Abstract

Salman Rushdie’s *The Moor’s Last Sigh* delineates, fictively and historically, a family saga in India. The four-generation family approximately spans the twentieth century that, generally speaking, has gone through colonization and imperialism in the first half as well as de-colonization and nationalism in the second half. Accordingly, they bring forth a few significant issues, such as hybridity, multiculturalism, and nationalism. Homi Bhabha’s idea of ‘liminal space’ is conducive to the evaluation of the novel, and expressly to the discussion of the above three concepts in a more specific way. He subsumes a lot of ideas under the umbrella term ‘liminal space’, so this thesis is to extract three ideas—hybridity, cultural difference, and nationness—to elaborate on the novel.

The introductory chapter expounds Bhabha’s idea of ‘liminal space’ and also explores a few post-colonial issues in the novel. The issues in question are related to Bhabha’s idea of ‘liminal space’, from which some key ideas are derived so as to appreciate the fictional world Rushdie constructs in the novel. The following three chapters are respectively based on the three liminality-related ideas, whereby to find the relation of the novel with Bhabha’s ‘liminal space’. The second chapter is to obtain a deeper apprehension of colonial and post-colonial hybridity through Bhabha’s argumentation concerning the ambivalent relationship between colonizer and colonized. The ambivalent relationship is theoretically associated with the othering process. In the process, identification and subjectification are moot questions not only in post-colonial theory but in the novel as well. The third chapter is intended to make use of Bhabha’s idea of ‘cultural difference’ to review and redefine what the word ‘multiculturalism’ is like. In turn, it helps to shed much more light upon Rushdie’s palimpsesting modern India over Moorish Spain. In addition, liminal space refers to a contact zone of cultural difference that elucidates Rushdie’s eclecticism between popular culture and high culture in the novel. The fourth chapter is to discuss the way Bhabha colligates liminal space and the idiolect ‘nationness’ and the way he relates the idea of nation to narration. The relationship between nation and narration is applied to the understanding of how Rushdie utilizes literary techniques, especially intertextual materials and historical allusions, for a re-construction of a nation in a fictional world.
The conclusive chapter is to reiterate some important arguments that are germane to the above key concepts and to the reciprocal clarification between Bhabha’s ‘liminal space’ and Rushdie’s *The Moor’s Last Sigh*. 