

## “DW ATKINSON ILLUSTRATIONS ON MIDNIGHT’S CHILDREN AS AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOVEL”

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### ABSTRACT

*D W Atkinson illustrates Midnight's Children as an autobiographical novel, projecting, grandiosely the 'macro-reality' of national concerns, as an extension of the 'macro-reality' of self. The novel looks at the Indian sub-continent through the eyes of a young man born at the stroke of the hour of Independence. The novel's narrator hero, Saleem Sinai, is one of the midnight's children of the title. Midnight is the point of timewhere the past and the future coalesce in the present and there is liberation from the clock-time. His private, personal actions are mirrored in public events and national affairs of his sibling India; both his life and his health are a labyrinthine tangle with those of his nation, 'mysteriously handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country.'*

*Key Words; autobiographical, grandiosely, coalesce, liberation, indissolubly.*

### INTRODUCTION

The projection of the Independence in the novel is a good example of the application of Fernand Brandel's 'longue duree' view of history. According to this view as discussed in French Studies in History, the historical study should move from surface to the depth, from event to structure and move back to the event - a view contrary to the position that concentration on 'the most capricious and delusive ... short time span' dealing only with major events and front-line actors is good enough for a historical study.

### MATERIAL AND METHOD

To the reader, of course, the influence of the narrator alone on the history of the nation is absurd; as is the idea that one relatively insignificant person could have so much effect on so large a scale. But the genius of Rushdie's writing is that Saleem's position is simply a relatively common one writ large: doesn't everybody feel that somehow he is the centre of all that happens around him? Saleem's story strikes anyone who would like to feel that he is significant beyond the borders of his own self.

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:

Before entering into this world and taking physical shape the narrator summarizes his ancestral past and re-invents his parents. The narrator's inheritance includes this gift, 'the gift of inventing new

parents' for him whenever necessary (Midnight's Children 125). He has very dramatically presented before us his arrival and the nation being re-born. The hourly countdown with clocks 'tick-tock'-ing increases the curiosity of the readers as they eagerly await the Moment. And when he discloses the swapping of kids, readers, like Padma feel that they have been tricked. He too, admits afterwards that he lied about his personality.

Here, the prophecy of Ram, the soothsayer is tallied and applied to every development that takes place. The comparison is heightened when 'knees and a nose, a nose and knees' is made comprehensible; a boy with knock knees exchanged with a snotnose. Children, like India, were partially the offspring of their parents - 'the children of midnight were also the children of the time: fathered... by history' (Midnight's Children 137). Even India, once the ancient golden bird, was now a baby of time. The narrator not only associates his moment of birth with the nation's birth but he makes us accept that even Nehru congratulated him, 'the newest bearer' of the young nation (Midnight's Children 143). Thus, emphasizing the historical necessity of his coming into the world. He adds that they 'shall be watching over your life with the closest attention; it will be, in a sense, the mirror of our own' (Midnight's Children 143).

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