

THE PARALLEL DYNAMICS BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE NATION IN SALMAN RUSHDIE'S MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN

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Salman Rushdie Has Emerged Over The Years As One Of The Controversial Figures Of Our Times. He Is Admired As A Writer Of Brilliant Political Satire In Regard To His Commitment To Struggle For Freedom Of Expression, For The Speech To The Silenced People, Power To The Disempowered Which He Caries On Through His Satire. His Art Is The Issue Of The Migrant Identity. Many Of His Character Are Migrating From Shore To Shore In Search Of Their Imaginary Homeland. In His Personal Life, He Has Been No Less A Migrant Drifting Between India, England, Pakistan, Us And Finally Exiled. Search for Identity Is One of the Recurring Theme in Rushdie's Which Is Equally Dealt with Double Identity Divided Selves, Shadow Figures. He Has Dynamically Parallelized His Own Life With The Disintegrated, Fragmented And Disappointed Indian Nation With Pluralistic Value And Diverse Culture.

Salman Rushdie Was Born In Bombay In The Year India Won Independence After Two Centuries Of British Rule. At Fourteen, The Boy Was Sent To The Famous Rugby School, England. The Following Year His Parent Migrated To Pakistan. Thus Migrancy And The Agony Of Experiencing Divided Life Had An Early Impact On The Boy's Mental Makeup, Which Is Exhibited In Many Of His Novels.

In This Great Epic *Midnight's Children*, The Author Focuses On India's Myth, Folklore, Rituals, Its Realities ,Is Also Related To The History, Country And The World And It Remains An Indian Work Of Art Which Is Pluralistic Despite Its Inheritance From The Western Novel Genre. Multiplicity Of Events Has Been Woven Into His Life As Well As His Narrative.

His Deeper Concern, With Commitment And Sense Of Urgency For The Indian Sub-Continent Are Really Remarkable. He Presents Authenticity of Communal History Manipulating and Getting Predisposed by Individual's Trial And Aspiration. The Political Struggle And Freedom Movement In India Was Not Merely A Political Struggle But An Experience That Became A Part Of Life Of Almost All The Sensitive And Enlightened Indians.

Thus Rushdie's Masterpiece *Midnight's Children* Is A Novel About Indian Independence, The Partition And Its Aftermath.

It Puts In A Nutshell The Occurrences Of Three Cohorts Of The Sinai's Family Living In Amritsar, Srinagar, And Agra, Bombay And Finally Drifting To Karachi. The Novel Remains An Impure Text Because The Protagonists Are Of Illegitimate Birth And Saleem Has Four Fathers And Three Mothers. Though A Post- Modern Text, The Male Protagonist Does Not Experience Deport In A Society. Estranged Self Is Ludicrous In The Indian Milieu.

Saleem Sinai, Born At The Dawn Of Indian Independence, Manages To Represent The Entirety Of India Within His Individual Self. The Dynamic Relationship Between Saleem's Individual Life And The Collective Life Of The Nation Suggests That Public And Private Will Always Influence One Another. Saleem Sees His Story As Being Of Equal Importance As The World's Most Important Religious Texts. This Is Not Only His Story But Also The Story Of India.

Saleem's Story Travels Back In Time To 1915. He Narrates The Story Of His Maternal Grandfather Aadam Aziz, Who Was An Educated Kashmiri And An Indian Nationalist. He Had Spent Five Years In Germany To Study Medicine. He Rejected The Traditional Ways And Belief In Favor Of Modernity. "This Decision, However Made A Hole In Him, A Vacancy In A Vital Inner Chamber, Leaving Him Vulnerable To Woman And History" (Mc 10).

His Home-Coming Was Looked Upon As An Evil-Intrusion By The Boatman Tai. Tai, Stands For An Ancient India Which Is Changeless, Has A Non-Linear Cyclical History Of Repetition And Rebirth. Tai Brings In Urgent Summons To Dr. Aziz Who "Is About To Set History In Motion..." (Mc 13). The Doctor Adam Aziz Treated Ghani's Daughter Naseem Through The Perforated Sheet Where Rushdie Depicts The Entirety Of India Through The Symbol. The Doctor-Patient Relationship Eventually Turns Into Husband-Wife Relationship. It Was A Prolonged Treatment Of An Invisible Patient Which Coincided With The World War I. On The Day World War Ends, Naseem Finally Complains Of A Headache, And The Doctor Receives Permission To See Her Face.

On The Day The World War Ended, Naseem Developed The Longed-For Headache. Such Historical Coincidences Have Littered, And Perhaps Befouled, My Family's Existence In The World. (Mc 27).

Dr. Aziz And His Newly Married Wife Naseem Came Across A Political Agitation. It Was The Heyday Of Gandhian Nationalistic Movement. A Hartal Was Called. It Was A Day Of Mourning, A Day Of Protest Against The Infamous Rowlett Act. His Sense Of Participation In The Anti-Colonial Protest Forged His National Identity. He Treated The Wounded With Mercurochrome And Did His Part Of Medical Practitioner And Contributed Towards The Freedom Movement. This Kind Of Active Participation Filled Him With Patriotic Feeling And Made Him A True Indian. He Embraced Indian Nationalism And Secular Ideal.

Mercurochrome Is A Metaphor For Human Blood Shed Due To Inhuman Violence Inflicted On Peaceful Demonstrators, Who Gathered In Jallianwall Bagh On 13 April, 1919. The Deliberate Killing Of Innocent People At Jallianwala Bagh Did Evoke Protest Against The Colonial Rule. The Blood Of Indians Flowed On That Day Caused The Baptism Of Dr. Aziz Who Received A Severe Bruise On His Chest. Jallianwala Bagh Killing Took Place On April 13. As The Brigadier Issues A Command, Aadam Sneezes Violently Falling In The Ground And Thereby Missing A Bullet Aimed In His Direction.

Rushdie Links The Two Events To Illustrate The Way In Which Humans Rely On Their Individual Experiences To Make Sense Of Huge, Abstract Historical Events. Sometimes, Public History And Private History Intersect Directly, As When Aadam Participates In The Pro-Independence Riots And Miraculously Manages To Avoid Being Shot. Saleem Jumps Ahead To The Summer Of 1942. Aadam And Naseem Now Live In Cornwallis Road, In Agra And Have Five Children – Alia, Mumtaz, Hanif, Mustapha And Emerald. During 1942, In The Official History, The Partition Of The Country Occurs. In 1942 Aadam Aligned Himself With A Charismatic Man Named Mian Abdullah Also Known As Humming Bird. He Rose From The Famous Magician Ghetto In Delhi And Became The Hope Of India’s Hundred Million Muslims. He Was The Chairman And Moving Spirit Of The Free Islam Convocation.

In 1942, Preparations Were Afoot To Hold The Second Annual Convocation When British Rulers Murdered Mian Abdullah’s Benefactress.

I Start Off As A Kashmiri And Not Much Of A Muslim. Then I Got A Bruise On The Chest That Turned Me Into India. I’m Still Not Much Of A Muslim, But I’m For All Abdullah. He’s Fighting My Fight. (Mc 46)

In The Summer Of 1943 Mumtaz Wedded Nadir In A Clandestine Ceremony With The Authorization Of The Family Members Except For The Mother. Naseem Ends Her Three Years Of Silence, Releasing A Torrent Of Abusive Words At Her Husband. Saleem, Their Son Notes That This Occurred On The Day When Atomic Bombs Were Dropped On Japan.

In August 9, 1945 Emerald Runs Out Of The House And Tells Her Suitor Major Zulfikar That Nadir Khan Is Living In Her Basement. In The Meantime Nadir Khan Flees Leaving A Note Of Divorce To Emerald. In August, 1945 Subhash Chandra Bose Fought A Pitched Battle Against The British Soldiers In The Rain Soaked Forests Of Burma While The Satyagrahis In India Were Staging Non-Violent Demonstration Against The British Rulers.

Aadam Aziz Was Revengeful Against God After His Son Hanif’s Death. Aziz’s Loss Of Optimism After The Death Of Humming Bird, His Disappointment With The New Nation And His Growing Submission To His Wife’s Fanaticism Had Taken A Heavy Toll On His Body And Mind. Gradually His Bones Started Disintegrating And His Body Developed Cracks And Fissures Like The New Nation. Grandfather’s Disease Of Disintegration Of Body Would Eventually Leak Into Saleem Which Shows The Continuing Disintegration Of Our Diverse Nation.

Saleem’s Own Life Story Corresponds With “The Progress Of The Indo-Chinese Border War Of 1962”(Mc 286-87).The Narrative Gives A Lucid Description Of Aadam Aziz’s Revenge And Death In Kashmir Which Coincided With The Theft Of The Holy Relic From The Hazratbal Mosque Of Srinagar In 1963. The Communal Disturbances Which Occurred In The Sub-Continent Following The Theft Might Be Read As An “Attempt At Revenge Upon God By A Father Who Had Lost His Son” (Mc 277).

On January 1, 1964, Dr. Aziz Climbed The Hill On Which Sankara Temple Stood. But He Could Not Enter The Inner Sanctum Of The Temple To Take Revenge Upon God. His Bones Disintegrated And He Died. Then Aziz’s Story Of Reckoning With God Ended Where It Begin In His Youth When He Left The Valley With A Hole In The Heart. Prime Minister Nehru Fell Ill And He Did Not Recover. The Fatal Sickness Claimed His Life On May 27, 1964.

The Elimination Of Saleem’s Entire Family From The Earth Parallels With The Indo-Pakistan War Of 1965 “The Hidden Purpose Of The Indo-Pakistan War Of 1965 Was Nothing

More Or Less Than The Elimination Of My Benighted Family From The Fact Of The Earth(Mc 327). The Civil War In Pakistan In 1971 Brought The Turning In Saleem's Life As A Guide In The Pakistani Army. The War Between Shiva And Shiva Coincides With India's First Nuclear Explosions In May 1974. "The Period Of Thirteen Days In June 1975 Between The Returning Verdict On Mrs. Gandhi And Her Seizure Of Emergency Power (Mc 420-24) Parallels The Labor Of Parvati To Deliver Her Child. Finally Saleem The Narrator Himself Becomes A Victim Of The Sterilization Programme Along With The Other Midnight's Children. Such Forceful Sterilization Of The Private Lives Means The Nullification Of The Hopes And Possibilities Of The Nation.

The Concept Of Nation Is Fictionalized And Narrated Imaginatively In *Midnight's Children*. The Nation Is Personified With Symbols, Images, Metaphors And Tropes And Thus The Novel Has Been Grappled With The Ideas Of 'Nation' And 'History'. The Novel Is Not A Psychological But His Narrative Point Of View Is Typically Epic. Parvati, Shiva, Ganesh, Represents Aspects Of The National Style. Parvati's Power Of Sorcery Appears Real And As A Fictional Character Represents The 'Ghetto Of Magicians' And 'The Conjuror's Slum' Which Is Filled With Fakirs And Illusionists. The Author Has Thus Authentically Emphasized A Proper Linkage Between Magic And Eastern Mysticism.

Saleem Admits His Being A 'Swallower Of Lives' In Which 'Consumed Multitudes Are Jostling And Shoving' (Mc 4). He Encapsulates The Complex Web Of Hindu, Islamic, And German Motifs, The Philosophy Of Maya, Karma And Sufism. Saleem Senai Is The First Person Narrator. He Appears To Be The Representative Of The 1001 Magical Children Who Were Born In That Historical Hour Of The Midnight Of August 15, 1947 And A Great Story Teller. His Birth At The Midnight Hour Brought Him Into Collision With The Political Forces. Padma The Active Companion To Saleem Is Represented As A Literary Critic And Also She Represents The Members Of The Lower Classes. Her Role Is That Of Participant And Commentators Rather Than A Passive Receptor Or Disembodied Voice Of Tradition And Popular Aesthetic. According To Brenness, Padma's Role In The Narrative Is The Author's "Play Out Acknowledgement Of A Tradition Of National Literature Which Is Peripheral Status Allows Him To Criticize Even As He Participated In It"

Thus, Rushdie Audaciously Experiments Parallelism Of Both The History And The Individual Life With The Parody And Allegorical Modes. Adam Aziz, Saleem, And Rushdie By Themselves Are Linked To History By Various Modes Of Connection Through Manifold Relationships Both Literally And Metaphorically. They Are The Metaphor Of Indian Society," The Very Essence Of Multiplicity"(Mc 552). Thus The Private Lives Of Dr. Aadam Aziz, Saleem And All Most All The Character's Lives Coincide With The Public Life Of India Which Rushdie Dynamically Has Travelled

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