

## MYTHS AND ARCHETYPES IN RUSHDIE'S POSTCOLONIAL WORLD<sup>1</sup>

*"To understand just one life, you have to swallow the world."*

—Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*.

The following study analyses the realisations of the collective unconscious – archetypes and myths – in the world of postcolonial magical realism of Salman Rushdie in *Midnight's Children*. The introduction provides a theoretical framework which relies on Jungian theory of the collective unconscious and archetypes. Archetypes create myths, religions, fairy tales and folk tales, and these creations become representatives of entire nations and epochs. Furthermore, the study examines the ways and reasons myths are implemented, since myths can serve as a tool for tapping into the collective unconscious. The paper gives special attention to religion (spirituality) and sexuality, as innate archetypes and needs. Since Rushdie turns his back on Victorian and Indian tradition, giving advantage to postcolonial impulses and attitudes believing in an atheistic world that rejects myths, in the implementation of magical elements he sees an opportunity for the colonised and oppressed to finally rise above their oppressors.

**Key words:** postcolonialism, magical realism, archetypes, myths, collective unconscious

### Introduction

Salman Rushdie in his “aggressively postcolonial” (Faris, 2004: 29) *Midnight's Children* introduces magical in the mundane, thus creating perfect surroundings for a colonised and marginalised input, since in reality colonisers are the ones given, or rather the ones who have taken,

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is based on the oral presentation *Myths and Archetypes in Rushdie's Postcolonial World* at 10<sup>th</sup> Scientific Conference of Young Philologists of Serbia Contemporary Research of Language and Literature, Kragujevac, March 2019.

“real” powers, and now the colonized have obtained “magical” ones. Realism is simply inadequate, since it cannot portray the musings of the unconscious, not only the personal, but also the collective unconscious, the latter being one of the “puppet masters” in magical realism. Having that in mind, the supernatural can be viewed as an attempt to peer into the depths of the unconscious. This paper will not deal with the personal, individual unconscious, but rather the collective one.

According to Jung, “the magic may be attributed to a mysterious sense of collective relatedness rather than to individual memories or dreams or visions” (ibid:183). The representations of magical, placed within the real world, signify one way of the liberation of human experience, overcoming the limitations of the surrounding world, human body and mind. Some of these makings can be connected to individual repressed desires, fears and aspirations, while the others are a response to the collective unconscious. Therefore, Rushdie’s children of midnight are telepathically connected, and their visions are related to the visions of India, its history, politics, past, present and future.

The introduction of the study presents the theoretical background, which mainly relies on Jungian theory of the collective unconscious and its realisations – archetypes – within the framework of postcolonialism and magical realism. Archetypes constitute myths, religions, fairy tales and folktales that are exponents of whole nations and epochs. Postcolonial cultures’ reliance on myths and local legends is an effort at decontamination, a process of freeing their cultures from colonialists’ pervasive influence (Nayar 2010: 234). In the novel, myth is contextualized to critique the singular system of power dominating the current postcolonial state, and to imagine a utopian democratic space for secular state of the future. The paper argues that myths are ideological constructs coated in several forms of authority such as patriarchy, political and religious repression, and dogmatic versions of nationalism. Myths are deconstructed and left bare for interpretation, since it is demanded and expected from the reader to be active and to critically examine the text in front of them.

Furthermore, Jung describes religion as an innate archetype in the human unconscious, an archetype which incorporates both male and female elements (Gruss 2009: 59). Religion is observed as an unconscious phenomenon realised within an organised society, which Rushdie, deeply

critical of religion in his fiction, considers to be the very source of all the wars and turmoil in India. In addition, sexual repression is very often connected to religion. Still, Rushdie links sexual repression with political repression as well. Together they “breed a bizarre collective unconscious seething with anger” (Piciucco 2004: 236).

On more than one occasion, the collective unconscious is the source of prejudice, hatred and bigotry. It bestows the burden of past atrocities (e.g. war in Pakistan). In Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, magic realism has the function of highlighting the absurdity of the political scene in post-independence India, and to expose the complex nature of the relationship between the individual and their position in history. By dissolving the linear time, Rushdie is enabling the reader to conceptualize and see all possible events or times, creating an ultimate authority that is not one of rational knowledge, but the voice of collective memory. The entire concept of collective unconscious assumes that our consciousness is not a *tabula rasa*, but that it is equipped with patterns that are innate.

Therefore, instantaneous acknowledgment of symbols and the meanings of myths, can be understood as “the sudden conjunction of our outer reality and the inner reality of the collective unconscious” (Boeree 2006). Moreover, artists all over the world, since the dawn of time, shared creative and spiritual experiences. Equivalents of one nation's dreams, mythology, fantasy, literature can be found in other nations. Thus, the study of collective unconscious in literature is rather engaging and thought provoking, especially in the work of one of the greatest writers of magical realism –Salman Rushdie.

### **Jungian Archetypes**

Carl Jung suggests in his *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* that the psyche consists of various systems including the personal unconscious, with its complexes, and the collective unconscious, with its archetypes (Jung 1971: 21). According to Jung, the collective unconscious is a deeper and more significant layer of the unconscious. It is also a place where we can find our emotions, neurosis etc. Jung's collective unconscious has been described as a “storehouse of latent memory traces inherited from man's ancestral past, a past that includes not only the racial history of man as a separate species but his pre-human or animal ancestry

as well” (Hall& Lindzey 1957: 80). Therefore, Jung's theory incorporates Darwin's theory of evolution, as well as ancient mythology. Jung states that this collective unconscious is shared by all people and is, therefore, universal. However, since it is unconscious, not all people are able to tap into it. This collective unconscious, psychic inheritance, is the basin of our experiences as a species, the intrinsic knowledge. Yet, we can never be directly conscious of it. It does influence the entire human behaviour and experiences, mainly the emotional ones; however, we can only become aware of it by looking at those influences retrospectively. Since Jung believed that the fundamentals of personality are ancestral and universal, he studied religions, mythology, rituals, symbols, dreams and visions. He referred to universal images and patterns as archetypes. By using these patterns, playing with them, distorting them, Rushdie shaped his postcolonial world, giving social critique while doing so. An important product of the unconscious closely connected to archetypes, would certainly be myths. As such, mythology plays a central role in creating and shaping nations and their identities.

Salman Rushdie's exposing of these myths in his novel *Midnight's Children* serves as an individual narrative, clarifying and reifying rhetorical and postcolonial theory with vivid, rich, and accessible detail (Daniels 2008:1 ), thus leading to decolonization, which involves a “return to native traditions” (Hart & Ouyang 2005: 17).

### **Archetypes – false universals?**

The archetypes enable people to perceive and apprehend the world through patterns that have become specific for humanity. However, it is difficult to determine the number of archetypes, as we are normally not aware to what extent our conventional concepts are based on archetypal modes of perceptions. Due to our diversity of thinking, the primordial images have been obscured so that they often do not appear in their original form any more, but in a highly altered shape. The idea is that just as “conscious apprehension gives our action form and direction, so unconscious apprehension through the archetype determines the form and direction of instinct” (Nagy 1991: 167).

Alternatively, as Jung himself stated: “The unconscious, on the other hand, is the source of the instinctual forces of the psyche and of the forms

or categories that regulate them, namely the archetypes”(Jung 1969: 32). However, on this occasion the sphere of interest does not include archetypes in a psychological sense, but in a literary one. The accent will be put on how Rushdie incorporates the idea of archetypes and “plays” with them.

In *Midnight's Children*, Saleem and Shiva – Ganesha and Shiva – represent two opposing archetypes, an eternal antagonism. During the entire course of the novel, both of them, especially Saleem, are haunted by the feeling that their lives and destinies are bigger than them. Since they represent archetypes, the collective unconscious is the puppet master, pulling the strings and they are left to their roles of mere puppets. Both of them born at midnight, symbolising a new beginning, a creation of the new world, and both joined together, representing the natural balance, since the good cannot exist without the bad, and vice versa. Even Saleem's son, Shiva's biological son, represents the unity of the two.

Although Padma also provides a kind of antithesis to Saleem's magical, whimsical and sometimes too slow narration, she epitomises an archetypal image of the helper. She is Saleem's driving force. She provides balance, and gives a new dimension to his narration. It would not be complete without her. Padma, representing Laxmi, goddess of good fortune and also preserver, accompanies Vishnu – Saleem (throughout the novel there are numerous references to Saleem as Vishnu). Saleem feels completely and utterly lost without Padma:

How to dispense with Padma? How give up her ignorance and superstition, necessary counterweights to my miracle-laden omniscience? How to do without her paradoxical earthiness of spirit, which keeps-kept?-my feet on the ground? I have become, it seems to me, the apex of an isosceles triangle, supported equally by twin deities, the wild god of memory and the lotus-goddess of the present... but must i now become reconciled to the narrow one-dimensionality of a straight line? (Rushdie 1991: 170)

Some might hold these patronising words against Saleem, and for that matter Rushdie as well. However, they brilliantly portray the position of Indian women. Women are thick, superstitious beings, obsessed with trinkets and trifles. By confirming Padma's marginality, Rushdie points out how central male experience in fact is. Padma is given one derogatory

quality after another. Not only is she superstitious and ignorant, but also quite ugly. She is described as fat, “thick of waist, somewhat hairy of forearm” (ibid: 20). Even her name, as it often happens with Rushdie, depicts her (mis)fortune - 'The One Who Possesses Dung'. Rushdie comments that the names of the characters in the novel influence their lives, which further supports the idea of the collective unconscious – “our names contain our fates; acquired the meaninglessness of the West, and are victims of our titles” (ibid: 348-349). The image of Padma provides quite a humorous feature of Rushdie’s novel. However, the only good quality of hers is in the relation to a man, Saleem, as the archetypical helper, since she helps him write and focus. Moreover, the only appreciation she gets is from him, but only because she is there for him. Also, in most cases, Padma articulates the reader’s thoughts. She shares reader’s impatience, surprise, astonishment and shock.

It is interesting how archetypes, being primordial images of humanity’s unconscious, are shared throughout nations. The entire literary work relies on these archetypes, and they are the reasons why motifs and images, otherwise spatially and temporally distant, are so approachable and relevant.

### **Myth<sup>2</sup> – a tool for social critique**

The substantial growth of interest in myths and fairy tales is noticeable in the literature of postcolonialism, postmodernism, and of course magical realism. The novelists have employed mythology in their fiction with remarkable skill and variety. Myths, fairy tales, and folk tales are constituted by archetypes. In that way, they are born out of the collective unconsciousness. According to Jung, they are little more than expressions of that part of the psyche, "In fact, the whole of mythology could be taken as a sort of projection of the collective unconscious" (Jung 1969: 26). On the other hand, dreams, for example, mostly come from the personal unconscious, therefore cannot become myths, due to their personal imprint. Having that in mind, it is safe to presume that myths represent exponents of one nation.

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2 Indian mythology references thought the paper are adapted and taken from – Ions, V. (1967). *Indian Mythology*. London: Paul Hamilyn.

Rushdie uses myths to depict a blend of cultures. Rushdie's origin played a central role in determining the course of his implementation of mythology. His novel reflects countless mythic influences from both Eastern and Western culture. Since mythology is a major part of Indian tradition, a large part of the novel's religious mythological references stems from the abundant diversity of Hindu mythology. Rushdie's attention is pointed towards creating "newly-old myths around smaller collectivities of people; and in his very oscillation between frustrated condemnation and yearning affection Rushdie is seeking a renewal of community that is itself a fuller and more real" (Hartand & Ouyang 2005: 266).

Having in mind that religious beliefs and mythology have a focal role in Hindu culture, we could look at the *Midnight's children's* characters as actual incarnations of Hindu gods. Furthermore, Salman Rushdie's magnum opus and monumental novel, encompasses the whole of reality of the Indian Subcontinent using myths.

He presents two opposed worlds, the Western, rational, cold, materialistic one, and the Eastern, mythological, magical, oppressed one. The novel's backbone is for sure the Parvati-Shiva traditional myth. Their tempestuous relationship in the novel in fact reflects that of the mythical gods, and in that relationship the most positive is the female representation that Rushdie makes of Parvati. Rushdie did not just implement the myth, however. Main characters dynamically shift identities, and by doing so Rushdie alters the myth. For example, Shiva-of-the-knees and Saleem, whose fates have been intertwined since they were switched at birth, dually portray the traditional Hindu Shiva in that they alternatively share the consort Parvati-the-Witch (Tatko 1999). However, as Rushdie suggests himself, the fictional relationship between these two arche-opponents, Saleem and his 'alter ego' Shiva-of-the-knees, also resembles the mythic traditional opposition between Hindu gods Vishnu, the preserver, and Shiva, the Destroyer. Similar shift is noticed with Parvati-the-Witch. Though, she often represents her namesake, she also represents the traditional Kama, god of love, when she magically summons Shiva-of-the-knees and then sends him away after becoming pregnant as planned.

In *Midnight's children*, the ending of the traditional myth is severely darkened and distorted (ibid.). The telepathic connection that enabled children to have their meetings has been irreversibly damaged. Moreover,



the children are constantly followed by the stench of betrayal, sterilization and death. The relationship between Saleem, Parvati and Shiva, regardless of how perverted, has been permanently crushed. Still, Parvati gives birth to Aadam Sinai, and Rushdie again alludes to Hindu myths describing Aadam, "He was the true great-grand-son of his great-grandfather; but elephantiasis attacked him in the ears instead of the nose-because he was also the true son of Shiva-and-Parvati; he was the elephant headed Ganesh" (Rushdie 1991: 483).

Saleem's magical realism is a hybrid of orality (myths) and literacy (history) (Kortenaar & Louie 2004: 21). This hybridity is a focal point in magical realism. Saleem presumes that his readers are non-Indians, thus feeling obliged to give us further information about the culture, mythology and religion. However, on more than one occasion Saleem is deliberately misleading. He wants his reader to be actively involved, to show the ability of critical thinking, which is typical of magical realism. Moreover, Rushdie by using his narrator's personal, private history gives social, political and religious commentary. He is overtly ironic, mercilessly persistent in his intentions. Oral story-telling of myths and folk tales, partakes a significant place in the novel. Due to the story-teller's direct relation and influence to his audience, combining the fantasy, he leaves a great impact onto the listener (reader), creating a more intimate atmosphere, the one which cannot be found in realistic novels. The reader is led to believe that he is the only one the narrator felt comfortable sharing his knowledge and magical secrets with.

It would be hard to imagine the functioning of magical realism without myth and archetypes, since they serve as a binder, holding everything, both realistic and magical, naturally and unobtrusively in place. By introducing them, not only do they affect the reader's consciousness, but also the unconsciousness, since the reader has all of those archetypes and connections already archived deep in their unconsciousness, making the entire narrative more relatable, familiar and "real". Writers of magical realism create the alternative version of reality to de-alienate all that is imperceptible, inhibited and unspoken.



### **Religion as an archetype**

Religion is said to be imbued with “half-conscious longings, unconscious needs, and perceptions that combine the piercing lucidity of consciousness as its most refined with the archaic mixtures of instinct and image that are rarely delivered into consciousness at all” (Ulanov 1975: 25). Jung mentions concordances in the realm of so-called fantastic ideas – for example religious or superstitious ideas – thereby stressing that the ideas themselves are not inherited, but that there is a disposition to react in the same way as people have always reacted, which is inherited (Jung 1969: 45).

The concept of religion is indeed a universal one. Since there was a man, there was a need for religion, spirituality. Spirituality and religion can be viewed as two quite different concepts. Spirituality is as an essence, intangible and pure. Spirituality does not need religion since it exists in our collective unconscious, but religion needs spirituality. In a sense spirituality can be observed as a religion devoid of “symbols” (a Jungian term).

Religion in Rushdie’s novel is considered to be just one more tool of oppression. India represents a clash between religions, and this Hindu-Muslim relationship is to be held responsible for all the turmoil, violence that hit India. Rushdie firmly believes that “members of both religions betray their own ideals by exploiting religious prejudice” (Clark 2001: 69).

Within Rushdie’s work, religions are not always depicted in a completely horrendous or ludicrous way, but are spiced up with a sense of wistfulness and human longing. This is mostly a result of utter disappointment and a desire for unison. This is illustrated when Aadam Aziz, who by refusing to bow, revolts against God and Islam, and finds himself losing something very precious, and feeling “a hole at the heart of his very self”(Rushdie 1991: 15). For when Aadam resolves never to “kiss earth for any god or man”, rubies and diamonds miraculously drop from his nose and eyes (ibid: 15). Moreover, when he tries to steal the sacred lock of Muhammad’s hair and bring it to Hindu temple Shankara Acharya, which has rich history, both Muslim and Hindu, it is as if he was trying to unite the two religions. Aadam Aziz encompasses the Eastern and the Western, since he studied the Western medicine in Germany. When he returned to India, he found himself in a limbo between the East and

the West, “he also felt-inexplicably-as though the old place resented his educated, stethoscoped return. Beneath the winter ice, it had been coldly neutral, but now there was no doubt; the years in Germany had returned him to a hostile environment.” (ibid: 3) Moreover, his German, foreign friends mock “his prayer with their anti-ideologies”, and Aadam does not really capitulate to their Orientalism, in which India “had been discovered by the Europeans”. Saleem comments that “what finally separated Aadam Aziz from his friends” was their belief “that he was somehow the invention of their ancestors” (ibid: 11). The novel’s postcolonial strategy is rather obvious, and it consists of “marginalizing Europe from Saleem’s account of Indian history, and of taking the occasional dig at Europe and its pretence of dispensing knowledge and light to the rest of the world” (Clark 2001: 65).

Within Indian tradition, it is hard to separate and distinguish between religion and mythology, as they are completely intertwined. Rushdie’s novel depicts quite vividly the condition of the postcolonial state, tradition, religion. However, the reader must be careful, not to let himself get seduced into trusting deliberate misinformation:

When Valmiki, the author of the *Ramayana*, dictated his masterpiece to elephant-headed Ganesh, did the god walk out on him halfway? He certainly did not. (Note that, despite my Muslim background, I’m enough of a Bombayite to be well up in Hindu stories, and actually I’m very fond of the image of trunk-nosed, flap-eared Ganesh solemnly taking dictation!)

(Rushdie 1991: 170)

Rushdie here expects from the reader to notice the mistake (Vyasa dictated Mahabharata to Ganesh, and Valmiki dictated Ramayana to Rama’s sons), but not to hold it against Saleem, who has already been marked as an unreliable narrator. He brings personal, privatised history. Saleem expects to have hostile readers and “venom- quilled critics” (ibid: 414), but he boasts that he has already twice survived snakebite and emerged stronger ( Kortenaar & Louie 2004: 237). This is yet another comparison of the narrator to the god Ganesh. However, this time it is not a physical resemblance, but both of them are recorders, and both of them are not devoid of influences (Ganesh – Vyasa, Saleem – collective unconscious,

society, Padma etc.). Moreover, Ganesh is here represented somewhat ironically. Firstly, the narrator makes a mistake, mixing the writers and works, and then he mocks how Ganesh simply writes down the things he is dictated, served, without thinking. This is what religion demands, acceptance, not critical thinking. Precisely this lack of critical thinking is what Rushdie disapproves of, and the reason for an untrustworthy narrator, since that technique demands an active and mentally involved reader.

Rushdie is fully aware of the power religion encompasses. He sees it as a tool for manipulation in order to achieve, most often than not, a personal gain. People can easily be manipulated by promises of prosperity, afterlife, etc. However, the endeavours leading to that can be “both excessively theological and barbarically cruel” (Rushdie 1991: 225).

Martyrs, Padma! Heroes, bound for the perfumed garden!  
Where the men would be given four beauteous houris, untouched  
by man or djinn; and the women, four equally virile males! Which  
of your Lord's blessings would you deny? What a thing this holy  
war is, in which with one supreme sacrifice men may atone for all  
their evils! No wonder Lahore was defended; what did the Indians  
have to look forward to? Only re-incarnation - as cockroaches,  
maybe, or scorpions, or green-medicine-wallahs - there's really  
no comparison. (ibid: 389)

Here Rushdie mocks the bigotry of religions, the absurdity of a “holy war”. In religion, Rushdie sees a source of bigotry, prejudice, consequently resulting in violence, humiliation, and wars. He scorns the idea that by “holy” violence people of one religion can earn a place in “the perfumed garden” filled with earthly pleasures, while others can be re-incarnated as scorpions at best. Using an overt irony, he ridicules the absurdity of organised religions. Since Muslims can look forward to a more valuable and appealing prize, they are better motivated, thus the outcome of the battle for Lahore is “logical”. There are more examples of Rushdie’s condemnation of the atrocities of the “holy” war:

So I carried what was now only half of a boy (and therefore  
reasonably light) up narrow spiral stairs to the heights of that cool  
white minaret, where... red ants and black ants fought over a  
dead cockroach...[on the] concrete floor...antlike people were

emerging, preparing for peace; the ants, however, ignored the antlike, and fought on. (ibid: 431)

Both people and ants share basic characteristics. They share that primordial, animalistic experience. We, like ants, are not able to deal with problems without resorting to violence. Moreover, soldiers are being ruled by not only their superiors, but also, similarly to ants, their innate need for conflict. Rushdie presents the war here in a rather matter-of-fact way, ironically, since it is perfectly normal if someone misses half of the body, to be reasonably light. This is quite typical of magical realism, where the author does not really use words denoting violence, but metaphors, symbols and comparisons, for such words anchor the experience in our senses, making them “felt”, rather than literally described.

People wearing the masks of righteous religious men do not react out of a sense of duty or faith, but a desire to make profit and/or gain power. War, for that matter, is the ultimate lucrative business. People with power use their faith-driven pawns in an ever-growing business. Rushdie recognises this as India’s true faith, naming it “Businessism” (ibid: 457). “Businessism” is the most powerful and oldest religion, which has its loyal, persistent followers, offering up tremendous sacrifices to their financial god.

### **Myths and sexuality**

Rushdie deliberately disturbs sexual order, preordained by the society, in order to give social commentary. He disrupts the sexual balance of the Shiva-Parvati myth by inappropriately imposing Saleem on the Shiva-of-the-knees and Parvati-the-Witch relationship, a mythically matched pair. Rushdie’s Parvati, who is supposed to traditionally desire Shiva, at first yearns for Saleem, who closely resembles Vishnu, the Preserver, Shiva’s traditional opposite. Rushdie sacrileges this religious myth, since we have a kind of mythic adultery. This perversion of desire, this twisted love triangle, at the same time highlights the imbalance in postcolonial India. Thus, the resolution of proper sexual roles is qualified by the chaos that has irreversibly entered both Saleem and India, whose fate is so closely aligned with his own (Tatko1999). Eventually, Saleem does not succeed in holding onto this role as Vishnu, and faces inevitable dissolution from the postcolonial chaos.

Moreover, Rushdie will resort to exaggeration of sexuality, as yet another critique of its repression. Shiva, in *Midnight's Children*, represents his namesake the god Shiva, who is a god of excess, not only an ascetic, but also an erotic one. Therefore, Saleem informs us of General Shiva's sexual activity:

It is possible (I have divided by half the major's own figures) that at the height of his philanderings there were no less than ten thousand women in love with him. And certainly there were children. The spawn of illicit midnights. Beautiful bouncing infants secure in the cradles of the rich. Strewing bastards across the map of India, the war hero went his way. (Rushdie 1991: 470)

Furthermore, it is obvious that Shiva has had his share of women, the majority of them married. Having in mind that arranged marriages are a persistent part of the tradition, it is clear that many of these women ended up in loveless, sometimes filled with violence, marriages. At first, Shiva was very content with himself, as he played the role of a virile, fertile, real man. He, a slum dog, had the ladies of high society at his feet. Or did he?

O yes, Major Sahib, don't fool yourself, high-class women have always enjoyed sleeping with animals peasants brutes, but that's how we think of you, my God it's disgusting just to watch you eat, gravy down your chin, don't you think we see how you never hold teacups by their handles, do you imagine we can't hear your belches and breakings of wind, you're just our pet ape, major sahib, very useful, but basically a clown. (ibid: 471)

Having learnt about this and lost his confidence, he starts to notice the things he have never noticed before – derisive looks and smiles. The women and girls used to pretend that they dropped something, so they could leave him a secret little note in their shoes. Now, Shiva looked at this as just a way to subdue him, to make “kneel demeaningly at their feet” (ibid: 471). Even though, women embraced their sexuality and triumphed in that game of “who subdues whom”, their victory was not complete, since they would be condemned by the male society if the entire affair ceased to be a secret. Consequently, Shiva seeks the comfort of his divine female counterpart – Parvati. In Hindu mythology as in *Midnight's Children*, Shiva is Destructor,

his behaviour is violent and mad; still, Parvati manages to subjugate him. The goddess Parvati plays the part of a moderator, as a representative of an ideal of controlled sexuality. In *Midnight's Children* Parvati acts mainly as a stabilizing force, thus restoring the order. She even succeeds in putting under control Shiva's sexual urges.

Since Saleem is Shiva's opposite throughout the novel, it becomes rather obvious and expected that our narrator Saleem will have troublesome relationships with women: "Women have made me; and also unmade...I have been at the mercy of the so-called (erroneously, in my opinion!) gentler sex" (ibid: 483). Indeed, if we have a look at his virginal nurse Mary Pereira (who influenced and changed the entire course of his life), or his sister The Brass Monkey (influenced his love life), or his wife Parvati, Saleem's relationships with women are far from functional. However, the novel further disclosures the reason for those troubles – Saleem's vision of female sexuality, which is marked by fear, hatred and absence of understanding. For him the only good woman is a desexed one. At the same time, he is haunted by the fear and curiosity.

This Saleem's destruction of female sexuality can be observed in relation to postcolonial India – "Is not Mother India, Bharat-Mata, commonly thought of as female?" (ibid: 465). The notion of female India suggests that India was in fact violated by the male British colonisers. Thus, she should be guarded from her own sexuality, since that was the implicit cause of the abuses. In an effort to deal with his incestuous desire for Jamila Singer, Saleem says:

Had I already understood how I had simply transferred on to her shoulders the adoration which I now perceived to be a vaulting, all-encompassing love of country? When was it that I realized that my truly-incestuous feelings were for my true birth-sister, India herself...? (ibid: 444)

In this way, it can be perceived that Saleem is assigning an erotic desire to his nation. Since he shields his country's sexuality through his actions against women, it is quite natural that now female India strikes back. The female leader of the country, Indira Ghandi, issues an order, the result of which is demasculinisation and desexing of our narrator (via castration).

The realisation of female sexuality does arise, but within “a cracked wrinkled leather-ancient body” of “the oldest whore in the world”. Saleem visits a female prostitute, but not just any prostitute, the one that claims to be five hundred and twelve years old. This might be the only time in the book where a woman is connected to her sexuality. But at what cost? The Indian women are so desexualised, that even the prostitute, and being one is the only acceptable way for a woman to acknowledge her sexuality, is mythically demonised.

### **Conclusion**

Jung's collective unconscious is an inherited part of the psyche, a fundamental driving force, a container of great truths, and the only trustworthy guide to self-realization. Yet, it is hidden in the depths of the mind, unknown to man. Jung believed that there were certain basic mental patterns, or "archetypes" as he called them – patterns of information that exist in all human minds and that are part of the heritage of the human race. He thought that the contact of the conscious mind with these patterns, or the intrusion of the patterns into our consciousness, gave rise to the mythologies and religions of the world. Myths are the instruments to discover and to utilize the “absolute knowledge” of our collective unconsciousness (Jung 1969: 18).

The entire plot of Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* relies greatly on the perpetual archetypal conflict of two opposing sides (Saleem and Shiva). Rushdie uses archetypal images as such, or in a distorted form, to make us realise the social issues of the marginalised (women, the colonised, the poor etc.). He employs those images to accomplish a humorous effect, or to mock their absurdity or injustice.

Rushdie believes in the demythologised and atheistic world. He sees religion as the puppet master, pulling the strings of masses, where an individual becomes lost due to the expectations and demands of society. Everyone is supposed to fit the preordained mould, and any irregularities are simply unacceptable. The author remains unable to make his peace with it. Rushdie fights to overpower postcolonial legacy and abolish institutions of all kinds (religion, marriage etc.).

Rushdie condemns the constraints of society and religion that repress human sexuality. The usage of sexual innuendo and motifs is not vulgar,



they are mostly given as a sign of rebellion, liberation from oppression, insecurities, etc. or as a tool for accusing and judging the perversities of society.

In the end, the subservient triumph and “the imperial sun has set” (Rushdie 1991: 129). Rushdie demands critical thinking as the only way for progress. He wants us to open up our minds enough to see past the prejudice, bigotry and discrimination, in order to grasp the true image of the world we live in.

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## **MITOVI I ARHETIPOVI U POSTKOLONIJALNOM SVETU RUŽDIJA**

### **Sažetak**

Ova studija analizira realizacije kolektivnog nesvesnog, arhetipove i mitove, u svetu postkolonijalnog magijskog realizma Salmana Ruždija u delu „Deca ponoći“. Uvod daje teorijski okvir koji se oslanja na Jungovu teoriju kolektivnog nesvesnog i arhetipova. Arhetipovi stvaraju mitove, religije, bajke i narodne priče, i ove tvorevine postaju svojevrсни predstavnici čitavih nacija i epoha. Dalje se ispituju načini i razlozi za implementaciju mitova koji mogu biti sredstvo za prodiranje u ljudsko nesvesno. Takođe, posebna pažnja se posvećuje problemu religije (spiritualnosti) i seksualnosti, kao urođenim arhetipovima i potrebama. S obzirom na to da Ruždi okreće leđa viktorijanskoj i indijskoj tradiciji, dajući prednost postkolonijalnim impulsima i stavovima i verujući u ateistični svet koji odbacuje mitove, on u implementaciji magijskih elemenata vidi priliku za kolonizovane i potlačene da se konačno uzdignu iznad opresora.

**Ključne reči:** postkolonijalizam, magijski realizam, arhetipovi, mitovi, kolektivno nesvesno