

**COMPLEXITIES OF VARIOUS CULTURAL EXPERIENCES
IN SALMAN RUSHDIE'S THE *MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN***

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Indian English novels are known for its various themes, mood, tone, and technical methods. When Salman Rushdie published his *Midnight's Children* (1981) and *Shame* (1983) the Indian English novels took up new form. He was followed by writers like Upmanyu Chatterjee, Amitav Ghosh, Shashi Tharoor, Ranga Rao, Bahrathi Mukherjee, and Vikram Seth. They experimented new themes, and technical experiments in their novels. Salman Rushdie, an essayist, and fiction writer was born in Mumbai and got his graduation in London. His blends myth and fantasy in his novels. Hence his novels are grouped under magic realism. His *The Midnight's Children* was awarded Bookers' Prize in 1933. The theme of the novel is India and Pakistan. He explores various commercial and cultural complexities between India and Pakistan in the novel.

Rushdie was born after three months of Indian independence. After the independence there was a political and social tension between Hindus and Muslims. It resulted in the division of India into two separate countries. This partition claimed hundreds of lives. This political upheaval forms the backdrop for his novel *The Midnight's Children*. Rushdie takes from traditional Indian mythology and religion and puts cultural sources to them to show it as a complete reflection of life and character of India. The characters in the novel represent hybridization and diversity of India. Adam Aziz, grandfather of Saleem Sinai is the hybridization of western and Indian culture. He received his medical degree from Germany. His western training made him heterodox. One day while his prayer Adam Aziz hits his nose against the ground. A few drops of blood spills on the ground. From then he vows never to bow before God or man. In his regular visit to treat Nassem he falls in love with her and even marries her. After the marriage Aziz gives freedom both to his wife and his daughters. He even asks to do away with the purdah. He stops the teacher Maulvi as he gives lessons of intolerance and hatred. He dies on the mountain near the temple of Sankara Acharya.

He also represents cultural diversity of India. He is Muslim, a Kashmiri and an Indian. Saleem Sinai, grandson of Adam Aziz is son of William Methwold, an Englishman and an Indian Women Vanitha. He is also the son of Ahmed and Amina. He is born along with one other child. His identity is switched at birth. Though born for a Hindu parent he is raised by a rich Muslim family in Bombay. His rival Shiva, though born for a Muslim parent is raised in poverty by a Hindu parent.

Saleem Sinai is metaphorically related to the life story of India, which means he is bound to the complexities of various cultural experiences of India. In the first place he is the biological son of Methwold and adopted son of Ahmed and Amina, a product of Hindu, Muslim and English. The same is the fate of India. The nature of Indian culture is multiplicity, plurality and mingling. India as a

nation assimilates whatever comes to it. It also rejects the rest. Saleem too accepts his multiplicity as he himself puts, “my inheritance includes this gift, the gift of inventing new parents for myself whenever necessary” (108)

Thus, the predicament of modern India with its history and its tendency to affiliate with Indian cultural traditions and its attractions to Western values are clearly shown by Rushdie. On the other hand the author also shows how the ideas of a secular India are expressed in the Independence movement. He also shows the disintegration of traditional, cultural and political structures in present day India through his characters.

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