

## **Magical Islam. The symbolic-religious meaning of colors in S. Rushdie's novels *Shame* and *The Satanic Verses*.**

The aim of my thesis is to perform color symbolic analysis of two novels by S. Rushdie – *Shame* and *The Satanic Verses* from the perspective of religion (Islam), anthropology (the meaning of color in a society and religious group within a certain territory) and culture (color as a cultural phenomenon). This analysis has been extended to include a realistic-magical dimension since the two novels mentioned above belong to such a literary movement. Therefore, the necessity arises for scrutinizing the meanings of colors in these novels by S. Rushdie as realistic-magical literary works, as well as for expanding the set of distinctive features of this literary movement through the deliberate use of hues as an esthetic and symbolic expression. I have put forward the thesis that the color map of these novels is reflected in their ideological message and story content.

Since mentioned above novels are embedded in postcolonial discourse, the coloristic implications have been presented in terms of migrant identity in combination with a symbolic expression of the coloristic figure of a Muslim as a character inhabiting two worlds – the East and the West. The symbolism of both of these worlds has been used by S. Rushdie in his search for the hybrid third space, as evidenced by his color palette. I have followed the production of nearly a Manichaean world of white and black with reference to colonial racist theories (the concept of superior) as well as ethical ones (Good and Evil). I have also analyzed the content of the sacred book of Islam (*The Quran*), and the color scheme of an everyday Muslim world emerging from the novels within the territories inhabited by the protagonists (London, Bombay, Pakistan) as well as in its universal spiritual dimension. I have studied the degree to which colors help the author to create mythology and religion-related characters (God, Satan, angels, jinn, the Prophet and so on) and the atmosphere of the sacred and the profane.

The color analysis of the novels mentioned above, especially *Shame*, indicates that hues play a significant role in presenting the patriarchal world of men on an Islamic territory and the world of women subordinated to it. Since the concepts of shame and shamelessness are not only moral or ethical imagery but also a psychosomatic color landscape in which the original triad of colors (white, black and red) demonstrates the degree to which human nature is interrelated with the phenomenon of colors. Cultural backgrounds assist people in gaining power, developing a sense of belonging, or stigmatizing other people. In this way colors have become a key phenomenon in the world of human existence. The novels by S. Rushdie are an excellent

material to be analyzed in terms of colors, as the author uses an abundance of colors in a painter-like manner, resorting without hesitation to the most incisive examples from the symbolic-color palette.

The interdisciplinary nature of this thesis has imposed some requirements with regard to the use of specific methodological tools and techniques. They have involved the need to perform a color analysis of both novels mentioned above (*Shame* and *The Satanic Verses*) as well as of three other novels written by S. Rushdie and belonging to the movement of magic realism: *Midnight's Children*, *The Enchantress of Florence* and *Shalimar the Clown*. The qualitative analysis has been based on the frequency of colors. I have analyzed groups of colors extracted from the novels, and individual hues from a symbolic-aesthetic, cultural-anthropological and religious perspective, and on the basis of a broad research literature as well as dictionaries and encyclopedias. The comparative analysis of colors has proved indispensable for bringing out similarities and differences among the novels in terms of their atmosphere, characters depiction and topics, as well as drawing final conclusions concerning the role colors play in realistic-magical and postcolonial novels, and in works of fiction dealing with religious topics (Islam, Christianity, Judaizm). This dissertation also reveals the need for further research on the role of colors in literature since such an analysis generates relevant findings which may help us to fight against racial prejudices and stereotypes in human-to-human relations and thus, I hope, it may contribute, even in the slightest degree, to peaceful coexistence of the human race in its individual and universal dimension.

Keywords: Salman Rushdie, islam, color, color symbolism, magic realism, postcolonialism, binarism, third space