



## FEMALE CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL *THE MOOR'S LAST SIGH* AS THE KEY ELEMENT TO REVEALING INDIAN IDENTITY



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### Summary

The article is dedicated to the analysis of female characters in the novel *The Moor's Last Sigh* by Salman Rushdie. Our aim is to understand better the evolution of artistic images by highlighting and researching the means the author uses for revealing the «nature» and «socialization» of a woman. The novel appeals to the understanding of a woman's place in the socio-historical processes of the modern world. The author reveals a woman's identity which is formed under the influence of the globalization factors as well as other ones. India's modern history becomes the background for the evolution of the female characters. Salman Rushdie is an English writer of an Indian origin who reveals in front of a reader bright and unique India, while he himself is caught between two cultural worlds – his native Indian and acquired European. In order to reveal the evolution of female characters, we will scrutinize the way in which the author describes motherhood and love in their lives.

**Key words:** Salman Rushdie, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, female characters, female, feminist, feminine.

The works by English writer of Indian origin Salman Rushdie (b. 1947) are in the focus of research of many literary critics, nevertheless they tend to overlook investigation of singularity of female characters. Thus our article is dedicated to the analyses of the role of female characters in the novel *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995).

N. W. Thiara states that « in nationalist discourse Indian women played a role of those who were supposed to represent the essence of Indian culture and the nuclear of the authentic Indian nation» (Thiara, 2009: 56).

The novel depicts a complicated history of modern India's formation by embracing several decades of XXth century history. The personality of the main heroine Aurora da Gama Zogoiby represents an allusion at *Mother India*, her bright multifaced image and complicated destiny. Still on the first pages of the novel we come across the words by Aurora: «From the beginning, what the world wanted from bloody mother India was daylight-clear. They came for the hot stuff, just like any man calling on a tart» (Rushdie, 1997: 5). As we can see, India's modern history becomes the background for the evolution of the protagonist's character. The tangled relationship between Aurora and men in her life remind of India's colonization: she is being admired, and nonetheless she pays to the full for her talent and beauty. In the Aurora's character Salman Rushdie combines traditions and modernity, mythology and Biblical traits. The first person to characterize this woman is Vasco Miranda, the disappointed suitor tells Moraes, Aurora's son: «To be the offspring of our demonic Aurora is to be, truly, a modern Lucifer. You know: son of the blooming morning» (Rushdie, 1997: 5). Those words become a prophesy, that leads the main character to an inevitable ending.

It is important for the deeper understanding of the novel to separate key female characters that take on the role of the bearers of various important attributes: Bella (Aurora Zogoiby's mother) – rebellious spirit, Aurora Zogoiby – urge for independence, self-realization in art, Ina Zogoiby (Aurora's elder daughter) – longing for self-affirmation via her own feminity, Minie Zogoiby (Aurora's middle daughter) – appeal to God and church as a way to escape family problems, Mynah Zogoiby (Aurora's younger daughter) – active social position, assertion of women rights. In general, these characters brightly embody the concepts of «female», «feminist» та «feminine». For the differentiation of the above-mentioned notions, it is vital to apply to the ideas of «convention» and «socialization». According to the Toril Moi explanation «female» concept is a «political position», «feminist» is a «question of biology», and «feminine» is «a bulk of characteristics determined by culture» (Moi, 2004: 145).

Nobody can deny the influence of a mother on every person's life, upbringing and principles that a mother passes to her child as well as her attitude towards her own children determine people's further destiny. In Salman Rushdie's novel *The Moor's Last Sigh* the image of protagonist's mother becomes an allusion at India's

difficult and full of trials fate, in the face of which the country succeeds to preserve its own unique entity. Even the mother's name is symbolic – Aurora – day-dawn, day-spring, the believe in the prospects of a new beginning

We can see that Aurora embodies in Moraes' unconsciousness the image of his motherland – powerful and ambiguous. Mother and motherland intertwine into the one whole: similar to the way he becomes an estranged son, he later becomes an estranged Indian. Aurora the artist reflects the world in her works, paints the picture of India and the picture of her own family. In the novel she is first of all presented as an artist, a woman who makes art and self-realization her top priority, consequently family comes second, as a result her relationship with the family are troubled and complicated, children love her and suffer at the same time, suffer from «mother Aurora, nee da Gama, most illustrious of our modern artists, a great beauty who was also the most sharp-tongued woman of her generation, handing out the hot stuff to anybody who came within range. Her children were shown no mercy» (Rushdie, 1997: 5). The mother makes M feel his «difference», disenfranchisement both from the family and from social medium. The key role of the mother and the motherland in *The Moor's Last Sigh* is determined by the fact that any personality forms under the influence of factors of the surroundings he / she grows and lives in. In the same way as it was a challenge to understand Aurora, it was as well a challenge to comprehend India: «India was uncertainty. It was deception and illusion. Here at Fort Cochin the English had striven mightily to construct a mirage of Englishness, where English bungalows clustered around an English green, where there were Rotarians and golfers and tea-dances and cricket and a Masonic Lodge» (Rushdie, 1997: 95). The author makes us perceive both Aurora and India as two complex, multifarious female images.

The image of the mother in *The Moor's Last Sigh* acquires wider characteristics than «a woman that gave birth to a child», when the author distinguishes a separate image of Mother India. Salman Rushdie presents her as a contradictory heroine who forces her children pass many life tests. N.W. Thiara stresses the fact that «usually it is almost impossible to divide clearly the land and the nation in the image of Mother India, because the convenience of this image lies in its elasticity while combining the land and the nation with emotionally fulfilled figures of mother and goddess» (Thiara, 2009: 137). She believes that «Aurora's character as an alternative Mother India is fully revealed in the episode when she is opposed to, the actress that played this role in M. Khan's movie and became an impersonification of this character in mass consciousness» (Thiara, 2009: 138).

There are also other female characters that represent the conception of «motherhood», they are Epifania da Gama, Bella da Gama, Flory Zogoiby, Carmen da Gama, Aurora da Gama Zogoiby. These are the three generations of women with their destinies closely intertwined that leads to conflicts between those women while the plot unfolds. At the very beginning of the novel we come across the conflict between the matriarch of the da Gama family Epifania and her granddaughter Aurora, so heated that the young girl is on the verge of committing a murder: «So it was that Aurora da Gama got the idea of murdering her grandmother from the lips of the intended victim herself. After that she began making plans» (Rushdie, 1997: 8). It is another side of Aurora – cruel and vindictive.

Epifania is the head of the family and has the whip over everyone: «Widowed at forty-five, Epifania at once commenced to play the matriarch, and would sit with a lapful of pistachios in the morning shadow of her favourite courtyard, fanning herself, cracking nutshells with her teeth in a loud, impressive demonstration of power, singing the while in a high, implacable voice» (Rushdie, 1997: 11). Only her daughter-in-law, Aurora's mother, does not feel intimidated and has power to confront the mother-in-law: «In all the years of her life only Belle refused to be scared of her» (Rushdie, 1997: 11). Thus, the author features images of strong-willed women on the background of men retreated into themselves.

Carmen da Gama, Aires' wife, sublimates a woman's pursuit of motherhood as a way to obtain the rightful place in her own family. Inability to give birth to a heir deprives Carmen the opportunity for «socialization». «Aires's wife's name was Carmen, but Bell, mimicking her brother-in-law's fondness for inventing names, had named her after the desert, «because she is barren-flat as sand and in all that waste ground I can't see any place to get a drink»» (Rushdie, 1997: 12). The marriage that at the beginning seemed to be a lucky rescue for Epifania's orphan niece without any prospects to find descent suitors, turns into a cover-up for Aires' homosexuality: «Carmen's marriage prospects had been lower than zero, frozen solid until Aires amazed his mother by agreeing to the making of a match. Epifania in a torment of indecision suffered a week of sleepless nights, unable to choose between her dream of finding Aires a fish worth hooking and the increasingly desperate need to palm Carmen off on someone before it was too late. In the end her duty to her dead sister took precedence over her hopes for her son» (Rushdie, 1997: 13). The truth is being uncovered on the wedding night: «Carmen never mentioned to a living soul that on her wedding night her husband had entered her bedroom late, ignored his terrified and scrawny young bride [...],

slipped his naked body into the wedding dress which her maidservant had left upon a tailor's dummy as a symbol of their union, and left the room through the latrine's outside door» (Rushdie, 1997: 13).

Instead of obtaining an opportunity to become a mother and a respected wife, the woman is forced to accept the role of a fooled victim. Epifania being disappointed in her sons claims: «My sons are useless playboys. From now on, better us ladies should call-o the tune» (Rushdie, 1997: 33). Her first order addressed to Carmen is the one that can be clearly anticipated: «Carmen must conceive a male child, a king-in-waiting through whom his loving mother and grandmother would rule» (Rushdie, 1997: 33). Inability to meet society's expectations, and first of all the expectations of her autocratic mother-in-law, makes the woman's life miserable, and the confrontation turns into a war between Carmen's relatives (Lobo family) and Epifania's relatives (Menezes family): «The big stink came rolling down from the Spice Mountains to the sea, the da Gama in-laws are firing the spice-fields, and that night, when Belle saw Carmen nee Lobo standing up for the first time in her life to her mother-in-law Epifania nee Menezes, when she saw them in their nighties, loose-haired, like witches, howling accusations and blaming each other for the catastrophe of the burning plantations, then she filled a bowl with cold water, took careful aim and drenched them both to the skin. «Since you could start-o these veil fires with your scheming, then it is with you that we must begin to put them out»» (Rushdie, 1997: 38). While Epifania and Carmen in their urge for power and acceptance act as destructionists, Bella is a doer, creator – she is the only one among the three women who exercises her «female», as well as «feminist» potential. After her husband and brother-in-law have been arrested, Bella makes everything in her power in order to return the lost family business, she refuses to sell the company and takes the control: «She started dressing in men's trousers, white cotton shirts and Camoen's cream fedora [...] She found managers whom she could trust and whom the work-force would follow with respect but without fear. She charmed banks into lending her money, bullied departed clients into returning, and became a mistress of small print. And for the rescue of her fifty per cent of the Gama Trading Company she earned a respectful nickname: from Fort Cochin's salons to the Ernakulam dockside, from British Residency in old Bolgatty Palace to the Spice Mountains, there was only one Queen Isabella of Cochin» (Rushdie, 1997: 43). Thus, we can see that Bella at the beginning without fail carries out her duties of a wife and a mother («female» aspect), later she persistently builds a career («feminist» aspect), and after achieving success in business feels the need to be attractive and desired (again

«female» aspect). As opposed to this strong-willed female character, Carmen fails to find her place either in motherhood or in society, subsequently she thinks of herself as being graceless and feels miserable, nevertheless, her female side comes into light during the niece's party: «It turned out Carmen had rhythm, and in the evenings that followed, as Aurora's young fellows queued up to ask her to dance, it was possible to see the masquerade of antiquity dropping away from Mrs. Aires da Gama, to see the stoop straightening and her eyes ceasing to squint and the hangdog expression being replaced by a tentative suggestion of pleasure. She was not yet thirty-five years old, and for the first time in an eternity she looked younger than her years» (Rushdie, 1997: 65).

One more aspect that cannot be disregarded while analyzing characters' attitude towards motherhood is «father – son» conflict, Oedipus complex that manifests itself in the rivalry for the mother's affection. Suffering from his own affliction and the lack of attention from his parents, Moraes feels himself the odd one out, offcast of the family. Aurora-the artist treats her own son as an art object, a piece of art that she works at from the conception and throughout his life, consequently she feels that possesses the rights to rule his life. All in all, motherhood which is implementation of a feminine core for the majority of women, becomes the source of realizing her own «femininity», and not biological nature and «female» aspect for Aurora Zogoiby. Her attitude towards motherhood and creative energy implementation are determined by the relationship with her mother: «What is probably true is that Aurora began her life in art during those long motherless hours; that she had a talent for drawing and as a colorist, perhaps even one that an expert eye could have» (Rushdie, 1997: 45). The son of the main heroine says: «Yes, mother; once you were a daughter, too. You were given life, and you took it away» (Rushdie, 1997: 61). Simone de Beauvoir believes that «actually it is not a woman who creates a child: it creates itself inside of a woman. Her flesh serves only serves to produce flesh: a woman is not able to create new life, it creates itself. Works that spread free spirit, declare a conceivable object to be a ready value and transform it into a necessity: while a baby is still inside a woman's womb, there is no good reason to consider it as a child, it is only baseless reproduction by mitosis, this is a stark fact, its eventuality is symmetrical to the eventuality of death. A mother can have reasons of her own for wanting a child, but she will not be able to pass her own life principles to a creature that will come to this world tomorrow. She gives birth because her body has the same set of characteristics as bodies of other women, and not because she is a special creature (Beauvoir, 1995: 127). However, for Aurora her perception of children is

extension of art perception, her three daughters personify «feminine», «feminist» and «female» qualities, the features that are distinctive to Aurora herself, but it seems that each of the girls sublimate a separate vivid characteristic. Ina becomes an embodiment of «femininity»: «Ina, the eldest, Ina of the halved name, was the greatest beauty of the trio and also, I'm afraid, what her sisters liked to call «the Family Stupe» » (Rushdie, 1997: 207). She also represents feminine characteristics, but unlike her mother her art is her body – she is a model successful on both the catwalk and sitting for artists. Two other Zogoiby daughters – Mynah and Minnie – are at the forefront of social life, thus these two characters serve to illustrate «feminist» aspect: Minnie dived into religion, participated in protest movement against birth control, Mynah after receiving legal education joined radical women organization. As for Moraes, Aurora's son becomes integrated into mother's art work, his is her main model, the source of aspiration for the plots of her pictures, but it rather alienates them, makes the connection «mother – son» relatively amorphous. Salman Rushdie has not outlined any sincere dialogue between Aurora and Moraes, the deeper understanding of their relationship can be gained from the canvases of the artist.

Aurora herself was deprived of a good example how it is better to build relationship between children and parents. It can be assumed that her parents' early death resulted in preserving a special bond between them and Aurora. She loved her parents in spite of the fact that they have not paid much attention to a girl in her childhood: father was taken to prison, mother was constrained to manage family business, and her nights were spent with lovers: «She [Aurora] never seemed to hold her isolation against the father who was absent throughout her childhood, locked away in jail, or the mother who spent her days running a business and her nights in search of wildlife; rather she worshipped them both, and refused to hear a word of criticism about their skills as parents» (Rushdie, 1997: 45). Still when it comes to her own children, Aurora treats them quite frivolously. The children grow up, their relationship should progress, but Aurora is infatuated with her own bohemian life while her family exists parallel to it. S. de Beauvoir states that «mother's treatment of a child changes as he\she grows up. First it is just a baby, one of the many similar ones. But one by one a child obtains its own individual traits. By this time authoritative or oversensitive women become indifferent towards a child. Others per contra, start to show more interest. A mother's feelings towards a child become more and more varying: a child is another me, occasionally she gets a temptation to give up on herself for the benefit of a child, but it is an autonomous specimen, thus it is a rebel. A child

is remarkably real today, but there in the future it is an unknown young person, and we can only imagine what he\she will be like when grows up. A child is a treasure, a gem and a burden, a tyrant all at the same time. The joy that a child can bring to a mother depends on a mother's largesse» (Beauvoir, 1995: 146). However, all the emotional will of Aurora Zogoiby is centered on her art, children play low-key role in her life. Cornerstone of intimate relationship between a mother and a child is appreciation of independence and singularity of another creature, readiness to give your own children some rights and a certain degree of freedom. Yet Aurora Zogoiby is not ready to treat neither daughters nor a son as independent personalities.

According to S. de Beauvoir «similar to a woman in love, mother thrilled with the awareness of her own necessity. She meets a set of requirements and it creates the basis for her existence. But the difficulty and the nobility of mother's love is first of all defined by its unselfishness, by no expectation of reciprocity. In front of a woman there is not a man, not a hero, not a half-god, but a little mumbling creature endowed with consciousness and an accident fragile body. A child has no significance as yet and is unable to give significance to anyone else. A woman stays lonely around a child. She does not expect any rewards in return for her sacrifice; she finds objectivities for it herself. This kind of goodness deserves the greatest praise, which men relentlessly give to a woman. Therefore, the mystification begins at the point when while people praise motherhood, they state that any woman-mother is an example for humanity. Certainly, mother's devotion can be perfectly sincere, but in real life it seldom happens. Obviously, maternal feelings is a certain compromise between egotism, altruism, a dream, candidness, insincerity, loyalty and cynicism» (Beauvoir, 1995: 147).

We can see that although Aurora Zogoiby tries to support her children in critical situations, still she does not show maternal care in everyday life. Therefore the conflicts between Aurora and Ina results, first in the latter's exploitation of her own appearance, and then in her elope to another country. However, when fouled up and disappointed Ina returns from the USA, mother offers consolation to a girl: «Home is the place to which you can always return, no matter how painful the circumstances of your leaving. Aurora made no mention of their year-old rift, and took the prodigal child into her arms. «We will fix-o that rotter, – she comforted weeping Ina, – Just tell us what you want»» (Rushdie, 1997: 209).

Aurora Zogoiby seems to be a strong and independent personality, the qualities that are supposed to be reflected in every sphere of her life, but «in reality, in



motherhood as well as in marriage, and love, some kind of ambivalence towards men's transcendentality, men's priority is distinctive of women. If marital or love life invoke in her hostile feelings towards men, she will look for satisfaction in obtaining control over a male via her children» (Beauvoir, 1995: 153). On the surface Aurora Zogoiby is supposed to be happy in marriage: Abraham Zogoiby is the man she chose from her own will, family did not obtrude on a girl whom she should be married to, thuswise it is assumed to be a union based on love. Still Salman Rushdie makes us consider the possibility of this marriage being a masterminded plan, which, on the one hand, could have been a blow for the family, causing a definite conflict, and on the other hand, a union should have secured a reliable future for a young girl, a stable environment to develop her talent. But in the course of time tentative place in the family influences woman's relationship with her only son, whom she strives to control completely.

The most dramatic are relationships between Aurora and her daughter Ina. The girl urges to be recognized by her mother, but failing to gain Aurora's love she turns to competition. The only way of contest she can see is to use her own appearance to her advantage. As S. de Beauvoir states «a girl to a greater extent belongs to a mother, and taking this into consideration her demands to the latter are greater as well. Their relationships are coloured in more dramatic manner. A daughter is not considered to be a part of her own community for a mother, but her counterpart. She reflects her own binary attitude towards herself, and when deformation of alterego is observed, a mother perceives it as a treachery. Conflicts between a mother and a daughter are of especially severe nature» (Beauvoir, 1995: 154). The conflict begins with Ina's attempt to build her own career in a model business, and then moves to using her own body as a weapon in a fight with her mother: «One by one she offered herself as a model to the male artists in Aurora's circle – the Lawyer, the Sarangi Player, the Jazz Singer – and when she unveiled her extraordinary physique in their studios its gravitational force drew them into her at once; like satellites falling from their orbits they crash-landed on her soft hills. After every conquest she arranged her mother to discover a lover's note or a pornographic sketch, as if an Apache brave displaying scalps to the big chief in his tent» (Rushdie, 1997: 207).

There are three daughters in the Zogoiby family, and their images are used to verbalize the threefold specifics of the personality of Aurora da Gama Zogoiby: relationship «Aurora – Mynah» reflect the free spirit, the urge to be recognized in society, take active part in social and political life; relationship «Aurora – Ina» reflect a woman's desire to have power over a man, to reveal her own beauty, to

embody her female core in a marriage; relationship «Aurora – Minnie» reflect a need for spirituality, a search for God. In such a manner, using the above described dualities the author reveals the categories of «female», «feministo» and «feminine».

In Salman Rushdie's novel we can find the wide use of intertextuality, thereby it is possible to see India through the eyes of the protagonist while shifting between eras and countries. When Moraes leads us through his family history, his life story, we can at the same time observe a kaleidoscope of historical events taking place in XXth century India. Moraes's relationships with his mother are difficult and ambiguous, but even in the situation of an outcast of his own family, he still stays in the bosom of Mother-India, being first an integral part of beau monde, and later the bottom of society. The author represents India as a multifaceted and structurally heterogeneous country, which is similar to the way da Gama Zogoiby family is, therefore, we come across references to Indian mythology, Spanish legends, Jewish stories and classical English literature. «Each quotation is considered to be a bearer of functional stylistic code which points to a certain way of thinking. Mutual insertion of such codes transforms into their streams, thus forming a complex picture of interplay between texts» (Гром'як, 2007: 307).

Salman Rushdie is an English writer of an Indian origin who reveals in front of a reader bright and unique India, while he himself is caught between two cultural worlds – his native Indian and acquired European. Therefore some kind of «hybridity» can be traced in the image of Moraes. «The notion of “hybridity” is central to Bhabha's work in challenging notions of identity, culture, and nation as coherent and unified entities that exhibit a linear historical development. Hybridity expresses a state of “in betweenness”, as in a person who stands between two cultures» (Tyson, 2006: 750). The Moor constantly finds himself in between two worlds: his mother's and his father's, his mother's and fiancée's, the world of beau monde and outcasts. This leads to a subconscious struggle inside himself, forming double consciousness. Double consciousness in the light of postcolonial critics often results in unstable perception of a person. There arouses a feeling of being stuck between cultures, rather not belonging to any, than to both, which is often referred to as «voidness of home»

People around perceive Moraes Zogoiby first of all as a son of an outstanding artist, nevertheless it reflects in definite stereotypes attached to his own image. Thus, Aurora's close friend says: «To be the offspring of our demonic Aurora is

to be, truly, a modern Lucifer. You know: son of the blooming morning» (Rushdie, 1997: 5).

A man's personality is first of all formed under the influence of factors of surroundings he lives and grows up in, consequently crucial role is given to mother and motherland. In the novel *The Moor's Last Sigh* the protagonist's inenarrable relationship with his mother as well as versatile world of Indian society which he is doomed to experience from different angles, lead to continuous soul searching: «India was uncertainty. It was deception and illusion. Here at Fort Cochin the English had striven mightily to construct a mirage of Englishness, where English bungalows clustered around an English green, where there were Rotarians and golfers and tea-dances and cricket and a Masonic Lodge» (Rushdie, 1997: 95). «Double consciousness often produced an unstable sense of self, which was heightened by the forced migration colonialism frequently caused, for example, from the rural farm or village to the city in search of employment. This feeling of being caught between cultures, of belonging to neither rather than to both, of finding oneself arrested in a psychological limbo that results not merely from some individual psychological disorder but from the trauma of the cultural displacement within which one lives, is referred to by HomiBhabha and others as unhomeliness. Being “unhomed” is not the same as being homeless. To be unhomed is to feel not at home even in your own home because you are not at home in yourself: your cultural identity crisis has made you a psychological refugee, so to speak» (Tyson, 2006: 421).

Thus, the parallel between the complex and changeable fate of India and presentation of protagonist's mother's Aurora image becomes obvious. Consequently, we can acknowledge symbolization of the mother's image in Salman Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh*.

One more vital aspect that predetermines evolution of female characters in the novel is their love life. In a traditional patriarch society a man is supposed to initiate relationship and play the leading part throughout their course. Nevertheless, the women in *The Moor's Last Sigh* break gender stereotypes.

«Gender stereotypes as a generalized idea of men and women, first of all manifest themselves as gender-role stereotypes which refer to accepting various roles and occupations for men and women, as well as stereotypes of gender traits, in other words psychological and behavioral characteristics immanent to men and women. These two components of gender stereotypes are tightly connected. Prevailing acceptance of a definite social role for a person of some gender is justified by a

proportion of some features and characteristics he\she possesses» (Агеева, 2004: 159). Contrary to all expectations, not men, but women are in control of romantic relationship in the novel. Aurora initiates the start of love affair with her future husband Abraham, who otherwise would not dare to approach a young girl belonging to different society strata. In a similar way Uma is resolute to seduce naïve Moraes: «She came back to me and place her hands over mine. As my breathing settled down she caressed my mangled right hand lightly and said in a voice almost too quiet to be audible, «There is a young guy in there. I can see him looking out at me. What a combination, yaar! Youthful-spirit, plus this older-man look that I must tell you I have gone for all my life. Too hot, men, I swear». She took away her hands; leaving behind a Moor in love» (Rushdie, 1997: 244).

The girl not only aims to make Moraes fall in love with her, her aim is to possess his consciousness completely: «Poor baby, – she said, curling against me like a spoon. How I adored her; how grateful I was, in this treacherous world, to have her maturity, her serenity, her worldly wisdom, her strength, her love. – Poor unlucky Moor. I will be your family now» (Rushdie, 1997: 258). But the love turns into madness, and the fiancé into an instrument of destruction. Pretending to be proving her pure love to the young man, Uma commits suicide, she brings some pills and says: «To show you how truly I have always loved you, to prove to you at last that I have never lied, I will swallow first. If you too are true, then follow me at once, at once, for I will be waiting, O my only love» (Rushdie, 1997: 280). But later the horrifying truth is revealed: she did not have any intention to die, she intended to separate Moraes from his family and was prepared to kill him: «But now I knew everything. No more benefits of doubt. Uma, my beloved traitor, you were ready to play the game to the end; to murder me and watch my death while hallucinogens blew your mind» (Rushdie, 1997: 321).

Aurora da Gama by entering relationship with Abraham Zogoiby, by seducing him starts a new period of her life, now as Aurora Zogoiby. A French sociologist and philosopher Jean Baudrillard writes: «The law of seduction is, first of all, the law of continuous ritual exchange, constant raise of the stakes by a seducer and the one who is being seduced – never-ending because the dividing line which could determine one's victory and another one's defeat fundamentally is impossible to specify – and also because only death can intermit this challenge (give up to the seduction, love me more, than I love you)» (Бодрийяр, 2017: 99). Desire and seduction give the beginning to relationship between Aurora da Gama and her future husband Abraham Zogoiby: «In the perfumed half-light of C-50 Godown No.I, Aurora da Gama grabbed Abraham Zogoiby by the chin and looked

deep into his eyes [...] Aurora da Gama at the age of fifteen lay back on pepper sacks, breathed in the hot spice-laden air, and waited for Abraham» (Rushdie, 1997: 88). Passion makes them disregard age difference (twenty-one years gap), social gap (a rich heiress and a mid-ranking manager), difference in confession (a Christian woman and a Jewish man), oppose their families, because neither Abraham's mother Flori Zogoiby, nor da Gama family approve this union: «...after the fifteen-years-young spice-trade heiress entered the bedchamber of her lover the twenty-one-years-older duty manager dressed in nothing but moonlight...for a moment the awestruck Abraham thought she was flying; the door of their nuptial chamber flew open, and there, in pyjamas with a lantern was Aires da Gama looking like a storybook picture except for his expression of counterfeit wrath; and in one of Epifania's old muslin mob-caps and ruffled-neck nighties, Carmen Lobo da Gama, doing her best to look horrified but failing to push the envy off her face» (Rushdie, 1997: 99). The girl's reaction to the appearance of relatives stresses her independent and resolute character.

The union between Abraham Zoiby and Aurora da Gama is marked with many contradictions. According to S. de Beauvoir «marriage is a social phenomenon denominated by family, social class, environment, race it belongs to, and is connected by relationship of involuntary solidarity with the groups in a similar social situation» (Beauvoir, 1995: 166). But in Zogoiby da Gama family husband and wife belong to different classes, different religion groups, have different interests.

In the world of global unification of concepts and traditions the role of marriage alters, still it means a lot in life of a modern woman. In the novel *The Moor's Last Sigh* the author uses marital status of characters as an instrument that serves to actualize female images. Thus, Aurora da Gama's marriage reflects contemporary global tendency towards intertwinement of various nations and cultures. It was a marriage based on love and the passion aroused by a woman makes Abraham Zogoiby neglect his own roots: «After he [Abraham Zogoiby] said «yes», to marry her [Aurora da Gama] he would take the great step, he would accept instruction and enter the Church of Rome, and in the presence of her naked body which inspired in him a kind of religious awe the thing did not seem so difficult to say, in this matter too he would surrender to her will, her cultural conventions, even though she had less faith than a mosquito, even though there was a voice within him uttering a command he did not repeat aloud, a voice which told him that he must guard his Jewishness in the innermost chamber of his soul» (Rushdie, 1997: 100).

In love story of Abraham and Aurora both strength and weakness on the part of a woman are present. At the beginning Aurora is determined to do anything in her struggle for the right to be together with the beloved man: she opposes to the family, ignores social judgment, disregards religious traditions. But when encounter's Abraham's adultery, she is unable to confront him with dignity: «She was a confronter, a squarer-up, a haver-out. Yet, when faced with the ruin of her life's great love, and offered a choice between an honest war and an untruthful, self-serving peace, she buttoned her lip, and never offered her husband an angry word. Thus silence grew between them like an accusation; he talked in his sleep, she muttered in her studio, and they slept in separate rooms» (Rushdie, 1997: 223). This way their love gradually turns into farce.

Although the changes aimed at improvement of a woman's situation were quite slow and were not broad-based, but due to distinctive advancement in Indian society during the years of independency, women became more involved into economic, social and political spheres. Using the example of Zogoiby da Gama family we can trace different possibilities open for a woman. Aurora realizes her talent in art, while disregarding motherhood; Minnie (middle daughter) is involved in religion, she takes the gown and leads active social life; Mynah (younger daughter) becomes a lawyer, joins radical feminist group; only elder daughter Ina tries to assert herself by using the looks – she becomes a model, and at first is remarkably successful, but fail in love leads to the girl's early death. She tries to use her own body as an instrument of influence when reaching for men, but actually the main aim is to obtain mother's approval: «She blocked her ears against her mother, and competed with her in the only way she thought she could: by using her looks» (Rushdie, 1997: 207). Unfortunately Ina fails to fight her inner demons, she runs away to the USA together with a young husband but this display of protest ends with fiasco. The ruin of life begins with the ruin of body: «Ina came home in disgrace a year later. We were all shocked. She was greasy-haired and disheveled and had put on over seventy pounds: not-so-Goody Gama now!» (Rushdie, 1997: 209). In the world of globalization with its indistinct country borders and language barriers, Ina elopes from India to the USA, but she stays the hostage of her dependence on mother and her self-doubt, which she attempts to overcome via the marriage to the young and self-confident Jimmy Cashondelivery. While trying to return her husband Ina takes desperate chances, she forces Jimmy to come back to India by persuading him she is dying of cancer, but the lie turns into prophecy: «Soon after the end of the Emergency, Ina died

of cancer. The lymphoma developed quite suddenly, and gobbled up her body like a beggar at a feast» (Rushdie, 1997: 216).

For Ina love is the only way to live her own independent life, detach from the family, and the marriage with Jimmy turns into «a final throw of the dice». In the novel *The Moor's Last Sigh* Ina's character represent a woman unable to assert herself without relying on a man, transcendency of a man's nature is incomprehensible for the girl's consciousness: «Ina who was the most fragile, that she had never really been all there since her parents chopped her name in half, and that what with her nymphomania and all she had been cracking up for years. So she was drowning, she was clutching at straws as she had always clutched at men, and cheesy Jimmy was the last straw on offer» (Rushdie, 1997: 213). From the perspective of her relationship with men Ina resembles her mother, although she is deprived of Aurora's personal charm and intellect, therefore the girl brings into the foreground sexuality which is still not enough to build long lasting meaningful relationship.

The novel *The Moor's Last Sigh* appeals to the understanding of a woman's place in the socio-historical processes of the modern world. The author reveals a woman's identity which is formed under the influence of the globalization factors as well as other ones. Thus, analyzing the text of the novel we can trace the evolution of female characters in the process of formation of modern India. The XXth century was marked with the vital changes in the world structure: former colonies gained independence, and empire-states lost a part of their power and influence. Still we can observe the situation when the language attribute is a linchpin that preserves the connection between colonies and former dominions. Language aspect is one of the key elements of globalization. Close economical, political and cultural connection stimulates the participants of communication to choose the language that would be able to connect remote countries and people: «The fact that many peoples previously colonized by Britain speak English, write in English, use English language at schools and universities, and along with the national language use English for maintaining official work, is an indicator of a rudimentary influence of colonial dominance on their cultures» (Tyson, 2006: 419).

As P. Barry states, at some point of postcolonial critics development «postcolonial authors approach analysis of themselves and their society» (Barry, 2005: 235). In the novel *The Moor's Last Sigh* Salman Rushdie brightly depicts the pictures of cultural variety and differences inside the boundaries of modern India, expands

the problem of colonization, imperialism and its consequences, presents characters in the situations of hybridism and cultural multivalency.

Studying the novel *The Moor's Last Sigh* provides a means of perceiving today's India as a part of the modern multicultural world. We can understand better the evolution of artistic images by highlighting and researching the means the author uses for revealing the «nature» and «socialization» of a woman. In spite of the fact that the novel is written by a male author, Salman Rushdie pays great attention to the subject of a woman's place and role in Indian society at the end of XXth – beginning of the XXIst century. The author presents a woman not only as a wife and mother («female» aspect), which is typical of a society with conservative patriarch organization, but also as an artist («feminine» aspect), and a politician, a public figure («feminist» aspect). Thus we can come to a conclusion that the processes of globalization, that shifted gender accents, had their influence on a modern Indian society.

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