



Fragments of Nationhood: A Critical Analysis of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*

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ABSTRACT :

Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* gives a fragmented but metaphorical photograph of post-colonial India, interweaving the historic narrative, magical realism, and political satire into a resounding discourse on countrywide identification. Saleem Sinai, the protagonist, whose delivery coincides with the independence of India, embodies the capricious trajectory of the state. In employing the unreliable narrator and a non-linear fashion of storytelling, Rushdie evaluates the development of identification, punctuating the intersection of opposing articulations of history, moderation, and cultural background which come collectively in mosaic bureaucracy as opposed to a coherent totality. This paper analyses the subject of fragmented nationhood inside the paintings via considering ancient, political, spiritual, economic, and gendered traces. Rushdie portrays how the textual content reflects the contradictions and disillusioned screw ups of postcolonial India, without delay noting its monetary divisions, its linguistic complexes, its local conflicts, and its gender imbalances. His techniques, specially intertextuality and metaphors, are present in a postmodernist land shifter. *Midnight's Children*, then, shall ever evoke the idea of a West that works towards fragmentation because such fragmentation is interpreted as, right now, a negation of solidarity and, at other instances, a structuring part of that identification.

Keywords: Nation, identification, fragmentation, post colonialism, history

INTRODUCTION

Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* gives us a fractured and metaphorical view of post-colonial India, blending historic account, magical realism, and political satire to create a fractured however appealing imaginative and prescient of national identity. The novel's protagonist, Saleem Sinai, turned into born at the time of India's independence, and for that reason his personal future is tied up with that of the country's personal stormy direction. Employing this resourceful metaphor, Rushdie examines the fragmentation of nationhood, featuring that identity, history, and reminiscence come collectively in a patchwork of cross-cutting and conflicting tales as opposed to a unified whole. He lays emphasis for the reader to bear in mind the paradoxes and intricacies of the countrywide identification creation process via the use of an untrustworthy narrator and non-linear narrative style. This examination will take into consideration the depiction of fragmented nationhood in *Midnight's Children* in mild of historical, political, theological, and cultural perspectives. The argument will revolve around Rushdie's articulation of the paradoxes, disillusionments, and contradictions that have characterised post-colonial India, primarily based on direct citations from the radical.

THE FRAGMENTED CHARACTER OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

In *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie embodies nationhood as heterogeneity of viewpoints, histories, and doubtful recollections, and as a result it is a structurally unstable work. Saleem Sinai's self is an embodiment of the biological, cultural, and political diversities marking India's post-independence records. Being raised by a own family into which he is not born, after the discovery of his swapped delivery, is a powerful symbol for the instability and production of identities forged. Saleem's announcement, "Thanks to the occult tyrannies of those blandly saluting clocks, I had been mysteriously handcuffed to records, my destinies indissolubly chained to those of my united states of america," (Rushdie nine) illustrates his profound connection to India's records.

Saleem is portrayed in this book as a guy who bears the weight of the beyond, much like a currently unbiased u . S . . The inconsistencies and ambiguities of Indian colonial identity are contemplated in his transition from a privileged Anglo-Indian identification in a few situations to a marginalized overseas identity in others. Additionally, the mixing of various spiritual and cultural factors further muddies Saleem's feel of self. He embodied the many and once in a while conflicting facets of Indian identity, having been born right into a Muslim family, knowledgeable in Britain, and steeped in Hindu mythology. His celebrated strains on the paintings, "Who am I? My reply is: everything that existed before I existed, everything that I witnessed about everything that I did." (Rushdie 380) It stresses that identification isn't always a unmarried fixed point, however a loose collection

of fragmented reviews. Rushdie for that reason offers countrywide identification as some thing constructed thru history and now not as something innate or monolithic. Similar to Saleem Sinai, whose fractured identification reflects the nation's postcolonial conflicts, India is not a in reality understood entity in *Midnight's Children*; as a substitute, it's miles a rustic this is constantly trying to integrate its various and often opposing parts.

HISTORY AND MEMORY: A PATCHWORK OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

One of the essential ways wherein Rushdie builds a fractured picture of the country is through his handling of records and memory. Rather than offering objective and chronological accounts of records, *Midnight's Children* gives active and often contradictory money owed of India's past. Saleem's account is marked by using inconsistencies, exaggeration, and outright lies, highlighting the subjective nature and malleability of ancient bills. Saleem himself recognizes the fallibility of reminiscence in him while he states: "Memory's authentic, due to the fact memory has its very own special kind. It chooses, excludes, changes, exaggerates, minimizes, glory, and vile. But in the end it creates its very own reality." (Rushdie 211)

With this statement, Rushdie disassembles the method used in building ancient narratives to reveal that narratives of history tend to be built on ideological applications and now not always on an objective reality. In the unconventional, Indian history isn't a single essence however usually evolving in order to respond to political and cultural agendas. This is meditated within the *Midnight's Children* personal self - kids who had been born when the U.S. Completed independence. They all proportion a personal supernatural potential. They constitute newly independent India's hopes and goals, however because the tale unfolds, they dwindle, reflecting a growing disillusionment with their beliefs. This is what Saleem has to mention: "The youngsters of middle of the night have been youngsters too of the time: fathered, you notice, by way of records. It is viable. Particularly in a state which itself is a form of dream." (Rushdie 118)

The phrase "dream" holds incredible importance, because it indicates that the countryside isn't an inherent reality however alternatively a construct of the imagination. Furthermore, the novel's very own narrative structure displays this disintegration. Its non-linear, recursive shape which include many interlinked narratives, interruptions, and shifts in time represents the disordered and contentious nature of Indian historic evolution. According to Rushdie "Historical money owed are inherently obscure. Establishing verifiable facts present challenges, and those information may be interpreted in severa approaches" (Rushdie 25). This is in keeping with the postmodern function that history is not an immutable fact, however an open-ended narrative open to reinterpretation.

POLITICAL DISINTEGRATION AND THE FAILURE OF IDEALISM

Rushdie's grievance of the Indian country includes its political evolution, particularly disillusionment following independence. Initially, there had been a temper of optimism and unity contained in Jawaharlal Nehru's vision of secular and democratic India. However, as visible in *Midnight's Children*, this early idealism soon gave manner to corruption, authoritarianism, and social disintegration. Saleem's lifestyles is deeply entangled with these political shifts. Indira Gandhi's Growth and Emergency Declaration (1975-1977) is a turning factor within the novel.

Saleem and other nighttime children could be forced to be sterilized throughout this era. This is the cause among silencing opposition and the destruction of man or woman establishments. The novel conveys this betrayal of democratic values thru Saleem crying:

"One can not escape the constraints of shape. But one has to recognize that shape isn't freedom. Salvation is in the end not possible." (Rushdie 226) Here, Rushdie contends that despite the fact that the nation has completed political independence, it is nevertheless tied to new expressions of oppression and authoritarianism. The *Midnight Children*, who had been symbolic of promise, are made into victims of country violence, evincing a triumphing subject matter of "lost hope." Furthermore, as evidenced by the *Midnight's Children* convention's slow breakdown, the radical's idealized imaginative and prescient criticizes national division. Its eventual crumble emphasizes the problem of keeping unity in a rustic characterised via internal divisions, because it become first of all supposed to convey collectively children from different backgrounds in growing a unified vision of India.

RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL FRAGMENTATION

Religion is a determining thing in *Midnight's Children*, both as identification and as a divisive force. The novel foregrounds the battle among the diverse spiritual communities, the Hindu-Muslim divide that become India's history. Saleem's own identification as Muslim makes his place in a largely Hindu society extra complex. The circle of relatives records illustrates the susceptible reputation of non secular minorities in India. Moreover, the novel is likewise vital of religious fundamentalism, as in the instance of a Catholic missionary who says: "The entirety of present evidence... suggests that Our Lord Jesus possessed the maximum remarkable crystal hue of pale sky blue." (Rushdie 103) This ridiculous statement illustrates the arbitrary and built individual inherent in non secular mythology. Rushdie additionally defies the traditional non secular constructs by way of blending myths and legends from unique traditions, thereby forming a coherent but fragmented revel in of cultural identity. This is the truth of India, a nation that is characterized via the co-existence of some of religions, languages, and traditions that live beneath a condition of hysteria.

STATE ECONOMIC HARDSHIP AND RANKING FACTORS

Midnight's children generally take a look at political, non secular and cultural inequality, however financial variations also function prominently inside the building of submit-based India. Rushdie highlights the socioeconomic domain via contrasting the lives of privileged elites and bad hundreds. New grievance of financial stratification in mirroring inequality in colonial rule demonstrates that independence has not been accompanied by means of the enlargement of monetary rights and opportunities for the majority of Indians. Saleem's upbringing in a notably well-off Muslim own family contrasts

sharply with the struggles of his ayah, Mary Pereira, and different working-magnificence characters who endure difficulty to live on. His attention of social stratification develops steadily, as he remains largely protected from financial problems at some stage in his early life.

However, as he ventures beyond the confines of his privileged world, he begins to understand the stark inequalities that define postcolonial India. Saleem says, "Comprehending one life way embracing the whole thing of the world." (Rushdie, 109) This is to highlight that non-public identity is unavoidably linked to broader societal forces, together with financial systems. Rushdie argues that the fragmented nature of India is not best because of spiritual and linguistic variations but additionally due to monetary differences that preserve to shape everyday lifestyles.

This novel additionally ridicules the non-Russian socialist goals. This has promised monetary prosperity and self-strain to all, however the majority will not lessen poverty. Attempts by the state of industrialization and agricultural reform, designed to overcome the monetary gap, are represented as bureaucratic and ineffective. This is obvious inside the unsuccessful guarantees of the state programs, which gain in a disproportionate manner to the elite, leaving the bad under the situations of worsening. Another essential point that highlights financial fragmentation is the urgency declared through Indira Gandhi, throughout which slums are destroyed and the working class is sterilized by means of pressure underneath the cover of populace control. The government's rhetoric of modernization and development is what undermines the maximum prone residents. Saleem's castration, in a extra or less, represents the helplessness of those alienated beneath an increasingly more authoritarian regime, highlighting how economic inequality exacerbates political oppression. Rushdie describes India such that it stresses the economic disparities which might be the motive of the fragmentation of the state and essentially counteract the belief of an egalitarian postcolonial kingdom. Thus, countrywide independence is described as incomplete, on the grounds that economic disparities still perpetuate dissatisfaction and division.

REGIONALISM AND LINGUISTIC DIVISION

A broken national attention past simply financial differences, *Midnight's Children* delves into how regionalism and the rich tapestry of languages contribute to India's fragmented identity. With over 1,600 languages spoken throughout its states, language plays an essential function in shaping political and cultural ties. Rushdie evaluations how India has come to be more and more divided into labels and nearby conflicts, in preference to fostering harmony after gaining independence. A significant historical moment highlighted within the novel is the 1956 reorganization of Indian states based totally on linguistic demographics. Ironically, even as this become supposed to address linguistic diversity, it ended up intensifying regional tensions, main to competing needs for statehood and autonomy.

The chaos of this example is mirrored in the breakdown of the *Midnight Kid's* conference, in which linguistic and regional differences save you the children from coming together as one. Saleem, the protagonist, embodies this linguistic ambiguity—he fluently speaks English, a nod to his Western schooling, but is also immersed in Hindi, Urdu, and different Indian languages. He struggles to find his location in a multilingual India reflecting broader problems of countrywide integration. At one point, he poignantly states, "India, my India, changed into neither wealthy nor bad, neither old nor new, neither simple nor complex. It turned into, simply, itself." (Rushdie 323) This quote underscores the demanding situations of forging a countrywide identity in a country in which language and local ties frequently take priority over a shared countrywide consciousness. The novel also examines the relationship among language, electricity, and exclusion, with English—the language of the former colonizers—remaining the tongue of the elite, similarly marginalizing people who speak local languages. This linguistic hierarchy deepens social inequality and turns language right into a issue of country wide division. By highlighting linguistic differences and regional rivalries, Rushdie demanding situations the belief that India's independence naturally ended in countrywide team spirit. Instead, he depicts the country as a regular dealer among its diverse identities, in which language and geography upload extra hurdles to feeling a real sense of belonging collectively.

GENDER VIEWS ON THE STATE

The fragmented identification of the *Midnight's Children* has a vast impact on national focus. While Saleem narrates the story, the novel also examines how women shape and revel in national identification—regularly ignored or compromised. Rushdie provides lady characters who embody one of a kind aspects of India's identity, but their voices often pass unheard or appear out of region. Saleem's mother, Amina, and his grandmother, Reverend Mother, navigate a male-dominated society wherein family and social norms restriction their freedom. Their reviews replicate the struggles of girls in colonial and postcolonial India, whose contributions to the nation's combat for independence have been frequently disregarded of political and historic narratives.

The man or woman of Parvati-the-Witch stands proud as a prime instance of gender department in the novel. As one of the *Midnight's Children*, her magical capabilities characterize the unnoticed and untapped ability of women in shaping India's future. However, like many women in the story, her employer is limited through societal expectancies and patriarchal systems. Still, his tale ends in tragedy - others use him, depart him in the back of, and he dies. Rushdie additionally takes issue with how political energy ties to gender at some stage in Indira Gandhi's emergency rule. Gandhi turned into the primary girl to lead India, but the e book shows her manage as harsh and controlling hard the concept that lady in fee continually ends in desirable adjustments. Saleem calls her a "widow", getting rid of who she is as someone and making her just stand for oppression. This paints a photograph that even when girls get political energy, they frequently ought to healthy into structures that prefer men and strict manipulate. By displaying how gender shapes what nations undergo, *Midnight's Children* offers us a deeper have a look at how India cut up aside.

POSTMODERN STORYTELLING AND BREAKING UP STORIES

Beyond exploring fragmentation as a topic, *Midnight's Children* also employs postmodern narrative strategies that mirror the chaotic and multi-layered nature of the Indian kingdom. Rushdie disrupts conventional storytelling thru an untrustworthy narrator, a non-chronological timeline, connections between texts, and self-referential feedback.

Untrustworthy narration and historical inaccuracies

Saleem Sinai's function as an unreliable narrator is imperative to the novel's critique of historic truth. His frequent lapses in memory, overstatements, and inconsistencies underscore how records usually relies upon on perspective rather than absolute fact. For instance, Saleem remembers Gandhi's assassination. This mistake isn't always unintentional, however a purposeful storytelling tool that highlights the subjective nature of historical reminiscence. As he admits: "I instructed you the reality ... The reality of memory ... But I had to mention that reminiscence has its own reality." (Rushdie211)Rushdie indicates that records, like personal recollection, is shaped via selective retelling and ideological interpretations.

Mixing the textual nature of myths with the real global

Rushdie is also exemplar using intertextuality that is to mention he mixes ancient events with factors of mythology and folklore. This writing tool is part of the topic of the unconventional that can be interpreted in special ways. If the storyline is complete of holes and is a made of the creativeness then it can not be taken into consideration real historic activities. Thus, the general message of the passage is that history is composed now not best of coherent information but additionally of cultural and literary additives. A excellent instance of the connection between Saleem and Mahabharata and other mythical traditions is the manner those fictitious characters (as ancient figures) are juxtaposed with the author to illustrate the idea how a national tale may be accounted for as a mixture of facts and imagination.

Metafiction and self-reflexivity

The reader of the unconventional is as if Salem who offers without delay with the readers and comments on the act of the narration itself. This self-reflexivity creates the perception of the proximately calculated nature of personal and national history. He says, "I'm supplying you with my identify... I'm definitely actually nearly a d-signed human being in the direction of the give up of the radical." (Rushdie 533)The uncooked form that it takes is its bodily decay which mirrors the breaking down of the Indian state, making it clear that identity is a private or country wide issue it really is constantly inside the blend of factors. Postmodern strategies have made Rushdie wreck from the conventional recounting and release a energetic assault on the reader that is supposed to shake up our comfortable beyond truths approximately Indian records as well as to make us query reality and identity itself.

CONCLUSION: A NATION IN CONSTANT RETHINKING

The children of "middle of the night" are a symbolic illustration of the persistent improvement and destruction of India. This is brought about by using financial disparities, regionalism, language identity, gender opportunities, and the postmodern reordering of the narrative. The ebook, which essentially shows the multifaceted nature of the fragmentation that defines post-colonial India, gives differing reasons for those factors to exist. Yet, rather than displaying the element of being shattered as only terrible, Rushdie recommendations at the power of Indian expertise of lack. The quick solidarity that comes into play in states, as they exist, broaden and create their respective memories, is ironic. To positioned it in a nutshell, nighttime youngsters notice that the country isn't always a branch as meant, the continued story is the one this is constantly being imagined and rewritten.

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