

# The Role Of Memory In The Imaginary Homelands And The Reality Which Migrants Face

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## **Abstract-**

Salman Rushdie argues in his work *Imaginary Homelands* that migrants carry an idea of home with them, a memory which they feel that they belong to. He tells how each one of them carry a version of their own homelands which presently no longer exist. The statement is true in the case Partition migrants as well. Certainly, there are indications that underneath the ambiguous narrative of *Midnight's Children* there resides a hidden and cohesive structure to reality.

The story runs as a continual interplay of synchronicities, recapitulations, prophetic inter-windings of fate, homologisations, and rhythmic patterns. In forming a background tempo, these hint at an organising intelligence residing deep beneath the plurality of imaginary worlds Rushdie creates, even if such a mind or ultimate logos can only ever be that of the author himself.

Saleem talks of a "national longing for form... an expression of our belief that forms lie hidden within reality; that meaning reveals itself only in flashes", and states that "everything has shape, if you look for it. There is no escape from form". It is a testimony to Rushdie's ability to effortlessly manipulate language that the overall tone of a book that resets upon such bleak epistemology never becomes overwhelmingly depressive or nihilistic.

**Keywords-** ossified, hybrid identities, multifaceted, migrants, colonialism, communities.

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## **I. Introduction-**

Salman Rushdie says that this book is not just a book of essays it narrates the whole scenerio that, how much India is closer to my heart and it actually shares my own autobiography that how does it feels like to belong nowhere?

India is my own land where I've spent my childhood and all the memories are shared in the essays of my book that how much I remembered about it. The memory which is close to my heart is my homeland from where I belongs to and how much I miss it. Apart from his personal experiences he also described on social, political and literary topics in these essays. In these essays he beautifully described the controversial facts of the decade, when Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister of India.

To be an Indian writer in this society is to face, every day, problems of definition.

- What does it mean to be 'Indian' outside India?
- How can culture be preserved without becoming ossified?
- How should we discuss the need for change within ourselves and our community without seeming to play into the hands of our racial enemies?
- What are the consequences, both spiritual and practical, of refusing to make any concessions to Western ideas and practices?
- What are the consequences of embracing those ideas and practices?

Back to my memories, I've number of questions still pinching me to get those answers that ,what if someone else feel like the same way I've suffered !

## **II. Memory Plays A Role Of Bridge-**

Memory plays a profound role in the concept of imaginary homelands and the reality that migrants face. Imaginary homelands, a term popularized by Salman Rushdie, refers to the idea of a homeland that exists in the imagination of migrants, often constructed through memories, nostalgia, and cultural artifacts. For

migrants, memory becomes a powerful tool for constructing a sense of belonging and identity, especially when they are physically displaced from their homeland.

Memory serves as a bridge between the past and present, allowing migrants to maintain connections with their cultural roots and heritage. Through memories of their homeland, migrants can preserve traditions, language, and customs, thereby fostering a sense of continuity and belonging in their new surroundings. Memories also provide a source of comfort and solace, offering a means of coping with the challenges of migration and the feelings of displacement.

However, the reality that migrants face often diverges from the idealized imagery of their imaginary homelands. The experience of migration involves confronting unfamiliar environments, navigating complex social dynamics, and overcoming systemic barriers such as discrimination and xenophobia. In this reality, memory can be both a source of strength and a source of pain. While memories of home provide a sense of identity and belonging, they can also evoke feelings of longing, nostalgia, and loss for what has been left behind.

Moreover, the passage of time can alter and reshape memories, leading to a sense of displacement even within one's own recollections. As migrants adapt to their new lives, memories may become fragmented or distorted, blurring the distinction between reality and imagination.

In this sense, memory becomes a dynamic and evolving aspect of the migrant experience, continuously shaping and reshaping their sense of identity and belonging.

Overall, memory plays a complex and multifaceted role in the imaginary homelands of migrants and the reality they face. It serves as a source of connection to the past, a means of navigating the present, and a lens through which to envision the future. Yet, memory also carries the weight of longing and loss, highlighting the tension between nostalgia and adaptation in the migrant experience.

### **III. Research Methods**

**Comparative Analysis:** In this research paper a comparative study has been analysed. The migrant memory plays a vital role as it assist us with number of differences we can't see what a migrant has to suffer. An analysis has been discovered through various authors in their respective novels.

#### **1. Postcolonial Theory**

Postcolonial theory explores the effects of colonization on cultures and societies, and the concept of imaginary homelands is particularly relevant in this context.

Homi K. Bhabha's idea of the "third space" is pertinent here, as it describes a liminal space where cultural identities are negotiated and where hybrid identities emerge. This space is where many diasporic individuals reconstruct their sense of homeland, blending their memories with new experiences.

#### **2. Diaspora Studies**

Diaspora studies focus on the experiences of dispersed populations, their connections to their homeland, and their identities.

Avtar Brah's concept of "diaspora space" considers the intersectionality of diaspora, where multiple histories and cultures coexist and interact. This space often becomes the imaginary homeland where individuals recreate their sense of belonging.

#### **3. Memory Studies**

Memory studies investigate how memories are constructed, preserved, and transmitted.

Marianne Hirsch's concept of "postmemory" is relevant as it deals with the intergenerational transmission of trauma and memories within families. For many in the diaspora, the homeland is not directly experienced but remembered through stories and symbols, creating a shared imaginary space that binds the community.

#### **4. Literary Frameworks**

Literature often reflects and constructs imaginary homelands through narrative and metaphor. Edward Said's notion of "orientalism" examines how the East is represented in the West, often through exoticized and nostalgic imagery. Writers in the diaspora, like Rushdie in "Midnight's Children," challenge these representations by providing counter-narratives that reconstruct their own versions of homeland.

#### **5. Psychoanalytic Theory**

Sigmund Freud's theories on mourning and melancholia provide a lens to understand the emotional attachments to lost homelands. The concept of "unheimlich" or the uncanny, where something familiar yet foreign evokes a sense of unease, can be related to the experience of diasporic individuals who find their reconstructed homelands both comforting and unsettling.

## 6. Cultural Geography

Cultural geography examines how space and place are perceived and represented.

Yi-Fu Tuan's concept of "topophilia" describes the emotional connections people have to places. In the context of imaginary homelands, these places are often more imagined than real, constructed through narratives, memories, and emotions rather than physical geography.

## 7. Globalization Studies

Globalization has intensified the movement of people and ideas, creating more complex identities and connections to homelands. Arjun Appadurai's notion of "scapes" (ethnoscapes, mediascapes, etc.) illustrates the fluid and dynamic nature of global cultural flows, which shape and reshape diasporic identities and their imaginary homelands.

## 8. Anthropology and Ethnography

Anthropologists like James Clifford have examined how diasporic communities maintain their cultural identities and connections to their homelands.

Clifford's idea of "routes" versus "roots" highlights the fluidity and hybridity of cultural identity in the diaspora, emphasizing the importance of movement and travel in the construction of imaginary homelands.

Difference and Similarities:-

However, the function and influence of memory can vary significantly among different migrant groups and cultural contexts. Here are some key similarities and differences:

### **Similarities:**

#### 1. **Nostalgia and Loss:**

- Across various migrant communities, memory often invokes a sense of nostalgia for the homeland. This shared sense of loss and longing for a place left behind is a common experience in Rushdie's works.
- The past is idealized, and memories become a way to cope with the displacement and fragmentation that come with migration.

#### 2. **Identity Formation:**

- Memory plays a pivotal role in maintaining cultural identity. For many migrants, recalling traditions, languages, and customs from their homeland helps preserve a sense of self in a foreign environment.
- This process of remembering and retelling stories from the past is essential for passing down cultural heritage to future generations.

#### 3. **Hybrid Identities:**

- Rushdie often explores how migrants navigate their dual identities, shaped by both their memories of the homeland and their experiences in the new land. This creates a hybrid identity, a blend of the old and new.
- Memory serves as a bridge between the past and present, allowing individuals to reconcile different aspects of their identity.

#### 4. **Collective Memory:**

- In migrant communities, collective memory – the shared memories of a group – becomes a vital source of unity and solidarity. Festivals, rituals, and communal gatherings often revolve around shared memories of the homeland.

### **Differences:**

#### 1. **Cultural Specificity:**

- The role of memory can differ based on cultural contexts. For instance, in South Asian migrant communities, memory might be tied strongly to family structures, religious practices, and community networks.
- In contrast, for African or Caribbean migrants, memory might be more focused on colonial histories, struggles for independence, and resistance against cultural erasure.

#### 2. **Historical Context:**

- The historical circumstances of migration – whether voluntary or forced, due to economic reasons or conflict – shape the nature of memories. Refugees fleeing war-torn regions might have traumatic memories that differ from economic migrants seeking better opportunities.
- The collective trauma experienced by Jewish migrants during the Holocaust, for instance, is distinct in its impact and representation of memory compared to the experiences of economic migrants from India to the UK.

3. **Generational Perspectives:**

- First-generation migrants often have direct, lived memories of the homeland, while second and third-generation migrants might have a more fragmented or imagined understanding, influenced by the stories of their parents or grandparents.
- This generational shift can lead to differing relationships with memory, where younger generations might seek to reinterpret or reimagine the past in ways that align with their contemporary realities.

4. **Representation in Media and Literature:**

- The portrayal of memory in media and literature can vary across different migrant communities. South Asian diaspora literature, for example, might emphasize themes of partition and postcolonial identity, while Caribbean literature might focus on themes of slavery, diaspora, and cultural hybridity.
- These narratives shape how memory is constructed and communicated within and outside the community.

5. **Political and Social Contexts:**

- The host country's policies and societal attitudes towards migrants can influence how memories are preserved and expressed. In more multicultural societies, there might be greater acceptance and institutional support for preserving cultural memories.
- In contrast, in more assimilationist or hostile environments, there might be a suppression or marginalization of migrant memories, leading to different modes of cultural preservation and expression.

#### **4. Case Studies and Examples**

- Literature:

In Jhumpa Lahiri's "The Namesake," the protagonist grapples with his Indian heritage and American upbringing, creating an imaginary homeland that blends both worlds. Similarly, in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "Americanah," the concept of home is explored through the lens of a Nigerian woman who migrates to the United States.

The fatwa and its aftermath by Ruvani and Ranasinha in Cambridge express.

- Film:

In the film "In Between Days" by So Yong Kim, the immigrant experience is portrayed through the eyes of a Korean teenage girl in Canada, illustrating the emotional landscape of longing and belonging that constructs her imaginary homeland.

- Art:

The works of diasporic artists like Yinka Shonibare explore themes of colonialism and cultural identity, creating visual representations of imaginary homelands that challenge and redefine traditional narratives of place and belonging.

- **"Midnight's Children":**

- This novel showcases the diverse experiences of memory among Indian migrants, reflecting on the partition and its aftermath. The protagonist's memories are a blend of personal and national histories, illustrating the complex interplay of memory in identity formation.

- **"The Satanic Verses":**

- This work highlights the experiences of South Asian migrants in Britain, dealing with cultural dislocation and identity crises. The contrasting memories of the homeland and the experiences in the diaspora are central to the narrative.

- **"The Moor's Last Sigh":**

- The novel explores the multilayered memories of a family with roots in both India and Spain, depicting how personal and collective memories shape the characters' identities and their understanding of history.

#### **IV. Conclusions**

In conclusion, memory plays a pivotal role in shaping the imaginary homelands of migrants and influencing their experiences in reality. It serves as a lens through which they interpret their surroundings and negotiate their sense of self in a world marked by displacement and transition. Acknowledging the significance of memory is essential for understanding the complex dynamics of migration and fostering empathy and understanding towards migrant communities.

Imaginary homelands are complex, multi-faceted constructs that arise from the interplay of memory,

migration, and diaspora. They are shaped by personal and collective memories, cultural narratives, and the continuous negotiation of identity within new and old contexts. By integrating various literary and theoretical frameworks, we can gain a deeper understanding of how these imagined spaces are formed and the roles they play in the lives of diasporic individuals and communities.

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