

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

NARRATIVE AND SEMANTIC ANALYSIS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF “LANGUAGES OF TRUTH” AND IMAGINARY HOMELAND” BY SALMAN RUSHDIE

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**Samarah Nazar, Shireen Gul, Saira Sonam. Narrative And Semantic Analysis: A
Comparative Study Of “Languages Of Truth” And Imaginary Homeland” By Salman
Rushdie -- PalArch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 20(2), 2018-2028.
ISSN 1567-214x**

Keywords: Narrative, Semantic Analysis, Commonalities, Language, Identity

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to draw a comparison of selected novels by British-American author Ahmed Salman Rushdie by doing narrative and semantic analysis. 'Languages of Truth' is a compilation of Salman Rushdie's essays and speeches delivered during the course of his career. 'Imaginary Homelands' is an anthology of essays and critical analysis. The purpose of this analysis is also to assess the merits and shortcomings of the book, as well as its semantic network of 'Imaginary Homelands' and 'languages of truth'. The article also provides details how to place 'Imaginary Homelands' within the broader framework of its subject area, contrasting it with 'Languages of truth' and noting its contributions to the field. The qualitative approach taken here sheds light on several facets of both "Imaginary Homelands" and "Languages of Truth," as the title of this study suggests. Metaphor, narrative structure, textual register, and organizational system are only few of the areas where the two writings are compared and contrasted. This study also elaborates the commonalities, both "Languages of Truth" and "Imaginary Homelands", share in their focus on language and identity, as well as their use of cultural study, literary criticism, and introspective writing. The study identifies the reasons Rushdie's books have captivated readers all over the world.

INTRODUCTION

British-American novelist Sir Ahmed Salman Rushdie (born in India on June 19, 1947) is a member of the Order of the Garter. A lot of his stories are set on

the Indian subcontinent and combine magic realism with historical fiction to explore the interactions and migrations between Eastern and Western cultures. Rushdie's debut novel, the part-science fiction story *Grimus* (1975), was largely disregarded by both readers and critics. After that, his next book, *Midnight's Children* (1981), propelled him to literary stardom. This novel was originally awarded the Booker Prize in 1981, and it has since won the Best of the Bookers twice, in 1993 and 2008. Following the success of *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie authored *Shame* (1983), in which he portrayed the political unrest in Pakistan through fictionalized portrayals of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the former prime minister, and General Zia-ul-Haq. In 1987, Rushdie authored a nonfiction book titled *The Jaguar Smile*, which is set in Nicaragua. Focusing on politics, this book draws on the author's first-hand observations and investigation at the epicenter of Sandinista diplomatic experimental studies. *The Satanic Verses*, his most divisive book, came out in 1988. In 1990, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* came out as a sequel. It's an allegory defense of storytelling's power over silence, written in the darkness of a fatwa, which warns against the dangers of storytelling. Besides novels, Rushdie has also written and published numerous short stories, many of which can be found in his anthology *East, West* (1994). Many consider Salman Rushdie to be the best living writer because his magnificent and often abrasive prose illuminates the shadowy parts of our cultural and social landscape. In his latest offering of nonfiction, he further cements his position as one of the most original thinkers of our time by gathering together essays, criticism, and speeches that focus on his connection with writing

LANGUAGES OF TRUTH

Languages of Truth is a compilation of Rushdie's writings about the period of profound cultural change between 2003 and 2020. He takes the reader on a journey through many different topics before delving into the psychology of storytelling and producing what is, in many ways, a love song to the written word. From Shakespeare and Cervantes to Samuel Beckett, Eudora Welty, and Toni Morrison, Rushdie discusses the significance of their written and spoken works in his life. He takes a fresh look at relocation, cultural pluralism, and censoring while also exploring the depths of the concept of "truth" and the vivacious mutability of vocabulary and the inventive lines that can join art and life. As Rushdie takes us on a thrilling trip of his own effusive and ferocious imagination, *Languages of Truth* is livened up on every page by his trademark wit and dazzling voice. Rushdie has discussed his early career in a few of his books, and he does so once more in his new essay collection titled *Languages of Truth* (Quayson, 2015).

IMAGINARY HOMELANDS

Written by Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands* is a compilation of essays. This book, written by the author between 1981 and 1992, focuses on his life in India during the years that Indira Gandhi was in power. The chapters are titled, "Midnight's children," "The politics of India and Pakistan," Topics include: literature, the arts, the migrant experience, and the Palestine question. Michael Ondaatje's *English patient* puts it best when he says, "born in one place and choosing to live elsewhere," which describes the situation of many writers. Constantly risking harm to return to or escape from our ancestral homes.

Specifically, Rushdie examines the topic of home in the works of his ilk of author, arguing that any attempt to depict one's homeland is inextricably linked to an inability to be honest and true to any objective fact. While his focus is on Anglo-Indian authors, his analysis and observation are applicable to any author who has lived the transnational life. The struggle of writers in the Diaspora to maintain ties to their homelands is explored in the essay *Imaginary Homelands*. The reconnection, however, is a dismal failure because of the lack of full memory. They feel extremely disconnected from their home countries as a result of this. In order to bring up the issue of memory fragmentation, this essay will center on specific aspects of linguistic and lexical structures. Metaphors, semantic fields, intertextuality, different genres of texts, and register are some examples. (Reloaded, 2012)

NONFICTIONAL WRITING

Our lives are surrounded with nonfictional writing. There are newspapers, magazines, signs pointing the way, street names, menus, notes, maps, recipes, emails, websites, commercials, etc., everywhere you look. In the actual world, writers do things like write down to-do lists, compose letters and emails, explain things, and jot down notes. In everyday life, we choose the forms of written expression that best serve our needs for learning, archiving, and sharing information. One must master the various structures, linguistic elements, and visuals that make up the core of nonfiction writings in order to succeed in education, the business, and in one's personal life. Intriguingly, research reveals that not enough kids receive explicit skills for reading and writing informative texts, despite the fact that these texts make up the vast majority of what literate adults write and read. Writing nonfiction in a fictional style is called creative nonfiction. (Davis, 2008) The 1960s saw the emergence of creative nonfiction, then known as "The New Journalism." The term "creative nonfiction" may give the impression that the focus is not on accuracy, but this is far from the case; rather, the purpose of creative nonfiction is to reveal the truth, which is absolutely the case when applied to the drafting of qualitative research reports. Creative nonfiction is a contentious genre. The term "creative nonfiction" is sometimes viewed as oxymoronic. Some people automatically associate the word "creative" with untruthfulness, fiction, and other negative connotations.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To draw a comparison between two of the books of Rushdie, 'Languages of Truth' and 'Imaginary Homelands'.
- To evaluate the book's strengths and weaknesses and semantic web of 'Languages of Truth' and 'Imaginary Homelands'.
- To situate "Imaginary Homelands" within the broader context of its subject area and comparing it with "Languages of Truth" and highlighting its contributions to the field.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the narrative forms used in 'Imaginary Homelands' and "Languages of Truth"?
2. Which semantic system is used in Rushdie's books? Compare the semantic web of imaginary homelands and languages of truth.

3. What are the similarities between 'Imaginary Homelands' and 'Languages of Truth'?

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The books under review offer distinct perspectives on different essays and debates collected in the form of books. This study the issues or challenges that both of Rushdie's books address, and why those issues are important or relevant to the field. The new book by Rushdie, "Languages of Truth: Essays 2003-2020," is an attempt at a defensive joust. He claims his books haven't been given the respect they deserve because readers have moved on from "brio-filled imaginative writing" to the auto fiction's humbler delights. On the other hand, Rushdie argues that any author who writes about his home country from abroad must "deal in broken mirrors, some of whose fragments have been irretrievably lost." By comparing and contrasting these two perspectives, this study aims to contribute to ongoing debates about the most effective approaches to literature. In doing so, it will also explore the unique contributions of each book and how they complement or challenge each other.

LITERATURE REVIEW

(Breed et al., 2013) uses a certain narrative method and resorts to a certain narrative strategy to achieve a certain result. In addition, a novel's artistic vitality and aesthetic radiance are greatly influenced by the narrative approach used in writing it. After receiving the Booker Prize in 1981, Salman Rushdie has been an undeniable presence on the international literary landscape for nearly four decades. In addition to delving into a wide variety of topics, Rushdie stands out as a fabulist for his ability to mix genres, combine oriental and occidental narrative modes, forego the use of traditional narrative techniques in favor of more experimental ones, and to eliminate clear distinctions between literary works and the models of popular culture.

(Cook, 1994) elaborates that the impacts based on culture displacement are explored in all of Rushdie's works, the benefits of an alienated "off-centering" perspective are probably most convincingly argued in *Shame*. "It's male' plot refracted, so to speak, through the refraction of its reverse and 'female side," and the book is narrated primarily from the perspective of its "marginal" or repressed or rejected characters. "The fear that one is living at the border of the globe, so close that he might drop off at any moment" is a reoccurring theme, as is the feeling of cultural dislocation, or "a world turned upside down."

(Reloaded, 2012) lightens up the literary cleverness and endearing newness of Rushdie's storytelling stem largely from his penchant for experimentally novel narrative techniques. Rushdie's attempt to look microcosmically into the latest history of India from the viewpoint of his completely fictitious lead character Saleem Sinai and the members of his family subverts the officially recorded versions of history and challenges any absolute historical certainty. Rushdie pieces together a version of history like numerous other possible versions of the past, none of which can clout the others. *Midnight's Children* is a postcolonial novel because Rushdie "gets away through his use of the mongrel street language of cities, daring to translate idioms and metaphors with

extremely ambitious literalness and committing bilingual puns mediated by no apology, nary a hint of remorse, nary a hint of contrition"

(Diplomová Práce, 2022) explains Rushdie's book *Shame* that primarily focuses on political events in Pakistan throughout the 1970s and 1980s, while *Midnight's Children* concentrates on post-independence Indian history. The storyline of *Shame* deftly blends elements of both reality and fiction. According to Novy Kapadia, the novel's fictional characters are all satirical takes on real-life Pakistani politicians and military leaders: "Iskandar Harappa is Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Raza Hyder is Zia-ul-Haq, Rani Harappa is Nusrat Bhutto, Arjumand Harappa is Nusrat Bhutto, and Benazir Harappa is Benazir Bhutto, General Shaggy Dog. At various points throughout *Shame*, the author provides an "author's aside," in which he or she appears to address the readers personally. Injecting the author's own ideas, recollections, personal ruminations or stories, and deliberations into the fictional story is a self-reflexive way to reveal these aspects of the author's experience.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this research is qualitative that's explains different aspects of 'Imaginary Homelands' and 'Languages of Truth'. The similarities and differences between the two books are discussed, including their use of metaphor, narrative forms, text register, and systematic system. Salman Rushdie's novels often explore the intersection of cultures, highlighting the ways in which different cultural traditions and practices can blend together to create new hybrid identities. For example, in "*Midnight's Children*," the protagonist Saleem Sinai embodies a hybrid identity that reflects the complex mixture of Indian, British, and Muslim cultures that have shaped his life. Rushdie frequently explores religious themes in his fiction. A common theme in his work is the friction and struggle that emerge when different religious tenets and identities collide. Many of Rushdie's novels also address the intersection of culture, religion, and identity in the context of political oppression. For example, in another writing Rushdie explores the impact of Pakistan's political turmoil on the personal lives of its citizens, highlighting the ways in which political identities can shape individual identity. Finally, Rushdie's novels often emphasize the power of storytelling in shaping cultural identity. For example, in "*Languages of Truth*," Rushdie uses a fantastical narrative to explore the role of storytelling in preserving cultural traditions and values.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Use of Metaphor in Imaginary Homelands and Languages of Truth

In his essay "*Imaginary Homelands*," Rushdie makes heavy use of metaphor. This is motivated by a desire to communicate the universal struggle with isolation that Diaspora communities face. Most of the time, exiles are forced to rely on hazy recollections that are riddled with huge holes that necessitate creative leaps of faith (Baumeister & Leary, 1997). The metaphorical significance of the antique photo hanging in Rushdie's office. It stands for a period of Rushdie's life that he has completely cut off from his present. That

picture was taken before he was even conceived. The significance of the vintage photograph lies in the fact that it compels Rushdie to go to the house that is forever captured in it. The house is depicted in black and white, and Rushdie learns that his own childhood recollections are similarly monochrome (Rushdie 1991, p. 9). Thus, it appears that his recollections of his youth are pure. The metaphorical use of "pillars of salt" is not without precedent. This is a reference to the biblical story of Lot and his wife, who became a pillar of salt after turning around to see their home being destroyed. Therefore, the perilous journey back to one's homeland represents the "pillars of salt" in this context. Rushdie's native country gave him trouble after he published *Satanic Verses*, in which the Prophet Muhammad was depicted in a derogatory light. As a result, a fatwa was issued against him, necessitating that the British government provide him with constant police protection. A broken mirror is another metaphor that can be used. This metaphor is intended to convey the vague, faraway feelings that exiles have for their homeland. Our recollections are fragmented and can't be put back together again. The situation is made worse by the absence of key components. Many people in diaspora have no recollection of their home country at all. As a result, they have to rely on their imaginations to fill in the blanks. According to (Rushdie 1991, p. Shattered recollections are akin to fragments of a broken mirror. When something breaks, it usually into numerous small, sharp fragments called shards. You can't use them to get back the original product. The vast majority of them cannot be saved, unfortunately. This exemplifies how those in exile feel about the memories they hold of their home countries: they are woefully inadequate. They can only manage to keep a few scattered recollections alive, which do not add up to a whole picture of their homeland. Therefore, they look to the "broken pots of antiquity" (Rushdie 1991, p. 12) to piece together their history.

One could argue that Rushdie's use of metaphor is an intentional allusion to his own life. The following is a discussion of the metaphors. In his writing, symbolism plays a central role and is one of Rushdie's most frequent and important tools. For example, the author uses the metaphor of a "linguistic prism" to describe how different languages refract reality in unique and sometimes contradictory ways. She also uses the metaphor of a "linguistic ladder" to explain how language can be used to climb to higher levels of understanding and truth, but also to obscure or distort reality. By using metaphor in this way, the author helps to make abstract concepts more concrete and accessible to readers, and to show how language can both illuminate and obscure truth. The use of metaphor also adds depth and richness to Rushdie's writing, and helps to engage readers on both an intellectual and emotional level. Overall, the use of metaphor in "Languages of Truth" is an effective tool for exploring complex ideas and illuminating the ways in which language shapes our understanding of the world. Author Salman Rushdie lacks anything to prove. But now that he's in his early 70s, he finds that he's hopelessly out of style. He's too old to seize the moment and too busy to be rediscover able; as a result, he's received some of the cruelest criticism ever levelled at an artist of his caliber over the last two decades. As incomplete beings, Rushdie maintains that we humans can only ever have partial insights. Rushdie also compares meaning to a precarious structure pieced together from disparate components such as myths, beliefs, personal

experiences, casual comments, and even vintage films. This suggests that people in exile are continually revising the significance they assign to their cherished memories. In order to keep the shaky structure standing, it requires constant patching and repairs.

Narrative forms used in 'Imaginary Homelands' and its comparison with 'Languages of Truth'

The essay by Rushdie is, above all else, a work of literature. That's because it uses story telling as its primary mode of presentation. After not having been to Bombay in a very long time, the author recounts his heartfelt experiences there. After an apparent lack of roughly half a lifetime, he returns to his "lost city" of Bombay and relates the following: For example: (Rushdie 1991, p. this is a great way to connect with the readers, many of whom may have never experienced the isolation of exile firsthand. Orientation is an essential part of the narrative forms because it introduces the reader to the setting, the time period, and the main characters. It all takes place in Bombay a few years ago, and the narrator is a part of the cast. Additionally, there is the compilation, which describes the issue that precipitates the chain of occurrences. In this piece, it was an old photograph that finally prompted the author to pay a long-overdue visit to Bombay. Every good story has a happy ending. To sum up, this is the solution to the issue discussed in the essay. As a result of memory loss, the author of this essay resorts to making up stories. He makes India into a place he can actually visit.(Forster, 2001) Although it is written in the form of an essay, it is also a factual account. This is due to the fact that it necessitates talking about the issue of having a disjointed past. The author brings to light the plight of an emigrant who is troubled by his or her own forgotten past. The author, a literary artist, realizes he is not a sage because of his poor memory.

This varied collection of articles produced over the past two decades includes some outstanding works of nonfiction, ranging from recollections of childhood to parodies on Philip Roth. The essay on Roth also hints at an unintentional makeover: when Rushdie refers to "we" or "us" in the first-person plural throughout this collection, he is almost always referring to people who live in the United States like himself. The boy from Bombay has been all over the world: to Cambridge, London, hiding for ten years following the Satanic Verses judgment, and on the other side of the Atlantic. Though he attributes his literary moorings to his upbringing in India, it was in England that he honed his craft, located the "perfect writer's garret," and gained the perspective he needed to revisit his formative concerns—including upheaval, childhood, nationalism, stories within stories, and the origins of Islam. His brief time in Britain is vividly evoked in his writing, whether it is during his time at university in the 1960s. The figure is consistent with the profile that Rushdie presents in the 21st century. Rushdie is equally at ease reminiscing about his closeness with Carrie Fisher as he is pontificating about the value of children's literature. He can discuss Satyajit Ray, *Lolita*, and *Slumdog Millionaire* in the same essay on film adaptations of literature, and then announce that he was requested to compete on *Dancing with the Stars*(Wyly, 2023).

Textual Markup Language in Imaginary Homelands and Languages of Truth

Register is frequently employed and is closely linked to the text type. Register is the collection of meanings, the arrangement of semantic patterns, and the vocabulary and syntax that are commonly deployed while communicating in a certain context. This piques curiosity in Rushdie's choice of language in *Imaginary Homelands* because of its context. As the author in the diaspora struggles to turn nostalgia into an idealized past, Rushdie analyses the tangled circumstances in which they find themselves (Bowers et al., 2010). However, the rosy reflection of the past is tarnished when viewed through cracked mirrors. He also makes a connection between his early memories and the image in the black and white photos. These memories were once vibrant with the details of the past, but with the onset of nostalgia, "the colors of history had seeped out of my mind's eye" (Rushdie, 1991, p. 9).

"Languages of Truth" by Salman Rushdie can be categorized as a formal or academic register of writing. Rushdie's writing style in this book is scholarly and erudite, and he uses sophisticated vocabulary and complex sentence structures. He also makes extensive use of literary and cultural references, which are characteristic of an academic register of writing. (Ariana, 2016) Furthermore, the book deals with a range of intellectual and philosophical topics, including the nature of truth, the relationship between language and reality, and the role of art and literature in society. (Bennett et al., 2002) This subject matter lends itself to a formal and academic register, as it requires precise and nuanced language to convey complex ideas. Overall, the text register of "Languages of Truth" is scholarly and formal, reflecting the book's intellectual content and Rushdie's erudite writing style.

Comparing Semantic System in Imaginary Homelands and Languages of Truth

Semantic field is defined by Brinton (2000) as "a slice of reality represented by a cluster of words" (p. 112). Semantic fields group words that all have something in common with regard to meaning. The *Imaginary Homelands* of Salman Rushdie contain a wide range of conceptual terrains. Rushdie employs the metaphor of "imaginary homelands" to describe the broken perspective of an immigrant living in a foreign country. This semantic space refers to the fixation with forgotten pasts that often plagues persons who are forced to flee their home countries. Where they call "home" is not a physical location but rather a representation crafted from the disjointed pieces of memory and imagination. Rushdie claims that it is impossible to recover the forgotten past, necessitating instead the construction of a highly idealized "India's of the imagination" (Rushdie 1991, p. 10). For those already feeling isolated, this is a cruel kick in the teeth. The phrases "lost time" and "lost city" reveal yet another semantic domain. (Hobbs & Frost, 2003) The history alluded to by Rushdie's characters is gone forever, and his Diaspora audience will never know its secrets. All we have are fragmented recollections that are hardly enough to piece together a narrative. This forces Rushdie to rely on his imagination to create his own interpretation of India; as a result, his novel is a

meditation on and exploration of memory. It's a devastating message that further separates the exiles from the places they once called home. An additional semantic domain is provided by the exhortation, "Drive like Hell and you will get there" (Rushdie 1991, p. 11), which can be found on a bridge over a nearby railway line. This is a rather vague remark. For one thing, it might serve as a caution against dangerous behaviors like speeding that could result in fatalities. On the contrary side, it may serve as a call to action for motorists, encouraging them to cross the bridge at top speed. In this uncertainty, Rushdie sees a contradiction. One of the few things he remembers from his childhood that he has managed to cling on to is this token of his birthplace. Another thing is the way "our worlds" is used by Rushdie. Personal history, hopes, and dreams constitute this area of meaning. The author of this essay argues that everyone has the right to describe the world in terms of their own experiences. It's an effort to avoid facing the truth of forgotten experiences. He can take solace in making up his own reality out of bits and pieces of his past memories. It highlights the painful isolation that people in the Diaspora experience.

What makes up a text's "semantic field" are the ideas and concepts discussed at various points. Salman Rushdie's "Languages of Truth" is an in-depth investigation into the philosophical and intellectual questions surrounding the relationships between language, truth, and reality. This book covers a wide range of semantic topics, but some of the most important ones include many such as, Rushdie examines the relationship between language and truth, exploring questions such as how language shapes our perceptions of reality and how different languages encode different worldviews. Author Salman Rushdie uses his personal and cultural history to consider how reading and writing affect our perspectives on the world. When reflecting on the importance that literature and culture play in sculpting our perceptions of the world, Rushdie draws on his professional experiences as a writer as well as his own cultural heritage. During the entirety of the book, Rushdie discusses a wide variety of philosophical and religious concepts. Some of these concepts include the nature of reality, the function of the artist in society, and the connection between religion and politics. The book also contains debates on art and aesthetics, which investigate the various ways in which art can be utilized to challenge prevalent cultural narratives and to imagine alternative realities. Above all, "Languages of Truth" has a rich and varied semantic field because of the breadth and depth of Rushdie's intellectual interests and his engagement with various philosophical, cultural, and literary subjects. (Kannan et al., 2020)

Similarities between Languages of Truth and Imaginary Homelands

"Languages of Truth" and "Imaginary Homelands" are two books by Salman Rushdie that share several similarities. Here are a few similarities between the two books:

- Theme: Both books deal with themes of identity, exile, and the role of language in shaping our perceptions of the world. Rushdie explores these themes through personal anecdotes, cultural analysis, and literary criticism.

- **Writing Style:** Rushdie's writing style in both books is erudite and scholarly. He uses complex vocabulary, literary references, and sophisticated sentence structures to convey his ideas. (Hobbs & Frost, 2003)
 - **Cultural Analysis:** Both books are heavily influenced by Rushdie's cultural background and his experiences as a writer. He reflects on the impact of colonialism, religious fundamentalism, and cultural identity on his work and on society at large.
 - **Literary Criticism:** Both books include essays on literature and the role of the writer in society. Rushdie analyzes the works of other writers, including James Joyce, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, and Vladimir Nabokov, and offers insights into their writing styles and themes.
 - **Personal Reflection:** In both books, Rushdie also reflects on his personal life, including his experiences growing up in India, his relationship with his parents, and his experiences as an exiled writer.
- Overall, "Languages of Truth" and "Imaginary Homelands" share several similarities in terms of theme, writing style, cultural analysis, literary criticism, and personal reflection. These similarities highlight Rushdie's ongoing exploration of complex themes and his unique perspective as a writer and cultural commentator.

CONCLUSION

Rushdie has effectively used the many tools at his disposal, including semantics and the grammatical structure of the English language, to convey his ideas. The author effectively portrays the issue of a shattered memory and shows why persons in exile must rely on imagination to reconstruct the residences they can never obtain through the author's use of symbols and intertextuality. (Watt, 1968) The choice of language is also suitable since it allows the author to establish a rapport with the reader, some of whom may be unfamiliar with the isolating realities of individuals in captivity and the motivations that drive writers to rely on fiction rather than reflect the real world. The essay's use of semantic fields successfully conveys its meaning to the widest potential audience. As a result, in order to completely comprehend Rushdie's works, it is necessary to examine the grammatical and lexical framework he employs. Whether you love him or hate him, Salman Rushdie is a writer you can't ignore because of his dogged dedication to the fight for free speech, his support for decentralization and decolonization, his willingness to challenge the status quo, and his preference to advocate for the advancement of the weak and powerless. Rushdie's creative storytelling approaches and his use of genre-blurring and fusing narrative strategies are two of the many reasons his works have captivated readers all around the world.

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