

A Postcolonial Perspective Of Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children

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ABSTRACT

Writing transcends the real world because its creators are not limited by political agendas. Literature is a reflection of the ideological and cultural factors that shape the historical and cultural setting of the literary work. Indian-born British author Salman Rushdie focuses on the numerous links, rifts, and migrations between Eastern and Western civilizations in his works of historical fiction mixed with magical realism. A large portion of Rushdie's literature is set in the Indian subcontinent. In Rushdie's works, the nation's history is told and revealed via a single character's life. According to Rushdie, human history is like a continuous text that incorporates both historical and modern elements. The argument that Rushdie, like other postcolonial writers, appears to be looking for new social structures and realities is discussed in this essay. He argues in *Midnight's Children* that the world is complicated and hybrid, with entwined shared relations. To shift from the conventional notions of national identification to cultural identity, one must reject the nation, religion, and convention as determining factors.

Keywords: Civilizations, cultural identity, historical, nation, Postcolonial, religion.

Introduction

Postcolonial theory suggests that the exercise of colonial power is also the exercise of profoundly determined powers of representation. It is a means of understanding, reading, and criticising the cultural practices of colonialism. A corpus of literary

works that respond to the narrative of colonisation is known as postcolonial literature. Writings about decolonization or the political and cultural independence of those who were once subject to colonial power are frequently included in post-colonial literature. It is the critical examination of literature, history, culture, and discourse patterns unique to the former colonies of France, Spain, England, and other European imperial powers.

Postcolonial writing has given particular attention to Third World nations. Salman Rushdie is a globally renowned author of politically charged novels. Salman Rushdie is a well-known author whose novels have sold millions of copies and been translated into numerous other languages. What's maybe most telling is that Salman Rushdie's name has become so well-known throughout the world, that people who don't often read literary fiction have heard of him and are somewhat knowledgeable about the topics he writes about. He is a distinguished writer, but it is more difficult to pinpoint his exact fame-the 1989 Fatwa debate or his books. Furthermore, *Midnight's Children* (1981) has been hailed as a groundbreaking piece in the developing postcolonial fiction counter-canon in addition to being a work of astounding originality. Important thoughts and ideas created during the anti-colonial movement are incorporated into postcolonial theory.

Postcolonial theory focuses on the issue of race within colonialism and demonstrates how colonial powers can depict, reflect, refract, and make visible local cultures in specific ways because of the optics of race. It starts with the presumption that all writing, art, science, law, and other socio-cultural activities produced during the colonial era were racially and unequally representative of the local people, with the colonisers doing the representing. The nation figure is portrayed in a variety of ways in the postcolonial age. A country is a group that mainly consists of acts of thought and imagination; although it may be more fiction than fact, it nevertheless has strong. Additionally, the idea of a nation is fictitious. Individuals from different corners of the geographical area who would never interact with or learn about others yet regard the other regions and their traditions as an integral part of their own country. Salman Rushdie's primary area of writing is political fiction. He is not interested in his entirely fantastical works. The majority of his writings are on reality. For this reason, the narrator of *Midnight's Children* rejects fantastical

and ill-placed writing in favour of a work that is precisely situated in a recognisable location and deeply anchored in a certain moment in time.

I was born in the city of Bombay... once upon a time. No, that won't do, there is no getting away from the date: I was born in Doctor Narlikar's Nursing Home on August 15th, 1947. And the time? The time matters, too. Well then: at night. No, it's important to be more... On the stroke of midnight, as a matter of fact. Clock-hands joined palms in respectful greeting as I came. (Midnight's Children, 11)

The life story of Saleem Sinai and the history of the Indian subcontinent are the subjects of *Midnight's Children*. For Saleem, it is his birth date, which guarantees that he and this book will be "handcuffed to history." For India, it marks the moment when the country gained independence from Britain. The story of the book is narrated as Saleem reconstructs his life's events for the benefit of Padma, his sporadic girlfriend, a single auditor, and an employee of the pickle factory where he has come to conclude his days. Thus, the novel's setting alternates between a made-up present in which Saleem writes a reflection on the writing process and a made-up past where the story of Saleem's family is told against the backdrop of Indian national life. But Saleem will never be able to piece together the many disparate pieces that make up his history and the history of the country to create a new totality. Saleem might have thought at the beginning of the book that he could piece together the disorganised collection of tales to create a meaningful story.

The prime minister proclaims a state of emergency at midnight on June 25, enabling her to detain her opponents and restrict the media. In keeping with the custom of significant historical occurrences in Indian history coinciding with pivotal moments in Saleem's life, Parvati's son is born simultaneously. When the military broke into the magicians' ghetto, they were living there and slaughtered the majority of the residents. Shiva catches Saleem and brings him to Indira Gandhi's prison. Saleem informs his interrogators that the remaining children of *Midnight* have all undergone sterilisation, which causes them to lose both their magical and reproductive abilities. The birth of Saleem signifies the beginning of *Midnight's Children*, while the birth of his son signifies the end of them. Saleem was born during a period of

immense hope and optimism for the Indian nation, whereas his son was born during a state of emergency, a moment of chaos and sorrow. However, by the book's end, it is clear that Saleem will lose and that the pieces cannot be put together to form a meaningful whole. While Saleem's endeavour to give his life and the life of post-independence India a form failed. Although Saleem experiences sorrow as a result of his story, the book itself does not portray sadness:

The story is told in a manner designed to echo, as closely as my abilities allowed, the Indian talent for non-stop self-regeneration. The form-multitudinous, hinting at the infinite possibilities of the country-is the optimistic counterweight to Saleem's tragedy. I do not think that a book written in such a manner can be called a despairing work. (Imaginary Homelands, 16)

Rushdie's attempt to fictionalise a current event in Indian history in this book raises the possibility that it qualifies as historical fiction. There are undoubtedly aspects of *Midnight's Children* that mark it as a historical narrative. The Amritsar massacre (1919), the Quit India resolution, Indian independence and partition, the language marches in Bombay, the Indo-Chinese war, Nehru's death, the Indo-Pakistan war, Indira Gandhi's emergency suspension of regular democratic procedures, and the defeat of Gandhi's Congress party by the newly established Janata Morcha party in 1977 are just a few of the significant events that fall under its purview. What, then, defines historical fiction as historical? It is the idea of history as a moulding force that is actively present, and Saleem occasionally suffers from the illusion that he shapes history rather than being a subject of it.

The figure of Saleem, who is shown as a literal result of the political and cultural uncertainty typical of his day, best embodies the concept of cultural hybridization. The two cultural groups that Rushdie believes define their historical and political period are typically represented in his protagonists. In this book, Saleem is the biological kid of a low-class Hindu and a fleeing English colonist; He is reared by wealthy Indian Muslims named Amina and Ahmed. Later, he takes on the role of several father figures, including his uncle Zulfikar, a general in the Pakistani army. Rushdie's protagonist is defined by a multitude of allegiances, not all of which are certain or contribute to the clarification of cultural identity. These allegiances are defined by class, culture, and

gender. According to Rushdie, there isn't a fresh, cohesive identity that can be pitted against existing, cohesive identities. Rushdie thinks that if history has resulted in complexity, we shouldn't try to simplify it.

The postmodern scenario forces a writer to negotiate a situation, think again about the past, and create alternatives. Rushdie is a highly acclaimed writer who promotes the cosmopolitan vision of global identity in which artificial national borders are blurred. He is a postcolonial writer who primarily works with the concepts of nation and national history. For him, history is a dynamic process. The veracity of history is not absolute. Individuals, including men and women, make history; collective memory is another example of hegemony. For instance, Saleem, the main character of *Midnight's Children*, highlights how memory shapes reality by highlighting how memory chooses particular events:

Memory's truth, because memory has its special kind, it selects, eliminates, alters, exaggerates, minimizes, glorifies and vilifies also; but in the end, it creates its reality, its heterogeneous but usually coherent version of events; and no sane human being ever trusts someone else's version more than his own. (*Midnight's Children* 211)

This book highlights a different facet of individuality that Rushdie has fought for throughout his writing career: the idea that history is an individual experience rather than a communal memory and that the version of it that we are exposed to is merely one of many possible interpretations. By doing this, Rushdie has created a fictional framework for his interpretation of human individuality, one in which feelings of alienation and exile is more natural human responses to loneliness and isolation than external effects.

A symbolic gesture of life against fatal silence, exclusion and narrative- like regeneration. Individual occurrences that are comparatively caused in connection to other events make up the history of the country. Consequently, it is impossible to divorce a country's colonial past from its pre- or post-colonial history. However, it should be noted that Rushdie's writing does vary in political relevance from text to text-not just in terms of subject matter, but also in terms of political location. Rushdie's primary

goal as a fiction writer is to challenge readers' conceptions of nationhood. Cosmopolitanism permits new perspectives on national shape, on a contemporary type of homelessness that is simultaneously worldly, and on the complex and contradictory post-colonial obligation.

The term "postcolonial literature" often refers to writing that was produced both during and after colonisation. In postcolonial literature, Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is still essential reading. These crucial concepts of postcoloniality, identity, history production and telling, and storytelling are all amply demonstrated throughout the book. Even if the book explores these profound and vital subjects, it also becomes necessary to talk about the challenges of developing a postcolonial history and identity. The work demonstrates the challenges associated with postcoloniality, including the challenges of identifying one's history, origin, and real identity. To undermine Enlightenment ideas of cultural coherence and historical advancement, Rushdie advocates an anti-Enlightenment historiography. Rushdie takes this stance for several reasons, chief among them being the fact that European colonists of the 19th century exploited the Enlightenment paradigm of development to legitimise and explain their attempts to subjugate and conquer other civilizations they perceived as less advanced or civilised.

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