



**THE POLEMICS OF PROTEANISM AND THE QUEST FOR
A PROTEAN POISE IN SALMAN RUSHDIE'S
MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN AND FURY**



ETHEL JOFFI MOLUA EWUSI

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE.

UNIVERSITY OF MAROUA

FAR NORTH REGION, CAMEROON

EMAIL: ethyjeff@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Salman Rushdie in Midnight's Children and Fury depict characters who undergo cultural, religious and spatial metamorphosis or proteanism and it is rather difficult to remain fixed to a particular space for a very long time. These protean characters assume many protean spaces and easily mutate to different roles. Characters deconstruct spaces and shift consciously or unconsciously their identities depending on the situations in which they find themselves such as cultures, religion, history and other spaces.

There is a troubled confusion sometimes surrounding proteanism. The many shifts through wobbly borders can alter characters from attaining selfhood without conflict and identity formation. And if a protean poise is not maintained, the various shifts might lead to an inconsistent identity formation and contradictions in one's being. If the protean character does not maintain a protean poise, then identity formation becomes very challenging and disadvantageous because it may attack the very core of identity since characters may fail to reconcile their multiple changes.

The postmodern theory greatly applies in the analysis of this paper because the term itself, is as flickering and superficial and mutating as the protean space. Grounding on the theory of deconstruction, this paper uses deconstructive ideas to transcend the various steps of the protean ladder.

KEYWORDS

protean, protean poise, deconstruction and metamorphosis.

RESEARCH PAPER

INTRODUCTION

In this paper, we review Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and *Fury* and discover that the author surveys boundary crossing and pinpoints characters in the novels whose characters traits are fluid and mutating depending on the situation in which they find themselves. Through discussing the polemics of metamorphosis and proteanism, we will show how characters attain the attributes of the protean self through cultural, religious, political and spatial flux. It also analyses the factors that influence the characters choice of mask for instance setting, (time and space) culture and so on.

Postmodernism resonates deeply in this paper considering the fact that postmodern identities are fluctuating and metamorphosing like the protean self. Deconstruction becomes very applicable as well, as a postmodern tenet. The Derridean notion, originating in *Of Grammatology*, helps in analysing the various steps of the protean ladder.

METAMORPHOSIS AND THE PROTEAN DISCOURSE

Walter Anderson Following Robert Jay Lifton's revision of the psychology of the self, makes mention of the "Protean Self," a reference to Proteus, Greek sea god of many forms refers to the multiple dimensions of the self that are much part of the context of the fluctuation and mayhem of postmodern society. Proteus in Greek Mythology knew the past, the present, and the future of all things. In order to avoid having to tell the truth, he used his ability to change his shape with relative ease and assumed the pseudoidentities of animals; from wild boar to lion to dragon and elements of nature; to tree, to fire and to flood. But what he did find difficult and would not do unless seized and chained, was to commit himself to a single form, the form most of his own, and carry out his function of prophecy. (130)

Like the Greek god Proteus, characters take on various forms and qualities that a particular life situation demands. They juggle multiple roles, wear different masks, different lives, forging selves whose lifespan is very uncertain, selves waiting to be dissolved into new combinations or even discarded for brand new editions when life changes and new challenges arise.

In Lifton's opinion in *The Protean Self: Human Resilience in an Age of Fragmentation*, he argues thus:

We can say the same of protean man, but we must keep in mind his possibilities as well as his difficulties. The protean style of self-process, then, is characterised by an interminable series of experiments and explorations--some shallow, some profound--each of which may be readily abandoned in favour of still new psychological quests (17).

The above quotation shows that a protean self is capable of fluid transformations. Characters with this protean identity have cultural behaviours that are easily interchangeable between cultures and are flexible in various social settings.

Metamorphosis connotes an ability to move and change shape on the slightest pressure. It is therefore something which is unfixed, fluctuating, varying, variable, unsettled, changeable, alterable, versatile, adaptable, flexible and elastic. In this regard, the label "the Protean self" provided by Robert Jay Lifton helps to identify the cultural and spatial metamorphosis and fluid personality silhouetted in a fragmented backdrop. Lifton's protean self embodies tangibility and multiplicity of identities like Proteus the Greek god.

Erik Erikson gives a comprehensive definition of this protean metamorphosis which he labels polymorphously versatile personality. According to him:

It can and does denote a many-sided man of universal stature, a man of many gifts, competent in each; a man of many appearances, yet centred in a true identity. But it can also mean a man of many disguises; a man of chameleon like adaptation to passing scenes; a man of essential elusiveness (51).

The simile of the chameleon is very significant in protean discourse. It connotes the ability of characters to change their colours represented by the spaces they occupy. This many sided identity he talks about is almost in many ways very synonymous to Lifton's view of proteanism.

Anderson's analysis shifts to *The Postmodern Condition*, where Jean Francois Lyotard assures the mobility between boundaries and notes that, "a self does not amount to much, but no self is an island, each exists in a fabric of relations that is now more complex and mobile than before" (15). Bearing in mind the similarity between the postmodern and Proteus, the concept of identity as posited by the Postmodern critics has been among other things, an effort to get away from this principle of fixity of inner stability and sameness.

Expanding on Walter Anderson's analysis on postmodernism, he argues that anything and everything related to postmodern identity is rooted in a deep sense of plurality and it is essentially fluid. Yet the term Postmodernism, Proteus-like, is evasive when grappled assuming all possible varying forms so as to avoid one fixed form (of definition) that would display its proper identity. Perhaps because, as Ihab Hassan contends in *The Postmodern Turn* that "postmodernism suffers from a certain semantic instability; that is, no clear consensus about its meaning exists among scholars" (14).

In *Midnight's Children*, segmentation and integration is a potent depiction of proteanism. Different aspects of Saleem are personified as voices in dialogue in the midnight's children conference, creating a multivocal self that takes the form of an internalised polyphonic novel. The most dramatic expressions of proteanism in Saleem's self occurs when the midnight children meet and their voices in the polyphony come to take on "personalities" of their own in characters such as Shiva, Parvati the Witch and so on as seen in the passage below:

Telepathy, then: the inner monologues of all the so-called teeming millions, of masses and classes alike, jostled for space within my head. In the beginning, when I was content to be an audience-before I began to act-there was a language problem. The voices babbled in everything from Malayalam to Naga dialects, from the purity of Luck-now Urdu to the Southern slurrings of Tamil. (164)

The extract stands out aptly as one of Rushdie's great use of imagery as a narrative technique. The audience greatly pictures the various protean voices and selves of the midnight children. The midnight's children have a similar protean nature like the Indian nation. This density of a network (through Saleem) is a good indication of its proteanism as it demonstrates many different voices exist within the network. And Saleem accommodates them all in his head. The hundred of midnight's children each represent a space because they all have separate and different voices. Saleem at this point becomes like the web of life reconnecting the various systems in his protean being. And very similar to what Dan McAdams in "The Case for Unity in the (Post)Modern Self" notes about the protean self. Saleem becomes a perfect protean character who:

Like the Greek god Proteus, one takes on whatever forms and qualities that a particular life situation demands. One juggles multiple roles, tries on different hats, different lives, forging selves whose unity is at best tentative and provisional, selves waiting to be dissolved into new combinations or even discarded for brand new editions when life changes and new challenges arise. (49)

Metaphorically, all the midnight's children existed in Saleem's psyche. Therefore as the above passage notes, Saleem forges various selves in the presentation of each midnight child. Like a chameleon, he takes different shades and roles in the different hats. The hats represent

each self and each midnight child that Saleem calls into his psyche. Saleem values all members of the midnight's conference (except Shiva) and he is aware of the necessary interdependence of all. This diversity enriches individual members as well as the Indian community as a whole. Saleem therefore reports the experience of a number of distinct and autonomous executive selves who possess their own moods, memories, and behavioural repertoires. These protean perspectives on the self have emphasised the ways in which individuals adopt multiple roles and performances.

In the course of Saleem's narrative, sometimes, there is no clear cut distinction between him and the midnight's children. At a literary level, they are various characters with special gifts to metamorphose into various protean situations and on a metaphoric level, the midnight's children do not exist outside Saleem's imagination. In any case, there is a protean twist in both situations as seen in the quotation below:

For the sake of their privacy, I am refusing to distinguish the voices from one another; and for other reasons. For one thing, my narrative could not cope with five hundred and eighty-one fully-rounded personalities; for another, the children, despite their wondrously discrete and varied gifts, remained, to my mind, a sort of many-headed monster, speaking in the myriad tongues of Babel; they were the very essence of multiplicity, and I see no point in dividing them now. (But there were exceptions. In particular, there was Shiva; and there was Parvati-the-witch. (227)

The passage marks a very significant face of protean metamorphosis. If all these hundreds of children exist in Saleem's psyche, then as Lifton predicted, "we are becoming fluid and many-sided, without quite realizing it" (1).

The midnight's children possess all the gifts one can imagine and Saleem observes that, "I had to go into exile to learn that the children of midnight were more varied than I-even I-had dreamed" (287). And because of these variations, "they can't stop us, man! We can bewitch, and fly, and read minds, and turn them into frogs, and make gold and fishes, and they will fall in love with us, and we can vanish through mirrors and change our sex... how will they be able to fight?" (226) The image of metamorphosing into another creature very well connotes to, "Proteus was able to change his shape with relative ease from wild boar to lion to dragon to fire to flood" (132). The variation of the midnight children serves as a strength to boost the protean situation in the novel. The situation aligns with Lawrence Friedman's view in "Erik Erikson and Robert Lifton: The Pattern of a Relationship," as he notes that "the protean personality as Lifton developed it, had no fixed character or personality but was characterized by a constant remaking of the self in response to change and flux all about" (131). Ultimately, their varied styles expose the limits of the coherence in identity formation.

The change of sex is one interesting protean situation that Rushdie exposes in the novel, "because one of us, whom we called Narada or Markandaya, had the ability of changing sex; he, or she" (433). As Lifton predicated, the protean self just like in this case, "is a self of many possibilities" (5). Sexuality too becomes plural and malleable! In fact, the transgender identity in the novel marks a pinnacle of proteanism by the children of midnight as seen in the quotation below.

The only problems were that our Keralan member (who could, you remember, travel through mirrors) accidentally ended up emerging through a restaurant mirror in the smarter part of New Delhi, and had to make a hurried retreat; while the blue-eyed member for Kashmir fell into a lake and accidentally changed sex, entering as a girl and emerging as a beautiful boy. (217)

From the above quotation, Rushdie makes use of imagery as a great figurative device, the image of the mirror symbolises the Indian society, community and history. which is reflected in the midnight's children. There's also a thematic patterning of magic realism which extended to other aspects of the text.

The protean situation extends to growth and development of the protagonist. We see Saleem growing and evolving the various stages of life. Each physical change and growth in life comes with another space where characters are forced to negotiate proteanism. In *Midnight's Children*, Saleem takes note of his physical metamorphosis: Each stage of his biology is another metaphorical step in his protean ladder. As the novel advances, he says, "I felt oppressed by a feeling of having moved directly from an overlong and dribbling childhood into a premature (though still leaky) old age. My voice had deepened; I had been forced to start shaving, and my face was spotted with blood where the razor had sliced off the heads of pimples..." (280).

Saleem has a wide variety of cultural and ethnic histories. No doubt in the course of the novel he changes not only physically but also his parenting. The nature of the parental ambiguity emerged from his very birth, "my inheritance includes this gift, the gift of inventing new parents for myself whenever necessary" (105). Parental ambiguities generally do not create pleasant environments for family and social relations and Saleem goes to great lengths to manage the ambiguities from his protean situation even though he notes that, "I had more mothers than most mothers have children". (239) This protean parenting represents not only Saleem's life but it bears semblance to the Indian nation which has a great pantheon of cultures and religions and also its colonial history before British colonialism, she enjoyed trading histories with many countries like China, France and other West European countries.

Saleem's protean parenting shows that even parents or other family relationships are interchangeable typecasts; as in the case of Proteus. When defence mechanism becomes dysfunctional in parenthood, there is rupture in the protean situation and it mutates again, that is why Saleem becomes a child to many parents even the snake charmer who says to him, "You must think of me as another father." (254) Protean parenting which is one of the major thematic patterning that Rushdie expresses proteanism is depicted especially under conditions of change; it should be thought of as an almost natural occurrence in Saleem's identity, although it is also a state that most characters do not enjoy experiencing, "at the henna ceremony, half the magicians adopted me, performing the functions of my 'family'" (408). It is emotionally overwhelming for Saleem who confesses, "I have sought out fathers. Ahmed Sinai, Hanif Aziz, Sharpsticker Sahib, General Zulfikar have all been pressed into service in the absence of William Methwold; Picture Singh was the last of this noble line" (419).

Apart of Saleem and the midnight's children, we come across many other protean characters in the novel who move between protean spaces. The Brass Monkey too undergoes some metamorphosis in the course of the novel. Saleem watches with awe, "my sister's transformation from monkey into singer" (288). Rushdie uses magic realism as a figurative device to portray the Brass Monkey's mutation from animal to singer. Each transformation connotes a space she occupies which strengthens her protean metamorphosis.

This observation continues after migration to Pakistan, "in Pakistan, the land of submission, the home of purity, I watched the transformation of Monkey-into-Singer" (399). Walter Truett Anderson's in the *Truth About the Truth: De-confusing and Reconstructing the Postmodern World* predicated these protean changes when he argues that, individuals negotiate (and renegotiate) personal identity, struggling to make internal peace among the multiple components of their selves and the claims of the different communities to which they are connected. People negotiate (and renegotiated) -such matters as gender roles and rules for sexual behaviour. (128)

In this Anderson's view, The Brass Monkey struggles to make peace with the animal and the human world that she occupies. These spaces become the various components of her protean self. The changes too come through The Brass Monkey's (Jamila) physical appearance. "she was growing out of scrawny tomboy youth into a slender, slant-eyed, golden-skinned beauty whose hair was nearly long enough to sit on; even her nose looked good" (309). But since she

is not the protagonist Rushdie does not focus on the physical growth as part of the very protean existence.

Jamila does not only change from the Brass Monkey to Jamila singer but she also changes her faith from the Muslim upbringing to fervent pious and overzealous Christianity as we observe “her flirtation with Christianity, which was partly due to the influence of her European school-friends...she requested a nun's outfit to replace her favourite nurse's dress; it was given to her... (249) This shows that Jamila embodies tangibility and multiplicity of identities like Proteus. It is a quick turn to Christianity considering the fact that she is born and bred a Muslim. This protean tendency conjures up a galaxy of religious spaces apparent in Jamila's life. It is worthwhile to say at this point that Jamila grounds in Jacques Derrida's deconstructive thinking because Muslim religion does not become a centre that is why she is able to drift quickly to a new religion. Jamila is at the very forefront of the social and cultural transformation and metamorphosis due to the exposure to other cultures and religions. She drifts around in a sea of religious possibilities not very sure of which is more reliable.

Parvati the Witch is one of the most prominent children of midnight not only in her role as Saleem's first wife but also because she is a third space character between the two great analogous, Saleem and Shiva. She too changes with her powers of a witch but her marriage to Saleem also determines the kind of mask she chooses to wear:

Parvati's formal conversion to Islam (which irritated Picture Singh... she intoned her belief that there was no God but God and that Muhammad was his prophet; she took a name which I chose for her out of the repository of my dreams, becoming Laylah, night, so that she too was caught up in the repetitive cycles of my history, becoming an echo of all the other people who have been obliged to change their names... like my own mother Amina Sinai, Parvati-the-witch became a new person in order to have a child. (408)

There are so many changes in the life of Parvati. There is the play of religions from no God to God and Mohammed. There is a metaphorical melange of religions which becomes very deconstructive as Derrida fore saw. There is no fixed authoritative centre. All there is, is a free play for gods, prophets and religions. This demonstrates that there are a number of factors that influence the choice of a character's mask she chooses to wear at what given time to suit what roles and responsibilities. The factors impact characters as they venture through different identity paths.

In Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and *Fury*, the characters have different compartments or many subselves making up a protean piece. The notion of proteanism in this paper reveals characters who change from one space to another just like Lifton's prediction, “people are changing, not only changing, but changing again and again, and sometimes changing back” (130). In *Midnight's Children*, the protagonist, Saleem finds inspiration in a number of different faith traditions. As a young boy, he loves the Catholic rituals surrounding his education in school, “in my nearly ninth year I had begun to attend the Cathedral and John Connon Boys' High School on Outram Road in the old Fort district” (151). Which he skilfully merges with his Muslim upbringing since he is, “... born and raised in the Muslim tradition, I find myself overwhelmed all of a sudden by an older learning;”(193) and later in the novel, he is referred to as Buddha, “I admit openly I have not been myself of late. I have been a buddha, and a basketed ghost, and a would-be-saviour of the nation...” (429). This play of religions is echoed throughout the novel as Joseph da Costa says, “they're Hindu and Muslim people only; why get good Christian folk mixed up in their fight?” (101) This play of religions follow Saleem throughout the novel as seen the in quotation below:

We must all become new people; in the land of the pure, purity became our ideal. But Saleem was forever tainted with Bombayness, his head was full of all sorts of religions apart from Allah's (like India's first Muslims, the mercantile Moplas of Malabar, I had lived in a country whose population of deities rivalled the numbers of its people...(305)

This excerpt illustrates the Indian society as a pantheon of religions represented by various gods which all make up protean spaces as seen even in the quotation below from *Midnight's Children*. Saleem says:

But I was brought up in Bombay, where Shiva Vishnu Ganesh Ahuramazda Allah and countless others had their flocks... What about the pantheon, I argued, the three hundred and thirty million gods of Hinduism alone? And Islam, and Bodhisattvas...? And now the answer: Oh yes! My God, millions of gods. (431)

Rushdie's use of hyperbole is very remarkable. He quite exaggerates the number of gods. Each god though, represents a space in the protean ladder. Saleem in the midnight's voice represents many of the millions of spaces that Rushdie talks about.

Rushdie's portrayal of the poetics of metamorphosis is very stunning in both his novels. Even though the Indian nation in *Midnight's Children* is not limited to a fixed identity, proteanism is even more so in a diasporic nation. The notion of proteanism expands in *Fury* as Rushdie even expands metaphor and magic realism for instance, Little Brain an original doll mutates easily in the protean American society into a successful human being. The very protean nature of the American society makes it possible for characters to foster their various protean positions and change masks and roles easily.

In the protean American society, a variety of religious beliefs exist and characters are free to navigate in any space that they desire. There are many religious outlets which constitute the core of proteanism Solanka makes mention of Urdu, mosque, God, Jew which all represent different religious outlets thereby portraying the protean American society. All these religious spaces jostle for attention for their own religion to be more prolific. In this epoch, we see a globalised city. Despite the setting, most of the characters are all protean because of the given world order, Rushdie notes still in *Fury* that:

...These days when everything was changing it was a satellite high above the ocean, he couldn't be sure. In these days when the age of pulse was giving way to the age of tone. When the epoch of analog (which was to say also of the richness of language, of analogy) was giving way to the digital era, the final victory of the numerate over the literate. (6)

In these days therefore, things and people are not stable. People change their visions and dreams within the spaces and just like Lifton had predicted in "The Protean Style" that, "today, it is not so unusual to encounter several such shifts accomplished relatively painlessly within a year, or even a month, whether in politics, aesthetic values, or style of living. Among many groups the rarity is the man who has gone through life holding firmly to a single ideological vision" (131). One person therefore occupies various spaces like in the case of Saskia in *Fury* as seen in the quotation below:

For Saskia at nineteen was not only a linguist, pianist, and dedicated fashionista; she was also already an expert horsewoman, an archer with hopes of making the Sydney Olympic team, a long-distance swimmer, a fabulous dancer, a great cook, a happy weekend painter, a bel canto singer, a hostess in her mother's grand manner...(64)

Saskia like most of the characters in the postmodern world are presented with various spaces, professions and so on that characters can occupy at any given time. Like Lifton predicted Saskia is "evolving a self of many possibilities" (1). She is a fluid personality silhouetted in a fragmented backdrop. As a teenager, she uses her protean ability to change her identity with relative ease and assumed the pseudoidentities of a postmodern protean character.

In *Fury*, a close examination of myriad spaces reveals how Malik Solanka actively seeks out the intimate spaces within public spaces in the wide protean New York society to foster his imaginative space and gets lost in its bosom. Rushdie portrays the American society as such in the novel in the quotation below:

It's good to make a new start. All around them a new cycle of Time was being initiated. This was how everything had begun: boom! Things flew apart. The center did not hold. But the birth of the universe was a feel-good metaphor. What followed it was not mere Yeatsian anarchy. (100)

Walter Anderson supports Michel Foucault's view of this Yeatsian anarchy, he took Yeats' famous "the center cannot hold" a step farther: he says there are a lot of centers, and none of them holds. Instead, we are exposed to a babble of diverse and contradictory fragments of stories, and the arts and sciences go their various ways. This is a similar outlook to Rushdie's view. When the centre becomes decentred with a free play of ideas, Solanka becomes the coloniser and creates a protean world through his creations even though his vision changes over time with the characters he creates. As Solanka's visions change, his creations too take various forms, each revolving from his original vision. These intimate/imaginative spaces within public spaces allow Solanka to escape from ideological interpellation and metamorphosise into a protean self. Thus, Rushdie says in *Fury*, "a change of direction was required. The story you finished was perhaps never the one you began. Yes! He would take charge of his life anew, binding his breaking selves together. Those changes in himself that he sought, he himself would initiate and make them" (77).

Solanka starts making the puppet kings which can be referred to as "certain chronological segments of himself" (76) and the use of the masks in various situations. Assumption of masks and playing of roles is a very powerful metaphor that Rushdie uses in *Fury* to portray the protean self, and he says, "the actor in the mask is liberated from her normality, her everydayness. Her body acquires remarkable new freedoms. The mask dictates all this. The mask acts" (86).

The image of the mask becomes similar to Lifton's actors who perform with great "polymorphous versatility" (132). Each mask takes a new space in the life of a character and the various masks become segments of the protean self. Each mask or space therefore determines the role a character plays at what given time.

Fury resonates powerfully with Robert Jay Lifton's description of the protean self. The attributes of a protean life - pluralism, malleability, estrangement, and indeterminacy are all present in this diasporic society defining the characters present there. Little Brain who is one of Solanka's creations embodies an uncanny match for the type of youth imagined by Lifton; living mostly unsupervised in the privileged space.

Little Brain exemplifies the critical shift many colonised subjects tend to have as they begin to think beyond the coloniser which consequently leads her to an identity that subsequently became protean, "out she went from his home in all her versions-the sketches, maquettes, tableaux, the infinite proliferation of her in all her myriad versions, paper, cloth, wood, plastic, animation cell, videotape, film; and with her, inevitably, went a once-precious version of himself" (88). After Little Brain shakes off the shackles of Solanka's colonial grip:

Day by day she became a creature of the entertainment microverse, her music videos-yes, she was a recording artist now!-out-raunching Madonna's, her appearances at premieres out-Hurleying every starlet who ever trod the red carpet in a dangerous frock. She was a video game and a cover girl, and this, remember, in her personal appearance mode at least, was essentially a woman whose own head was completely concealed inside the iconic doll's. (85)

There is an analogous use of woman and a doll in the above citation. The doll represents Solanka's creations while the woman represents the mutating spaces of American career

woman. In all of this, Little Brain can take any form she wishes which expands Rushdie's notion of proteanism. When Little Brian goes out in the world, she has full intentions of metamorphosing and plans strategy of growing bigger. In this light:

On children's television, in comic books, and in audio versions of her legendary memoirs, Little Brain's protean persona had reached out and captured the hearts of children even younger than Asmaan Solanka. Three was not too young to fall in love with this most universally appealing of contemporary icons. (89)

It is interesting to note that Rushdie mentions Little Brain as a protean persona in the above quotation. That means according to his view of her, Little Brain shows that she is an interchangeable typecast; as in the case of Proteus, the Greek god. Identity is only an armour to defend the self in a mercurial shape shifting process. Little Brain fully transforms from puppet or a doll to a full human being! As Rushdie says, " 'Little Brain is not some plastic-fantastic Barbie Spice,' she told the world-she had started speaking of herself in the third person" and the new film will be very human, and quality all the way" (85-86). She advances her protean steps in every aspect of her life by identifying, inventing, and exploring new opportunities and she:

...become the Maya Angelou of the doll world... She crossed all boundaries of language, race, and class. She became, variously, her admirers' ideal lover or confidante or goal. Her first book of memoirs was originally placed by the Amazon people in the nonfiction lists. The decision to move it, and the subsequent volumes, across into the world of make-believe was resisted by both readers and staff. Little Brain, they argued, was no longer a simulacrum. She was a phenomenon. The fairy's wand had touched her, and she was real. (84)

Many sentiments stand out in the above passage. First of all, she lives in the doll world as well as in the human world meaning she transforms into any cast that she wants. Secondly, Rushdie's literary allusion to Maya Angelou symbolises a great sense of personification as a figurative device. Angelou is definitely not a doll but a successful woman and a role model to many and Little Brain metaphorically becomes Maya Angelou. The image of the fairy's wand is a symbolic image that Rushdie uses. The wand represents magic, change and metamorphosis to any protean space that Little Brain wants to occupy. Meaning she can take the form of both human and doll at the wave of the wand.

For Solanka, now that Little Brain has grown and moved away, this same entrepreneur stated that her absence serves as a catalyst for him to get more involved in the production of more creation and take on additional work roles and responsibilities as seen below:

The only one of his creations with whom he fell in love-the only one he didn't want anyone else to handle-would break his heart. This was, of course, Little Brain: first a doll, later a puppet, then an animated cartoon, and afterward an actress, or, at various other times, a talk-show host, gymnast, ballerina, or supermodel, in a Little Brain outfit. (82)

The above reference shows the height of metamorphosis in *Fury*. Little Brain is seen as one of the most protean characters in the novel. The moment that she forces herself out of Solanka's grip, that is the moment when she discovers that the world has no fixed centre and that it is possible to mutate to any desirable space in the protean society. She constantly renews her identity as the need arises. Solanka's traditional set of borders blur and all distinctions between the real and the imaginary blend as Little Brain evolves. She blends fiction and reality as the above quotation implies.

Rushdie describes Jack Rhinehart as another very protean character in *Fury*. He is described as, "wind surfer, a sky diver, a bungee jumper, a rock climber, a man whose idea of fun it was to go to Hunter College twice a week and run up and down forty flights of stairs" (53). It is obvious that his choice of mask is even determined by the time and space as seen below:

Solanka had spoken to Rhinehart's mother and sister of the exquisite pleasures of dining at Jack's table, he had bewildered and amazed them both. Jack, cook? This Jack? asked his mother, disbelievingly pointing at her son. Jack I know couldn't open a can of beans less'n I showed him how to hold the can opener. Jack I know, his sister added, couldn't boil a pan of water without burnin' it up. Jack I know, his mother concluded, definitively, couldn't find the kitchen without a seein'-eye dog leadin' the way. This same Jack could now hold his own with the great chefs of the world, and Solanka marveled, once again, at the human capacity for automorphosis, the transformation of the self, which Americans claimed as their own special, defining characteristic. (49)

The above quotation posits how Rhinehart is able to deconstruct the stereotypical identity his family has for him. He breaks grounds to new spaces and gives up traditional notions about life that surprise his mother and sister. He elucidates the idea that the process in which a person constructs himself to create identity which is not constant but fluid and shifting depending on the situation one finds himself. This Rhinehart's transformation is salutary and Rushdie makes use of a figurative sharp contrast between his previous and present life, to imagine that he could not open a tin of food and through fluxes and fluidity he can compete with the best chefs! Rhinehart's protean perceptual experience portrays variations in identity formations which is even inherited by people all over the world.

The image of the veil and mask is a very powerful metaphor that Rushdie uses to expose the protean matrix in his novels. Lifton in "The Protean Style" asserts that, "one patient of mine, a gifted young teacher, referred to himself as wearing a number of masks which he could put on or take off... He went on to compare himself to an actor on the stage, who, as he put it, 'performs with a certain kind of polymorphous versatility' " (131). Rushdie adopts this notion of the masks and acting. In *Fury*, Rushdie refers to almost all of the characters as "two faced creature" (88). And in the course of the novel, most characters have veils which he says, "for the veils were falling away from their play" (114). The American society is a metaphoric play and all the characters in *Fury* are actors. At some point, Jack Rhinehart becomes, "a snake in disguise all along, and after what he'd done he simply slipped out of his human skin, just shucked it off and it crumbled to dust the moment he let it go (106).

This is a high point in protean analysis. The veil, the skin that falls off, or the mask becomes a place where characters ascribe their identities. It also represents the theme of disguise which becomes shady to represent any particular trait. Jack Rhinehart is a good character that Rushdie uses to expose this theme of disguise. Another image comes to mind which is the snake which is an animal that sheds its skin in the process of metamorphosis. Rhinehart become analogous to this animal to exhibit protean traits. This image of shedding skin becomes adopted by other characters in the novel.

Milo is also very protean as a child who sheds her adolescence skin often to love her colonising lover father Solanka:

The seventh veil falls away, Solanka thought. Fully clothed as Mila was in her daytime sportswear, she stood naked before him at last. Furia. This was the self she had never fully shown, Mila as Fury, the world-swallower, the self as pure transformative energy. In this incarnation she was simultaneously terrifying and wonderful. (155)

The image of the veil and masks give her different spaces to occupy and one begins to wonder if there is any true self amidst these protean phase just like Lifton questions, "is there, or should there be, one face which should be, authentic? He wasn't really sure and found parallels to this in literature" (132). The image of the transformative self resonates throughout postmodern discourses. Very evidently at this point Mila is being reincarnated

and born again as she uses her protean identity on any space she occupies. There are many selves that she possesses as represented by the veils she wears.

CHALLENGES OF PROTEANISM

While Lifton seems to support the notion that there are benefits to proteanism, he also seems greatly concerned with social and psychological dangers of this proteanism. He also shows concern for the negative reaction that characters are exposed to due to the multiple spaces they may occupy.

Unity among the protean selves is not an easy kind of unity to achieve. Failure to maintain Lifton's desirable "protean poise" may result in "negative proteanism" which he refers to as, "fluidity so lacking in moral content and sustainable inner form that it is likely to result in fragmentation (or near fragmentation) of the self, harm to others, or both" (190-191). Lifton worries about the dangers of fragmentation in negative proteanism where he suggests that the "Protean man was not free of guilt. He indeed suffers from it considerably, but often without awareness of what is causing his suffering". (133) This shows that the protean self is a flawed concept if protean characters fail to maintain a protean poise. When these consequences come, they attack proteanism with a fierce force. The protean concept therefore, becomes faulty in the sense that Lifton notes, "his difficulty is that focused indignation is as hard for him to sustain as is any single identification or conviction. In his discomforts and even his symptoms he experiences the same kind of formlessness, together with flexibility search, that characterizes the rest of his psychological experience" (133). In line with this quotation, the protean self still searches for identity amidst the multiple selves. Failure to assert a protean poise identity amidst the multiple selves can lead to formlessness.

Lifton notes that, involved in all of these patterns is a profound psychic struggle with the idea of change itself. Here, protean self finds himself ambivalent in the extreme. He is profoundly attracted to the idea of making all things, including himself, totally new-to the "mode of transformation." But he is equally drawn to an image of a mythical past of perfect harmony and prescientific wholeness, to the "mode of restoration" (133). Moreover, beneath his transformationism is nostalgia, and beneath his restorationism is his fascinated attraction to contemporary forms and symbols. Constantly balancing these elements midst the extraordinary, rapid change surrounding his own life, the nostalgia is pervasive, and can be one of his most explosive and dangerous emotions. (133-134) Despite how enticing the concept of the protean self may sound, there are still some challenges that affect the characters due to the many changes that they undergo in the course of time.

There are many dangers inherent in proteanism as portrayed in the selected novels. Similarly, In "The Healthy, Happy Human Being Wears Many Masks" Kenneth Gergen argues that rapid social and technological change and upheaval has created a crisis of identity: an individual no longer can develop and maintain a strong, integrated sense of personal identity. It challenges the traditional doctrine that mental health requires a coherent sense of identity. (139)

The challenges of proteanism are far reaching in the works of Rushdie, he presents various situations where characters navigate between cultures and spaces. Proteanism if not well negotiated can be very regressive and produce characters who do not negotiate a coherent identity amidst the changes. It has different consequences in different characters and that is why protean mutations are not always progressive but sometimes regressive, that is to say, some protean characters find themselves between cultures or spaces but lack the protean poise.

Identity crisis is a very prevalent situation in the protean world. When characters are exposed to many different spaces, they might lack the ability to possess a protean poise. In *Midnight's Children* for instance, the midnight's children are automatically thrown into the protean space because of their diverse gifts and origin but they lack the ability to negotiate their identity as

a group. Saleem glows with optimism and tries to impose a third space identity on the children just before their mutilation by the Widow. But they are very different that they do not try to find a protean poise out of Saleem's optimism and therefore, they do not come to a compromise and so Saleem is left alone. Saleem says they are various reasons that led to the failure of the midnight's children's conference. And of course religious and cultural differences come to play because their spaces are so divergent that it becomes a very big challenge for the children to speak as one.

Aadam Aziz is an intriguing character when it comes to proteanism and negotiating a protean poise. At the beginning of the novel, when he returns home from Germany, "he saw through travelled eyes. Instead of the beauty of the tiny valley circled by giant teeth, he noticed the narrowness, the proximity of the horizon; and felt sad, to be at home and feel so utterly enclosed" (2). He almost limits himself to the foreign space feeling sad to be at home but later, wanting to strike a balance between different religions available in the Indian society as well as modern and traditional Indian medicine. But with passing of time, he is exposed to other spaces and he lacks the ability to merge all the protean spaces to a coherent identity. At the end of the day, this stamps a great mark on his identity as he becomes an atheist but still believes in a vision of God so he loses sanity and consequently his selfhood.

In *Fury*, Jack Rhinehart who is one of the most protean characters in the novel does not succeed to negotiate selfhood and a protean poise. He is a black man who hates being black. He renounces his blackness and loses himself with the white ways of life. Rhinehart lives his life in the States hating his black face and pretending to be white by keeping company only with white people. But as Fanon predicted, he can never attain the whiteness he desires and shed the blackness he castigates. At the end of day, he slides into a mental abyss because he does not negotiate his identity along a protean intersection. The line that Rhinehart crosses one must say is straight into his sanity. Solanka describes him thus:

Behind the infinite layers of Rhinehart's cool was this ignoble fact: he had been seduced, and his desire to be accepted into this white man's club was the dark secret he could not confess to anyone, perhaps not even to himself. And these are the secrets from which the anger comes. In this dark bed the seeds of fury grow. And although Jack's act was armor-plated, although his mask never slipped, Solanka was sure he could see, in his friend's blazing eyes, the self-loathing fire of his rage. It took him a long while to concede that Jack's suppressed fury was the mirror of his own. (51)

Two cardinal points stand out in the quotation. Anger and fury become a reservoir to deposit all spaces that cannot be negotiated and secondly, the veil or mask that he uses to cover his blackness never leaves him. And thus, he (Rhinehart) sheds every black value he had as Fanon argues in *Black Skin White Masks*:

Every people whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality – finds itself face to face with the culture of mother country. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle. (18)

This is similar to Rushdie's portrayal of Rhinehart's identity. Rhinehart elevates his status by moving away from the black community to predominantly white one and realises that as much as he wants to belong there, it still remains the white world. He debunks the blackness by marrying white woman. It is interesting to note that the more time Rhinehart spends at the in the white community, the more he loses his grip on attaining a coherent identity. By renouncing blackness over a predominantly white way of life, one begins to wonder if Rhinehart is conscious of the dangers of his identity.

Solanka, too protean in nature, lacks the ability to negotiate a protean poise. Like Rhinehart, he renounces his Indian origin in favour of a pure American protean identity which alludes

that one's interaction with others that have been blended into one's psychological landscape like a pattern in a fabric also helps characters formulate and secure an ontological anchoring in a constantly shifting world.

The protean American society enables characters in *Fury* to organise and continue to articulate their personal narrative of self in a protective, nurturing environment. But in Solanka's case there is an identity crisis and Rushdie narrates, "those whom the gods would destroy they first make mad. The Furies hovered over Malik Solanka, over New York and America, and shrieked. In the streets below, the traffic, human and inhuman, screamed back its enraged assent" (161). Despite Solanka's effort to bring his fury under control, it does not yield much fruit as his identity is already in jeopardy, "this new cultural hypersensitivity...Why was he being caught off guard, time and again, by surges of rage that almost overwhelmed his will?" (31)

The protean society swallows Solanka and he does not find a protean poise amidst the protean spaces that he occupies. He remains alone, marked by difference, separated from the community around him. At the end, "his old life had left him forever and the new world he'd created had slipped through his fingers too" (88) and among the various protean spaces he had occupies, he fits nowhere, "life becomes very, I don't know, finite. You realize you don't have anything, you belong nowhere, you're just using things for a while" (89).

Looking at the works of Rushdie, the challenges of proteanism are very deep and can tamper with the very core of identity if identities are not negotiated. Characters must find a protean poise between protean spaces in order to attain a coherent sense of identity.

THE PROTEAN POISE

The protean poise becomes a space that characters occupy in the process of asserting selfhood where metamorphosis is negotiated and identity is constructed and re-constructed, subsequently creating new identities and possibilities. The protean poise itself is shifting and fluid but characters are able to negotiate a sense of self amidst all these cultural and spatial flux.

In *Midnight's Children*, Amina; Saleem's mother is one of the characters who negotiate a sense of self amidst the protean spaces. The protean changes she undergoes in the novel are enormous to a point that one almost wonders if she is able to reconcile these spaces. But she does. At the beginning of the novel, she is introduced as Mumtaz Aziz who gets married to Nadir Khan living illegally at the basement of the Aziz Mansion. She loves her husband and plays the dubious role of an Aziz spinster, but descends to the basement at night to be a wife to Nadir. It is without doubt that she performs these roles very well and achieves selfhood. In the midst of all these, she is happy and shows no signs of despair even when it comes to the limelight that the marriage has not been consummated. It is quite alarming to her parents who send Nadir packing and signing divorces documents to ease her off the marriage.

Then she gets married to Ahmed Sinai whom she does not love. But while negotiating protean spaces, she trains herself to love him. The negotiating process begins by her accepting to change her name to Amina Sinai, "change your name," Ahmed Sinai said, "time for a fresh start. Throw Mumtaz and her Nadir Khan out of the window, I'll choose you a new name. Amina. Amina Sinai: you'd like that?" she does not really mind as she answers, "whatever you say, husband" (56).

The notion of naming was very significant in the colonial days. Accepting to change her name means a change in her identity. So the change takes her to a new step on the protean ladder. Amina formerly called Mumtaz feels no remorse and skilfully negotiates in-betweenness on every space she occupies in the protean climb. So she starts living her life like the "the brand-new Amina Sinai, who also looked still and unchanging although great things

were happening beneath her skin” (56). Amina continues with her in-between negotiation every day, seeing something new in her new husband to love and, “and all these minute transformations helped her in her Herculean task, the task of accepting, bit by bit, that she must love a new man” (60). As the plot unfolds, she becomes a loving wife and settles comfortably as Ahmed’s wife. However, in the course of time, the family is exposed to wars and other calamities; Ahmed Sinai somehow does not find a place to navigate the various protean spaces he has been exposed to. The family moves to Pakistan and he is left to lament his failure to reconcile various spaces. Amina uses her gifts to nurture Ahmed back to life because she is a strong woman who changes as situations demand thus ascending various steps of the protean but never succumbs to failure. There is a note of optimism that she exudes and her husband draws inspiration from her strength.

Through the choice of Saleem as a central character, Rushdie finds a vent through which to express his personal dilemma on race and class. Through Saleem, Rushdie creates a character that defies easy categorisation by virtue of the character’s race and class; as Englishman William Methwold’s son born to a poor Hindu woman Venita and raised by the rich Muslim family. He says:

(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!)... 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? (146)

The image of the isosceles triangle Rushdie uses is very symbolic in protean and third space demonstration. More significantly, if Saleem is the apex, it metaphorically means he is true to both sides and carries attributes of both. The apex becomes the meeting point where the Hindu and Muslim, the imagination and the real, the ancient and the modern spaces meet, interact, celebrate and negotiate their in-betweenness skilfully. This naturally puts Saleem in a protean position and he is aware of where he stands and he fights relentlessly to assert for himself selfhood, he says, “I shall attempt to piece together an account... amid ancient and modern” (383) and in this light, “attempt to gain a place in the world” (384). The end of the quotation stating being reconciled means he skilfully navigates between every protean space he occupies while asserting a protean poise.

He gains a place in the world first of all by blending his consciousness to fit into any space he finds himself and being very aware of his multiple belongings. He tells about the powers of his “special blends” (453) in which, “thanks to the powers of my drained nasal passages, I am able to include memories, dreams, ideas, so that once they enter mass-production all who consume them will know...” (453) that can they all fit into one compartment. All these shelves of memories, dreams, ideas are spaces of proteanism that Saleem occupies and reconciles.

Saleem is one of the major characters in the novel who invests his strength to make a balance among the spaces that he inhabits. He presents a challenge to fixities as he seeks to position himself within fluxes of situations. It is this hybrid status that informs his parentage. He deconstructs fixed identities and transforms the prevailing fixed and static notion of stereotypes. His method of cultural navigation is seen in his transformative power in creating this new identity Bhabha argues that by occupying a third space, the colonised man can renegotiate the terms of past and present, male and female, black and white. In this case, why not reality and fantasy in this case?

By mediating between the community and the midnight’s children, Saleem reconciles many protean spaces as seen below:

By sunrise, I had discovered that the voices could be controlled-I was a radio receiver, and could turn the volume down or up; I could select individual voices; I could even, by an effort of will; switch off my newly-discovered inner ear. It was astonishing how soon fear left me; by morning, I was thinking, Man, this is better than All-India Radio, man; better than Radio Ceylon! (160)

The image of the radio is a powerful metaphor that Rushdie uses for negotiating a protean poise, Saleem becomes the frequency mediator by navigating the third space. He knows which voice to play at what circumstance to avoid conflicting voices and stations at once. More so, finds himself placed at the intersection of the living and the midnight's children. He becomes the transmitter of the collective, undifferentiated midnight voice which becomes a part of his person, and it is he who will be remembered by the coming generations. With Saleem acting as a national network means he has reached the height of negotiation.

This proteanism resonates in his life in such a way that it almost tampers with his own personal identity, but for the fact that he negotiates well, "if I had not believed myself in control of the flooding multitudes, their massed identities would have annihilated mine..." (171). But he stands firm to protect his own identity, "to regain my equilibrium" (220). This idea of equilibrium that he talks about marks the pinnacle of Saleem's reconciliation of a protean poise and he becomes a negotiation venue and decides "to act as a sort of national network, so that by opening my transformed mind to all the children I could turn it into a kind of forum in which they could talk to one another, through me" (224).

The protean nature of the midnight's children is very rich and Saleem navigates through all these spaces erasing all language barriers and provides hope for new possibilities as seen in the quotation below:

In the beginning, when I was content to be an audience-before I began to act-there was a language problem. The voices babbled in everything from Malayalam to Naga dialects, from the purity of Luck-now Urdu to the Southern slurrings of Tamil. I understood only a fraction of the things being said within the walls of my skull. Only later, when I began to probe, did I learn that below the surface transmissions-the front-of-mind stuff which is what I'd originally been picking up-language faded away, and was replaced by universally intelligible thought-forms which far transcended words...(164)

There is an important sentiment that stands out in the above quotation; language. The above quotation grounds typically of what Bhabha says is the process of negotiation and translation between different discourses. Language is a very important metaphor in postcolonialism. Ngugi Wa Thiongo pronounces in "The Language of African Literature" that language as communication and language as culture are then products of each other. Communication creates culture; culture is a means of communication. Language carries culture (290). Since Saleem understands all the languages that the midnight's children speak means he is himself an embodiment of all the spaces that they occupy, thus making him more protean than the midnight conference itself.

Kwai Prah in *Between Distinction and Extinction: The Harmonization and Standardisation of African Languages* observes that languages enable people to express their culture and are the window through which they understand the world and are themselves understood. Prah underscores the importance of a language that one has mastered well in expressing him/herself in relation to the world he notes that:

It is in language that people find their mental home, their definitional relationship to the external world. What this also means is that people can hardly be themselves in an idiom in which they have difficulty understanding or expressing themselves. They can barely be creative and innovative in a language they have to struggle with in order to command expression. (2)

The metaphor of home becomes analogous to belonging and selfhood. As Saleem transcends language barriers, he negotiates a sense of belonging and selfhood as he navigates between protean voices. Saleem negotiates his space among the language sphere of the other midnight's children. And he denies hearing various voices as languages. He synthesises all these voices to one as he does not want to divide them. This language co-operation marks the height of the protean poise.

The midnight's children could not keep themselves together due to their protean belonging. But what stands out in the above passage is Saleem's optimism which becomes very significant in him asserting his selfhood. He does not feel responsible for the children's crumbling, contrarily, he still feels optimism in all of this. But this does not split Saleem's selfhood. He manages to maintain his sense of self.

He manages to stabilise himself amid their destruction, "despite streaming eyes and puffed-up sinuses, I was happy; despite even the end of the Children's Conference, I was basking in the new glow of happiness which permeated Buckingham Villa" (297) and at the end Rushdie says that "Saleem Sinai came to terms with himself" (311). Coming to terms with himself is synonymous to selfhood amid all the protean spaces he occupies.

He even attempts to start anew after the demise of the conference saying that, "I reconcile myself" (454). He adopts Parvati and Shiva's child and the story comes full cycle, "Saleem returned to the city of his birth to stand illuminated in a cellar while Bombayites tittered at him from the dark" (448). There, he "felt instantly and comfortingly at home" (390) and he says, "my old life was waiting to reclaim me. I should have known: no escape from past acquaintance. What you were is forever who you are" (362). History at this point becomes deconstructed but not castigated. It becomes part of Saleem as he merges his old self to the present selves.

The quest for a protean poise is also prevalent in *Fury*. Little Brain becomes something new and universal, a type of personality that would be unable to fit into a definition of something as narrow as tribe or race or nation. That is why she easily becomes a role model to almost every one in the society. What is worth noting is that Little Brain crosses all these boundaries and merges generation, gender, language which are all compartments of the protean self. Interestingly as Little Brain continues to evolve in the protean space, she metamorphoses to a real human being. She is a borderline between the artificial and the natural.

Despite all of this, Little Brain enjoys a sense of peace and gains a place in the society as she asserts herself at home in the real human world as seen below:

Little Brain was the star, and the new show had to be built around her, it was decreed. Instead of traveling constantly, she needed a location and a cast of recurring characters to play off.... Thus Little Brain moved to Brain Street in Brainville, with a whole family and neighborhood posse of Brains: she had an older brother called Little Big Brain... But Little Brain gave every indication of being happy... (82-83)

The quest for home has always been on a centre stage in postcolonial literature and one is forced to say that a sense of settling down is synonymous to belonging or selfhood or negotiation of a character's identity.

Neela in *Fury* also quest for a protean poise amid protean spaces in a very significant way. At some point in the novel, she marks almost a rigid space to maintain an identity amid the people of Indo-Lilly. But as the novel evolves, there's an evolution of her consciousness as she tries to merge this minority Indian identity with the various spaces that she meets at the protean American stage in New York. She reconciles herself with the society and feels a sense of home, "... New York at once, as did everybody who needed, and found here, a home away from home among other wanderers who needed exactly the same thing: a haven in

which to spread their wings” (136). The notion of home in this case is synonymous to belonging, selfhood and identity.

Neela spreads her wings in the haven she finds, she soars higher and begins to appreciate the world around her as she sees the strength of other third spaces as seen in the quotation below:

They settled down to watch the game. More goals came: six in all for the Netherlands, a late, irrelevant consolation strike for Yugoslavia. Neela, too, was glad the Dutch had done well. She saw their black players, uncompetitively but also without false modesty, as her near equals in gorgeousness. The Surinamese, she said, unknowingly echoing the thoughts of the young Malik Solanka in Amsterdam all those years ago, are the living proof of the value of mixing up the races. Look at them. Edgar Davids, Kluivert, Rijkaard in the dugout, and, in the good old days, Ruud. The great Gullit. All of them, metegues. Stir all the races together and you get the most beautiful people in the world. I want to go, she added, to nobody in particular, soon, to Surinam. (56)

The football setting is metaphorical to the protean world in New York and the players represent the various protean spaces which is made up of blacks, coloured and whites. Neela believes that a mixture of these races produce the best people ever. This is a great step in achieving the protean poise Neela appreciates hybrid connections as a societal strength. Even though she finds a haven in the American society, she craves to go to Surinam which becomes a utopic venue where protean identities are reconciled.

CONCLUSION

Rushdie, uses many themes to expose how characters metamorphose within various contexts. Sometime proteanism moves within cultures and characters choose which mask to wear depending on the segment of the protean ladder they want to ascend or descend. Sometimes, it moves within other social spaces like migration and also proteanism along biological spheres. which all these portray a kind of metamorphosis unique to proteanism. Proteanism is a flexible and fluid concept beneficial to many characters especially those who succeed to maintain a protean poise. However, proteanism if not well managed, may produce characters who do not reconcile their differences amidst protean spaces. and end up with an identity crisis.

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