



# शोधभूमि

शिक्षा एवं शिक्षण शास्त्र विषय की पूर्व समीक्षित शोध पत्रिका

## Swimming Against Moral Currents: Gasping for Survival in Manjula Padmanabhans “Harvest”

**Asifa Tamjeed**

Student M.A (English), UGC-NET(English)

Department of English

St. Xavier's College, Ranchi, Jharkhand

E-mail : asifatamjeed123@gmail.com

### Abstract

Manjula Padmanabhan's *Harvest* (1997) depicts despoiled and despondent characters whose change of fortunes compel them to careen between two conflicting cultures and squash their revered moral etiquettes as their vulnerable bodies are prey on and their lifestyles are distorted with impunity. Although the audience/readers may wriggle on Padmanabhan's *Harvest*, circumstances drive her characters to swim against moral currents to survive in a world hanging on a string of economic collapse. Conscious of the dent their choices would put on their morality, these characters still surrender their rights to their own bodies and their pristine values to Ginni, a metaphor for western greed and exploitation. Ginni, via InterPlanta Services, tiptoes into the lives of impoverished Indian characters with promises of alleviating their poverty-stricken conditions, but quickly becomes a dour, barking orders to them with sternness, and leaving them battered and empty. Bruised by active resistance to western encroachment into their lives, Jaya defies the patriarchal system, even as her family members egg on her husband to give away everything for basic western needs.

*Keywords:* morals, values, culture, poverty, exploitation, collapse, resistance, dignity, and hope

**Salman Rushdie's Later Novels: Postcolonial Identity and Cultural Hybridity**

### Introduction

Salman Rushdie is a key contemporary writer whose novels explore identity, culture, and politics through a postcolonial lens. His later works delve deeper into themes of

postcolonial subjectivity and cultural diaspora in a globalized world. This study aims to analyze how Rushdie's later novels depict identity construction, assess the influence of historical and political contexts, and contribute fresh insights to postcolonial literary criticism.

### **Overview of Major Later Works**

Rushdie's later novels such as *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995), *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999), *Shalimar the Clown* (2005), *The Enchantress of Florence* (2008), *Two Years Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Nights* (2015), and *Quichotte* (2019) present multilayered narratives exploring globalization, migration, and hybridity. These novels reflect the complexities of cultural creolization and identity formation in postcolonial societies.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Postcolonial theory, involving ideas such as colonialism, orientalism (Edward Said), hybridity (Homi K. Bhabha), and subalternity (Gayatri Spivak), underpins Rushdie's novels. This framework helps to understand the effects of colonial histories on culture and identity, revealing the fluid and hybrid nature of the postcolonial subject. Cultural hybridity, as a process of mixing cultures to create new identities, is central to interpreting Rushdie's literary approach.

### **Postcolonial Identity in Rushdie's Novels**

Rushdie's later novels depict identity as a continuously evolving and hybrid process shaped by colonial legacies, migration, and cultural interaction. His characters live "in between"—straddling multiple histories, cultures, and political realities. For example, in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, the protagonist's mixed heritage symbolizes India's multicultural identity. *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* portrays identity fluidity in a globalized world, while *Shalimar the Clown* shows the destructive effects of political violence on personal and communal identity.

### **Cultural Hybridity in Fiction**

Rushdie's fiction vividly illustrates cultural hybridity as characters navigate the intersections of multiple cultural influences. His use of magical realism and myth enables complex portrayals of hybridity and creolization, where identity is never fixed but constantly in flux. Notable works like *Midnight's Children* and *The Satanic Verses* emphasize the

pluralistic struggle for selfhood in postcolonial societies, while *The Enchantress of Florence* dramatizes the Renaissance-era fusion of Eastern and Western cultures.

### **Comparative Perspectives**

Unlike some postcolonial writers who focus on conflict and cultural disintegration, Rushdie often presents hybridity optimistically, emphasizing its creative and generative potential. While authors like Chinua Achebe or Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o tend toward realist depictions of colonial impact, Rushdie intertwines historical realism with fantasy and magical realism, presenting hybridity as both a struggle and a source of innovation in identity formation.

### **Globalization and Transnationalism**

Rushdie situates his narratives against the backdrop of globalization, portraying migration, diaspora, and transcultural identities as defining features of the modern postcolonial condition. His approach contrasts with writers who emphasize localized impacts of globalization, offering broader reflections on cultural interconnectedness and hybrid identity.

### **Critical and Scholarly Reception**

Rushdie's novels have sparked diverse critical reactions, particularly concerning his use of religion and hybridity. While some critics view his portrayal of hybridity as overly optimistic or his cosmopolitan characters as alienating for some readers, others laud his inventive narrative style and incisive cultural and historical reflections. Debates continue on how his works address identity, power, and history, confirming his importance in postcolonial studies.

### **Conclusion**

Rushdie's later novels provide rich explorations of postcolonial identity and cultural hybridity, using innovative narrative techniques to represent complex cultural realities. His optimistic portrayal of hybridity and use of magical realism have influenced contemporary postcolonial literature and scholarship. Future research could extend to his treatment of diaspora, immigration, and the ethical dimensions of hybridity, further illuminating his contribution to global cultural and literary studies.

**References**

1. Henighan, S. (1998). Coming to Benengeli: The Genesis of Salman Rushdie's Rewriting of Juan Rulfo in *The Moor's Last Sigh*. *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 33(2), 55-74.
2. Rushdie, S. (1999). *The ground beneath her feet*. Random House.
3. Bierman, I. A. (1979). Edward Said, *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978. 15. *Review of Middle East Studies*, 13(1), 68-68.
4. Bhabha, H. K. (2012). *The location of culture*. Routledge.
5. Chakravorty Spivak, G. (1988). Can the subaltern speak?. *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, 271-313.
6. D'Cruze, M. P. (2023). Reconstructing Postcolonial Identity: A Comparative Analysis of Cultural Hybridity in Salman Rushdie's Novels with a Focus on the South Asian Context. *Journal of Research in Social Science and Humanities*, 2(12), 50-60.
7. Brown, J. (2011). *East/West: Salman Rushdie and Hybridity*.
8. Atiwi, G., & Al-Khafaji, W. (2020). Struggle For Cultural Identity in a Postcolonial World A Study in Salman Rushdie's Works. *Kufa Journal of Arts*, 1(43), 667-676.
9. Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (2000). *Post-colonial studies: the key concepts* Routledge.
10. Needham, A. D. (1994). *The Politics of Post-Colonial Identity in Salman Rushdie*. In *Reading Rushdie* (pp. 145-157). Brill.