



Study of Historicity in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*

JAGBIR SINGH

Research scholar IGNOU

Abstract:

He's a global writer Salman Rushdie. It belongs to many civilizations. His legacy is partly contested and replicated in his books i.e., the individual's existential problems. The characters of Rushdie cause anguish in the readers' mind. His works generate tension in readers and provoke contradictory feelings. His claims on secularism and religion are much more ambiguous. Children of Rushdie's *Mid Night* have an intellectual and multicultural wealth. This book '*Midnight's Children*' has been translated into 12 languages and discusses events of the subcontinent's pre- and post-Independence period. It deals with politics, religion and fanaticism. The book is an allegory of contemporary India and a history and political family history. The book deals with two of the children's fates. The book is a connection between the country and the life of the protagonist, Saleem Sinai, the protagonist, and significant historical and political events. It is an account of society's impoverished and oppressed sectors. Rushdie tries to reconstruct his history via this book. The narrative of his life therefore coincides with the period and end of the National Emergency Movement. The book shows a conflict between a search for valour, personality and uniqueness, and the political deception..

Keywords: New Historicism, *Midnight's Children*, Salman Rushdie

Introduction

Linda Hutcheon proposed the term "historiographic metafiction" as "those famous and popular books that are highly self-reflective but paradoxically also claim historical events and characters." In fact, texts of metafiction historiographical, such as those written in the context of post-colonial history and politics by Salman Rushdie and Garcia Marquez, are primarily postmodernist novels which deal with socio-historical materials, based on textual plays/intertextuality, parody, irony as well as self-conscious historical (re-)narrativisation. "The postmodern reaction to the contemporary consists in acknowledging that the past cannot be really erased, because its annihilation leads to quiet, but with sarcasm and not innocent."

Magical realism in *Children's Midnight*

Children, Rushdie has rewritten the first 30 years of modern India history, which encompasses the independence, division, war in Indo-Pakistan, the emergence of Indira Gandhi, and power build-up during emergencies, famins, and sterilisations – all of them presented diegically in the juxtaposition of the magical and the realistic to question the colonial paradigms so that the building takes place. As Benny points out, the Rushdie metanarrator recognises "this history, or a large proportion of it, ends in fantasy," because when truth stops, or is perverted or 38 invisible, imagination is the only way of discovering what is concealed." The novel tells India's postcolonial history and interprets its complex and multifaceted reality as part of Rushdie's social-political vision by combining the realistic code through the "historical anchorage" (referencing historical characters, dates and events) and describes the lives of the three generations in the Sinai Family, which are located historically in different periods of Indian modern history.



The Historicity of Text

New historicists think that historical materials like history books, novels, literary works, documents, and folklore are influenced by the time period in which they were written. As a result, a literary work should be viewed as a product of the time, location, and historical context in which it was written. Furthermore, historical events are interpreted by writers based on their personal experiences and perspectives during the writing process. As a result, it's important to look into the psychological backgrounds of writers, as well as the social realm and the books and theories that may have inspired them.

Birth

Salman Rushdie is a British Indian novelist and essayist who was born on June 19, 1947, the year India gained independence from the United Kingdom. India's independence from the British Empire was celebrated on August 15, 1947, almost precisely three months after Rushdie's birth, and is considered the most momentous occasion in Indian history. This coincidence may have provided Rushdie with ideas and inspiration for *Midnight's Children*, as the narrator, who is also the novel's main protagonist, was born at the stroke of midnight on August 15, "at the precise time of India's arrival at independence." There are a thousand more children that were born on the same night as Saleem. They are known as the midnight children, and they are inextricably linked to one another as well as the nation's fate. The newly independent country, like a newly born life, had to face numerous hardships. One of the most important issues is that, as colonial authority in South Asia came to an end, the peninsula was partitioned into two independent dominions — India and Pakistan — and granted to two sovereign governments, generally based on district-by-district Hindu or Muslim majorities. Before the Partition, there were clashes between Muslims and Hindus, such as the one on August 19, which left 3000 people dead, and the street rioting between Muslims and Hindus in Bombay on September 4, 1946. As a result, the time immediately following independence was tumultuous.

Family Background

Rushdie, like the protagonist and narrator of the story, Saleem Sinai, was born into an affluent Kashmiri family as the family's only son. Rushdie's father is a rich businessman who graduated from Cambridge University, ensuring Salman the greatest education possible. He had a joyful childhood and was often surrounded by literature. When he was five years old, he decided he wanted to be a writer and was sent to Rugby, an elite school in England, to pursue his dream. Later, he obtained his master's degree in history from King's College, University of Cambridge. Rushdie grew interested in and sensitive to history as a result of his scholastic background. Salman Rushdie's novels, such as *Midnight Children* and *Shame*, generally centered on historical outrages. Rushdie, like the protagonist Saleem and his family in the novel, graduated from the University of Cambridge in 1968 and lived with his family, who had moved to Pakistan in 1964 after the Partition. Pakistan, formally the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, was established in 1947 as an independent state for Muslims in India. Because Rushdie was born into a Muslim household, he and his family should return to Muslim Pakistan, where Hindu-Muslim riots occur on both the western and eastern borders. Because Saleem was moved at birth, it was revealed that his parents were not his biological parents, according to the novel.



Religious beliefs

Rushdie was born into a liberal Muslim household, and in a 1989 interview, he stated that "Muslim culture affected me more than any other." He was, however, schooled in England, which is known for providing the best Western education. He saw himself as a lapsed Muslim, in a way, because of the connectivity and interdependence of his family and educational backgrounds, as well as the melding of Muslim and British Christian cultures "My viewpoint is that of a nonreligious human being. Whether Christian, Jewish, Muslim, or Hindu, I do not believe in supernatural creatures." And now, like the boatman Tai in the novel, he referred to himself as a "hardline atheist." "I saw that Isa, that Christ, when he arrived to Kashmir," Tai claims. I'm saving your past in my head, so grin, smile. It was once written down in long-lost books. He is a witness of history, from early times when Kashmir was a place of purity to its colonial current. Tai, while being a Muslim, is aware of the presence of other religions and cultures. composite personality in his work.

The Textuality of History

Midnight's personal experiences of the protagonists are intimately linked to Indian and Parkistan national history. It is presented as historic fiction in the backdrop of real historical events. The protagonist represents the Indian nation, since they were both born at the same time, and in his work the writer made it extremely apparent. Something happens in India every time, his nose feels it and he's not comfortable. He experiences not just historical events, but also participates in them. For example, he helps his uncle General Zulfikar in the revolt against the Pakistani government that turned General Ayub Khan as Pakistan's second President. The Indo-Pakistan War of 1947, the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965, the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971, the Sino-Indian War of 1962 have all been historical occurrences. Rushdie portrayed these events and judged by expressing the views of characters. For example Rushdie opposed the Sino-Indian War and felt it wasn't a good moment for war since people still suffer. As a new-born nation, India has a long way to go before prosperity is achieved. However, the President was quite enthusiastic about the war at the time, as Rushdie wrote "The optimistic illness" "War optimism has grown like fat" He also claimed that "this nation is over. Bankrupt. Funtoosh." In addition, almost all the members in Saleem's family may be viewed as historical incarnations. Grandfather Aadam Aziz of Saleem has a large nose. Because of the nose, he is extremely sensitive to historical occurrences. Aadam Sinai, Saleem's son, born during the time of the emergency, which is also a very significant day in the history of India, is a further Saleem Sinai with a history that continues in history. As Riemenschneider argues, "There is practically nothing in Rushdie's work that is not given both an individual and a historical significance." Therefore human experience and existence are intimately connected to history, and they are the incarnations of history.

Conclusion

Midnight's Children's interpretation by examining the history of the text by investigating the period of the author's birth, the family background, the educational background and religion and analyzing the texts of the history by concentrating on historical events. The Muslim and pluralistic identity of Rushdie strongly influences Midnight's children's literature. Personal experience and historical events are intimately interrelated in a such that historical events have



an effect on the personal experience of the writer and on the personal experience of the characters in the book.

References

- [1] Greenblatt, Stephen (2007). *Learning to Curse*. Routledge. p. 197.
- [2] Veeder, H. Aram. Ed. *The New Historicism*. New York: Routledge, 1989 p20
- [3] Rushdie, Saleem. *Midnight's Children*. New York: Random House, 2006.
- [4] Meer, Ameena (1989). "Interview: Salman Rushdie". *Bomb*. 27 (Spring). Retrieved 22 March 2015.
- [5] "Fact, faith and fiction". *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 2 March 1989. p. 11.
- [6] "Bill Moyers on Faith & Reason . Bill Moyers and Salman Rushdie . June 23, 2006 - PBS".
- [7] Riemenschneider, Dieter. "History and the Individual in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day*." *Kunapipi*. 6:2 (1984): 53-66.
- [8] Reder, Michael. "Rewriting History and Identity: The Reinvention of Myth, Epic, and Allegory in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*." M. Keith Booker, ed. *Critical Essays on Salman Rushdie*. New York: G. K., 1999. 225-250.