

TO BE BORN AGAIN: THE BINARY OF ANGEL AND DEVIL IN

SALMAN RUSHDIE'S THE SATANIC VERSES

A GRADUATING PAPER

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement

for Gaining the Bachelor Degree in English Department



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A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

I certify that this thesis is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this thesis. Other writers' opinions or findings included in the thesis are quoted or cited in accordance with ethical standards.

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saya menyatakan bahwa skripsi tersebut sudah dapat diajukan pada sidang munaqasyah untuk memenuhi salah satu syarat memperoleh gelar Sarjana Sastra Inggris.

Atas perhatian Bapak Dekan, saya ucapkan terima kasih

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MOTTO

“dubito, ergo cogito, ergo sum”

“I doubt, therefore I think, therefore I am.”



DEDICATION

I dedicate this paper to my loving family, my precious friends, and my silly cat.



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I do understand that this research is far from perfect. I hope this paper can help my fellow researchers, you are more than welcome to give a constructive feedback.

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ABSTRACT

Reincarnation or rebirth is a central theme in many cultures and religions, symbolizing renewal and the cycle of life. Hinduism and Buddhism view it as the soul's journey through reincarnation toward enlightenment. This theme influenced the Indian writer Salman Rushdie in writing *The Satanic Verses*. In his novel, the two main characters, namely Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha, are reborn into angels and devils. The research aims to identify the angelic and devilish elements of the two main characters. Many believe that the novel is blasphemy towards Islam due to the similarities between the elements in the novel and Islam. This controversy even resulted in a fatwa from the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini, to kill Salman Rushdie. The researcher uses the binary opposition theory by Lévi-Strauss to analyze the data taken from the novel. The researcher uses the qualitative research method. The result of this research is that there are eleven angelic and devilish traits found in the two main characters. Those traits come in binary pairs: uncaring vs. caring, happy vs. sad, calm vs. upset, unfaithful vs. faithful, haram vs. halal, handsome vs. ugly, rejecting vs. accepting, angry vs. pleased, resentful vs. grateful, bad breath vs. good breath, and halo vs. horns. The researcher concludes that both Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha possess the qualities of angel and devil.

Keywords: Reincarnation, angel, devil, binary opposition.

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ABSTRAK

Reinkarnasi atau kelahiran kembali adalah tema utama dalam banyak budaya dan agama, melambangkan pembaruan dan siklus kehidupan, Agama Hindu dan Buddha melihatnya sebagai perjalanan jiwa melalui reinkarnasi menuju pencerahan. Tema ini mungkin telah mempengaruhi penulis India Salman Rushdie dalam menulis *The Satanic Verses*. Dalam novelnya, dua tokoh utama yaitu Gibreel Farishta dan Saladin Chamcha terlahir kembali sebagai malaikat dan setan. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi elemen malaikat dan setan dalam dua karakter utama novel ini. Banyak yang percaya bahwa novel ini adalah penghinaan terhadap Islam karena adanya kemiripan antara elemen-elemen dalam novel dan Islam. Kontroversi ini bahkan mengakibatkan fatwa yang diturunkan oleh pemimpin tertinggi Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini, untuk membunuh Salman Rushdie. Peneliti menggunakan teori oposisi biner oleh Lévi-Strauss untuk menganalisis data yang diambil dari novel. Peneliti menggunakan metode kualitatif. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah terdapat sebelas sifat-sifat malaikat dan setan yang ditemukan dalam kedua karakter utama. Sifat-sifat tersebut memiliki pasangan biner: tidak peduli vs. peduli, bahagia vs. sedih, tenang vs. gundah, tidak setia vs. setia, haram vs. halal, tampan vs. jelek, menolak vs. menerima, marah vs. senang, sebal vs. bersyukur, napas bau vs. napas harum, dan lingkaran cahaya vs. tanduk. Peneliti menyimpulkan bahwa kedua karakter Gibreel Farishta dan Saladin Chamcha memiliki kualitas malaikat dan setan.

Kata kunci: Reinkarnasi, malaikat, setan, oposisi biner.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A GRADUATING PAPER	i
A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT	ii
APPROVAL	iii
NOTA DINAS	iv
MOTTO	v
DEDICATION	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vii
ABSTRACT	x
ABSTRAK	xi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	xii
CHAPTER I	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of Study	1
1.2 Problem Statements	3
1.3 Objectives of Study	3
1.4 Scope and Limitation	3
1.5 Significance of Study	4
1.6 Literature Review	4

1.7 Theoretical Approach	6
1.8 Methods of Research	7
1.8.1 Type of Research	7
1.8.2 Data Sources	7
1.8.3 Data Collection Technique	7
1.8.4. Data Analysis Technique	8
1.9 Paper Organization	8
CHAPTER II	9
INTRINSIC ELEMENTS	9
2.1 Summary of The Satanic Verses	9
2.2 Themes	11
2.2.1 Reincarnation	11
2.2.2 Cultural Identity	12
2.3 Plot	12
2.3.1 Exposition	13
2.3.2 Rising Action	13
2.3.3 Climax	14
2.3.4 Falling Action	14
2.3.5 Denouement	15
2.4 Setting	15

2.5 Point of View	15
2.6 Characters and Characterization	15
2.6.1 Flat Characters	16
2.6.1.1 Rekha Merchant	16
2.6.1.2 Alleluia Conne	17
2.6.1.3 Changez Chamchawala	17
2.6.2 Round Characters	18
2.6.2.1 Gibreel Farishta	18
2.6.2.2 Saladin Chamcha	19
2.6.2.3 Pamela Lovelace	20
2.6.2.4 Jumpy Joshi	21
2.6.2.5 Zeeny Vakil	22
CHAPTER III	23
ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION	23
3.1 Categorization of Angelic and Devilish Qualities	23
3.2 Binary Opposites	25
3.2.1 Uncaring vs. Caring	25
3.2.2 Happy vs. Sad	25
3.2.3 Calm vs. Upset	26
3.2.4 Unfaithful vs. Faithful	27

3.2.5 Haram vs. Halal	28
3.2.6 Handsome vs. Ugly	29
3.2.7 Rejecting vs. Accepting	30
3.2.8 Angry vs. Pleased	30
3.2.9 Resentful vs. Grateful	32
3.2.10 Bad Breath vs. Good Breath	33
3.2.11 Halo vs. Horns	34
CHAPTER IV	35
CONCLUSION	35
4.1 Conclusion	35
4.2 Suggestion	36
References	37
CURRICULUM VITAE	39

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Jonathan Culler argued that literature is a speech act or a textual event that elicits certain kinds of attention (1997:27). Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, in this case, really draws attention. This is Rushdie's fourth novel, rapidly becoming one of the most controversial books in the world. This *Whitbread Prize*-winning novel leaves a significant impact on the readers, especially Muslims. Protested by the Muslim community for the accusation of blasphemy, this novel is banned in many countries. In 1989, The Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini even issued a *fatwa* to kill Rushdie (Corsette, 1998).

The Satanic Verses controversy involved intense and often violent backlash from Muslims following the release of *The Satanic Verses*, which debuted in the United Kingdom in 1988 and drew some inspiration from the life of Muhammad. Salman Rushdie's works had already sparked controversy even prior to the publication of *The Satanic Verses* (Pipes, 2003).

The publication of *The Satanic Verses* sparks off powerful protests among the British Muslim communities (Ossowska-Czader: 2015). Members of the multi-ethnic British Muslim community view it as

blasphemous. There are similarities found in the book between the Submission and Islam. Ossowska-Czader (2015) believes that this religion is portrayed in a satirical manner.

Sobhan (1995) states that Rushdie has a recurring theme in his writings, which is “the identity of the Westernized Indian”, as seen in his essay titled *Imaginary Homelands* and his novel *Midnight's Children*. Sobhan also claims that Rushdie’s concept of Indian identity is plural, eclectic, and hybrid. *The Satanic Verses* is no different; it is also about Westernized Indians.

Sobhan in his thesis argues that the idea of Westernized Indian is about how Westernization can create a new and vibrant strain of Indian identity. It shows that British Indian culture is something fresh and fascinating rather than an imitation of mainstream British culture or a diluted and polluted (and hence lesser) form of Indian culture (Sobhan, 1995). Salman Rushdie himself is a Westernized Indian. His somewhat unusual existence gives him a distinct perspective in life. He was born in India, received his education in England, moved to Pakistan at the order of his parents, and sent into exile in Britain (Hamilton, 1995).

The Satanic Verses is a work of fiction. Fiction is any literary narrative, whether in prose or verse, which is invented instead of being an account of events that in fact happened (Abrams, 1999:94). The writer chooses this subject because the Muslims protested Rushdie’s book due to

its relevance to Islam, one of them being the character of Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha. The novel portrays Gibreel as an angel and Saladin as a devil after the plane accident. Gibreel Farishta found himself having a halo hovering above his head, and Saladin Chamcha transformed into a cloven-hoofed devil. These angelic and satanic characteristics are a pair of binary opposition. In this research, the writer intends to conduct a study on the portrayal of the angel and devil in Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*.

1.2 Problem Statements

Based on the above background of study, the writer proposes the following research question: How are the binary opposites of angel and devil found in the character of Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha portrayed in *The Satanic Verses*?

1.3 Objectives of Study

The objective of this study is to understand how Rushdie uses the binary system to give characterizations on his characters in the novel. The study will focus on the depiction of Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha as an angel and a devil.

1.4 Scope and Limitation

This research focuses on the characterization of Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha as the main characters of the story. The data collection will be limited to only the angelic and devilish elements of the

two characters. One of the plot points is that Gibreel Farishta experienced some dream sequences. This research will only discuss the two main characters who appeared in the main timeline, not the dream sequences.

1.5 Significance of Study

The researcher hopes that this study will contribute to Islamic fiction in literature research, as *The Satanic Verses* is often used as one of the examples of novels that are banned in some countries due to their criticism towards Islam. This research is also intended as an additional literary source for future research following the same topic. It is expected that this study will give a higher level of understanding to the readers and fellow researchers towards *The Satanic Verses*.

1.6 Literature Review

Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* has been analyzed in journals and research. A thesis by Debora Wienda Rosari, entitled *The Insufficiency of Reality in Salman Rushdie's The Satanic Verses*, investigates how *The Satanic Verses* portrays Submission and the way insufficiency of reality is found in the novel. The research concluded that the novel does not show sufficient Islamic history in the real world.

Another thesis by Sun Lie entitled *Di Balik Kontroversi Novel "The Satanic Verses" Salman Rushdie (Sebuah Kritik Post Kolonial)* that investigates whether *The Satanic Verses* is a blasphemy towards Islam. Sun Lie concluded that The author (Salman Rushdie) did not write an anti-religious novel but rather a story about migration and transformation.

The next is a thesis entitled *Realisme Magis dalam Novel The Satanic Verses* Karya Salman Rushdie by Imam Hendra Saputra and Prof. Dr. Faruk, SU. The focus of this research is how magic realism is used in literary work. The researchers find that *The Satanic Verses* presents a world confronting the oppositional binary of reality and magic.

The following thesis is by Lina Puryanti, entitled *Representasi Muhammad dalam novel The Satanic Verses* Karya Salman Rusdhie, using theory of representation to investigate how Muhammad is represented in the novel.

The last is a thesis by Muhammad Edy Thoyib entitled *Allusions to Islam in Salman Ruhdie's The Satanic Verses*. The research tries to find out what are Salman Rushdie's allusions in *The Satanic Verses* that are addressed to Islam. The author concluded that allusions to Islam, as described in the novel, take five forms, i.e., names, history, doctrine, theme, and the sacred place. All of them have their own representation in the novel.

Based on the above literature reviews, the researcher concludes that the theory of binary opposition has not been used to analyze the main characters. Therefore, this research focuses on analyzing how Gibreel and Saladin is portrayed as an angel and a devil using the theory of binary opposition by Lévi-Strauss.

1.7 Theoretical Approach

The researcher uses Binary Opposition as the main theory to analyze the novel. Lévi-Strauss proposed this theory, concluding that the literature narratives contain opposing main characters, for example, good vs. evil, young vs. old, and innocent vs. corrupt. In the novel, Gibreel is portrayed as an angel and Saladin as a devil. Therefore, the binary opposition used in this analysis is angel vs. devil (Lévi-Strauss: 1955).

Lévi-Strauss argues that the fundamental building blocks of narratives are binary opposites. His concept of the binary opposite is an expansion of Ferdinand de Saussure's structuralism theory. Binary opposites are adjective qualities, such as tall vs. short, big vs. small, and far vs. near. However, there are also noun and verb qualities, such as day vs. night, black vs. white, attack vs. defense, and man vs. Woman (Lévi-Strauss: 1955).

The researcher uses this theory because the main characters are fundamentally binary opposites. The binary is not Gibreel vs. Saladin, but angel vs. devil. This is because angelic and devilish qualities can be found in both of those characters. The researcher will attribute the data found as either angelic or devilish alignment. All good qualities will be categorized into the angelic alignment and the bad ones into the devilish alignment. Using the theory of binary opposition, the researcher can determine what a devil would do or be if the data is of an angelic alignment or vice versa.

1.8 Methods of Research

1.8.1 Type of Research

This research used qualitative methods. Qualitative research, as defined here, is consequently a combination of two criteria: (i) how to do things – namely, generating and analyzing empirical material in an iterative process in which one gets closer by making distinctions, and (ii) the outcome –improved understanding novel to the scholarly community (Corte, 2019).

1.8.2 Data Sources

The primary source of data used in the research is *The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie. The researcher also uses supporting sources such as books, theses, journals, articles, or publications regarding *The Satanic Verses* and Salman Rushdie to gather appropriate research data.

1.8.3 Data Collection Technique

The researcher collects data by using various literature sources. The information gathered directly relates to the subjects being studied. The researcher also includes relevant theories and concepts to provide a comprehensive understanding to the reader. The main data is taken directly from the novel in the form of text. This method helps identify essential patterns and insights. In the end, the combination of theoretical frameworks and sources improves the research's overall quality.

1.8.4. Data Analysis Technique

To analyze the data, the researcher used the close-reading technique. To understand the content, the researcher will study the intrinsic elements of *The Satanic Verses*. The intrinsic elements consist of summary of the novel, themes, plot, setting, point of view, characters, and characterization. The researcher will then identify the two main characters' binary opposition of angel and devil qualities. After gathering the data, the researcher analyzes the characterization of Gibreel and Saladin based on the sequence of events throughout the novel and the discourse of angel and devil.

1.9 Paper Organization

This paper is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is the introduction of the paper, including the background of the study, research question, objectives of the study, scope and limitation, the significance of the study, literature review, theoretical approach, methods of research, and paper organization. The second chapter elaborates on the data collected in order to analyze the text in the form of intrinsic elements. The third chapter is an analysis and discussion. This chapter focuses on analyzing the qualities of angel and devil from the two main characters, Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha. The binary opposition of those qualities regarding angel and devil will then be discussed. The fourth chapter consists of conclusion and suggestion.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

4.1 Conclusion

In analyzing the characterizations of the two main characters, Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha, as seen in *The Satanic Verses*, by using the theory of binary opposition, the researcher finds some number of conclusions. First, every good characteristic that is found in both Gibreel and Saladin is categorized into angelic qualities, while the bad characteristics are called devilish ones. This is in line with the depictions of angels and devils by many cultures and religions.

The researcher found that the angelic qualities shown in the main characters are caring, happy, calm, faithful, halal, handsome, accepting, pleased, grateful, good breath, and halo and they can be found in both Gibreel and Saladin. The devilish qualities consist of uncaring, sad, upset, unfaithful, haram, ugly, rejecting, pleased, resentful, bad breath, and horns. These devilish qualities are also found in both Gibreel and Saladin's characters. Therefore, both of the main characters possess the qualities of an angel and a devil.

The concept of duality and binary opposites keeps appearing throughout the story. The fact that both angelic and devilish qualities are found in both characters shows that outside appearance does not guarantee their inner qualities. Gibreel Farishta turns into an archangel and has a glowing halo and good breath, yet he eats pork and is resentful towards God. Meanwhile, Saladin Chamcha looks

like a devil with his twisted horns and cloven-hooved legs, but he ends up accepting his original Indian identity.

4.2 Suggestion

The research of binary opposition found in the two main characters of *The Satanic Verses* is analyzed with the theory of binary opposition by Lévi-Strauss. Due to the scope and limitation of this research which only looks at the character of Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha, the data are limited. The analysis could also be more in depth if the researcher is also analyzing the dream sequences that happened throughout the story. This research topic could also be further enriched using other binary opposition theories such as Roland Barthes'. Angelic and devilish qualities can also be found in other characters in the novel. Hopefully, this research will inspire other researchers to explore the intricate topic of *The Satanic Verses*, perhaps from the scope of different fields such as philosophy or theology.

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