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## The History and Narrative: A Postmodern Scrutiny of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*

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### Abstract

This paper critically analyzes the fictional representation of historical events and individual experiences in the pre-and post-independence India in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) in the light of postmodernist theory. It examines how the novel demonstrates an intricate relationship between history and individual and question and subvert the underpinnings of Indian history in order to provide a more complex, multiethnic, multilingual, pluralistic, and heterogeneous image of the nation's history, culture, identity, and tradition. With its self-referential, self-reflexive, subversive, transgressive, and meta-historical narrative, the novel destabilizes the absolute, authentic, and holistic historical real, truth, knowledge or identity which are represented by dominant power and knowledge systems i.e. 'metanarrative.' In problematizing the traditionally received and unquestionable version of historical truth preoccupied with a single and dominant perspective with universal meaning or truth, Rushdie's postmodern novel redefines history, providing an alternative historical truth by fusing historical with the individual. The prime focus of the paper is to unravel the problematic relations between history and fiction and the fusion of them which are represented from a diverse and multiple experiences or perspectives. By critiquing liberal humanistic approach and deconstructing, Rushdie's postmodern novel offers a fictionalized version of Indian history from the perspective of the marginal with its emphasis on cross-cultural *mélange*, liberal democratic values, diversity, plurality, multiethnicity, hybridity, and fluidity. The protagonist Saleem situates himself in a contemporary globalized world and opens himself to the possibility of the cross-cultural, mongrelized, and different versions of history of the country. His unreliable narrative dismantles the claims of pure, monolithic and authentic version of historical reality and emphasizes the paradigms of the decentred, fragmented, and pluralized notions of Indian culture, custom, language, religion, identity, and ethics. His postmodern narrative tends to historicize fiction and individualize history. It questions history and simultaneously makes a sense of historical events or reality. The history of the nation is individualized and fictionalized in which the interplay between individual self and collective self, history and fiction, private and public life and past and present are intertwined and integrated and dynamic and fluid in ironical, ambiguous, and ludicrous ways. The postmodern theoretical approach is used in the paper.

**Keywords:** Postmodernism, Metafiction, Indian History, Individual, Chutnification, Self-Reflexivity.