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**A STUDY OF SOCIAL IMAGERY IN THE NOVELS OF SALMAN  
RUSHDIE AND AMITAV GHOUSH  
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**ABSTRACT**

*Many writers of this world have given unmemorable contribution of social imaginary through their writing skills. This research work also comprises the work and the contribution of the most renowned India based writers. One is Sir Salman Rashid and other is Amitav Ghosh. Indian Writing in English which has commended unstinted admiration in both home and abroad is now in its full swing. Amitav Ghosh has undoubtedly earned his position in the canon of Indian English Fiction. The lists of contemporary Indian-English writers remain incomplete without the name of Amitav Ghosh. Indian Fiction Writers depicted Women and their experiences in patriarchal societies with a deep sympathetic understanding. Amitav Ghosh portrays his women sensitively and infact, they are the leading spirits in his fiction. They are distinct portrayals of a cultural construction. He never presents his women as overt radical feminists nor as the stereotypical images of Sita and Savithiri. They are the characters of real life and in his novels he portrays the women characters in a realistic manner. This paper dealt with the portrayal of women characters in the selected novels of Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*, *The Hungry Tide* and *Sea of Poppies*. Through the portrayal of his women characters, he aims to envisage a future where women's empowerment will lead to emancipator changes in the larger social structures.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Ghosh eschews feminist attitudes to bring out the social traumas undergone by the women in his novels. Despite the fact that there are only few women characters in his novels and their role is limited, they are in control of the entire happening in the novels. They act as independent entities, growing and developing according to their own inclinations and finding social acceptance,

defining their own space, determining their own lives, fighting their own battles, enjoying the fruits of victory and never fearing to taste the bitterness of defeat. The avoidance of vilification, victimization and degradation of women is commendable, though not surprising considering the fact that the author hails from the land of Kali. Rushdie himself may have changed quite radically. Having been vocal throughout his career about his lack of religious belief,

Rushdie on Christmas Day 1990 announced that he had become, for the first time in his life, a believing Muslim. This announcement surprised and dismayed Rushdie's strongest supporters, most of whom believe, as he had believed, that religion in general (and Islam especially) is a perniciously regressive and oppressive force in society. The lawyer Francis Bennion"who resigned in anger from the Salman Rushdie Defense Committee, saying that "Rushdie is not worth defending""was not alone in thinking that Rushdie's conversion meant that he had "surrendered to would-be murderers." Such an interpretation is patently absurd, since it depends on the ignorant assumption that to accept Islam is to accept the beliefs and actions of Khomeini and his followers. In "Why I Have Embraced Islam," the final essay in Rushdie's new collection (Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991, Viking/Penguin, 1991), he appeals to the larger community of Muslims throughout the world, quite clearly not to Teheran. But little else is clear from that essay, the most notable feature of which is that it makes no attempt whatsoever to answer the question its title promises to answer. It describes with warmth and gratitude a meeting that

Rushdie had on Christmas Eve 1990 with six Muslim scholars, but does not say whether that meeting had any influence upon his decision. It says that he had been moving towards religious belief for several years, and that The Satanic Verses is a mirror of his internal conflicts, but it does not say how, when, or (again) why he resolved those conflicts in favor of religious belief. It would be presumptuous to attempt to answer such a private question, especially with so little information available.

The research is being commenced to get the social imagery of two legendary writers of the writing world i.e. Salman Rashid and Amitav Ghosh. Sir Ahmed Salman Rushdie born 19 June 1947 is a British Indian novelist and essayist. His second novel, *Midnight's Children* (1981), won the Booker Prize in 1981. Much of his fiction is set on the Indian subcontinent. He is said to combine magical realism with historical fiction; his work is concerned with the many connections, disruptions and migrations between East and West.

His fourth novel, *The Satanic Verses* (1988), was the centre of a major controversy, provoking protests from Muslims in several

countries, some violent. Death threats were made against him, including a fatwā issued by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the Supreme Leader of Iran, on 14 February 1989.

Rushdie was appointed Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of France in January 1999.<sup>[5]</sup> In June 2007, Queen Elizabeth II knighted him for his services to literature. In 2008, The Times ranked him thirteenth on its list of the fifty greatest British writers since 1945.

Since 2000, Rushdie has lived in the United States, where he has worked at Emory University and was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 2012, he published *Joseph Anton: A Memoir*, an account of his life in the wake of the controversy over *The Satanic Verses*.

Amitav Ghosh was born in Calcutta on July 11, 1956 in a Bengali Hindu family, to Lieutenant Colonel Shailendra Chandra Ghosh, a retired officer of the pre-independence Indian Army, and was educated at The Doon School; St. Stephen's College, Delhi, Delhi University, India; the Delhi School of Economics and St Edmund Hall, Oxford, where he was awarded a D. Phil. in social

anthropology under the supervision of Peter Lienhardt. His first job was at the Indian Express newspaper in New Delhi.

Ghosh lives in New York with his wife, Deborah Baker, author of the Laura Riding biography *In Extremis: The Life of Laura Riding* (1993) and a senior editor at Little, Brown and Company. They have two children, Lila and Nayan. He has been a Fellow at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta and Centre for Development Studies in Trivandrum. In 1999, Ghosh joined the faculty at Queens College, City University of New York, as Distinguished Professor in Comparative Literature. He has also been a visiting professor to the English department of Harvard University since 2005. Ghosh subsequently returned to India began working on the Ibis trilogy, of which two volumes have been published to date, *Sea of Poppies* and *River of Smoke*.

He was awarded the Padma Shri by the Indian government in 2007. In 2009, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Salman's first novel, *Grimus* (1975), a part-science fiction tale, was generally ignored

by the public and literary critics. His next novel, *Midnight's Children* (1981), catapulted him to literary notability. This work won the 1981 Booker Prize and, in 1993 and 2008, was awarded the Best of the Bookers as the best novel to have received the prize during its first 25 and 40 years. *Midnight's Children* follows the life of a child, born at the stroke of midnight as India gained its independence, who is endowed with special powers and a connection to other children born at the dawn of a new and tumultuous age in the history of the Indian sub-continent and the birth of the modern nation of India. The character of Saleem Sinai has been compared to Rushdie. However, the author has refuted the idea of having written any of his characters as autobiographical, stating, "People assume that because certain things in the character are drawn from your own experience, it just becomes you. In that sense, I've never felt that I've written an autobiographical character

Ghosh is the author of *The Circle of Reason* (his 1986 debut novel), *The Shadow Lines* (1988), *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995), *The Glass Palace* (2000), *The Hungry Tide* (2004), and *Sea of Poppies* (2008), the first volume of *The Ibis* trilogy, set in the 1830s, just

before the Opium War, which encapsulates the colonial history of the East. Ghosh's latest work of fiction is *River of Smoke* (2011), the second volume of *The Ibis* trilogy. Most of his works deals with an historical setting, especially in the context of Indian Ocean world. In an interview with Mahmood Kooria, he said:

"It was not intentional, but sometimes things are intentional without being intentional. Though it was never part of a planned venture and did not begin as a conscious project, I realise in hindsight that this is really what always interested me most: the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the connections and the cross-connections between these regions.

## OBJECTIVES

This purpose, which became the almost exclusive concern of both the writers of the time, soon led to **Naturalism**. The term *realist* was used for the first time in 1850, referring to painting, but was later adopted by literature, in which it was applied mainly to the novel. One of the reasons for the popular success of novels was their publication in newspapers in installments, conceived as a tactic to encourage the public to buy the newspaper

daily. The attitude of the realistic writer is analytical and critical, and usually remains objective. The important novels of the 19th century focused on social character, leading the writers to consider themselves to be "historians of the present"

The Realist novel of Salman Rashid and Amitav Ghosh is characterized by:

- Objective vision of reality through direct observation of customs or psychological characters, eliminating subjective aspects and fantastic events. According to Galdós and Clarín respectively, "The novel is the image of life," as well as "an artistic copy of reality."
- Defense of a thesis: the narrators write their works focusing reality through their moral conception, using an **omniscient narrator**. The defense of a thesis usually compromises the objectivity of the novel.
- Themes relevant to the reader, such as marital conflicts, infidelity, and defense of ideals.
- Colloquial and popular language, which acquire great importance because they locate characters firmly in the environment reflected in the text.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Research on the above title will be processed with the theme and messages of selected novels of Salman Rashid and Amitav Ghosh. There will be chapter wise theory of social imagery and other aspects of their writings including the conclusive theory for future suggestions and benefits in the world of fiction and writing. Abstract Introduction Background of the study present scenario and detailed discussion on the both writers and their social imagery contribution will be discussed through different resources of internet and available books in the library and the market.

## HYPOTHESIS

Salman Rashid and Amitav Ghosh both the writers have been picturised their words in the format of social life of human beings in the last three decades. The **social imagery**, also known as the social aspects of novel, is a "work of fiction in which a prevailing social problem, such as gender, race, or class prejudice, is dramatized through its effect on the characters of a novel". More specific examples of social problems that are addressed in such works, include poverty, conditions in factories and mines, the plight of child labor, violence against women,

rising criminality, and epidemics because of over-crowding, and poor sanitation in cities.

Terms like thesis novel, propaganda novel, industrial novel, working-class novel and problem novel are also used to describe this type of novel; a recent development in this genre is the young adult problem novel. It is also referred to as the sociological novel. The social protest novel is a form of social novel which places an emphasis on the idea of social change, while the Proletarian novel is political form of the social protest novel which may emphasize revolution. The writing work of both the writers will spread a key data of motivation and encouragement to the new generation writers which may result towards a big social change and many problems may be sorted out through their lessons and message of

## **CONCLUSION**

Through this research, our vast array of new found knowledge will help us to become more involved in discussions; you will be more able to instigate much more variable and interesting levels of conversations. Obtaining more information will give you a distinct advantage over the others because you will have gathered a

much wider understanding of many subjects and topics of conversation. Limited knowledge can seriously hold you back and leave you feeling left out in some social situations.

Story books can engage you in a world which is miles apart from our own, here you can have a glimpse of what goes on in the lives of many fictional characters, where you can experience empathy, sympathy and compassion with these make believe characters, this shows the power of your imagination as you bring these people and their experiences to life.

You can travel anywhere in a book and you get to meet and engage with the author and their fantasy worlds. Fiction books will allow you to use your imagination to paint your own version of the images, characters, and places, every book can give a different representation of the characters and the location to each reader because every body's imagination will perceive things slightly different.

Many of the answers and solutions to our problems can be found or solved by reading and learning and now with the advancement of technology and the internet, websites and e-books the wealth of knowledge and

information is limitless and readily available to us all at the touch of a button.

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