mythologies. Myth serves as a narrative strategy in his fiction. The novel derives a mythical framework of narrative which brings out the deeper relevance of the historical or political situations obtaining in the Indian subcontinent. The full meaning of the onward movement of history emerges from the pattern created by myths. Without the mythical dimensions the novel would lose its charm and meaning.

Rushdie has used the heading of his chapter from mythology in order to give its complete meaning. Chapter like “Many-Headed Monsters” reflects the evil deeds of Ravana, the mythical monarch of Lanka, as also the achievements of Hanuman from the Indian epic *Ramayana*. He has given a new orientation to the myth of Hanuman. By using the myths of Ravana and Hanuman he deplores partition and violence effectively. Another heading the “Revelations” in the second books refers to “The Revelations of St. John, the Divine,” the last book of the New Testament.

The mythical reference to the ‘elephant-headed Ganesh’, the Hindu God associated with wisdom. The myth of Ganesh has been used to describe the nose of Saleem as well as his grandfather. Saleem, his grandfather, his mother Emerald,
Alia, Hanif, Mustapha and the Brass Monkey all have nose like that of Ganesh. Saleem, who says “My nose: elephantine as the trunk of Ganesh” (214). The ears of Ganesh are reflected across Saleem’s son Aadam Sinai who is attacked by elephantitis and who is “the true son of Siva and Parvati, the elephant – headed Ganesh” (420). Padma’s running away from Saleem compels him to interpret the myth in a wrong way. “When Valmiki, the author of the *Ramayana*, dictated his masterpiece to elephant – headed Ganesh, did the god walk out on his halfway?” (206). The myth of Ravana has been used in a fragmented manner: “I shall call him Hanuman, after the monkey god who helped prince Rama defect the original Ravana” and “Hanuman races to the alcove here, on the topmost leading, in which the three men have left their soft grey alien things” (110-111).

Rushdie uses the image of cobras in the novel. Under the title “Snakes and Ladders” cobra is associated with the lord Vishnu, when Krishna was taken by Vasudeva after his birth to Gokulam, it was raining. Therefore the God Naga came and acted as an umbrella for Krishna:

He was Krishna come to chastise his people.... It seems that, in the aftermath of my changeling birth, while I enlarged myself at breakneck speed, everything that could possibly go wring began to do so. In the winter of early 1948, and in the succeeding hot and rainy seasons, events poled upon events; [...] Escaped cobras vanished into the sewers of the city: banded kraits were seen on buses. Religious leaders described the snake escape as warning- the god Naga had been unleashed, they intoned, as a punishment for the nation’s official renunciation of its deities. (187)
The narration of Saleem to Padma is related to the narration of Vishnu to Lakshmi. When she was small, she had been named after the lotus goddess, whose most common term amongst village folk is “The One Who Possesses Dung” (24). “I my village there is no shame is being named for the ‘Dung Goddess’. Write at once that you are wrong, completely. In accordance with my lotus wishes, I insert, forthwith, a belief paean to Dung” (35). Another example Ramram Seth, forecasts Saleem’s birth and his room is full of picture of Vishnu, “Room on whose walls are pictures of Vishnu in each of his avatars” (84).

The metaphorical reference to Mahabharata the great Indian epic is also portrayed by Rushdie in this novel. Mary Pereira, the ayah of Saleem believes in the story of Mahabharata and says it was happening in “Kurukshtara and place where an old Sikh woman witnessed. The chariots of Arjuna and Karna” and “truly wheel marks in the mud” (340) largely prove the mythical past and the shadows of Great War indicating the future India just as the aftermath of the Mahabharata war. There is one most important myth from the Mahabharata occurring in the novel is the metaphor of Brahma. Brahma is a god of creation. Just as Brahma creates the world, Saleem creates a conference in his mind with his imaginary friends:

Do Hindus not accept - Padma – that the world is a kind of dream; that Brahma dreamed, is dreaming the universe; that we only see dimly through that dream-web, which is Maya. Maya,’ I adopted a haughty, lecturing tone, ‘may be defined as all that is illusory; as trickery, artifice and deceit. Apparitions, Phantasms, mirages, sleight-of-hand, the seeming form of things: all these are parts of
Maya. If I say that certain things took place which you, lost in Brahma’s dream, find hard to believe, then which of us is right? (293)

The metaphorical presentation of the myth of Brahma provides an answer to the improbable world created by Saleem in the novel, pointing out the fact that midnight’s children and their conference from a park of maya created by Brahma.

Rushdie portrays the myth of Lord Siva, the god of destruction and procreation is moulded in the character of Shiva. Shiva dominates a large section of the novel, his character is intermingled with history and tradition as “most ferocious and powerful of the children” (393) affecting the course of the Indian political history and as a traditional reference from Ramayana and Mahabharata as “Rama who could draw the undrawable bows of Arjuna and Bhima…of Kurur and Pandavas…” (277). “Shiva thinks everything is thing” (355) and emerges as “a principle of life” (400). He strongly argues that “money-and-poverty, have- and-lack and right-and-left; there is only me against the world” as against “free will…hope…the great soul…poverty and art” (355). Saleem describes Shiva:

…he came to represent, in my mind, all the venge - fullness and violence and simultaneous – love – and – hate – of - Things in the world; so that even now, when I hear of drowned bodies floating like balloons on the Hooghly and exploding when nudged by passing boats; or trains set on fire, or politicians killed, or riots in Orissa or Punjab, it seems to me that the hand of Shiva lies heavily over all these things, dooming us to flounder endlessly amid murder rape greed war - that Shiva , in short, has made us who we are. (415)
Shiva with his materialism and war skill wins over Saleem, who is a “mirror of the nation” (527) and who has been dreaming of “national salvation” (604). His victory over Saleem is an index to the disruptive elements in Indian politics and society prevailing during post-Independence India. Rushdie comments it as: “Shiva and Saleem, Victor and Victim, understand over rivalry, and you will gain an understanding of the age in which we live” (604).

The metaphor of Shiva is modelled with God “Shiva”. “Shiva, the god of destruction, who is also most potent of deities, Shiva, greatest of dancers, who rides on a bull, whom no force can resist ...” (306). Apart from his destructive function, he stands for procreative function also. “His son, named Shiva after the god of procreation and destruction” (176) and “Shiva the destroyer of midnight’s children...was being raised towards future” (615 - 616). The godly figure of Lord Shiva is thoroughly distorted in “a picture of such grotesque proportions” (304) and “the terrifying image of a short, rat-faced youth with filed – down teeth and two of the biggest knees the world has ever seen” (304). The wicked destructive and unethical aspects of his functions are essentially associated with evil deform.

Rushdie’s another apt example of condensation is in the myth of Shakti in the character of Indira Gandhi, the next Prime Minister of India, by description of an incarnation of Kali, is shown as one who aspires to dominate the faiths of religious people. “Who worship different gods and goddesses” (612). She tries to in calculate faith in one goddess:

But I was brought up in Bombay, where Shiva Vishnu Ganesh Ahuramazda Allah and countless others had their flocks . . . What about the pantheon,’ I argued, ‘the three hundred and thirty million
gods of Hinduism alone? And Islam and Bodhisattvas . . .?’ And now the answer: “Oh yes! My God, million of gods, you are right! But all Main-festations of the same OM. You are Muslim: you know what is OM? Very well. For the masses, our lady is a manifestation of the OM (611-612).

Indira Gandhi is called the Kali, the goddess of death for Indians, who believes in different gods and goddesses into her. Her role during the Emergency is equivalent only to most ferocious aspect of Kali. Reference the temple of Kali in the Sundarban with its “towering statue of a black dancing goddess, whom the boy - soldier from Pakistan could not name; but the Buddha knew she was Kali, fecund and awful, with the remnants of gold paint on her teeth” (511). The metaphor of Shakti-myth resembles from the Reverend mother to Indira Gandhi. There are “too much women” (567) in the novel. On the ordinary plane, they are “the multiple faces of Bharat-Mata” (567) and on the higher level they are “the dynamic aspect of maya, as cosmic energy, which is represented as the female organ?” (567), connecting earthly women to the goddesses, Saleem asks:

My too-many woman: are they all aspects of Devi, the goddess – who is Shakti, who slew the buffalo – demon, who defeated the ogre Mahisha, who is Kali Durga Chandi Chamunda Uma Sati and Parvati … and who, when active, is coloured red? (567-568)

Rushdie connects India as Kali -Yuga with accounts for his extensive use of Hindu myths. The myth of Kali -Yuga is metaphorically introduced for the novelist’s grief over the evils existing in the aftermath of India’s Independence. The evils are the evils of Kali -Yuga (the age of Darkness) balanced over free India:
Kali – Yuga - the losing throw in our national dice-game; the worst of everything; the age when property gives a man rank, when wealth is equated with virtue, when passion becomes the sole bond between men and women, when falsehood brings success (is it any wonder, in such a time, that I too have been confused about good and evil?). (269)

The metaphor of Buddha is also noticed in this novel where Saleem is compared with Buddha. Just as the Buddha gains his enlightenment under the tree of Gaya, Saleem sat under a different tree. Rushdie gives the detail of Buddha as:

The Urdu word ‘Buddha’, meaning old man. Is pronounced with the Ds hard and plosive. But there is also Buddha, with soft- tongued Ds, meaning he – who – achieved – enlightenment – under – the bodhi - tree… In ancient India, Gautama the Buddha sat enlightened under a tree at Gaya; in the deer park at Sarnath he taught others to abstract themselves from worldly sorrows and achieve inner peace; and centuries later, Saleem the Buddha sat unable to remember grief, numb as ice, wiped clean as a slate. (487-488)

Saleem as though a character in the realist mode becomes another device in the communication of the story. The metaphor of the Hair Oil forehead is so apt to Saleem. Even though he is one among the one thousand and one midnight’s children whose stories he says because of the lack of space: “My narrative could not cope with five hundred and eight - one - fully rounded personalities” (274). Rushdie imagines that all the children born in India at that moment have secret powers of communication with one another.
The symbolism of duality between Saleem and his archrival Shiva is the main stream theme of the novel. They both are the true children of midnight, born at the same exact time on August 15, 1947, where as the other 999 referred to as midnight’s children in the novel are actually born in the minutes and hours following the stroke of twelve. Saleem is given more importance by Rushdie as a child of destiny of free India where as Shiva hardly appears in the novel. He appears as a threatening presence in Saleem’s psychic connection to the other midnight’s children. Saleem and Shiva are represented as the creative and destructive forces in the novel. As Saleem is responsible for creating the world as a narrator, Shiva is responsible for the destruction of midnight’s children conference.

Thus *Midnight’s Children* appears to be a Rushdie’s autobiography highlighting his personality as a narrator, whereas his second novel *Shame* is his strong oppression towards Pakistan. The theme of the novel is shame or Sharam, its characters, actions and the conflict are so arranged and dramatized as to focus the meaning of shame, “between the shame and shamelessness lies the axis upon which we turn”. The author interrupts on the narrative to explain that Sharam, an Urdu word hold as “encyclopaedia of nuance that embarrassment, discomfite, decency, modesty, and shyness”:

*Sharam* that’s the word. For which this paltry ‘Shame’ as a wholly inadequate translation. There letters, shin re’mim (written, naturally, from right to left); plus Zabar accents indicating the short vowel sounds. A short word, but one containing encyclopaedias of nuance. (…) embarrassment, discomfute, decency, modesty, shyness, the sense of having an ordained place in the world. (38-39)
The narrative structure of the novel is brought out through a major character called narrator with the first person “I”. Rushdie’s first person narrative leaves, what is relevant within shame by proposing magic and fiction along with authenticity. When Rushdie address the idea of shame in the novel, he makes obvious that he is the first person narrator. He inserts his own life along with the detail about his sister who is 22 years old. “I would be talking about youngest sister. Who is twenty-two, studying engineering in Karachi” (68). Rushdie’s personal view of shame and shamelessness along with real and imagined view has also been brought out through his narrator. Even though Shame is considered to be a political satire, Rushdie tries to make it as a fairy tale. Storytelling is a prevalent theme in Rushdie’s novels and it adds to the complex layers of his postmodern text.

The landmark of the novel is a place called “Q.”. This city of “Q.” could be identified on the earthy plane with Quetta, a Defence colony in Pakistan. But the narrator forbids this association by saying that “Q.” is a fictional city and not the real Pakistan. “I have not given the country a name. And “Q.” is not really Quatta at all” (29). He catalogues in detail and with apparent delight the numerous aspects of the uneven side of the life and politics in the real Pakistan:

- for example, the long ago Deputy Speaker who was killed in the National Assembly when the furniture was flung at him by elected representatives; ... or about the TV chief who once told me solemnly that park was a four-letter word’, ... . (69-70)

And with clear tongue in the check defends his avoidance of their portrayal for “fear’ of government action against him:
If I had been writing a book of this nature, 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. … Realism can break a writer’s heart. (70)

Therefore he is not writing of the real Pakistan it is absolutely fictional. “Fortunately, however I am only telling a sort of modern fairy tale. So that’s all right; nobody need get upset, or take anything I say too seriously. No drastic action need to taken, either” (70).

In *Shame* reality has ceased to exist within a restricted limit. The Pakistani reality is off centred, exaggerated, played upon by light and darkness, coloured with the numerous shades of fancy and transcended into the universal novel. The novelist has professedly given it, the dynamics of a fairy tale, calling it a “legend” (79), “a sort of modern fairy tale” (70) and “my fairy – story” (71). He has given some modify of his own to make it a real fairy tale such as “Once – upon – a – time” starting, an extensive and isolated castle almost impenetrable, three “mothers” being the only significant inhabitants of the castle and “jointly” giving birth to one son a few year later to another:

In the remote border town of ‘Q.’, which when seen from the air resembles nothing so much as an ill-proportioned dumb bell, there once lived three lovely, and loving, sisters. (11) …

No outside eyes witnessed the passage of the three labours, two phantom one genuine, or the moment when empty balloons subsided, while between a third pair of thighs, as if in an alleyway, there appeared the illegitimate child; or when hands lifted Omar Khayyam
Shakil by the ankles, held him upside-down, and thumped him on the back. (20)

They swear a sort of oath that they will not let the secret out and the oath makes the bond between them strong. All the three breastfeed the child and raise him without any shame, Omar Khayyam Shakil therefore never learns about his birth.

The protagonist Omar Khayyam Shakil is the first son born to the three sisters Chunni, Munnee and Bunny. He is personally affected by shame and shamelessness throughout his life even when his mothers had banned him from feeling shame at an early age. He is born of three mothers (!) and does not know who his real mother, as well as he does not know, who his father to be, as the mothers got pregnant after a house party. The mothers give Shakil an excellent survival means in a society where having an English father known or unknown, is worse than having none, which is not sense of shame. But when Omar enters the world of school he understands that he is an illegitimate child born of a British officer and one of the Shakil mothers. The mothers do not show any feeling of dishonour when Omar was conceived, but lock themselves up in their large mansion and remain in their self – imposed captivity till the end of the novel.

Omar remains in this prison like enclosed world of his mothers, which is isolated from the rest of the world and where different rules apply, so the house resembles an independent country. “He enters life without benefit of mutilation, barbery or divine approval” (21) that the Muslims consider a must. Born in the death bed of his grandfather, “his first sight is the spectacle of a range of topsy – turvy mountains…” (21) that troubles him a sense of inversion, of world turned upside down: “Hell above, paradise below” (23). He grows up infinity whose
traditional experience is accurately inverted that shame is honour. Omar lives with
his mothers exclusively for some twelve years and then joins the school and the
outer world for the next six years finally leaving them from the city of “Q.” for
further studies at the age of 18 and visits them only when his brother Babar dies:
Ultimately returning at the age of 65 to die there.

The mother’s bondness has grown so tight without their knowledge that
they realise the love towards their son when he says his wish to leave home and
they start to quarrel what to do:

Their quarrels died down when he made his second escape; but they
were never properly reunited until they decided to repeat the act of
motherhood. ... And there is an even stranger matter to report. It is
this: when had been indistinguishable too long to retain any exact sense
of their former selves – and, well to come right out with it, the result
was that they divided up in the wrong way, they got all mixed up, so
that Bunny, the youngest, sprouted the premature grey hairs and took
on the queenly airs that ought to have been the prerogative of the senior
sibling; while big Chunni seemed to become a torn, uncertain soul, a
sister of middles and vacillations; and Munnee developed the histrionic
gadfly petulance that is the traditional characteristic of the baby in any
generation, and which never ceases to be that baby’s right, no matter
how old she gets. In the chaos of their regeneration the wrong heads
had ended up on the wrong bodies; they became psychological
centaurs, fish-women, hybrids; and of course this confused separation
of personalities carried with it the implications that they were still not
genuinely discrete, because they could only be comprehended if you 
took them as a whole. (39-40)

However, Omar was not qualified for living in the other world either. At the first 
time he appears outside the house he is spat on and he gets a “necklace of shoes” 
which is something very humiliating. For the rest of his life he has a bad reputation 
of a shameless person and people who treat him as if there was something wrong 
with him. In the chapter “necklace of shoes” Rushdie uses a beautiful technique for 
describing his life through his narrator. He narrates his return to Karachi and 
meets his familiar and friends:

A few weeks after Russian troops entered Afghanistan, I returned 
home, to visit my parents and sisters and to show off my firstborn 
son. My family lives in Defence’, the Pakistan Defence Services 
Officers’ Co-Operative Housing Society, although it is not a military 
family. ‘Defence’ is a fashionable part of Karachi. (26)

The narrator brings out Rushdie’s eagerness to know about his hometown 
in the following lines: “I visited an old friend, a poet. I had been looking forward 
to one of our long conversations, to hearing his views about recent events in 
Pakistan and about Afghanistan, of course” (27). Rushdie was not happy about the 
migration of his family from India to Pakistan. During the period of partition not 
only Rushdie’s family migrated but nearly twelve million Hindus, Muslims and 
Sikhs crossed the newly established borders of Pakistan, Muslims from India 
migrated to Pakistan and Hindus and Sikhs returned to India. As violence became 
more serious, more than one million people were killed and injured in the partition.
Rushdie has created the fiction with careful narrative representation, where a person or an individual belonging to one geographic (or) cultural location has a deep feeling towards his homeland. Rushdie’s unstable conditions in Pakistan had made him to write the novel, throughout the course of his narration he is aware of his status as an “outsider” and “trespasser” who has “no right to this subject”, who will be accrued of speaking in a “foreign language wrapped around you like a flag: speaking about us in your forked tongue”, (28) about a nation to which he has joined with compulsion:

I tell myself this will be a novel of leave taking my last words on the East from which, many year ago, I began to come loose. I do not always believe myself when I say this. It is a part of the world to which, whether I like it or not, I am still joined, it only by elastic bands. (28)

Through the narrator, Rushdie defends his position as an emigrant and the disturbed situation that is prevailing in the state of Pakistan. The narrator conflates his migrant status with the status of Pakistan “Migration, n., moving, for instance in flight, from one place to another” (86) and his telling of its tale to the creation of the “insufficiently imagined” (87) nation itself:

When individuals come unstuck from their native land, they are called migrants. When nation do the same thing (Bangladesh), the act is called secession. I may be such a person. Pakistan may be such a country. Moreover, the term Pakistan itself is an acronym that was “born in exile which went East, was borne-across or trens-lated, and imposed itself on the past. (87)
The narrator comments on how Pakistan was built, it is a “Palimpsest” that “Obscures what lies beneath”, in order to which, “it was necessary to cover up Indian history, to deny that Indian centuries lay just beneath the surface of Pakistani Standard Time. The past was rewritten; there was nothing else to do done” (87).

Rushdie’s second central character of Shame appears to belong to fairy tale. Just as Omar Khayyam Shakil a “translated hero”, Sufiya Zinobia is also a powerful and multiple symbol of the novel. She represents shame and shameless on herself. “This is a novel about Sufiya Zinobia, elder daughter of General Raza Hyder and his wife Bilquis, about what her surprising marriage to a certain Omar Khayyam Shakil”(59). Rushdie shows his women to be more dynamic and aggressive. They reject the passive roles that women are reduced to playing and sometimes under the inclusive influence of patriarchal valves.

The name given by Rushdie to his character is an act of sign, Sufiya Zinobia, apart from the obvious reference to Sufism in “Sufiya”; the name evokes the personalities of some of the women involved with the prophet during his lifetime. In another consisting of the name “Sufiya” is the name of Safiyah, the Prophet’s Jewish wife and in Zinobia, the three women Zainab integral in many ways to the Prohbet’s life two of them his wives and one is his daughter. However “Zenobia” is also the name of the third century Queen of Palmyra, famous for her beauty and intelligence and yet one whose name has also been a symbol of ruthless arrogance. Thus the name as well as the character of Zenobia is equal to man.

Rushdie describes the genesis of the character of Sufiya Zinobia and what inspired him and why he created her in his novel. His inspiration was an Asian girl
and his reaction to the news he heard recently about a Pakistani girl murdered by her father for having an affair with an English boy: “I, too found myself understanding the killer... that man will sacrifice their dearest live in the implacable altars of their pride” (115). On the next page he describes other sources of his inspiration for Sufiya Zinobia. He talks about the unnamed Asian girl, who was beaten up in an underground by a gang of white boys. Instead of feeling angry she feels ashamed:

A girl set upon in a late-night underground train by a group of teenage boys is the first. The girls ‘Asian’ again, the boys predictably white. Afterwards, remembering her beating, she feels not angry but ashamed. She does not want to talk about what happened, she makes no official compliant, she hopes the story won’t get out: it is a typical reaction, and the girl is not one girl but many. Looking at smoking cities on my television screen, I see groups of young people running through the streets, the shame burning on their brows and setting fire to shops, police shields, cars. (117)

The narrator defines the difficulty of people caught in situations, where they are either the victims of other people’s shame as in the story of the Pakistani girl or of the unnamed girl. He also says about the reflection of the incidence that “it is a typical reaction, the girl as not one girl but many” (117). Syed Mujeebuddin in “Centres and Margins: Shame’s ‘Other’ Nation” states that “the ‘Burning’ boy’s case connects the humiliation suffered by coloured people in a metropolitan society with the sense of shame inflated on women in ‘traditional’ societies” (145).
Rushdie’s third inspiration was from a boy in London who had simply catch fire of his own accord without dowsing himself in petrol or applying and external flame:

a boy from a news clipping. You may have read about him, or at least his prototype: he was found blazing in a parking lot, his skin on fire. He burned to death, and the experts who examined his body and the scene of the incident were forced to accept what seemed impossible: namely that the boy had simply ignited of his own accord without dousing himself in petrol or applying any external flame. (117)

The seeds of all the three incidents are to be found in Sufiya, thereby making her the heroine. Rushdie brings out the wreckage all around him. He also states that her shame starts from her birth. She is often beaten up by her mother Bilquis for not being born as a boy, therefore considered her to be her shame:

The stillborn son died again, even his ghost snuffed out by the medico’s fatal speech: ‘No possibility of error. Please to note that the child has been washed. Prior to swaddling procedure. Matter of sex is beyond dispute. Permit me to tender my congratulations.’ But what father would allow his son, twice-conceived, to be executed thus, without a fight? Raza tore away swaddling cloth: having penetrated to the baby within he jabbed at its nether zones: ‘There! I ask you, sir, what is that?’ – ‘We see here the expected configuration, also the not uncommon post-natal swelling, of the female...’- ‘A bump!’ Raza shrieked hopelessly. [...] Then, even then, she was too easily shamed. (90)
She is considered to be weak idiot girl, “the wrong miracle” whose birth is a personification of shame itself. The shame that Sufiya feels is that of a young woman who has the mind of a child. She is a “wrong miracle” in the sense that her parents wanted a son and got a daughter therefore Bilquis calls her ‘shame’ and the child in Sufiya never grows up. When Sufiya Zinobia was handed to Bilquis, she “could not forbear to cry, faintly, ‘Is that all, God? So much huffery and puffery to push out only this mouse?”… “the wrong miracle, Sufiya Zinobia was as small a baby as anyone had ever seen” (89).

The narrator states Sufiya to be an idiot in the novel because according to him “idiots are, by definition, innocent”, and only way he finds of “creating purity in what is supposed to be the land of the Pure”. He states about the state of Sufiya physically: “Sufiya Zinobia has grown, her mind more slowly than her body, and owing to this slowness she remains, for me, somehow clean (Pak) in the midst of a dirty world” (120-21). He also tells about how she got demented. He explains it as “Let me voice my suspicion: the brain – fever that made Sufiya Zinobia preternaturally receptive to all sorts of things that float around in the ether enabled her to absorb, like a sponge, a host of unfelt feelings” (122). And when the fever attacked her, she was going to die. Therefore Bilquis gave her a dose of snake poison to save her life. The poison caused the fever but it forever damaged Sufiya’s life. But he later however indicates that the story about poison does not sound reliable and that Bilquis has made it up to hide that she has beaten her daughter that caused the damage. Hyder refuses to accept her equally, “Sufiya Zinobia, her parent’s burden, her mother’s shame, remained as dry as the desert. Groans, insults, even the wild blows of exasperation rained on her instead” (121).
She was lacking for love but when love was in her vicinity, she blushes it. Her bluses become so incandescent that they burn the lips of an old lady who kisses her:

The ancient lady bent to kiss the girl and was alarmed to find that her lips had been mildly burned by a sudden rush of that to Sufiya Zinobia’s check; the burn was bad enough to necessitate twice – daily applications of lip salve for a week. (121)

Rushdie’s narrator states that she is powerful and represents multiple symbols. She changes into beast by her parents. She embodies shame and her later murderous exploits appear to be governed by a subconscious logic of ethics. She seems to become “something more like a principle, the embodiment of violence, the pure male violent strength of the Beast” (242).

Rushdie’s female character resembles shame in them. As the narrator narrates about Naveed Hyder who gives birth to twenty seven children in six years and who disintegrates with their numbers because everyone had lost to count how many boys and how many girls:

Begum Naveed Talvar, the former Good News Hyder, proved utterly incapable of coping with the endless stream of humanity flowing out between her thighs. ... Her old personality was getting squashed by the pressure of the children who were so numerous that she forgot their names, she hired an army of ayahs and abandoned her offspring to their fate, and then she gave up trying. No more attempts to sit on her hair: the absolute determination to be beautiful which had entranced first Haroun Harappa and then captain Talvar faded from
her features, and she stood revealed as the plain, unremarkable matron she had always really been. (207)

Rushdie illustrates the technique of storytelling through Sufiya and Bilquis. The narrator gives more importance to Bilquis’s childhood, and her father thinks of himself to be an emperor. Therefore she was raised with a pride; she walks like a queen with her head in the crowd which makes her look arrogant to the people in her neighbourhood. But she loses her pride after her father’s death. She marries Raza Hyder and becomes so guilty for not giving birth to a son because in her husband’s family most of children are male and she is naturally expected to have son as well, but giving birth to a girl has driven her mad with shame.

Rushdie uses a technique of writing about one side of the character throughout the novel and the other side of character is brought out after many long years. He uses myth to point out the sense of objectives embedded in the character of Omar Khayyam. He says his hero to be Peripheral hero the one who afflicted from his earliest days:

Omar Khayyam Shakil was afflicted, from his earliest days, by a sense of inversion, of a world turned upside-down. And by something worse: the fear that he was living at the edge of the world, so close that he might fall off at any moment. (21)

Fawia Afzal- Khan in “Salman Rushdie. The Debunking of Myth” states the objectives of Rushdie’s hero in the novel:

He experiences such a sense of marginality, of ‘objectness’, because he was conceived out of his mother’s sense of ‘objectness’, a sense shared by the family in their cloistered world, significantly, situated
right across from the Palladian Hotel, where the ‘suited and booted’
imperial ‘angrez’ (British) officers gathered nightly to dance but from
which they (by virtue of being natives) were naturally excluded. So, after
the death of their father, they invite the white officers to a gala
celebration, and then – choose one of them to conceive a baby by! (161)

The three major countries that Rushdie thinks to be his homeland like
India, Pakistan and Bangladesh which came into existence after independence
symbolize the three mothers of Omar who were free from their father: “I, too,
know something of this immigrant business. I am an emigrant from one country
(India) and a newcomer in two (England, where I live, and Pakistan, to which my
family moved against my will)” (85). Omar’s relationship with his three mothers is
unhealthy as they are portrayed as close-minded, dictatorial and repressive. Their
treatment of Omar turns him to be a shameless, marginalized, circumscribed
creature:

He was not free. His roving freedom-of-the-house was only the
pseudo-liberty of a zoo animal: and his mothers were his loving,
caring keepers. His three mothers: who else implanted in his heart the
conviction of being a sidelined personality, a watcher from the wings
of his own life? He watched them for a dozen years, and yes, it must
be said, he hated them for their closeness,... Three – in – oneness
redoubled that sense of exclusion, of being, in the midst of objects,
out of things. (35)

Rushdie’s “Peripheral hero” Omar Khayyam resembles the third world hero
of the modern times. He offers him a scope to dream about mystification of
Pakistan, thereby creating a link between India and American fiction. Omar has a habit of looking at the world outside from the upper level casement of Nishapur, as third hero who can look at the world outside and comment upon it without affecting themselves. He lives a ghostly existence alone from Nishapur. He defies the existing myths and can create new myths of his own. Rushdie says in “The Indian Journal of English Writing” about myth:

> These anti-myths of gravity and of belonging bear the same name: Migration, n., moving, for instance in flight, from one place to another. To fly and to flee: both are ways of seeking freedom…an odd thing about gravity, incidentally, is that while it remains uncomprehended everybody seems to find it easy to comprehend the notion of its theoretical counter force: anti-gravity. (34)

In the town “Q.”, Omar always finds himself “an outsider” and “homeless” (47). For his uncanny personal habits, he is accrued of “being ugly inside as well as out, a Beast” (144). He is “monster in a civilized society” and is condemned to walk on the “uttermost rim” of the earth (199).

The narrator’s dissatisfaction about his hero Omar is due to his alienation, the consequence for dissatisfaction has been described as “I am no less disappointed in my hero than I was” (198). The use of first person narrative makes expect a relative authenticity of shame, because Rushdie suggests directly his personal involvement. Thereby the narrative stories with tales of magic such as the transformation of Sufiya, fictional Pakistan and the factual Pakistan makes to connect the authentic proposal.
Just as his previous work *Midnight’s Children*, Rushdie has succeeded in mixing out an exciting fictional work after fatwa in *The Moor’s Last Sigh* that retains the technique of magic realism. The novel portrays Rushdie’s double exile position both at the national and the individual level. The communication modes from the narrative to found his view of truth are transformed into his narrative imagination. His narrative struggle and dialectical interrelationship between the author and narrative, narrative and national and finally the national and the individual has been brought out in the novel.

*The Moor’s Last Sigh* is a novel about modern India. It is set in cites of Bombay and Cochin. It traces four generations of the narrator’s family and final effects upon the narrator to find the true history of family saga. Its hero is Moraes Zogoiby of Bombay nicknamed by his mother “the Moor”. The title of the novel is connected with two painting of the same name made by two different characters. The first is actually a portrait of Aurora Zogoiby, the mother of Moraes, painted long before the birth of Moraes, but it was rejected by her husband, therefore Vasco Miranda the artist painted over the famous sigh that inhaled five centuries ego, in 1492. During the period of Muhammad XI, last sultan of Andalusia, greeting farewell to his kingdom and bringing an end to Arab- Islamic supremacy in Iberia known as *Puerto del Supermodel Moro* (“Pass of the Moor’s sigh”).

The narrator Moraes Zogoiby traces his family beginnings from the time of his birth, the narrative mode he uses is the first person narrative for the history of four generation. He is an exceptional character whose physical body ages twice as fast as a normal person does and also has a deformed hand. Rushdie starts the book from where it finishes at Spain and its narrator traces his descent both from the
illegal offspring of the last Moorish King of Spain along with his Jewish mistress and from Vasco da Gama, initiator of the spice trade. “I HAVE LOST COUNT of the days that have passed since I fled the horrors of Vasco Miranda’s mad fortress in the Andalusia mountain- village of Benengel” (13).

The novel traces the decade that Jews and Moorish are expelled from Spain, and that Christopher Columbus and Vasco da Gama set sail from Spain for new world. Moraes is a Jew, a Moorish, Christian and an Indian. His mother’s family descended from the Portuguese who settled in Goa and his father’s side can trace its lineage to the Christian of Spain. They have been in Indian for many centuries; therefore Moraes is half Jewish and half Christian of Indian:

I, however, was raised nether as Catholic nor as Jew, I was both, and nothing: a Jewholic -anonymous, a Cathjew nut, a stewpot a mongrel cur. I was –what’s the word these days? –atomised. Yessir: a real Bombay mix. (104)

The story arises cooking at a perfumed house on Cabral Island near Cochin and travels to cook at *Elephanta* on the Malabar Hill in Bombay. The elements are provided by the past growth and history of two clean places of India.

Aurora da Gama, Moraes’s mother combines artistic genius with her sharpness of painting for handling business. Abraham Zogoiby, the father is equally good in the globe of trade and commerce, but toward the end of the novel, he surprises everyone including his son, by turning out to be a mafia boss figure of an actual Dawood Ibrahim. Moraes, Aurora da Gama, Abraham Zogoiby along with Vasco Miranda, a small time painter who rises to acquire an international reputation by an association with Aurora, are the central figures of the novel:
Mine is the Story of the fall from grace of a high-born cross-breed: me, Moreas Zogoiby, called “Moor”, for most of my life the only male heir, to the Spice, trade-‘n’-big-business crores of the da Gama-Zogoiby dynasty of Cochin, and of my banishment from what I had every right to think of as my natural life by my mother Aurora, nee da Gama, most illustrious of our modern artists, a great beauty who was also the most sharp-tongued woman of her generation, handing out the hot stuff to anybody who came within range. (5)

Rushdie describes the family story and the beauty of Moraes’s mother in a single sentence: “Mine is the story of the fall from grace of a high-born cross-breed,” which is a technique he used in most of his novels. Rushdie’s personal life has been portrayed through the narrator just as the novel Shame. Moraes is narrating the events of his life, as a man in a great hurry, tearing along the road of life to reach the end of his journey. He is born only four and a half months after conception, half of the normal time and after the passage of twenty, he was already a middle aged man of forty-two, a young man in an older man’s skin: “Speaking for myself at this late hour? Just about managing, thanks for asking; though old, old, old before my time” (53). This is the psychology of Rushdie, who is forced by circumstances to lead an underground existence after fatwa. In this context, Moraes makes an unusual confession:

I GREW IN ALL directions, Willy–nilly. My father was a big man but by the age ten my shoulders had grown wider than his coats. I was a skyscraper freed of all legal restraints, a one-man population explosion, a megalopolis, a shirt–ripping, button–popping Hulk. (188)
Moraes is both in Aurora’s paintings showing reality and in his father’s Baby Soft Talcum Powder Pvt Ltd’s marketing the fiction of narcotics, he is never let to come out of his taste just as Rushdie. Even when Moraes tries to resurrect himself through Dolly Hormug and then Uma Saraswati his lover, he is disappointed by conspiracy and betrayal respectively. Rushdie with hope of his life represents Raman Fielding “the Mainduck”, the Frog, Cartoonist turned supporter of Mumbai’s Axis who is out of jail and under his wicked support upon which he admits with apparent relief “I knew in that instant that I need no longer a provisional life, a life – in – waiting: I need no longer be what ancestry, breeding – and misfortune as decreed, but could enter, at long last, into myself my true self” (295). Again Moreas says, “I found for the first time in my short - long life, the feeling of normality, being among kindred spirits, among people – like – me that is the defining quality of home” (305).

Obviously, Moreas equates Rushdie’s true self or feeling of normality. Even though Moraes is narrating his life story it gives the biographical details of Rushdie. Moraes for example says “[t]he old biographer’s problem,” which means that “even when people are telling their own life stories, they are invariably improving on the facts, rewriting their tales, or just plain marking them up” and further he states “[t]he truth of such stories lies in what they reveal about the protagonist’s hearts, rather than their deeds” (135).

In Moraes’s story the most important is Rushdie’s story; it is also a story of Aurora, Uma and Aio. Moraes finds no virtue in defending anything to the death, instead he wants to live and write, give meaning to his life, as he claims after Vasco’s murder of Aoi: “I must record my memories of that awful incarceration, if
only to honours the heroic role played by my fellow - captive, without whose courage, inventiveness and serenity I am sure I would not have lived to tell my tale” (419).

Rushdie wanted to live in exile country as Moraes exile to Alhambra, capital of Spain. It is the alternative place of possibility; he says Spain is the alternate of Delhi and Agra:

There it stands the glory of the Moraes, their triumphant master piece and their last redoubt. The Alhambra, Europe’s red fort, sister to Delhi’s and Agra’s – the palace of interlocking from and secret wisdom, of pleasure-courts and water – gardens, that monument to a lost possibility that nevertheless has gone on standing, long after its conquerors have fallen; like a testament to lost but sweetest love, to the love that endures beyond defeat, beyond annihilation, beyond despair; to the defeated love that is greater than what defeat it, to that most profound of our needs, to our for flowing together, for putting an end to frontiers, for the dropping of the boundaries of the self. (433)

Rushdie aptly chooses the concept of myth of “Mother India”. He presents the women of past with the women of today, the contrast between his mother Negin Rushdie, with his wife Clarisse Lard. The contrast between the past Bombay and present day Bombay; which was full of love and affection has been turned into a crime city. Just as the mothers of India, Bombay accepts all types of crime within it. In the Indian society the image of a mother is considered to be a divine being. The typical traditional “Indian mother” is loving, caring and bears everything for the sake of their family. Moraes himself tells of this concept of motherhood:
Motherless – excuse me if I underline the point - is a big idea in India, maybe our biggest: the land as mother, the mother as land, the firm ground beneath out feet. Ladies – O, gents - O: I’m taking major mother country. The year I was born, Mehboob Productions’ all-conquering movie mother its India –three years in the making, three hundred shooting days, in the top three all – time mega a uncrushability of village India made by the most cynical urbanites in the world. (137)

Moraes also comments on the Nargis of Mehboob Khan’s movie “Mother India,” where he supplants the traditional image of the kind, compassionate, rural, heroic mother. Rukmini Bhaya Nair in “What did Rushdie mean and Why?” states his opinion that “Own sort of Mother India …metropolitan, sophisticated, noisy, angry and different”, Rushdie provides Aurora as the typical mother India. She takes place on the semi-realistic terrace of the Malabar Hill Palace, Elephant, in which a legendary sacred mother – son relationship is demolished by the funny narrator:

In Mother India, a piece of Hindu myth making directed by a Muslim socialist, Mehboobkhan, the Indian Peasant women is idealized as bride, mother, and producer of sons, as long - suffering, stoical, loving, redemptive and conservatively wedded to the maintenance of the social status quo. (138-39)

The image of the Indian women “Bharat Nari” has been fostered for ages by writers, artists and popular media. The Indian epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata have shown ideal figures of women. The media have nourished this image over the decades. Rushdie’s concept of traditional motherhood has
undergone a number of changes due to globalization, which has changed the Indian society rapidly over the years. According to Rushdie Indian women are no longer confined to the four walls playing the part of a traditional women bearing mother.

P. Balaswamy points out in “A Post- modern, Provactive, Metropolitan Mother India: Aurora Zogoiby of Rushdie’s *The Moor Last Sigh*”:

…has witnessed for-reaching changes being effected not only in its social and economic spheres, but, in the psychological, cultural, ethical makeup of the individuals. Too. The changes are more daringly and glaringly adopted among the Indian women in their outlook, behaviour and attitude. The ‘Bharat Nari’ image, in particular, has received many severs beatings, the ramifications of which are yet to be felt on a large scale. (89)

Moraes describes Aurora images as“...an image of an aggressive, treacherous, annihilating mother who haunts the fantasy life of Indian males” (139).

Rushdie’s mother India systematically breaks the traditional image when they provide the characteristics of the urban mother India. Aurora in her girlhood proves herself to be a ruthless, exploitative, calculative and even cruel female. And Aurora’s mother Isabella had run a cold war with her mother – in - law Epifania, from the moment her son Cameons choose to marry Isabella with old lady’s opinion, a “hussy from somewhere” (23). Isabella’s only child Aurora also harbours a deep hatred and ill will towards her grandmother, her reactions to Epifania’s last dying moments on the chapel floor on the Christmas eve of 1938 are so cold and intended that they would have shocked any other family member present these.
Epifania is struck by a deadly paralysis, as she is praying along in the chapel in which Aurora, the sixteen-year old girl looking for a diversion from her monthly pains, accidentally peeps at her. She quickly grasping the situation, the young one sits down on the floor, cross-legged and watches on the death of her grandmother but does not even lift the suffering old lady. It is cold-blooded murder that shows Aurora to be some kind of evil which is equal to horror of Sufiya Zinobia:

Just then, in complete silence, Epifania Menezes da Gama fell sideways and lay still... Aurora - Did she, like a loving child, run forward,- she approached slowly, circling along the walls of the chapel, moving in towards the immobile form in gradual, deliberate steps.

Did she cry out..?- she did not – Epifania was already beyond help: that death had been swift and merciful?

When Aurora reached Epifania, she saw that the hand that help the rosary was still twitching feebly at the beads; that the old woman’s eyes were open, and met hers with recognition; that the old woman’s lips moved faintly, though no audible word emerged. (63)

After pausing, she took two steps backwards; and sat down, cross–legged, on the floor; and watched. … This was cold–blooded murder, then. ... If murder can be committed by inaction, then yes. (64)

Aurora’s marriage with Abraham in contrast is a public scandal as she was just fifteen, fresh and innocent whereas Abraham is of her father’s age thirty five. She is a rich Christian heiress and he is a poor insignificant Jewish employee of
her father’s spices company. Accidentally meeting him in a pepper godown, Aurora instantly falls in love with the handsome Jew, draws him “by the chin” literally and has an illegal relation with him then and there on pepper sacks stacked up to the godown roof. She even defies her Uncle Aires and Abraham, deserts his mother Flory for the sake of this mad “pepper love”. She even demands that he will become a Christian in order to marry her; therefore Aurora is thus “a shameless hussy”, as her grandmother would put it. The beautiful bride of traditional Christian who marries a man even without looking at his face becomes the scandal at every one:

Beauty is destiny of a sort, beauty speaks to beauty, it recognizes and assents, it believes it can excuse everything, so that even though they knew no more about each other than the words Christian heiress and and Jewish employee, they had already made the most important decision of all. ... That she had been first held, that it had been a simple case of innocence being drawn towards experience.

Mad love! It drove Abraham back to confront Flory Zogoiby and then it made him walk away from his race, looking backs only once. That for this favour, He presently become a Christian, The Merchant of Venice insisted in his moment of victory over Shylock, showing only a limited understanding of the quality of mercy; and the Duke agreed,

...what was forced upon shylock would have been freely chosen by Abraham, who preferred my mother’s love to God’s. (89-90)

Rushdie’s Mother India figure turns into an exact opposite of the popular image in her roles as bride, wife and mother. Aurora is never “redemptive” nor
“conservatively wedded to the maintenance of the social status-quo”: on the other hand, she is a “sharply- retaliating, vindictive woman in many of her reactions” says P. Balaswamy in “A Post-modern, Provocative Metropolitan Mother India. Aurora Zogoiby of Rushdie’s *The Moor’s Last Sigh*”. He further states that “Rushdie is particular in portraying the modern Indian women as not tolerant anymore (of her husband’s sins, for example) retaliatory and furious” (93).

Rushdie portrays the role for women in India have changed through the relationship between Aurora and her son Moraes. Moraes tells:

> My mother was no Nargis Dutt she was in your- face type not serene’
> and that ‘Aurora was a city girl, perhaps the city girl as much in
> incarnation of the smartly boots metropolis as Mother India was
> village earth made flesh. (139)

Thus, Aurora is basically a cosmopolitan mother with little affection towards her children. Moraes tells that Aurora gave birth to his three sisters and without caring much for them after their birth and his sisters, “… knew long before their births, that she would make few concessions to their post partum need” (139).

Moraes tells about his growing years as a child neglected by his mother “sometime in the middle of the night I would awake and weep, I would cry out pitifully for love. The shakes, the sobs came from place too deep within to be identifiable” (164). However, out of her four children Aurora had a feeling for Moraes. As he says that he was the only child who suckled at her breast which made the difference in her attitude towards me that was less destructive than her treatment of my sister. And this may be because of my physical deformity.
The Oedipal element in the relation between Aurora and Moraes is also evident from her conversation with Nargis. She tells about the famous movie that she saw for the first time and movie star who has a high terrace at Elephanta:

‘I took one look at your Bad son, Birju, and I thought, O boy, what a handsome guy- too much sizzle, too much chilli, bring water. He may be a thief and a bounder, but that is some A-class lover boy goods. And now look-you have gone and marry-o’ed him! What sexy lives you movie people leadofy: to marry your own son, I swear, wowie’. (137)

The Oedipal element is further revealed in two of her sketches when she paints Moraes. Moraes tells that in one of the paintings she reversed their relationship by painting herself as the young Eleanor Marx and Moraes as her father Karl. Aurora as a girl of affectionate and loving and Moraes is a “patriarchal, lapel - gripping pose, frock-coated and bewhiskered, like a prophecy of the all – too - near future” (224) figure. He was twice as old as he looked and was half old as he was and at the time, “I was too young to hear anything except the lightness she used to disguise the stranger things in her voice” (224).

One other painting by Aurora which brings out the Oedipal element in her relationship between her and her son is:

Nor was this our only double, or ambiguous, portrait; for there was also To Die upon a kiss, in which she portrayed herself as murdered Desdemona flung across her bed, while I was stabbed Othello, falling towards her in suicide remorse as I breathed my last. (224-225)

Rushdie’s Mother India is in sharp contrast to the traditional Mother India. Aurora is essentially a modern mother of the cities quite indifferent towards her children.
Especially the Oedipal element is a direct contrast with the idea of a traditional mother.

Rushdie hits hard at the myth of Indian womanhood through Moraes’s beloved Uma Saraswati. She is a typical, cosmopolitan, and opportunistic girl who changes her personality like a chameleon to get what she wants. Everyone she meets is highly impressed by her except Aurora who suspects her and even hires Dom Minot, a private detective to find about her character. Who gives an account of her which proves her to be wrong? Goonetilleke in “Mc Million Modern Novelists - Salman Rushdie” states:

The case of Uma perfectly fits the Hindus idea of Maya which one sees reality through a veil. Moraes thus sees Uma through a veil. It is stripped away partly by Minto and partly by Mynah. But he is in the grip of love, the only, love open to him in his deformed stale. (141)

Moraes knows that Uma in fooling him, he still clings onto her for the sake of love. Moraes himself tells about Uma’s selfish and complex personality when he tells of Uma’s personality:

I imagined a chameleon-like creature, a cold-blooded lizard from across the cosmos, who could take human form, male or female as required, for the express purpose of making as much trouble as possible, because trouble was its staple diet - its rice, its lentils, its bread. Turbulence, disruption, misery, catastrophe, grief, all these were on the menu of its preferred foods. (320)

The image created by Moraes about Uma is a far cry from a virtuous Indian girl. Uma tries creating a difference between Moraes and Aurora. She secretly
makes a video of her lovemaking with Moraes. She hands over the video to Aurora which makes her furious and she disinherits Moraes. Uma later tries to kill Moraes by offering him poisoned lozenges but has it accidentally and dies of poisoning. She in as Gonetilleke says, “seductive insidious” (241). He also tell that “she is not merely bad but mad a dislocated personality; not merely destructive but self-destructive” (141). Thus Rushdie has brought out his opinion about the myth of Mother India, traditionally without any complaints and changing face of Mother India representing the twentieth century urban woman through Aurora and Uma.


The protagonist and narrator of the novel is a fifty five year old Malik Solanka an Indian professor of philosophy who turned into a great doll maker and web designer. He has recently left his 15 year marriage English wife and their three year old son and flew from London to Manhattan. In Manhattan he made a lot of money by inventing and marketing a puppet and came to America desperately to erase his past, to start over a new life. He wanted to bury the guilt of his separation and the moment of “fury” in which, after an argument, he held a knife over his sleeping wife.

*Fury* is more exclusively about Rushdie’s experience of New York. The protagonist, Professor Malik Solanka is Rushdie himself with vision of his age and background. John Sutherland in “The Sound and the *Fury*” says about Rushdie and his novel *Fury*:
Rushdie is very great novelist – The greatness may not lie in the individual novel but in the whole oeuvre. Rushdie is laboriously and inventively assembling a life – long structure.

The implication is that Rushdie is a global international writer, and after his books mainly about India, Pakistan, Britain, the Middle East, Spain and further globe – trotting across eastern and western continents, ... ‘The Fury which Rushdie analyses is universal in AD 2000’, So it is the reader’s story as well, of whatever provenance he or she may be’. (14)

The narrative technique of Rushdie resembles a broadminded humanist. He is concerned for survival of human values and the humaneness of the human race. His fiction has represented bits of real history and made to appear as integral parts of the narrator’s consciousness. The narrator reveals himself as detached, disinterested and intelligent and reacts to events from a purely human point of view. He transcends nationality, race, creed and even cultural upbringing to bring out the truthfulness of political events as possible. Rushdie’s theme in Fury is:

Life is Fury ... Fury... Fury sexual, Oedipal, political, magical brutal-- drives us to our finest heights and coarsest depths. Out of furies comes creation, inspiration, originality, passion, but also violence, pain, pure unafraid destruction... The furies pursue us; Shiva dances his furious dance to create and also to destroy. (30-31)

Rushdie’s exile from Bombay is portrayed by his protagonist Solanka, who is an Indian born of an Indian father. He settled in England with an English wife and respectable job and acquired a disguised identity, a mask which he bears
throughout the novel. Rushdie’s personal identity is brought out where he is an Indian and after the publication of *Satanic Verses*, he has to be on an exile to America with his wife Padma Lakshmi, then he left his wife there and went to Britain. “America, because of its omnipotence, is full of fear, it fears the fury of the world and renames it envy” (114). He also commends on the rich and poor Americans:

> America insulted the rest of the planet, thought Malik Solanka in his old fashioned way, by treating such bounty with the shoulder-shrugging casualness of the inequitably wealthy. But New York in this time of plenty had become the object and goal of this world’s concupiscence and lust, and the insult’ only made the rest of the planet more desirous than ever. (6)

Rushdie states that Malik Solanka “predicts biological or germ warfare America and American paranoia about it” (85). He foresees, with the “millennium, the end of a golden age in America” (114). Rushdie draws chilling parallels between the fall of the Roman Empire and modern America; Solanka’s made the comparison between Roman Empire and modern America: “‘Rome did not fall because her armies weakened but because Romans forget what being a Roman meant.’... Were all empires so undeserving, or was this one particularly crass?” (86).

Rushdie’s love towards his mother India, especially Bombay is also brought out in the novel through Solanka, which becomes an eye opener to the west. The back cover reads:

> Malik Solanka, historian of ideas and doll maker extraordinaire, steps out of his life one day, abandons his family without a world of
explanation, a flees to New York. There’s a fury within him, and he fears he has become dangerous to those he loves. He arrives in New York at a time of unprecedented plenty, in the highest hour of America’s wealth and power, seeking to ‘erase’ himself. But fury is all around him cab drivers spout invective. A serial killer is murdering women with a lump of concrete. The petty spats and bone deep resentments of the metropolis engulf him. Mean while, his own thoughts, emotions and desires are also running wild. A young woman in a D’ Angelo baseball cap is in store. Also another woman, with whom he will fall in love and be drawn towards a different fury, whose roots lie on the far side of the world? (3-4)

Among the complete novel only two paragraphs refers to neither Rushdie nor his hero Solanka’s past life in India. Though his magical realism technique he brings out his biographical details. Rushdie’s biography is reflected in ‘Solanka that neither of his own parents had been fit to travel from Bombay to attend his graduation’ from Cambridge. He also writes ‘Solanka’s links with his family were badly eroded – the past was broken pot’. (19-20)

Rushdie has chosen a different technique along with his magical realism in this novel; this new technique of narration is from Greeks mythology. Rushdie and his hero are altered to fit his chosen myths such as the story of the Erinnyes, the goddesses of vengeance that appear in Homer’s *Iliad and Odyssey*, in Aeschylus’s *Eumenides* and in Euripides’s *Orestes*. Fury, the title of the novel explores the
mythology of the Furies at one level and on another level it is a psychological frame of mind that is attached to anger and desperation. “Fury” indicates absolute anger either of an individual or the world at large. In Greeks mythology, it is the sinner who is haunted by his guilty conscience, in the same way; the novel’s protagonist is not only haunted by his own sins, but also by the sins that are committed on him.

In Roman literature, Furies are called the daughters of Earth and sprang from the blood of her mutilated spouse Uranus; they are Hellenic goddesses of vengeance and retribution. The general idea is that these are Erinyes: Alecto “Unceasing is Anger”, Tisiphone “Avenger of Murder” and Megaera “Jealous”. As Pierre Grimal aptly puts in *The Dictionary of Classical Mythology*:

“The Erinyes were an expression of the fundamental Hellenic concept of a world order which had to be protected against the forces of anarchy” (151). Erinyes are not evil deities for they sought to punish only the sinners; they found their victims mercilessly until justice is affected. Erinyes punish those who commit serious sins; they also punish crimes against women and children. Women and children who are abused seek the protection of the goddesses. Nick Pontikis in “Erinnyes” commands, “As their influence spread, the Erinyes became the personification of the concept of vindictiveness and retribution and represented the psychological torments associated with guilty conscience” (1).

Rushdie’s Solanka is attacked by the inexorable emotional feelings of fury that threatens to undermine his humanity. The tone of the novel is summarized when Malik Solanka thinks about the fury enveloping the whole universe. Fury
was presented everywhere was the thought of Professor Malik Solanka; the fury
was in the air:

Everywhere you listened you heard the beating of the dark goddesses’
wings. Tisiphone, Alecto, Megara: the ancient Greeks were so afraid
of these, their most ferocious deities, that they didn’t even dare to
speak their real name. To use that name, Erinyes, Furies, might very
well be to call down upon yourself those ladies’ lethal wrath.
Therefore, and with deep irony, they called the enraged trinity the
good – tempered ones Eumenides. The euphemistic name did not,
alas, result in much of an improvement in the goddess’s permanent
bad mood. (123)

These ladies are given earthly shape by Malik, such as his middle-aged wife
Eleanor and his two wives at New York, the Serbian Mila and the Indian Neela.
Malik Solanka is haunted by the memories of his painful past at his homeland
Mumbai. As a child he is sexually abused by his stepfather and this horrible
memory leads him to separate from his homeland. He moves to London and
becomes an academician. Malik Solanka’s first marriage to Sara Lear proves to be
failure. Later he marries Eleanor Masters and they have a son, Asmaan. Solanka is
initially very happy in this marital union, at this point he creates a doll named
Little Brain. Solanka is disappointed by the turn of event and this slowly destroys
his family life, he leaves Eleanor and his son and moves to New York. He is
obtainable from the incessant fury that threatens his understanding. Later he meets
Mila Milo who tries to pacify his fury by channeling it into sexual and professional
outlets. Solanka’s relationship with Mila becomes unpleasant with the arrival of
Neela Mahendra, who soothes his inner demons. Neela leaves Solanka and he tries to win her back, but she dies in a political revolution.

The symbol of the Little Brain in the novel is an emotional ravine of Solanka. He is known for his short temper and his frustration of anger that is reflected in Little Brain. The speaking doll “Little Brain” turns out to be a big hit with the media and its inventor, Solanka also becomes popular:

Little Brain was his delinquent child grown into a rampaging giantess, who now stood everything he despaired and trampled beneath her giant feet all the high principle he had brought her into being to extol; including, evidently, his own. (100)

Solanka’s emotional attachment to Little Brain can perhaps be traced to his childhood trauma. His step father forces him to dress like a girl and young Solanka grows his hair and play with dolls. He tries to explain to his mother about his stepfather’s abuse but she refuses to believe him. In the end a kindly neighbour put an end to his terrible suffering and he is never again forced to dress like a girl: “Confining only in whispers, only in the hours of darkness, to the dolls who crowded around him in bed, like guardian angels, like blood kin: the only family he could bring himself to trust” (223).

Thus betrayed in the most inhuman manner by his own family at a very young age, Solanka is forced to seek refuge in the company of dolls. The dolls have become an extended metaphor for his lost family and his sense of self. The doll offer him a sense of normality for his past memories and he convince himself that nothing had happened.
Celia M. Wallhead in “Myth for Anger, Migration and Creativity in Salman Rushdie’s Fury” remarks that “Dolls can be both powerless – the playthings of their masters – or the instruments of power and evil, as in a voodoo doll” (161). Solanka’s relationship with Little Brain embodies these aspects. In the beginning, Little Brian is a mere toy created to entertain Solanka’s private fantasy but later its persona changes to have the power to create confusion in Solanka’s world. The symbol of crow in the novel is another metaphor used by Rushdie. As Solanka is haring his painful story with Neela, he states:

When Neela breaks all the barriers of forbidden secrets by her love the Furies that Solanka leave him forever: The spell broke. He laughed out aloud. A larger black crow spread its wings and flew away across town, to drop dead minutes later by the Booth statue in Gramercy Park. Solanka understood that his own cure, his recovery from his rare condition, was complete. [...] Much poison had been drained from his veins, and much that had been locked away for a far too long was being set free. (219)

The crow here becomes a symbol for the anger that torments Solanka because of his tormented past. In both western and Indian mythology, the crow is an ominous bird which portends bad luck or tragedy. The death of the crow here symbolically denotes Solanka’s liberation from his troubled past.

Rushdie has successfully made use of myth of the furies to mould a magnificent tale. His insightful analysis into the protagonist’s tormented psyche serves as an example of the complexity of human nature. Rushdie’s subversion of the myth has added a new dimension to the narrative technique in the novel.
Rushdie’s extremely ambitious work *Shalimar the Clown* brings out the three tragic strands in which the personal, the political and the ideological to create a powerful masterpiece. As a self conscious post modernist writer and story teller, he blends his technique of magic realism with history in this novel. He centres nature in the relationship of humans and thereby weaves a tale in which historiography, ethnography and topography are intermingled in his novel.

*Shalimar of Clown* was attractive and had significant attention compared to his earlier publications *Fury*. The title of the novel was derived from Shalimar Gardens in the locality of Srinagar, once under the rule of Mughal Gardens, and Shalimar is the name of the protagonist of novel. The novel begins in Los Angeles with the murder of Max Ophuls, Resistance fighter and former American ambassador to India. He was murdered like a chicken by his Kashmiri Chauffeur, the mysterious Shalimar the Clown, in an assassination that at first sight looks like a political murder on the doorstep of his illegitimate stepdaughter India. The identity of the murderer is revealed in the first pages, rather than a “who done it”; Rushdie declares “why done it”. He spins an interesting and thrilling tale by using a flashback technique to describe the protagonist Shalimar, the Clown. When living at the Kashmiri village of Pachigam he was once full of affection, love and laughter. His skill of walking on the tight rope earned him famous in his village and the name Shalimar the Clown. Although a number of narratives and incidents revolve around this Kashmiri village, the most important, was at a young age he falls in love with a beautiful Kashmiri Pandit girl, named Boonyi. Boonyi does not want to remain struck in the small village: “She knew that she would do anything
to get out of Pachigam” (114). She is forced to the marriage with Shalimar as the village elders agreed for the marriage.

Maximilian comes to the village and falls in love with Boonyi. With the help of his assistant, he gets her a flat in Delhi and their affair blooms. A scandal blows up when Boonyi gets pregnant and Max is forced to return to Los Angeles. But Shalimar was deeply in love with Boonyi; he describes her beauty:

Boonyi Kaul, dark as a secret, bright as happiness, his first and only love. Bhoomi by the Cold Water, great kisser, expert caresser, fearless acrobat, fabulous cook. Shalimar the clown’s heart was pounding joyfully because it was about to be granted its greatest desire. In the lusty silence during the pandit’s monologue they had decided that the moment had come to consummate their love, and in an exchange of wordless signals had briskly settled the hour and the place. (48)

His love towards her is brought out by Rushdie after their first lovemaking. Shalimar says to Boonyi, “Don’t you leave me now, or I’ll never forgive you, and I’ll have revenge, I’ll kill you and if you have any children by another man I’ll kill the children also” (61 ). To which she replies carelessly, “What a romantics you are [...] you say the sweetest things” (61 ).

When Boonyi returns to Pachigam leaving Max, she was declared to be dead by her father and father-in-law in order to stop Shalimar from killing her. The child who was born for Maximilian was brought to England by Maximilian’s wife Peggy and renamed her as India. But Shalimar’s hatred towards Boonyi made him leave the valley and join Islamic terrorist organization. When his father and
father-in-law die, he kills Boonyi and then Maximilian, which is the beginning. In 1991 Los Angeles, India Ophuls witnessing the murder of her father Maximullian Ophuls, by his chauffeur Shalimar. Towards the end India investigates her history and learns about her mother and adopts her mother’s name for Kashmir; therefore she changes her name to be Kashmiri. Shalimar eventually escapes from prison, the book ends with Shalimar breaking into India’s home to kill her while India prepares to defend herself and kills him.

Rushdie’s narrative strands deals with the ill-fated personal lives of three main characters: Boonyi, the beautiful, sensual young Hindu dancer; Shalimar Norman a handsome young Muslim tight rope walker and clown, who is her lover and husband of Boonyi and the ruthless old Jewish European Max Orphuls, who destroys their sacred marriage. Shalimar or Norman Sher Norman and Bhoomi (or) Boonyi Kaul Norman is born in the last night of Kashmir under the Maharaja’s rule; their birth is recounted by Saleem Sinai’s birth:

Two women gave snowbound birth behind the bushes, attended by a well-known local doctor and Sufistic Philosopher, Khwaja Abdul Hakim, Master of Medicine both herbal and chemical, traditional and modern, Eastern and Western. […] one boy child, one girl child, one trouble-free birth, one fatality. (82)

The night of their birth coincides with turbulent event of the Kashmir’s history. On the night of Boonyi and Shalimar’s birth, their families are performing at a feast laden with traditional and magic, an event that represents the high point of Kashmir’s society cooperation. The feast is laid in the honour of the Hindu Maharaja on the occasion of Desehera, celebrating the victory of lord Ram against
the demon King Ravana. Boonyi’s father, Pandit Pyarelel Kaul in a philosophical tone tells his wife:

Today our Muslim village, in the service of our Hindu Maharaja, will cook and act in Mughal that is to say Muslim - garden, to celebrate the anniversary of the day on which Ram marched against Ravana to rescue Sita. What is more, two plays are to be performed: our traditional Ram Leela and also Budshan, the tale of a Muslim Sultan. Who tonight are the Hindus? Who are the Muslim? Here in Kashmir, our stories sit happily side by side on the same double bill, we eat from the same dishes, we laugh at the same jokes. (71)

Rushdie’s narrative technique brings out the unity between the Hindus and Muslims during the Maharaja’s period. They were all one; they fought for their rights of Kashmir with togetherness. Their feeling and love towards their city is brought out by Rushdie, when the news comes that the Pakistani army has crossed into Kashmir, they all fight together as the attack indicates the end to peaceful life of Kashmir. The Kabailis attacked Kashmir and marched towards Srinagar and the Maharaja had to flee and seek Indian help.

“An army of Kabailis from Pakistan has crossed the border, looting, raping, burning, killing”, the rumours said, “and it is nearing the outskirts of the city” then the darkest rumour of all came in and sat down in the Maharaja’s chair: “The Maharaja has run away,” it said, contempt and terror mingling in its voice, “because he heard about the crucified man” (85). After Kabaili attack is moved away by the Indian army, the confused tragic history of Kashmir under Indian ruler starts.
People said terrible things about what the army did, its violence, its rapaciousness. Nobody remembered the Kabailis. They saw what was before their eyes, and what is looked like was an army of occupation, eating their food, seizing their horses, requisitioning their land, beating their children and there were sometimes deaths. (100)

Rushdie brings out the relationship between the Hindu and Muslims through Boonyi and Shalimar. Boonyi is a Hindu and Shalimar is Muslim, yet they both represent Kashmir, their marriage brings out the unity among the Hindus and Muslims. This is presented in the words of Abdullah, father of Shalimar:

We are all brothers and sisters here’, said Abdullah – ‘There is no Hindu – Muslim issue. Two Kashmiri – tub. Pachigami – youngsters wish to marry, that’s all. A love match is acceptable to both families and so a marriage there will be; both Hindu and Muslim customs will be observed’. Pyarelal added when his turn came, ‘To defend their love is to defend what is finest in ourselves’. (110)

The marriage of Shalimar and Boonyi is seen to be the finest quality of Kashmir through Pyarelel. Just as their marriage is symbol of Kashmir, their birth is a symbol of partition in a region whose people embrace diversity: “The time of demons had begun” (89). Being associated with partition of India and Pakistan, they are associated with the violence that happens in Kashmir for Kashmir.

Rushdie uses the disintegration of their marriage as an allegory that shows Kashmir’s harmonious beauty has been destroyed by outside influences. One of the destructive outside influence is American foreign policy in South Asia. This destruction is allegorized through Boonyi’s affair with Max Orphuls, the American
Ambassador to India representing the United States. Boonyi is a representation of Kashmir; their affairs symbolized the corruption influenced by the American Policy on Kashmir. Neil Murphy in “The Literalization of Allegory in Salman Rushdie’s *Shalimar the Clown*” states the condition of Kashmir:

Max becomes one of the major allegorical anchors, representative as he is of U.S. imperialism, Western theft and destruction, racial dominance and essentially an extension of the neo-colonial pattern that has had such an impact on India, Pakistan and (of course) Kashmir. (354)

Rushdie’s narrative technique is to represent the ugly and ridiculous in the backdrop and then to superimpose a tender and affectionate tale in the foreground. With the main characters he likes to bring in a mythical framework wherever possible. David Myers in “The Pitfalls of Magic Realism and the Fall From Paradise: The Rape of Kashmir in Salman Rushdie’s *Shalimar the Clown*” states Rushdie’s heroine:

The novel’s heroine, who subsequently becomes the novel’s anti-heroine in a bewildering volte-face by Rushdie, starts out as a gorgeous, sensual virgin village girl in remote Kashmir. She is swiftly clad in Hindu myth. She is not just her chucky self, plotting her secret erotic rendezvous at midnight; she is also Sita Devi being magically “abducted” by Ravana the demon King in the Ramayana. Rushdie cannot resist bringing in mythical allusion and alleged classical parallels’. (19)
Rushdie uses the myth from the great epics to describe his heroine such as Sita, when Boonyi thinks of her marriage she thinks of Sita’s story:

The blessed Sita in the forest hermitage at Panchavati near the Godavari River during the wandering years of Lord Ram’s exile from Ayodhya. Ram and Lakshman were away hunting for demons that fateful day. Sita was left alone, but Lakshman had drawn a magic line in the dirt all the way across the mouth of the little hermitage and warned her not to cross it or to invite anyone else to do so. The line was powerfully enchanted and would protect her from harm. But the moment Lakshman had left, the demon king Ravana showed up disguised as a wandering mendicant mendicant dressed in a tattered ochre cloth and wooden sandals, and carrying a cheap umbrella. (49)

She also speaks about Jetayu from Ramayana:

The great eagle Jatayu, old and blind, tried to save her, (Sita) killing the mules in the air and making the chariot fall to earth, but Ravana picked up Sita and leapt unharmed to the ground and when tired Jatayu attacked him he cut off the eagle’s wings. (49)

Rushdie as a brilliant story teller entertains the readers with the romance and spine frightening danger of a story. In Boonyi and Shalimar’s marriage scene he gives thousands of details about local colour and the mythical quality: “Boonyi smokes charas to give herself courage and walks to the midnight tryst bearing a little pot of hot coals below her belly” (60). Mythically, she is compared with Sita.
Shalimar on the other hand bring with him the “sky-dragons of his father, Rahu and Ketu and also the snake - witchcraft of his mother Firdaus Begum” (56).

Rushdie constructs the myths of a golden age of inter-religious and inter-racial harmony located in the fabled valley of Kashmir. It is an elegy for a society where Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims coexisted side by side in relative harmony: “The words Hindu and Muslims had no place in their story […]. In the valley these words were merely descriptions not divisions” (131). The golden age chronologically is the Mughal Empire in the 16th century or the Sikh emperors in the 18th century but paradoxically it is in the humble Kashmiri village of Pachigam and Shirpal, two villages with a friendly rivalry. At the outset golden age is comprised of the fertility of the fields with their rich saffron crops and the wild flowers of the mountain meadows of Khelmarg and the celestial China tree after which the heroine Boonyi names herself.

The distinctive human features of the Kashmiri villagers’ golden age are the humorous broad-minded subversion of all ideology and stiff beliefs. These beliefs are bent by the villagers until it can accommodate the needs of “the other”. Tolerance of “the other” and friendly compromise achieve their highest ethical moment in the wedding ceremony of Boonyi and Shalimar. Each religion conducts its traditional rituals and both sides are happy. This golden age is destroyed by the vanity, selfishness of Boonyi affair and later with Shalimar’s vengeance.

Rushdie’s narrator is a rationalist, but he follows the usual technical devices of magic realism. *Shalimar the Clown* is full of myths and superstitions, loads of omens, prophecies and flirtations with the super national. There are repeated prophecies of the earth’s witch of the forest Nazarebaddoor with her
“evil eye, begone” (63). Rushdie’s opportunity to voice his fears about the coming times as Abdull Noman prophesies, “the world he knew was disappearing this blind, inky night was the incontestable sign of the times” (88).

Rushdie makes a prophesy that, “The time of the demons had begun” (89) as the paradise on earth - Kashmir fall under the clutches of Indian army and Pakistan supported terrorist associated in an period of deaths and communal violence. The last prophesy that Firdous Noman remembers is: “What’s coming is so terrible that no prophet will have the words to foretell it” (80). The superstitious legends that Rushdie uses in this novel are the two dragon planets “Rahu and Ketu” (45), the legend of “the gold - digging ants” (74), the miracle of the “seventh Sarkar”, who can make the Shalimar Garden disappear (77), “the magic snake totemism” of Firdaus Norman “Snake Wriggle, World Jiggle” (56) and so on.

Rushdie’s narrative criteria are not a psychological realism but it is magical realism where historical and environmental background is blended together. It brews of hints of the super national, lots of folk superstitions. It portrays a lot of Hindu and Greek polytheistic myths. Rushdie uses his wit to outbursts of the individual breaking down the traditional way of wit. Especially Boonyi’s character begins with a playful tone and rushes randomly towards the horror of the climax. The beginning of the novel is the ending of the novel. Rushdie brings a subtle magic realist way in which Boonyi discusses with her father about the prophesy about the iron Mullah and about their religion. She tells:

The iron Mullah says that the question of religion can only be answered by looking at the condition of the world. When the world is in disarray then God does not send a religion of love. At such
times he sends a material religion, he asks that we sing battle hymns and crush the infidel. The iron Mullah says that at the root of religion is this desire, the desire to crush the infidel. This is the fundamental urge when the infidel has been crushed there may be time for love, although in the iron Mullah’s opinion this is of secondary importance. Religion demands austerity and self-denial says Bulbul Fakh. It has little time for the softness of pleasure or the weakness of love. (262)

Rushdie uses magical realist technique effectively to describe the arrival and growing influence in the valley of a fanatical “iron Mullah”, whose body apparently is made of scrap metal and who precedes the Jihadis of today.

Rushdie’s women characters in Shalimar the Clown are different from the traditional mother to the future Mother India. The difference in the women has been portrayed from the traditional story of Sita the pure was kidnapped and Ram fought a war to win her back. In the modern world everything had been turned upside down and inside out. Sita, or rather Boonyi in the Sita role, had freely chosen to run off with her American Ravana and willingly became his mistress and bore him a child; and Ram - the Muslim clown, Shalimar, misplaying the part of Ram - fought no war to rescue her. In the ancient tale, when Sita returned to Ayodhya after defending her chastity throughout her captive years, Ram had sent her back into exile because her residence under Ravana’s roof made that chastity suspect in the eyes of the common people. “In Boonyi’s story, she too has been exiled to the forest, but it was … her father, even her father – in – law … her
husband went off to war, and she knew that for him the battle was a form of
waiting that he would fight other enemies … take her unfaithful life” (263).

Rushdie is the master of story teller portraying the novel as a love and
revenge story. He combines the bleak conclusion of the defiled marriage of Boonyi
and Shalimar and destruction of present Kashmir in this novel.