

REDEFINE: THE CONCEPT OF IDENTITY CRISIS IN SALMAN RUSHDIE'S NOVELS FROM MODERN PROSPECTS

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Abstract:

In the modern era, humanity is suffering from so many problems which are creating halts in their day to day progress and 'Identity Crisis' is one of them. With the every passing day, it is becoming a bigger problem especially for the youth of modern era. In fact, in the modern world it is quite obvious as everyone craves for the unique identity and everyone wants to see oneself different from others. From top to bottom or from head to toe everyone is focused on establishing their own identity. Somewhere it has become a status symbol due to the increasing effects of social sites where each and every youngster mongers to show the identity through several pictures and posts. Salman Rushdie's novels are no exception in this way as his novels are dominating in terms of identity and reflect the ideal conception of identity. So, this paper is an attempt to redefine the concept of Identity crisis in Salman Rushdie's Novels from modern concept. As no problem exists in this world without any solution, so it is an effort to find out the solution of this crisis from modern prospects.

Keywords- Modern Prospects, Identity, Suffering, Existence, Crisis and Status Symbol.

Introduction:

In general form, identity crisis denotes the failure in achieving ego and it can occur as the cohesion of identity during adolescent age. This is the stage, in which every adolescent has to face physical growth, sexual maturity and integrated ideas about what others are thinking about them. In short, every adolescent child makes their own stories as well as image and go on with the resolution of this crisis. In terms of identity, it is acclaimed that it begins in the childhood and takes the shapes throughout the life in different circumstances. In fact, it is better to speak that circumstances are responsible to establish one's identity because obstacles in life may prevent one from the establishment of strong identity. So, it is well interpreted that this sort of unresolved crisis leads an individual to do the struggle to 'search themselves'.

In this situation, the person becomes blank who does not have any idea that what they want to achieve, where they want to go, where they belongs to who are they and what they are? From this, it is drawn easily that they quit to leading the normal life and takes a falls towards negative activities like crime and drugs as well because in this situation these wrong ways becomes the biggest supporters. This takes them away from the society because with these activities they become negligible for the society. In other words, 'identity' can be described as a subjective sense and an observable quality of personal sameness and continuity to an extent because of the increasing level of consciousness.

In the modern world, identity crisis has become the reason of major suffering for the population. Every individual is aware about the self respect; whether it is a child or an old age person, so the level of thinking about the identity is increasing day by day and little bit of occurrence of problem in establishment of identity has become a severe issue nowadays. In fact, writers from the different corners of the world are writing with keeping their focus on certain type of sense of identity. So, in this way, how the writer like Salman Rushdie can be an exception. He is the writer whose novels projects the question of identity and wonderfully explores the significance of ideals and concepts as well. His characters looks so intimately connected and when they are separated from each other they share the starvation for their identity with their striving efforts to achieve the identity. The proper study of Rushdie's novels proclaims that how the characters are suffering from identity crisis. According to the interpretation of Rushdie's thought process, ones identity is counted as a part of universe where individual's identity should be counted as its entity. In the context of the novels by him, his novel "Grimus" portrays the crisis of Flapping Eagle's soul in which the hero-Flapping Eagle seems as a marginalized by his own tribe for ill-fated circumstances of his birth. Due to which, he has to drink the elixir of eternal life and becomes an eternal voyager forever and loses his roots after becoming homeless. Being a creature, he becomes weary of eternity and hopes for a place where he can finally grow old and shake-off the burden of immortality just like an every individual and brings destruction of him and the surrounding related to him. It is clearly visible here that the protagonist is presented in an allegorical form and on domestic front; it seems a quest for his sister- the 'Bird-Dog' symbolically. Further enhancement of the facts reveals that it is the quest of Flapping Eagle and interaction with Grimus which defines the fictional value of the narrative.

It is analyzed that the quest of Flapping Eagle is projected as fundamentally beyond the realms of 'Time' to triumph over the boundaries of Death. In this manner, his quest looks deprived of history as well as temporal consciousness to an extent. So, in this way, Rushdie presents the identity as a part of universe by reflecting the individual's identity as an entity.

Salman Rushdie's another novel-"Midnight Children" depicts the milieu of the political upheaval and constant threat of violence which marks the first three decades of Independence. Saleem- Midnight Children's narrator's birth takes place on the eve of

Independence, and the events of his life shows closely parallel events in the development of both India and Pakistan. In short, it is interpreted that most of Rushdie's novels shows concern with the identity of an individual character to express the violent struggles between different religions, classes, languages, and geographical regions as well. Due to this, it is easily recognized that Salman Rushdie provides a big platform to his characters. It is universally acclaimed that in the three decades of thirty years India and Pakistan fought three wars in which they followed the Independence of both the countries. Among these three wars, two wars were over Kashmir, and another one was over the creation of an Independent Bangladesh. Here, the political historical background is depicted as a starting point through the quest which Saleem Sinai announces to show his emergence into this world in a moment of political reality by throwing light on the world of Azids where the progenitors of the three generations of the Muslims are discussed for the beginning of the narrative. For the fulfillment of thematic purpose, Rushdie creates the historical recreation of the individual's destiny which is bountifully realized as a part of an imaginative device in fulfilling the larger context namely, the search for identity in Saleem Sinai's mind. According to this, the question arises that 'How many things, people and notions we bring with us on the arrival in this world and how many possibilities as well as restrictions of possibility we face in this world'? The evaluation proclaims that this question arises because of the child born that midnight, and for every one of the midnight children there were as many more.

On the other hand, one more novel of Salman Rushdie which is "Shame", recreates the motive of identity through the character of Omar Khayyam. It is analyzed on large platform that although Shame and Midnight's Children both of the novels recreates the identical thematic designs, the latter projects a far more complex and rewarding artistic experience for the humanity. In terms of comparison, it is well interpreted that Saleem Sinai looks contrasting to Omar Khayyam and he does not truly bedeviled by a dual perception between India and Pakistan. But despite that, he is deliberately presented with the 'peripheral hero' experience in the context of Independence and Emergency as well. As he is presented as a "peripheral hero", it looks that his vision is meant to be as his destiny and his quest for reality becomes futile. He represents a character, which is peculiarly inhibited by history. Here, it is keenly observed that if Saleem feels irreformable in Time, Omar Khayyam develops even from its very conception a grim negation to Time because his gist from the shackles of a temporal order becomes an insistent urge for him even from his childhood. Here, through his character, glimpses of the world of his three mothers are clearly visible where his flow of irreparable past is clearly seen. So, it is easily interpreted that a radical sense of 'nothingness' is realized in the world of the past as a result of such a staggering experience where his psyche is fatally limited. On the other hand, it is visible that disparate like Saleem, Omar Khayyam's quest is depicted in the form of losing oneself into the death and decay of the sense of past history. On his twelfth birthday, Omar Khayyam gets ready to begin his search for the world of sanity and hope as well in an anonymous city which is also the beginning of

the search in the life and world of Nishapur as well as in the lives of his three mothers. On the other hand, Omar Khayyam's release into a world of future is presented in the form of freedom into total freedom of spirit and mind where his release is depicted as a world of knowledge and reality symbolically against the profligacy of a past history. It is revealed after the analysis that Omar Khayyam's insomnia is presented as an aspect of the drift into eternity which is later realized in his union with Sufiya. It is evaluated that, he is the true representative of a character whom if cannot sleep cannot dream at any cost. So, in this way, it is better to speak that, his decaying mind and listless hope in search of identity are truly outside Time to an extent. If it is analyzed further in the symbolic form as well as real terms then the output comes that-the theme of insomnia continues because if it is analyzed from symbolic prospects, he is a living witness to the decadence of the moral and political system of an anonymous country while in real terms- he is aimlessly drifting in a temporal world as his roots looks perceptible but not real in Time. So, the theme of identity operates with grim intensity and purpose as well. It is well interpreted that-the political or even politico-cultural and other themes related to the national development of India are artistically and emotionally well integrated into the motif of quest for Saleem Sinai's identity. As his quest is presented essentially spiritual, the historical detail only becomes a transitory phase in his growingly temporal awareness of the world of facts into an introvert world of intuitive perception of reality through fantasy, dream and memory as well. So, in this way, Rushdie's fictional world explores the world of eternity widely. It is well evaluated in terms of Genre of fiction- 'Grimus' belongs to the genre of science fiction while 'Midnight's Children' and 'Shame' are mostly complementary in their thematic exploration of identity of their respective protagonists. So, the theme of identity can be defined as national identity, both for Saleem Sinai and Omar Khayyam in its broad historical terms; but in its intrinsic value and meaning this quest becomes an "interiorized" reality and an aspect of their own emotional and life patterns.

In this way, it is well realized that Salman Rushdie's consciousness over the 'Identity Crisis' is seen wonderfully and his Fictional novels presents significant contribution to Indian Writing in order to spread meaningful message in the society. In fact, it is observed that Salman Rushdie's own identity is a case in this because his novels establish his own identity with several shades of human life. It is visible to everyone that Rushdie is the prey of lost identity due to numerous atypical conditions and occurrences in his life. Though he is Indian by birth, counted an English by education and Indian by marriage and English by immigrant – he possesses a mixed identity for himself. So, it can be derived that his novels are inspired from his own life to an extent. In this way, the writer's importance becomes perceptible everywhere but still it is much difficult to define that for what he is accurately meant and famous for – 'his writings' or the fatwa given by Ayatollah Khomeini in the year 1989 to demand the execution for blasphemy in which he lost his identity and remained under menace in Britain. The fact behind this is that- when the fatwa was issued by many more Islamic

scholars, he remained subversive for several years and hides himself with his family in disapproval. The main cause of losing identity looks the content of the novel which he wrote that time. Here, it is interpreted that-his valuable contribution to Indian English Fiction provides full scope to ponder upon social scenario of modern times around which most of his novels are woven. So, in this way, the concept of 'Identity Crisis' is one of those issues which marks his major concern for the humanity with the portrayal of identity crisis.

Conclusion:

On the basis of above mentioned facts and discussions it is concluded that Rushdie and his novels is just as a tradition for the East and the comprehension of the west and underlines the reality that "identity is discourse", in which stories are told about us-the human beings. Through the novels, it is analyzed that- Rushdie is not that kind of artist who reads to find answers to the contemporary Indian condition from a meta-fictional text. So, in the continuity, it emerges that he creates a mode of representation which marginalizes the monumentality of history and simply mocks its power to be a model. It is keenly analyzed after reading his novels that- text of Rushdie's novels is not accessible for the Western audience because of the spray of words in Indian languages in the text. Salman Rushdie is counted as one of the most discussed novelists of modern times widely acclaimed for the bold conception of history, politics and identity for such a long period of seventy years by wrapping all the chief incidents in the novels. In other words, it can be said that- the problem of identity crisis plagues many characters from the very beginning of each and every novel of him to reflect the fragmented identity with its autobiographical shades. After reading his novels, the foremost idea is taken that he; himself is the victim of identity due to migraines and cultural dislocation early in his life in England and it is the fact which can never be denied anyhow that most of his novels deal with the theme of identity in a hostile world and the other themes of migrants and cultural heterogeneity, the fragmented and hybrid nature of identity that are equally the pet themes of his novels which expresses vivid expressions of human life. Though, there are several writers who write on the theme of identity but Rushdie's style is completely different and relevant according to the modern scenario. In this way, it is very interesting that the way he has portrayed and exaggerated the theme of identity among many characters, seems bizarre to all. Though, he depicted the victims who are suffering from 'Identity crisis but the story looks so original due to his way of presentation. So, the characters like Saleem Sinai, Adam Sinai, Omar Khayyam and Baber from the novels are respectively taken for the study to give an emphasize on the theme of lost identity because Diasporic writers thinks that the world is suffering from identity crisis because of their own sufferings and Rushdie is one of them. Somewhere, Rushdie reminds the house where he was born by looking at the photograph and says- "It reminds me that it's my present that is foreign, and that the past is home, albeit a lost home in a lost city in the mists of lost time". It is well defined here that when he revisited the city Bombay he felt that he had lost it,

the very moment. In other words, In Imaginary Homelands Rushdie reaffirms: Our identity is at once plural and partial as well. It is a fact that, when a person leads his life at two different places then sometimes it happens that the person feels that two cultures are overlapping on him and the situation becomes that we feel that we fell between two stools. Diaspora is a platform which constitutes multiple identities which are singular, plural and one-sided as well; the biggest thing is that the writer produces it fruitfully through his novels. Salman Rushdie describes his identity as an Indian writer in England as being —made up of bits and fragments from here and there asll he wants to establish himself as a British writer because an Indian writer living in the British society has to face identity problems to an extent. In fact, he presented the glimpses of westernization in his novels, so we can have an idea that he has accepted the western world in his life. But, as a western citizen, he faces the dilemma between homeland and the foreign country as he tries to preserve his Indian culture. It is concluded that, in an individual's quest for identity, hybridity plays an important role and Rushdie's novels proves this authentically. Critic like Andrew Teverson writes in his Book 'Salman Rushdie: Contemporary World Writers' that: Rushdie's novels defines the intensified hybridization of an already Indian national culture after the colonization of India by the British, and the further hybridization of British culture both in India during the colonial period and in Britain as a result of post-colonial migrations. In fact, Rushdie has blurred the existing boundaries as his novels are depicted as a symbol of hybridity and heterogeneousness. The identity of the protagonists is portrayed in the multicultural form and therefore Rushdie has depicted cross multiple cultures as his writings include the geographic world. It is visible to everyone that modern form of lifestyle is related to hybridity where the mixed tradition has replaced the desire for integrity to an extent. So, the novelist- Salman Rushdie wonderfully portrays the 'Identity Crisis' on wide platform which is redefined according to the modern prospects.

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