



## **SALMAN RUSHDIE'S *MIDNIGHT CHILDREN* AS A NOVEL PRESENTING THE NOTION OF THE NATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Salman Rushdie's magnum opus, Midnight's Children is the novel where we may find the elements of which proves that he has discussed the notion of nation in his own manner. It appears that he has narrated the Nation in its totality all with the characters of Saleem Sinal, Amina Sinai, Shiva and many more. It has been seen that the main character of the novel Saleem Sinal has been handcuffed just like that of the novelist in the history. Saleem is the symbol of this India where the people of so many diverse religions, communities and cultures have been living together which represents the hybridity in its full form. So many things have presented that show the nation in an altogether new light and the perspective that is totally different from that of the other novelist. Let us try to look at these aspects in the following argument to make it more concrete.*

**Key words:** Nation, Notion, Hybridity, India, Fragments, Mother India, Perspective, Metaphor, History.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Salman Rushdie is the name with which we all are quite familiar because he is one of the greatest novelists ever produced by India in spite of the fact that he has been known as a diasporic writer. The novelist has used different themes like nation, hybridity, and history. He has drawn a real picture of India as a nation in his renowned Booker Prize winning novel *Midnight's children*. It appears that he has narrated the notion of nation in its totality all with the characters of Saleem Sinal, Amina Sinai, Shiva and many more. It has been seen that

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the main character of the novel SaleemSinal has been handcuffed just like that of the novelist in the history. He has been directly or indirectly involved with the shaping of the nation as well as the history and story of India. If you read this novel carefully, we can understand that our Salman Rushdie has given his ideas of the nation as well as his own perspective of how a Nation shapes and how the people of the nation react to it. So many things have presented that show the nation in an altogether newlight and the perspective that is totally different from that of the other novelist. We can also find the autobiographical element as far as the notion of nation is concern. In this respect Mehrotra says,

*“Saleem and Salman after all if you look back etymologically kind of version of the same name... so there are clear affinities made... he goes up in my house equals to my school some of the things that happened to me happens in more interesting forms to him.” (Mehrotra, 308)*

Saleem can also be seen as the conscious self of Salman Rushdie himself because many of the things have been presented to us from the perspective of his own. There are so many similarities between these two selves. However, major discussion here is the nation and how both of them have discussed it and presented it throughout the novel. We can also find that the concept of Mother India has been included in the novel by the novelist. This is a kind of meat that has come into existence at the time of the Indian movement of independence. Salman Rushdie has made a full use of this in order to present his characters as well as the nation. Saleem scenery has become the national son and his mother Amina Sinai has been taken as the National mother. She is the real metaphor taken for India. She has readily saved a child when the Hindu Revivalist group has attacked and terrorizes Lafifa Das. With bravery and boldness, she announces,

*“Listen well, I am with the child. I am a mother who will have a child and I am giving this man my shelter. Come on now, if you want to kill, kill a mother also and show the world what men you are!” (86)*

The use of the myth called ‘Mother India’ as a nation has really been operated on two diverse levels throughout the novel. Firstly, we can see that the whole Nation or the wholeness of the nation has been changed to that of the fragmentation where it has been divided into so many parts. Secondly, we can say the joining of the fragments to a college whole. Both these changes have been worked upon by Rushdie verywell throughout the novel which makes this novel a beautiful piece of art. Rushdie has shown that the above two independent India has been split into a new and diverse thing like the different locales for different group of people and also the languages that divide it. However, all these different aspects have been mingled together to form this wonderful novel. The country as a whole and the country in divided into



fragments has been shown by him in order to show the problems that we are facing despite of being one of the largest countries in the world.

Some of the images have been presented by the novelist as he shows Saleem's loss of hair, the mutilation of his finger, and his physical appearance that is like of an old man, a buddha, as symbols of the nation being fragmented and transformed into something that is broken or crumbled. He is the symbol of India itself has just like his body the nation has also been robbed away by its beauty and the richness that it once possessed.

However, it would be incomplete if we do not mention the aspect of hybridity in this novel. This novel is full of this element and Rushdie would be really proud as he has used this element in this novel purposely. Saleem is the symbol of this India where the people of so many diverse religions, communities and cultures have been living together which represents the hybridity in its full form. Being a symbol of Hybridity, Saleem has witnessed a multiple genealogical origin and identity which have been really clear from that of the numbers of mothers he has: his biological mother Vanita, his adoptive mother Amina, and his nurturing mother Mary Pereira, all of whom have been from different cultures different religions and different community yet all of them can be regarded as Saleem's mothers. So, Saleem has been a really hybrid character and a hybrid son as well because we can see him being changed and shaped all through the novel just like India itself. He also has hybridity in terms of languages because he speaks so many different languages throughout the novel. He is really an amazing character home the novelist has presented with so much care and with so many elements that have been compared with Nation. So, his character is really wonderful and popular as well.

However, after analyzing this, we can say that Rushdie has done a great job as far as presenting the nation in its totality where he has shown it being fragmented and also being rearranged on a small scale but the major thing to notice here is the characters as they are the real metaphors of the larger picture i.e. India and its people.

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