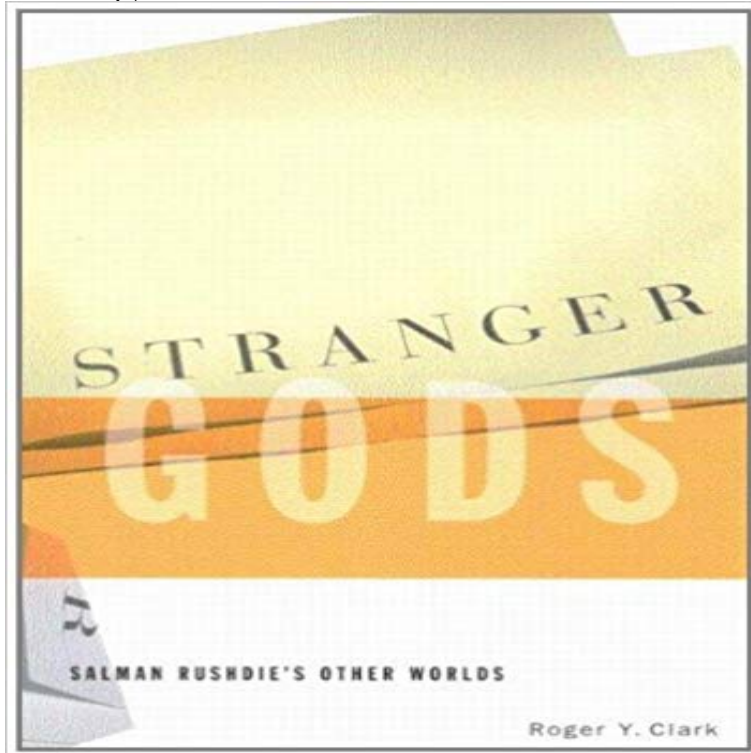


Stranger Gods: Salman Rushdie's Other Worlds



In *Stranger Gods*, Roger Clark offers an ambitious and wide-ranging study of Salman Rushdie's seven published novels, with a special focus on his earliest, *Grimus*, and his most powerful and provocative, *Midnight's Children*, *Shame*, and *The Satanic Verses*. Clark shows how Rushdie employs cosmology, mythology, and mysticism to structure otherworldly dramas that are fascinating in their own right, as well as crucial to the more worldly points Rushdie makes about literary tradition, history, ethnicity, and the politics of religion. Clark's exploration of Rushdie's novels works on at least three levels. First, he clarifies and interprets Rushdie's often puzzling references to figures such as Loki and Shiva, settings such as the mountain of Kaf and Kailasa, and experiences such as the annihilation of the self and the temptations of the Muslim Devil, Iblis. Second, he demonstrates how otherworldly motifs work with or against each other, fusing or clashing with Dantean, Shakespearean, and other literary forms to create hybrid characters, plots, and themes. Finally, Clark argues that Rushdie's brutal assault on tradition and taboo is mitigated by his secular idealism and by his subtle homage to mystical ideals of the past. This novel interpretation, which presents Rushdie's first five novels as a heterogeneous yet consistent body of work, will challenge and delight not only Rushdie scholars but anyone interested in comparative religion and mythology, iconoclasm, and the interplay of Western and Eastern literary forms. Roger Y. Clark teaches in the Department of English at the University of British Columbia.

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