

The Phantasmagoric Post-Nation: Magical Realism and Allegory in Salman Rushdie's Later Fiction

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Abstract

*The article studies how Salman Rushdie developed his writing style through the post-2000 novels which demonstrate his use of magical realism to create political allegories. Rushdie used magical realism in his early work *Midnight's Children* to build a national identity that appeared divided yet unified but his later writing which includes *The Enchantress of Florence* *Two Years Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Nights* and *Quichotte* uses these elements to explore the challenges of a worldwide existence in the present-day post-truth environment. The research demonstrates how Rushdie changes from traditional social realism which focuses on domestic spaces to his new phantasmagoric style which shows modern world chaos. The article demonstrates that Rushdie uses supernatural elements in his later settings to create tensions with everyday existence because he employs them as rebellious weapons which challenge both patriarchal power structures and the growing religious fundamentalism that characterizes the 21st century.*

The research examines how narratives redefine the concept of "Ghar," which used to function as a "mental captivity" and "existential disconnection" but now operates as a global platform where people continuously blend their personal wants with their public responsibilities. The study investigates how Rushdie's characters transition from "silent submission" to achieve "radical self-reclamation" through their exploration of "syntax of the soul" within the "phantasmagoric landscapes" of the story. The literature demonstrates that domestic spaces that restrict personal freedom can only be overturned through an artistic approach that embraces nonsensical elements. The article shows that Rushdie's later works function as a "mapping system" that depicts a world where independent thought and allegorical storytelling use their transformative power to combat gender-based violence and systemic exclusion.

Keywords: *Magical Realism, Political Allegory, Post-Truth Aesthetics, Spatial Politics, Radical Self-Reclamation*

I. Introduction: From the National to the Global Phantasmagoria

The complete body of Salman Rushdie's fictional work demonstrates a complete break from Mulk Raj Anand's social realism and R.K. Narayan's mythic storytelling [9]. Rushdie used magical realism to show that post-colonial literature established a stable reality which described developing nation-states because he believed reality exists as a collection of conflicting perceptions [11, 18]. The author uses a "syntax of the soul" to describe deep mental and emotional states which develop into an allegorical system that shows how globalized society breaks apart in his later works [16]. Rushdie investigates post-colonial identity through his examination of historical events which he combines with supernatural elements to study power relations [5, 10]. Through his use of allegory and symbolism, he presents complex cultural hybridization and diasporic experiences through his storytelling which shows people who struggle to find their true identity. Through his complex storytelling methods, Rushdie examines how colonialism shapes cultural identities and colonial relationships between people and communities. He combines real events with imaginary elements to develop a special story which makes readers think about how they understand historical events and factual information.

The female inner life of traditional feminist literature needs interior monologue and psychological realism to develop its female character [13]. Rushdie's later works transmit his internal conflicts through external expression. Traditional narratives use domestic space as a "mausoleum" which acts as a tomb that stops people from leaving and keeps their unrealized ambitions. Rushdie creates a global fictional universe through his storytelling which combines individual human wants with their public responsibilities. The process of space expansion shows how people build their personal identities in a world that unites various cultural traditions and different social practices [3, 8]. The narrative methods of Rushdie create new ways to see how people understand their gender identity and their connection to society through their personal experiences and their political reality. His characters often combine different identity elements which make it hard to classify them because they represent how modern society operates in a state of constant change and interdependence. The

exploration of these themes by Rushdie prompts readers to examine the strict boundaries that determine their identity while they envision a future world that embraces multiple perspectives.

Rushdie's adoption of a "phantasmagoric" artistic style enables him to evaluate "patriarchal power structures" more effectively [7]. His later works investigate "spatial politics" through their exploration of world events while they analyze human behavior in "internal psychological spaces" which create suspense from ordinary home settings. Domestic spaces which become prisons for people lead to "mental captivity" which people use as a "rebellious weapon" to fight against social injustice [11, 19]. Rushdie shows how personal and political realms converge to create spaces which people can use to resist oppressive systems and achieve freedom. His storytelling creates complex plots which make readers analyze how power operates in all areas of life. Rushdie uses his writing to show how people should challenge social conventions by taking direct action against systems that oppress them. Domestic spaces which he shows as resistance hubs demonstrate how personal empowerment enables people to achieve progress against major societal challenges.

II. Spatial Politics and the "Threshold" of Worlds

The concept of spatial politics in Rushdie's later works develops through his characters' journey across multiple realities and states of existence [19]. The threshold in *Two Years, Eight Months, and Twenty-Eight Nights* extends beyond the domestic doorway of a *Ghar* because it represents the "strangeness" which flows from the Jinns' world into human territory [1, 17]. The narrative shifts from exploring the "internal psychological spaces" that exist in standard fiction to a new territory which shows actual boundaries and invisible boundaries. Rushdie uses spatial politics to construct his story through spatial dimensions which create an illusion of reality while inviting readers to explore their world perception. Through his use of multiple dimensions, Rushdie develops a story which challenges imagination boundaries and reveals the intricate nature of existence that lies outside our physical world.

2.1 The Global Panopticon

The traditional story structure presents "Ghar" as a "Panopticon" which enables constant surveillance of the main character who faces judgment according to predetermined "moral assessments" and social evaluations [19]. Rushdie expands his surveillance theme in his later works to cover entire global territories. The protagonist of *Quichotte* travels through a "gendered city" and a divided America which uses digital technology to function as a contemporary panopticon that observes both "private thoughts and moral conduct" [12, 15]. The monitoring system establishes a "pressure cooker" environment which increases neurotic behavior by transforming the outer environment into a space that hinders freedom instead of providing safety [4, 18].

The boundary between the external weather of politics and the internal storm of the protagonist dissolves, creating a "muddle" of existential disconnection. The protagonist struggles with self-identity throughout the dystopian world because surveillance systems create boundaries that separate public spaces from private domains. Continuous examination with demands for alignment results in social disconnection, which demonstrates how people experience negative consequences when their personal independence is taken away. The protagonist's struggle to maintain their own beliefs and values in the face of societal expectations adds a layer of complexity to their journey. The novel presents a warning about how people lose their personal freedoms when they choose to believe in false security.

2.2 The External Boundary of the Unreal

The post-Independence fiction "new woman" character finds herself confined to her ancestral home because "invisible threads of familial obligation" bind her to that place [13]. The "spatial segregation" which they experience not only creates social separation but also results in their complete removal from their original home spaces. The "mental captivity" that social realism characters face inside family mansion walls results in Rushdie's protagonists experiencing "phantasmagoric" confinement which uses "Ghar" as the space where personal desires collide with a twisted version of worldwide truth [7, 19].

The individual enters a state of "living death" which results in complete inner self-destruction through a process of systemic exclusion that extends beyond the home mausoleum. The people who live in these places must develop "radical self-reclamation" abilities which enable them to use their inner abilities as a "rebellious weapon" against forces that try to control their fundamental self [13]. Rushdie's characters must navigate a labyrinth of societal expectations and familial obligations, using their own agency to break free from the suffocating confines of tradition and expectation. They reclaim their independence through rebellious actions while discovering their true selves, which leads them to freedom from the oppressive powers that attempt to restrict their existence.

III. The Pathology of the Post-Truth Era

The author develops his narrative through complex symbolic structures which he uses to show how rationality fails to maintain its hold on reality [4, 6]. The "syntax of the soul" uses elevated language and "metaphorical density" to convey emotional and existential states which exist beyond the reach of people living in standard home settings. The traditional *Ghar* serves as a testing site for human mental abilities because Rushdie uses his writing to create a world where reality exists in constant flux between actualness and imagination [12, 18]. The study of reality and imagination boundaries shows how Rushdie makes his readers examine the stable nature of their own beliefs and perceptions.

The intricate symbolism throughout the work demonstrates that human existence consists of multiple complex aspects which resist simple classification and explanation. The novel by Rushdie leads readers to accept life's unpredictable nature through its teaching that people must face unfamiliar situations instead of searching for clear solutions. The practice of challenging established beliefs about fundamental truth in existence pushes people to face the complicated nature of their personal lives.

3.1 The Aesthetics of Silence vs. The Noise of the Supernatural

The characters Monisha and Maya employ an "aesthetic of silence" which enables them to conceal their authentic feelings from "patriarchal power structures" and those who control their lives [13]. The "chaos" of the information age finds its reflection through the supernatural sounds which surround Rushdie's later characters [4]. The character in traditional narratives uses "double discourse" to complete domestic duties while her thoughts create an internal dialogue for secret rebellious plans. The internal conflicts of Rushdie's characters manifest through a "phantasmagoric" environment which they experience [7, 17].

A common domestic space which used to serve as a silent platform for social commentary now transforms into a supernatural storm that displays deep "existential disconnection" from rational existence. The characters experience a state of permanent anxiety and uncertainty because their internal struggles become public knowledge which makes them unable to distinguish between actual situations and imaginary ones. The supernatural noise represents how modern life creates overwhelming pressure on people who must discover their identity within a world that contains both disorder and confusion. The characters must face their deepest fears while they move through this dreamlike environment which forces them to doubt their entire existence.

3.2 Symbols of Fragmentation

Rushdie uses his metaphors to show world-ending events through his metaphorical density which he established as his primary method of demonstration [11, 18]. He shows how "domestic environments turn into spaces that restrict freedom" on a cosmic scale, moving beyond the specific locations of an ancestral home to a globalized stage of decay [8, 19]. The "blinding glare of the sun" and the "dust and silence" of a house function as traditional symbols which demonstrate marital claustrophobia, while Rushdie uses supernatural elements in his later works to portray complete personal destruction through systemic exclusion [12].

The house functions as a "pressure cooker" which produces both personal neuroticism and total societal truth collapse [18]. Rushdie studies domestic spaces as prison-like areas which enable him to examine how societal power structures and social systems govern people. The author shows how personal and political conflicts connect through his use of the house as a small-scale model that represents larger societal issues. Through his detailed imagery and complex storytelling Rushdie shows how personal home disputes result in larger societal disputes that exist beyond the home. His use of supernatural elements functions as a strong metaphor which shows how systemic exclusion causes people to lose their truth and identity [14].

IV. The Matriarchal Burden and the Enchanted Woman

The critique of Rushdie's work identifies a recurring pattern that shows how he presents women through complex characterizations who live between two opposing forces of ancient legends and present-day conflicts [14]. The established conventional texts examine how women manage their domestic duties because of their matriarchal responsibilities which tie to their societal expectation of performing unpaid household work. The Enchantress of Florence demonstrates how Rushdie uses allegory to depict worldwide female empowerment through his later fictional works [7, 14]. The enchanted women of Rushdie's stories proceed through a "phantasmagoric" realm which their domestic situations create as both a source of high stress and enchanted abilities.

Rushdie uses his storytelling to show how his female characters achieve success by breaking through the limitations society places on them. The combination of fantasy and reality elements in Rushdie's stories provides readers with new insights into how women navigate their identity and independence during societal transformations. Through his storytelling, Rushdie encourages readers to reconsider the limitations imposed on women by society and to recognize the strength and agency that lie within them.

4.1 Radical Self-Reclamation

Rushdie's female characters use "magic" as their "rebellious weapon," mirroring Monisha's "choice of fire" and Maya's "radicality of madness" found in traditional social realism [13, 14]. The supernatural force enables them to defend their "core identity" from the "domestic duties" and societal judgments which a patriarchal culture demands of them. The traditional narrative shows that a woman reaches her highest revolutionary state through independent thought, yet Rushdie's later works show that his characters achieve actual power through self-determined thinking which enables them to alter existence from "silent submission" to "complete self-reclamation" [10, 18].

The use of magic allows Rushdie's female characters to break free from societal norms while they reclaim their independence through methods that defy conventional gender expectations. Rushdie demonstrates that people can achieve revolutionary change when they accept their authentic selves, enabling them to fight against oppressive social standards. The work of Rushdie provides a strong analysis of how people should maintain their personal freedom while expressing themselves to combat social forces.

4.2 The Double Discourse

Rushdie's female characters use "double discourse" as their technique because they display superficial obedience to patriarchal authority while their hidden magical "monologue" develops plans for "radical and violent" escape [7, 14]. People in traditional home spaces need to use polite speech when talking to their husbands and elders because their minds grow excited while they plan secret activities. Rushdie demonstrates the "syntax of the soul" because the main character uses her inner self to protect her identity from a system that treats her as nonexistent [13]. The household "domestic mausoleum" receives transformation through internal phantasmagoria which leads to the breakdown of all household-based identities.

The protagonist uses her monologue to create a vision about destroying all systems that oppress her existence. The domestic space becomes her space for freedom because her internal rebellion enables her to choose her own path. The protagonist uses her soul as a protective barrier to fight against oppressive systems which try to erase her identity while she demonstrates her unique personality. The character uses internal rebellion to achieve a personal transformation which enables her to challenge the rules that her home environment has created.

V. Conclusion: Beyond the Tomb of Realism

The complete examination of Salman Rushdie's subsequent works demonstrates that his use of supernatural elements functions as an advanced test which evaluates human character. The characters in Rushdie's works experience "mental faculties" when they traverse a "phantasmagoric" world which resembles the "mental disintegration" that characters in Anita Desai's stories experience during their attempts to reach the "world of ideas. The domestic space functions as a vital element which actively shapes the development of human character through its ability to control human behavior.

The discussion of modern fiction receives its most important contribution from Rushdie because he proves that genuine human feelings can only be expressed when people break free from the restraints of classic social realism. The characters in his stories establish their identities through extreme interactions with irrational elements which he uses to criticize the "domestic mausoleum" that prevents people from fulfilling their life goals. The readers of his later works need to leave their personal spaces to discover the concealed battles which occur at the "threshold" that connects reality to fantasy.

The stories show that domestic entrapment exists as a complex problem which includes both spatial confinement and the overwhelming responsibility of family and community duties. Rushdie's characters use "syntax of the soul" as their "rebellious weapon" to protect their authentic selves from patriarchal power structures. The transition from "silent submission" to "radical self-reclamation" provides a path to survival that is both intellectually free and socially recognized, effectively turning sites of systemic exclusion into platforms for political agency.

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