

The Role of Memory and Storytelling in Constructing Postcolonial National Identity in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* Novel

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Summary :

Midnight's Children, written by Salman Rushdie, is a must-read postcolonial novel, as it skillfully combines personal narrative with the chaotic events of India's independence and division. This paper investigates the fundamental influence of memory and narrative in the formation of postcolonial national identity within the novel. Emphasising the protagonist, Saleem Sinai, whose life is permanently 'handcuffed to history,' the paper examines how his fragmented, regularly unreliable, memories and narrative style act as a microcosm for the complex, contested, and complex nature of Indian nationhood in the years after of colonial rule. Using a thematic analysis, this paper looks at the interaction between personal memory, communal history, and the act of storytelling drawing on genuine academic materials like research papers and theses. It states that Rushdie critiques the solid or unchangeable ideas of nationalism and historical truth as well as represents the fragmentation and hybridity typical of postcolonial identity by using a non-linear, magical realist story and the natural subjectivity and fallibility of memory. The study looks at how Saleem's 'chutnification' of history—The novel's metaphor for preserving history is a story-telling process that, like making chutney, selects, mixes, and changes different parts of memory to make a strong but different representation of the past. —acts as a counter-narrative to official histories, therefore implying that national identity is a never-ending, fought over process of remembering and narrative rather than a static thing. The results underline the importance of story in forming views about the country and the person's position within it.

1. Introduction

Midnight's Children, originally published in 1981 and won the Booker Prize, remains a cornerstone of postcolonial writing, known for its ambitious scope, linguistic creativity and deep engagement with the history of contemporary India. The novel narrates the story of Saleem Sinai, who was born precisely at the moment of India's independence on August 15, 1947, thereby permanently linking his personal destiny to that of the new country. As Saleem himself declares, he is "handcuffed to history" (Lone & Sofi, 2023, p. 1216). This natural link is the central focus of the novel's investigation into how personal lives interact with, mirror and even influence the great story of a country struggling with its postcolonial identity. Narrated by a protagonist whose authenticity is always in doubt, the novel is a complex fabric woven with memory, myth, and magical realism rather than just a historical narrative. As Liu (2020) notes, Saleem's personal history is "inextricably connected with the history of his own country India" (p. 62), implying that his own breakdown reflects the nation's own shattered experience. Parameswari & Raj (2023) emphasize that the novel intricately weaves themes of "cultural identity, historical context, magical realism, individual vs. collective identity, memory, storytelling, and language" (p. 1515), emphasising the importance of memory and story in comprehending postwar India, the development of a postcolonial national identity includes negotiating colonial legacies, different traditions, and a fractured past. Midnight's Children addresses these problems by means of Saleem's narrative, in which his personal past reflects the country's own chaotic path. (Kumar & Singh, 2022). 'Chutnification', his storytelling technique, maintains different pieces in contrast to linear histories. This reflects memory's subjective nature, which, as Saleem notes, "selects, eliminates, alters... creates its reality" (Lone & Sofi, 2023, p. 1218). Rushdie deliberately blurs history and fiction (Eriksson, 2017), Giving several points of view that influence the national narrative is a way to challenge objective history. (Eriksson, 2017). Despite its imperfection, this subjective recollection is essential for negotiating postcolonial complexity (Mahesh, 2021). Rushdie's broken narrative implies the postcolonial country is constructed from disputed recollections rather than a single entity. This paper looks at how memory and narrative shape and question postcolonial identity in the novel.

2. Theoretical Background

The main ideas that this research is based on come from postcolonial theory, especially Homi Bhabha's (1994) ideas of hybridity, ambivalence, and the "third space." These ideas help us understand how cultural production shapes colonial and postcolonial identities. Bhabha's theory of hybridity is a good approach to think about how Rushdie shows Indian national identity as something new that develops from the spaces between civilizations (Biju, 2024). This theoretical point of view helps us look at how *Midnight's Children* shows how Indian identity is a mix of many things after colonialism.

The research also looks at Benedict Anderson's (1983) important idea of nations as "imagined communities." This idea has been useful for scholars like Lone and Sofi (2023) when looking at Rushdie's work. Anderson's focus on how print capitalism and shared stories help people feel like they belong to a nation is a good way to look at how Rushdie's book both reflects and shapes the way people imagine the Indian nation.

The research uses ideas from memory studies, especially Maurice Halbwachs' (1992) idea of "collective memory" and Pierre Nora's (1989) difference between history and memory, to look at how individual and group memory work together. These ideas help us understand how Saleem's personal memories in the book connect with bigger stories about the country as a whole. The study also looks at more contemporary work on postcolonial memory, like Michael Rothberg's (2009) idea of "multidirectional memory," which focuses on how memories of distinct historical traumas can affect and inform each other.

Finally, the research uses ideas from narrative theory, especially Booth's (1983) theories of unreliable narration and Waugh's (1984) theories of metafiction, to look at how Rushdie tells stories and how they relate to the building of national identity. Johnson (2024) says, "History is always ambiguous. Facts are hard to establish. And capable of being given many meanings. Reality is built on our prejudices, misconceptions and ignorance as well as on our perceptiveness and knowledge." (p. 3). This theoretical point of view helps us look at how Rushdie's storytelling techniques show that national identity is both contingent and made up.

3. Data and Discussion

The main text for examination is Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981), with a focus on parts that talk about memory, storytelling, and national identity in a clear

way. The study looks at important events in the novel, such as Saleem's birth at the time of India's independence, his telepathic link to the other "midnight's children," his experiences during the Indo-Pakistani wars and the Emergency period, and his last act of "chutnification" in the book's last chapter.

The analysis is based on reading secondary academic works on Rushdie's writing, postcolonial theory, memory studies, and narrative theory. This comprises the twenty scholarly sources that this work cites, which give different views on how *Midnight's Children* deals with memory, storytelling, and national identity.

The method involves closely reading certain parts of the novel and paying attention to how Rushdie's use of language, narrative structure, and literary devices affect how he shows memory, storytelling, and national identity. This careful reading is based on the theoretical frameworks mentioned above and is part of the larger academic discussion regarding Rushdie's work and its importance in postcolonial literature.

There are five sections in this research that look at the complicated connection between memory, storytelling, and postcolonial national identity in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. These sections look closely at the text to see how Rushdie shows memory as a place where personal experiences and national history come together. They look at how his new ways of telling stories build and break down ideas about what it means to be a nation. They also look at how the changing relationship between remembering and telling stories affects how people see their postcolonial identity as fluid, mixed, and always changing. These sections show how Rushdie's book contradicts single-story historical accounts and offers new ways to think about the nation that include change, contradiction and variety.

1. Memory shapes reality through a slippery slope of fragmented and subjective remembrance.

In Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, memory is shown not as a reliable archive of the past but rather as a dynamic, subjective, and often dangerous force that actively impacts reality. The novel, which is narrated by Saleem Sinai from the borders of a pickle mill, is structured as an act of recollection, a passionate attempt to document his life experience, which is closely connected to the history of post-independence India. Saleem fully understands that this process is naturally subject to mistakes and personal bias. His notable statement, often referenced by academics, clarifies the novel's viewpoint on memory. "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" (Lone & Sofi, 2023, p. 1218).

This assertion is essential for comprehending the narrative's framework and thematic issues. Particularly in the structure of a country like India, formed under the anguish of partition and struggling with different, even contradictory, stories of its own history, this natural subjectivity questions any idea of a single, objective historical fact. Rushdie purposefully included Saleem's story, which is full of errors and self-contradictions. This acceptance of mistake emphasises how subjective experience shapes identity more than real correctness. Sharma (2013) suggests Saleem's narrative is an attempt "to write himself into existence, to create a cohesive identity from the fragments of his past and the tumultuous history of India" (p. 15, approximate).

National history is thus illustrated as lived and remembered via personal awareness. Moreover, the book investigates the difference and conflict between personal memory and group history. Saleem's story unavoidably focusses on his personal experiences and interpretations even as he tries to record the lives of the thousand and one children born at the midnight hour of India's freedom. Parameswari and Raj (2023) point out that Saleem's storytelling "reveals the varying interpretations of events, emphasising how different characters remember and experience the same historical incidents differently" (p. 1518). These many points of view call into question the concept of a single national memory. Saleem's telepathic link with the other youngsters at The Midnight's youngsters Conference (MCC) first suggests a possibility for shared national experience, a kind of collective consciousness. But this hopeful possibility finally falls apart into disorder, reflecting the nation's basic tendency to divide into conflicting, distinct groupings. The MCC's failure points to the challenge—maybe even impossibility—of creating a single, consistent national story from the many personal recollections and experiences. Memory therefore turns into a battleground where many pasts fight for dominance, hence representing the political and social conflicts within the postcolonial country.

The entire process of remembering, particularly for a diasporic character like Rushdie writing about a nation abandoned, is strongly linked with myth-making. As Pooja Mittal Biswas (2020) argues, diasporic individuals often "retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland... a myth that is continuously

reinvented and renegotiated" (p. 95). This myth-making is not always an untruth but rather a required creative attempt resulting from loss and distance. Biswas (2020) says that for diasporic authors like Rushdie, the fact that they can't properly remember the past makes them "create fictions... imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind" (p. 96).

Memory and myth become closely intertwined; myth acts as the "cartilage that connects the fragments of memory" (Biswas, 2020, p. 97). Saleem mixes historical reality with personal fiction in *Midnight's Children*, hence giving ordinary happenings metaphorical significance. Biswas (2020) notes Rushdie's observation that "fragmentation made trivial things seem like symbols, and the mundane acquired numinous qualities" (p. 98). This implies that the personal and myth-like memories formed from scattered diasporic experiences provide a unique-and possibly more powerful-form of truth compared to factual history, playing a significant role in shaping both individual and collective stories of identity.

2. Saleem's narration in *Midnight's Children* uses "chutnification" to both build and unbuild the nation through a blend of fragmented histories.

Storytelling is the active process by which memory shapes, challenges, and gives meaning to the raw, often untrustworthy, material for building identity in *Midnight's Children*. Saleem Sinai is not just a rememberer; he is basically a storyteller, telling Padma, his patient (and sometimes doubtful) audience within the pickle mill, his life narrative.

The novel's investigation of how national identity is formed revolves around this narrative technique, which skillfully weaves together personal stories with historical events. By doing so, it allows readers to see the interplay between individual experiences and the broader cultural context, ultimately enriching our understanding of what it means to belong to a nation. As Parameswari and Raj (2023) observe, "Memory, History, and Storytelling are integral themes... serving as narrative devices that intertwine personal experiences with the broader context of India's post-colonial history" (p. 1518). Saleem's narrative reflects the effort of the nation to narrate its story after independence, a process characterized by the challenges of incorporating many diverse experiences and reconciling a fractured past. The storyline underlines the difficulty for countries harmonizing different histories and stories as they try to create a unified identity. Saleem's path is a

metaphor for the larger struggle of bringing together many voices within a broken national story.

'Chutnification,' the technique of pickling various components to preserve them, is Saleem's main narrative tool. Liu (2020) elaborates on this metaphor, explaining that chutney is made from "fragmented fruit, vinegar, sugar, and spices" and that Saleem learns the secret is putting "feelings inside them" (p. 63). Saleem's method of history is reflected in this approach: he collects memories, personal stories, historical occurrences, rumours, and legends and preserves them all in his account. This approach naturally opposes large, linear, and homogenizing historical narratives. Liu (2020) argues that through this "pickling chutneys," Rushdie reveals a "determination... to challenge the Indian historical orthodox... and he tries to show Indian history with another version" (p. 62). Saleem's narrative, then, serves as a counter-narrative that offers diversity, paradox, and the value of human emotion in relation to public happenings. It suggests that the nation's story, like chutney, is best understood not as a pure essence but as a complex mixture of diverse, sometimes conflicting elements. Rushdie employs magical realism not merely as a stylistic flourish but as a crucial storytelling technique to represent the complex, often surreal realities of postcolonial experience (Singh & Devi, 2018).

The magical powers of the *Midnight's Children* reflect the many possibilities and difficulties of the nascent country. (Parameswari & Raj, 2023). Rushdie's combination of the actual and the imagined lets him show the deep effect of national events on personal life, hence implying that knowledge of history depends on subjective, interior experiences. Events like Saleem's nose reflecting political changes immediately connect the magical to political reality, showing how the destiny of the country affects the personal body and soul. Moreover, the criticism on storytelling and national identity in the novel depends much on Saleem's function as an unreliable narrator. His acknowledged mistakes, prejudices, and inclination to put himself at the center of past events make the reader doubt the character of historical reality itself. Lone and Sofi (2023) highlight Rushdie's intention: "This book highlights a different facet of individuality... 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" (p. 1218). Rushdie questions the idea of an authoritative, objective national narrative by showing history from Saleem's imperfect viewpoint. Like Saleem's tale, the narrative of the

country is presented as a fabrication molded by the storyteller's viewpoint, memories, and motives. This narrative approach fits postcolonial criticisms of colonial historiography, which often forced a single, Eurocentric story upon colonized populations. Even while recognizing its natural constraints and subjectivity, Rushdie, via Saleem, recovers the power of narrative, proving its capacity to generate other histories and identities. Storytelling in itself turns into a kind of resistance and self-creation against historical erasure and fragmentation.

The diasporic experience, in which distance demands a dependence on memory and myth to rebuild a lost nation, profoundly shapes this story construction. Biswas (2020) emphasizes that for diasporic writers like Rushdie, the impossibility of perfectly recovering the past leads them to "create fictions... imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind" (p. 96). Storytelling thus becomes a vital tool for bridging the gap between past and present, origin and destination. Furthermore, Arcak (2022), in her thesis analyzing memory in Rushdie's work, argues that novels like *Midnight's Children* "rely on and advocate the reconstruction and re-imagining of historically significant past events for an alternative world-making through various acts of memory" (p. iv). This point of view presents Saleem's narrative as a purposeful, creative effort meant to build an alternate world challenging prevailing historical readings rather than merely personal memory.

3. Fragmentation and hybridity characterize the postcolonial condition, as cracks in the mirror that reflect the complexities of a fragmented nation.

In *Midnight's Children*, the ideas of memory and narrative are closely related to the ideas of fragmentation and hybridity, which are important for comprehending Rushdie's view of the postcolonial predicament. Saleem Sinai, the narrator, is a broken person in many ways. His nose is always dripping and too big, and later on, cracks start to appear on his body. He is also a hybrid, the switched child of a Hindu mother and an Englishman father who left and was raised by a Muslim family. He is also mentally broken by trauma and the impact of history. This personal fragmentation is a strong metaphor for the status of the postcolonial country as a whole. As Liu (2020) emphasizes, "An individual's fragmentation can reflect the history of the country he lives in, and vice versa. In this respect, in *Midnight's Children*, Saleem's fragmentation is a mirror of the fragmented experience of the new-born India" (p. 63). India was founded out of the violent division that split the

subcontinent. At first, it was a broken country that had to deal with religious conflict, language differences, and deep wounds left by colonial authority.

Saleem's 'chutnification' of history is a direct result of this national division. Instead of giving a clear, seamless history, he gives a mix of incidents, digressions, and stories that don't agree with each other. This story structure shows how impossible it is to force a single, cohesive identity onto the many different and frequently conflicting realities of postcolonial India. The novel doesn't want nice endings and likes things to remain unclear, reflecting what Lone and Sofi (2023) describe as Rushdie's perspective: "if history has resulted in complexity, we shouldn't try to simplify it" (p. 1218). The fragmentation is seen not just as a bad thing, but also as a natural part of the postcolonial experience. Indira Gandhi's government tried to establish order during the emergency by sterilizing the Midnight's Children and silencing criticism. This is shown as a violent act that kills potential and imposes a sterile uniformity, which eventually fails against the country's natural diversity.

The novel's postcolonial identity is based on hybridity. Saleem is a good example of this since he has parents from various cultures and was raised in a different cultural setting, reflecting the blending of traditions and influences (Parameswari & Raj, 2023). Jones (2009) notes that the novel interweaves India's national history with Saleem's familial history, reflecting "the hybrid nature of postcolonial identity" (p. 1). This hybridity is seen not as a weakening but as a complication. Saleem's self-description as the "sum total of everything that went before" (Parameswari & Raj, 2023, p. 1516) shows that identity is not fixed and is tied to other things. The way the story is put together, with its digressions, shows this hybridity (Jones, 2009). This goes against binary oppositions and implies that postcolonial identity means dealing with complexity instead of looking for purity. The diasporic lens through which Rushdie, and by extension Saleem, sees India makes this hybridity clearer.

Being outdoors and gazing back at home will always change how one sees things. According to Biswas (2020), diasporic myth-making comes from loss and the fact that it's impossible to totally go back to the past. This leads to the formation of "imaginary homelands" (p. 96). This point of view naturally includes a mix of recollection and imagination, reality and myth. The fragmentation is not just a reflection of India's political situation, but it is also a result of the fractured, "broken mirror" perspective of the diasporic subject trying to piece together a sense of origin (Biswas, 2020, p. 97).

4. Counter-narratives challenge official histories by using storytelling as a political act to reshape the politics of representation.

In *Midnight's Children*, memory and narrative work together to build not just personal and cultural identity, but also political identity. Saleem Sinai's tale is a counter-narrative because it embraces subjectivity, fragmentation, and magical realism. It goes against the one-sided and frequently sanitized interpretations of history that the government pushes. In the postcolonial world, when newly independent countries try to create stories that bring people together, controlling history becomes a very important political issue. Rushdie sets Saleem's personal, sometimes chaotic stories against the background of important political events in India, such as Partition, wars with Pakistan and China, the hopefulness of independence, and the authoritarianism of Indira Gandhi's Emergency. This comparison shows how there is friction between personal experience and history that the state approves of. As Lone and Sofi (2023) argue, Rushdie's work aims to "challenge readers' conceptions of nationhood" and promotes a view where "history is an individual experience rather than a communal memory" (p. 1218). By letting Saleem's unique point of view speak for itself, Rushdie informally criticizes how official stories tend to simplify things and prevent voices who disagree.

This political analysis focusses on the Emergency era (1975–1977) as a key point. During this period, which the novel describes in a scary way, democratic procedures were put on hold, opposition leaders were put in jail, and censorship was everywhere. Shiva, who is now a government agent, observes the forced sterilization of Saleem and the other *Midnight's Children* who are still alive. This act is very significant because it shows how the government wants to get rid of differences, suppress other options (the children's "magic"), and make the whole country the same. Parameswari and Raj (2023) note how characters like Indira Gandhi "symbolize the struggles and complexities of leadership in a newly independent country, where leaders' decisions have far-reaching consequences" (p. 1517). The sterilization is the end of the first promise of freedom and the chance for the children to become a country that is varied and complex. Saleem's story, which he wrote after these events, is an act of resistance, a method to remember and give witness to the brutality of the state and the repression of other histories. This fits with postcolonial criticisms of histories that are imposed on people. Rushdie's way of telling stories is on variety and heterogeneity, which goes against rigid ideas of identification and

nationhood (Hassan, 2015). By using Saleem's faulty, subjective lens, Rushdie does something political: he takes history back from the government and gives it back to people's experiences and memories. He says that these tales that are often left out are important for comprehending the country.

Rushdie's main goal is to question official stories. Arcak (2022) highlights Rushdie's use of memory "to critique dogmas about nation, belonging, and identity" and his employment of intertextuality "to create an alternative cultural narrative that contradicts the monologic view of reality" (p. iv). Saleem's story is not just personal, but also quite political. It is a multi-voiced contrast to the one voice that state authority usually uses. Arcak (2022) says that "an alternative world-making" (p. iv) requires rebuilding and reimagining the past. This makes storytelling a kind of political resistance against enforced historical narratives. No matter how many times his tales are torn apart, they still battle against the removal that authoritarian power seeks. In this regard, Saleem's tale is a method to fight against erasure (Saini, 2023) by standing up for his and the nation's story against others who wish to make it easier.

5. Metafiction is a self-aware narrative that highlights storytelling by reflecting on its own fictionality.

Midnight's Children works on a big metafictional level, always reminding readers that it is a made-up story. It does this by using memory and narrative elements like magical realism. This self-awareness is important for its study of how stories shape both personal and national identities. Saleem Sinai is not simply sharing his narrative; he is also writing it, talking about how he is doing it, worrying about how it will be structured, talking to his audience (Padma), and being honest about his own flaws and prejudices. This focus on the act of telling a tale itself supports the concept that history and identity are not something that already exist but are created via language and storytelling (Khan,2024).

Saleem often stops talking about the past to think about how hard it is to get history right. He is concerned in the order of events, the choice of words, and the process of putting experiences into words. For instance, his initial struggle to pinpoint his birthdate—"No, that won't do, there is no getting away from the date..." (Lone & Sofi, 2023, p. 1216)—immediately establishes the narrative's self-awareness. These metafictional momenta have more than one use. They keep reminding the reader that Saleem is not trustworthy, which stops them from passively accepting his

account of events. They also show how hard it is for postcolonial authors to tell complicated, sometimes tragic events using story conventions that they got from the colonizer. Jordan (2009) might say in her comparison of *Midnight's Children* and *Tristram Shandy* that this self-reflexivity is a way of criticizing and changing narrative conventions to fit the needs of showing a postcolonial reality (based on what Jordan says in her abstract and introduction). Even while it uses stories to illustrate its arguments, the novel also criticizes storytelling.

Padma's presence, as Saleem's direct audience in the story, adds to the metafictional aspect. Padma stands in for the reader and reacts to Saleem's account with doubt, irritation, encouragement, and requests for clarity or normalcy (like chronological order or fewer digression). Her earthly way of thinking is different from Saleem's frequently strange and complicated stories. Their conversation demonstrates that storytelling involves both the storyteller and the listener, with the listener's emotions consistently influencing the storytelling process (Afzal,2021).

Padma's interruptions and demands make Saleem explain why he made the choices he did in his tale, defend his digressions, and deal with what his story means. This dynamic shows that stories, even national ones, aren't made in a vacuum; they are influenced by people talking and working together. People are always talking about and rethinking what the past means and how it shapes their identity in the present. In the end, the metafictional layer of *Midnight's Children* supports the novel's main point about how identity and reality are made up (De Riso,2023).

The novel shows how it was made, which makes readers more skeptical of all stories, particularly those that claim to be based on history. It means that to comprehend the postcolonial country, one needs to know not just what happened in the past, but also how people remember, tell, and argue about those events. The self-aware manner of making stories is like the self-aware way of establishing a nation: it's a never-ending, sometimes untidy, and always unfinished undertaking of defining oneself via narrative. Like Saleem's tale, the story of India is always being written and revised (Rather& Mondal,2024).

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* does a great job of using the themes of memory and storytelling to look at the complicated and controversial process of building a postcolonial national identity in India. The novel shows that memory is not a passive record but an active force that chooses, changes, and finally

creates its own version of reality. The fact that memory is inherently subjective and fallible, as shown in this study, is similar to the fact that the postcolonial country is split and mixed, having been formed by the pain of division and dealing with a wide range of historical experiences that frequently contradict with each other. Saleem's emotional breakdown serves as a metaphor for the country's own broken condition, which goes against any simple or one-dimensional view of Indian identity.

Telling stories, especially Saleem's "chutnification" style, turns out to be a very important way to deal with this complicated history. Saleem's tale is a strong counter-history because it keeps different pieces of personal and public history together, like pickle ingredients. It doesn't follow a straight line or an authoritative account. Rushdie uses magical realism to make this process better. This lets him show the complicated, sometimes conflicting reality of life after colonialism and criticize the state's efforts, especially during the Emergency, to impose a single, sterile story. The novel's self-awareness as metafiction shows that all stories, including national ones, are made up. It also shows how identity is always being negotiated and rewritten via the act of speaking and listening. In the end, *Midnight's Children* says that postcolonial national identity is not something that can be found again; it is a constant, changing process based on the continuing, disputed actions of remembering and recounting stories. Rushdie's work is a deep reflection on how countries, like people, deal with their pasts to picture their futures, always pickling history in the jars of storytelling. He does this by embracing complexity, fragmentation, and hybridity.

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دور الذاكرة ورواية القصص في بناء الهوية الوطنية ما بعد الاستعمارية في رواية سلمان

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الكلمات المفتاحية: سلمان رشدي، أطفال منتصف الليل، رواية القصص
الملخص:

أطفال منتصف الليل، من تأليف سلمان رشدي، هي رواية ما بعد الاستعمار التي يجب قراءتها، لأنها تجمع بمهارة بين السرد الشخصي والأحداث الفوضوية لاستقلال الهند وتقسيمها. تبحث هذه الورقة في التأثير الأساسي للذاكرة والسرد في تشكيل الهوية الوطنية ما بعد الاستعمارية داخل النص. مع التركيز على بطل الرواية، سليم سيناء، الذي كانت حياته "مقيدة بالتاريخ" بشكل دائم، تدرس الورقة كيف تعمل ذكرياته المجزأة وغير الموثوقة بانتظام وأسلوبه السرد كمنهج مصغر للطبيعة المعقدة والمتنازع عليها والمعقدة للأمة الهندية في السنوات التي أعقبت الحكم الاستعماري. باستخدام التحليل الموضوعي، تبحث هذه الورقة في التفاعل بين الذاكرة الشخصية والتاريخ المجتمعي وفعل سرد القصص بالاعتماد على مواد أكاديمية أصلية مثل الأوراق البحثية والأطروحات. تنص على أن رشدي ينتقد الأفكار الراسخة أو غير القابلة للتغيير للقومية والحقيقة التاريخية، كما يمثل التجزئة والتهجين النموذجي لهوية ما بعد الاستعمار باستخدام قصة واقعية سحرية غير خطية والذاتية الطبيعية وقابليتها للخطأ في الذاكرة. تبحث الدراسة في كيفية "تحويل سليم للتاريخ إلى سردية" - استعارة الرواية لحفظ التاريخ هي عملية سرد قصصي، مثل صناعة الصلصة، حيث تختار وتمزج وتغير أجزاء مختلفة من الذاكرة لتكوين تمثيل قوي ومختلف للماضي - يعمل كسرد مضاد للتواريخ الرسمية، وبالتالي يعني أن الهوية الوطنية هي عملية لا تنتهي أبداً، وتقاتل على عملية التذكر والسرد بدلا من كونها شيئا ثابتا. تؤكد النتائج على أهمية القصة في تكوين وجهات نظر حول البلد ومكانة الشخص داخله.