



“Landscape” and “Space Consciousness” in Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*: Shortfalls in the Analytic Diasporic Eye

Shuvendu Ghosh, Rajiv Bhushan & Maninder Kapoor

Abstract

The diasporic lens often misses the ground zero reality of the cultural space of the Indian multicultural dynamic. Salman Rushdie dramatized the issue of “space-consciousness” or “borderline-consciousness” of Kashmir, Bangladesh and Bombay in *Midnight’s Children* from an emotional or cognitive mode of mapping. As a mestize, Rushdie’s portrait of Indian culture, history and politics can never be an accurate estimate of the vastness of the Indian experience. Rushdie as a privileged post-colonial cultural relativist viewed Indian multicultural ethnicity from the top (a colonial male gaze). With the help of the compare and contrast research technique, this paper will try to comprehend the limitations of the diasporic cognitive cultural mapping of *Midnight’s Children* as opposed to the strengths of a cartographic landscape assessed through discourse analysis. The comprehension of the “Oriental Crisis” in the domain of literature and cultural studies could enable a gauging of the research gap in determining the limitations of “Landscape” and “Space-Consciousness” from an analytic diasporic eye. “New Mestiza Consciousness”, “Landscape”, “Critical Marxism”, “Eco-Feminism” and “Psycho analytic Criticism” under critical discourse analysis are some multicultural perspectives that may help to identify the research gap and the research questions. Indian history and politics have always had a direct influence in shaping Indian culture, and to some extent the east still carries the “White man’s burden” even in estimating one’s indigenous cultural identity and value before the world. Rushdie as a colonial mimic no doubt extended the legacy of the “White man’s / woman’s burden” seeing it from a diasporic eye. The distinction between “self” and “other” is self-contradictory in any diasporic writing and Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* is no exception. Saleem’s non-linear narration, imagination, and lack of factual evidence in presenting Indian culture, history and politics are questionable in terms of authenticity before the reader. In *Midnight’s Children*, Padma, portrayed by Rushdie, as an epistemological, metaphoric, oriental puppet often questions Saleem’s reliability as a narrator.

Keywords: Diasporic Eye, Space-Consciousness, Landscape, Cultural Mapping, Postcolonial Analytic Discourse.