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# Indian narratology: A study of Salman Rushdie

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### Abstract
The narrative in Indian languages has had a very long and varied history. There are many human groups who are writing, scattered across the world level, but as far as Indian context and art of narrative discourse is concerned, the little has been written on rhetoric and literary criticism. Sir Ahmed Salman Rushdie, a controversial modern writer, is remarkably known for with many path breaking attempts in literature. Mulk Raj Anand, Raj Rao and R.K. Narayan drew the first models of character and elaborated the peculiar logic of the Indian novel. They played very vital role in the narratology. Rushdie, through his works has explored new ideas in Narratology. Thus the proposed study will investigate the ideas.

**Keywords:** Narratology, structure, History, Fantasization, allegorisation.

## Introduction
Sir Ahmed Salman Rushdie, a controversial modern writer, is remarkably known for with many path breaking attempts in literature. Rushdie tries his pen in the literary world of vivid clarity of thought and sleight of syntax. His innovatory narrative techniquese are full of eloquent expression and dazzled whimsical ideas. This made him to be a writer of mainstream of World Literature. He was Born in Bombay on 19th June, 1947, the year of India's freedom and partition. Rushdie was the eldest child of Negin and Anis Ahmed Rushdie, a prosperous and learned businessman. He grew restless during his stay in Pakistan because of the prevailing conditions there and he puts it aptly, "I stayed in Pakistan for seven or eight months. I had few schemes... but I found that it is a difficult environment for anyone who wanted to be a writer" (Express Magazine 5).

Rushdie has always been controversial for one or another reason. His controversial depiction of 'the widow' in Midnight's Children upset Mrs. Indira Gandhi, then Prime Minister of India. She brought a libel suit against him. In the same way Rushdie's work *Shame* was immediately banned in Pakistan because in this novel he brutally and realistically depicted the reality of the leaders of Pakistan.

On 26th September 1988, Penguin U.K published *The Satanic Verses*, which is probably the most controversial novel in all of English literature. Many countries banned The Satanic Verses. The publishers were threatened, translators got killed, and book stalls attacked and bombed. People frightened the Book sellers so they refused to sell them.

The narrative in Indian languages has had a very long and varied history. It can be compared with that of any other country during the ancient or medieval period. Narrative, whether it is in written or in the oral form, survives in the one form or another. No doubt, it has been affected by the tyranny of historical forces. It shows a wide variety of themes and techniques. Some of such narratives may still be seen in the stage practices of various tribes and groups in the country. What is outlined here briefly is only a working model for the purpose of understanding major components of the history of Indian narrative.

There are many human groups who are writing, scattered across the world level, but as far as Indian context and art of narrative discourse is concerned, the little has been written on rhetoric and literary criticism. There are many texts available today on poetics in Sanskrit like Natya Sastra but they talk more about drama and poetry, and have not directly said much about fictional narration as such. It may be considered that whatever is told about poetry and drama is relevant to narrative art also in its effect on the readers or in its depiction of human emotions.

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Paniker's Indian Narratology is a seminal book tracing the tradition of Indian narratology, which is accepted in this dissertation as the basis of the theoretical frame work. Paniker says in Indian Narratology:

For the sake of clarity and conciseness, the main distinctive features of Indian narratology may be listed under ten heads. There may be some overlapping here and there in this classification, sometimes even chronological misinterpretations or imbalances in evaluation, but it is believed that the effort to categories itself is of some use at this distance of time. These are Interiorisation, Serialisation, Fantasisation, Cyclicalisation, Allegorisation, Anonymisation, Elasticisation of time, Spatialisation, Stylisation and Improvisation (Panikar 13).

Interiorisation, the first feature of Indian narratives, is known as a process. The external features of a text and its internal essence can affect to any type of distinction, a contrast or even a contradiction in such process. In some texts "the inner and outer structures may be parallel or contrastive, the outer frame may even be used to seduce the reader away from the inner core" (Panikar 14). A text comprises many layers of signification. The artful narrator may not only show or decorate the complex and the inner fabric of text but also can weave it in the simple external frame. The Indian narrative includes the special characteristic of showing this kind of dialectical relationship between different aspects of narration.

Serialisation "implies the structure of the typical Indian narrative, which seems to prefer an apparently never-ending series of episodes to a unified, single-strand, streamlines course of events, centering around a single hero or heroine and whatever happens to the central character" (Panikar 15). There are many episodes in the Indian epic. Some of these episodes seem to have the very clear and easy access of meanings and are easily detachable without any affliction to the whole frame. The Indian temple or palace reveals the long narrative of architecture with the inclusion of many substructures and many entrances. These substructures give a spatial lengthening to the total structure. The legends show the small temples which are dedicated to small palaces or minor deities. These temples and palaces no doubt, are occupied by young princes or princesses who represent the deluxe of the divine, but they are not integral parts of the foremost authority.

The beginning of history is itself a proof to raise the questions regarding the nature of reality. The Indian minds are believed to follow the tact which gives the aesthetic delight. They try to access this delight whether from invisible or from any intangible legend and myth. Pleasure from the fantasy is known to a way of adjustment. It can accommodate even the unpleasant reality of the outside world to the heart's content of the auction or reader. Paniker, in Indian Narratology , says that "the author fantasizes, so does the reader, so that fantasy becomes an interface that the reader's imagination shares with that of the author, the reader is allowed to be as creative as the author, although the former's imagination is triggered off by that of the latter" (Panikar 16).

Fantasization has been thus a privileged concern in the Indian narrative since the times of Vedas. The Indian rational minds show their artistic creativity of the imagination in the Vedas, the Puranas, the epics, the fairy tales and folk tales. Indian critics and austenitic aestheticians represent the orator of the highly subjective nature of the human imagination. They seem to attribute not only to Lord Brahma, the creator of the world but also to all its inhabitants. The aestheticians deal with the artistic expressions like poetry and drama and originate the new fabrics of literary pleasure from the works. The notions running from the ancient times becomes so integral part of psyche that an atheist or agnostic cannot turn against it. This type of notions can make a person slight different from it but cannot make him completely unaffected by it. God is considered to be the creation of man in his own image and familiar with the objects around him as "invested natural objects with some element of divinity" (Panikar 17). It may be named as a superstition but human imagination collects the objectivity as well as the subjectivity in the believed notions regarding Gods and Goddesses.

Allegorisation is another common feature of Indian narratives. An allegory is a technique of vision. It serves to convey abstract and mystic truths in an easy popular way. For the common reader, the writer merely narrates an entertaining story, but for the more discerning reader the story carries a profound more lesson. Thus, the allegory is a literary composition with a hidden moral lesson. Medieval English Literature is largely allegorical. Morality players are all allegorical, depicting the conflict between the Good and Evil for the possession of the human soul. It is perhaps a universal trait, not just Indian only, for there are specific varieties of in other languages allegories too. It is this universality that led to the popularity of the Indian text Pancatantra across the wide world. As Panikar says that "To invest non-human creatures as well as inanimate objects with the capacity to feel, think and speak probably stems from the animistic or atavistic beliefs of early times"(Panikar 15). That moral ideas could be more effectively presented in terms of the activities of birds or animals operates at the root of most of these animals fables, and Indian narrators have fully exploited the potential of the animal fable for intellectual and moral communication.

Several Indian narratives have the lost origins in antiquity but the narraritives are controlled by Anonymisation means impersonal. Anonymisation is actually a concept to control. Most story tellers maintained certain anonymity. They represent the historical times in which they lived in and their names were known or could be identified. The objective was to merge the subjective self of the narrator in the collective readership so that ideally the narrator and the audience are one. The point behind attributing the authorship of a work to fictitious names, like Brahma, the creator, Valmiki the anthill-born, or Vyasa the diameter or extension, which are loaded with infinite associations, is that no author is just an individual especially when he uses language which is an instrument of collective expression. A work of narration delves into the meaning whatever the masses of readers derive from that narration.

In the Indian narrative, the techniques are used for the measurement of time in day and night, the different phases of moon, the cycle of reasons, the ages or stars. The telescoping of time is often resorted to even in the realistic novel of nineteenth century Europe. "Narration, by definition, implies selection, elaboration, condensation, and this process is most manifest in the treatment of time" (Panikar 14), says Paniker in Indian Narratology.

Space is of great importance in Asian narrative. The narrative formula comprises the opening a tale which is more specific about place and leaving the exact time imprecise. The Pancatantra tales, for instance, begins thus: "Once upon a time, in the southern land flourished the fair city of Mahilarophyua, rivaling in splendour even Amarvati, city of

the Gods"(Panikar 12). The downgrading of the time factor is in narration with features, the mentioned earlier like interiorisation, fantasisation, allegorisation and impersonalisation. Even the order in the ten incarnations of Vishnu as narrated in some Puranas is not strictly confined or subjected to chronology.

There are many factors which impose the limitations on writers or the story telling, Stylisation is one of these factors. Improvisation, on the other hand, is a liberating factor. There are also certain pre-established codes which are to be followed while narrating any piece of art. The arising of certain kinds of expectations in the reader or spectator, prepares the conditions for him to move on expected lines. The narrator cultivates the special skills required for satisfying those very expectations. In order to go beyond the limitations imposed by the code of stylization, the writers use the contrary device of improvisation. The device helps the writers to provide elements of surprise to the readers. As Paniker says in Indian Narratology "Stylisation is discipline, improvisation is freedom" (Panikar 16).

A writer creates a work because he has a meaning to convey to his reader, to put his perspectives on life in words. It is the life's image of an author, an embodiment of his selective interpretation of life. The writer has an intention, a value to share with. He has to work out a form in order to express his meaning in its entirety. He selects material as well as technique for a work has much to do with the intention of the writer because, as Joseph Warren Beach says, "intention determines the technique" (Beach 03). So to say, technique is essential to a work of art, it is not "the cloths of the book -it is the embodiment." But the main concern of the author is how to arrange his experiences of life and its selective interpretation in the body of the novel so that reality can be rendered to it. Technique focuses on the transformative process between life and art.

Technique is the surest means of exploring and defining the values in an area of experience selected by the author. It is a "means toward the positive definition of theme" (Schorer 201). It is what T.S. Eliot means by 'Convention', "any selection, structure, or distortion, any form or rhythm imposed upon the world of action: by means of which it should be added our apprehension of the world of action is enriched or renewed" (Schorer 201-02). It is also not the fact that technique may only either be blunter or sharper. It is also not the fact that technique also can make a work appealing or rewarding. Even works like War and Peace and The New Comes are widely read, though they suffer from technical weaknesses, nevertheless, finer the technique, richer the work likely turns out to be. Hence technique is of no little importance to the novel. As early as 1875, "The Spectator while outlining the qualifications of a novelist stressed first on his capacity to understand the art of story-telling because without this art a novel cannot wholly succeed even if it contains subtle delineations of characters, exquisite descriptive passages, pregnant thoughts and witty dialogues" (Dennis 15). Technique is an integral aspect of creative process, "a transforming and informing" agent that unites with content in the act of expressing it. As Henry James succinctly puts, "So long as there is a subject to be treated, so long will it depend wholly on the treatment to rekindle the fire" (James 22). So the study of technique used in a work of art is necessary to comprehend its total meaning and derive aesthetic pleasure embedded in it.

From time to time serious efforts have been made by critics to locate the leading strains that make possible the orchestration of devices of technique. Henry James locates it in construction and characterization and Joseph Conrad locates it in the language. Percy Lubbock in his The Craft of Fiction (1921) locates it in the point of view. E.M. Forster in his Aspects of the Novel (1927) believes that the important thing for the novelist is to make believe in character and Edwin Muir in The Structure of the Novel (1928) emphasis upon the structure of a novel. As recently as David Lodge, in his Language of Fiction (1966), stresses more on the aspect of style and language in fiction. The art of Narration went into a great change with the advent of cinema. As Paul Cobley notes:

No one went to see a particular film until around 1907 at the very earliest. They went to the biograph, the cinematograph, the moving pictures, the nickeldon: it was a place and experience long before identifiable words and their makers emerged to claim their niche in history (Cobley 155).

With increase in popularity of films and television serials, technique of presenting characters and events has undergone a great change. Writers of novels and short stories whose works are often rendered for scripts of cinema and serials are now concentrating more on including cinematic devices in their work, of course, without neglecting the use of richer narrative perspective or failing to go for deeper probe into the inner psychology of the character.

Indian novelists writing in English are not unaware of the importance of technique in fiction, though early writings like The Princes of Destiny (1909), Hindupur (1909), Nur Tehan (1909) had numerous technical faults. From about 1920s when the novelists turned towards contemporary problems of politics and society avoiding historical tales and romance they became serious about their craftsmanship and developed a methodical approach to form and technique.

In a work of fiction, while studying its technique, importance of analysis of its narrative perspective cannot be played down as it is "a point from which a narrator views fictional events and characters as if visually" (Currie 18) or, as Leech and Short put it, "it is the slanting of the fictional world towards reality as apprehended by a particular participant or set of participants" (Leech 174). It is the angle from which the story is told, a series of events or facts are recounted. The choice of a suitable narrative perspective is crucial for heightening dramatic interest in a work, it also a means towards positive exploration of the author's world values. It is not merely to organize the material treated by him; it is like "a verse form in the composing of a poem" (Friedman 132). So no writer can ever ignore this aspect of technique.

Realizing the importance of point of view, critics have tried to find out its modes, following Jamesian call to fiction writers "dramatize, dramatize" Lubbock puts more stress on the mimetic mode of discourse when he says "the art of fiction does not begin until the novelist think of his story as a matter to be shown, to be so exhibited that it will tell itself" (Lubbock 251). His over emphasis on dramatic method, the method which "shows the events and more often than not, such events will contain scene is able to imitate through the use of quotation marks" (Lodge 122), does not satisfy Booth because he fears that the scene method is insufficient in defining the message embedded in the narrative. Booth does not want to subordinate diegetic mode to the mimetic one and holds the opinion that summary method-the method which "tells about events or people without imitating them" (Lodge 132), and in Aristotle's and Plato's terms, it takes place through the Poet's voice", is also equally important in the art of narration. But these two methods of narration are

found to be insufficient by certain critics who show that the modern narration consists not of two modes of discourse but of three, and the third mode is represented speech and thought.

In a work of narrative, behind the events and incidents, behind vigour and vitality of the actions of characters, there remains such element which is invisible, inaudible but inseparable. This element flows uninterruptedly and unabatedly in the narrative, peeps in and out of characters' mind and their inner consciousness. This element is time which cannot be eliminated, which cannot be ignored while designing a narrative because time is "crucial to narrative" (Bennet and Nicholas 143). Of course, modern narrative tendency is to subvert this element; but it cannot be fully effaced because to efface it is to eliminate all narrative art. Novel is also a narrative and whose movement implies "space" and "which must always involve time" (Cobley 16). Novel tells a story and a story is a narration of events connected by subject matter and it is related by time. As Robert Scholes puts it, "A real event is something that happens: a happening, an occurrence, an event; a narrated event is the symbolization of a real event; a temporal icon" (Scholes 205). In fact, life by values is celebrated through life in time which prompted E.M. Forster to observe, ".... It is never possible for a novelist to deny time inside the fabric of his novel..." (Forster 31). Rushdie's characters through the movement of time, through its shifts and switches discover themselves, realize their follies, understand the futility of their running after 'hysterics and illusions'.

Through the structure of a text the author wants to give a shape to the reader's experience as s/he goes through it. Studying structure of a work means studying the way the author fits 'parts' of the text together aiming at finding out why he fits them together in that particular way. By focusing on how the author fits the parts together the reader gets the idea of what sort of vision of life the author intends to convey.

Twentieth century heard very often declarations about the death of a character. Many modern novelists like D.H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf denied various features considered to be the hall marks of characters. They rejected the notion of stability modeled on a traditional view of man and replaced it with the conception of change and diversity. The schools like Formalists, Structuralists and individual critics like Barthes, Ferrara subordinated character to action holding the view that characters are necessary only as "agents" or "performers" of the action. "What is absolute in today's novels, says Barthes, "is not the novelistic, it is character; what can no longer be written in the Proper Name" (Barthes 49). But against this view, critics like E.M. Forster and Evans subordinated action to character. For them, twentieth century novel is in fact the sum total of the growth and development of personality; it is 'exploration of the human personality'. However, without being a part of the controversy whether character is more important than plot or vice-versa, it can be said that in any literary work, especially in fiction, plot and character are inseparable, and it is almost difficult to discuss these two components in water tight compartments. In full arrangements with Rimmon Kenan it may be said that it is "legitimate to subordinate character to action when we study action... equally legitimate to subordinate action to character when the latter is the focus of our study" (Kenan 36).

A writer can never ignore the factor of reading of his text by persons other than him because a text finds its meaning only when it is read. A reader as much as a writer produces text by reading it, and there remains always a reciprocal between the text and the reader. As Jonathan Culler puts it:

As a linguistic object the text is strange and ambiguous... We reduce its strangeness by reading it as the utterances of a particular narrator so that models of plausible human attitudes and of coherent personalities can be made operative (Cullar 146).

To understand the meaning of text, purposes of the maker behind the making, reading the text is a must because narrative structure and meaning function only in the process of reading. Narratives do not contain a definite meaning supposed to be sitting in the world waiting for someone to find it. Meaning comes into existence only in the act of reading. A text unless it is read fails to elicit response from the reader, and the result will be that the meaning embodied in it will die out. To put in the words of Wolfgang Iser, "a text can only come to life when it is read, and if it is to be examined, it must therefore be studied through the eyes of the reader" (qtd in Walse 06).

Mulk Raj Anand, Raj Rao and R.K. Narayan drew the first models of character and elaborated the peculiar logic of the Indian novel. They had to overcome several constraints of tradition and culture in the process of shaping the Indian novel in Indian languages. While following the most popular models of narration they also fully naturalized the western techniques like myth, symbol, irony etc. At the same time they made experiments in their technique to suit the changing moods of India's set up. The Guide of Narayan, The Serpent and The Rope of Raja Rao and The Untouchable of Anand are some of the novels in which the writers attempted to make new experiments in the method of narration.

There has been seen a notable development in narrative art in recent Indian English Fiction. Unlike the earlier generation, the new generation writers are ever trying to explore new frontiers of formal domain and go in for "unrestrained experimentation in narrative technique and language". Influenced by the great changes occurring in the west, the recent novelist like Salman Rushdie, Upamanyu Chatterji, Amitav Ghosh, Gita Mehta and several others have shown an uninhibited urge to explore the new possibilities of conveying the truth and reality. Never before had been seen such a tremendous enthusiasm and courage, as one can see in these novelists. Allegory, symbols, fantasy, magical realism, narrative fluctuating backwards and forwards in time, the compelling use of narrator, fluency in story-telling and the unveiling of layers and layers of meaning have all become a mode of writing. In this tradition, Salman Rushdie adds a strong and lively spirit of experimentalism in his novels.

Rushdie belongs to the "New Novelists" (Walse 10) of the Seventies and after and is a writer par excellence of wild and fantastic fiction. Rushdie's angst ridden political fiction is an entertaining scene which ironically exhibits the way of the modern world's drift towards total spiritual sterility and failure, as evidenced in T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land and Samuel Beckett's Theatre of the Absurd. Rushdie's works are varied and share an intense interest in the fate of individual's identity in relation to nation and history as a whole. Most of the themes deal with migration and home, writing and storytelling, myth and identity, birth and death, nationhood and politics and the nature and the meaning of art.

Almost all of Rushdie's works are very complex in their structure but filled with humour and energetic language and word play. All his works are incorporated with magical real elements, often with multiple narratives and many layers of

meaning. Rushdie's narrative technique has connected his books to Magic Realism, which includes works of English authors such as Peter Carey, Angela Carter, E.L. Doctorow, John Fowles, Mark Herpin or Emma Tennant.

The fiction of Salman Rushdie has been studied and analyzed from a variety of perspectives. He has been considered a Post-Modernist writer, when the critics applied the theories of Post Structuralism and Post Modernism. According to Linda Hutcheon, "Post modem fiction is an 'uneasy mix' of parody, history, metafiction and politics and that combination is probably historically determined by post modernist's confliction response to literary modernism. On one hand, the postmodern, obviously was made possible by the self-preferentiality, irony, ambiguity and parody that characterize by its explorations of language and its challenges to the classic realist system of representation; on other hand postmodern fiction has come to contest the modernist ideology of artistic autonomy, individual expression and the deliberate separation of art from mass culture and everyday life" (Hutchean 04).

Salman Rushdie introduces an innovative narrative technique in Indian writings in English. It is Rushdie who sets the trend for experimentation with narrative technique and usage of English language. In this way, he gave a new direction to Indian English writings. Rushdie's works are remarkable for their technical maturity. In his more than forty years literary carrier he has chiseled sharpened and improvised his literary tools to convey his world vision. The effort in the present work is to point out the narrative technique that is generally used in fictional world of Rushdie particularly in Shame (1983) and Grimus (1975).

Shame, Rushdie's third novel published in 1983, is a political allegory depicts the lives of Raza Hyder and Iskander Harrappa based on the real life of Pakistani Leaders; former president Zia-Ul-Haq and former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Rushdie, through Shame, wants to show the corrupted politics of 14th century Pakistan. Grimus, Rushdie debut novel published in 1981, is a science fiction tale narrating the story of the journeys of Flapping Eagle who, after drinking a magic fluid, wanders for more than 777 years on the earth in search of his sister and the mysterious 'The Stone Rose'. Rushdie, through the novel, wants to show that everyone wants to become immortal but an immortal life can be a curse also. The novel also portrays the alienation of a man in an unknown city.

This research aims to explore the narrative techniques used in the novels of Salman Rushdie. Narrative technique used in the novels Shame and Grimus is the crux of the dissertation in the following chapters. It shows that how Rushdie uses innovative narrative technique which is characterized by symbolism, postmodernism, magic realism and so on.

The selection of these two novels Shame (1983) and Grimus (1975) did not have originally any special significance. Both the works have different from their subject matter. But on close reading it is found that there are some similarities among the both the novels in terms of strategies and narrative technique. Both Shame and Grimus can be evaluated through the ten distinctive features of Indian Narratology given by Panikar. The technique of intertaxtuality is followed in both the novels. Art or painting is used as a technique in the novels. Magic Realism finds liberal expressions in both the novels. Women in these novels are totally passive, though Sufia in Shame is an exception to it. Besides this, the present study evaluates the two novels for both native as well as western perspective of narratology.

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