

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

“If I seem a little bizzare, remember the wild profusion of my inheritance...perhaps, if one wishes to remain an individual in the midst of the teeming multitudes, one must make oneself grotesque” (*Midnight's Children* 108). This quotation is taken from the main character's statement in Salman Rushdie's novel entitled *Midnight's Children*. Interested in such statement, the writer is curious to know what has happened to this character until he utters those words. Finally, it is found that the main character undergoes the crisis of identity.

Identity crisis may happen to anyone. Usually people relate it to adolescence's problem. In fact, identity crisis occurs to individual in any age, any race, and any social status. Woodward in *Identity and Difference* explained that identities in the contemporary world derive from a multiplicity of sources – from nationality, ethnicity, social class, community, gender, sexuality – sources which may conflict in the construction of identity positions and lead to contradictory fragmented identities (1). Each of us may experience some struggles between conflicting identities based on our different positions in the world. Globalization is often claimed as the major cause for crisis of identity in recent years. It is because many things change rapidly in this era, so that conflict of importance and the fast movement of roles lead people easily come to crisis. They soon get involved in 'a race' of search for identity. Sometimes we are confronted with the question of the true existence of fixed identity. A big question mark is nagging in the corner of our

mind repeating the problem of why every people search for identity. Some people said that identity is only the imagined construction, while the other said that fixed identity could not be found because identity is always in process. That is why the search for identity will always continue because it has no end.

Colonialization also contributes some significant causes of identity crisis to its colonized people. The image that purposively constructed by the colonizer to the colonized alienates the colonized from their perception of their own images. Labeling, stereotype, and prejudice create its own dispossession and dislocation feeling to the colonized. This condition leads them to the crisis of identity so that they find that it is important to redefine their identity. Mimicry can also be read as their way to re-identify their identity. It is as a part of search for identity. Whenever they are not satisfy to their pre-given image or to their mimicry performance or even to their newest finding of identity, it means that their search for identity has not finished yet. The identity crisis of the colonized happens not only at the moment of colonialization, but it, in fact, occurs continuously until the moment of post-independence as well. Physical preoccupation may end on independence day, but political and cultural preoccupation still happens to the ex-colonized until the present day. This phenomenon is vividly portrayed in one of literary works written by Salman Rushdie in his novel *Midnight's Children*.

Salman Rushdie is an Anglo-Indian essayist, novelist, travel writer, and screenwriter who was born in Bombay on 19 June 1947. He was the eldest of four children from a middle-class Muslim family. He and his three younger sisters are raised in a liberal and secular atmosphere. He went to school in Bombay and at Rugby in England and then graduated with honours from King's College, Cambridge

in England. He grew up speaking Urdu and English at home so that by the age of 10, he had produced his first story, "Over the Rainbow." As a novelist, he made his debut with *Grimus* in 1975. His second novel, *Midnight's Children*, was published in 1981. It won the Booker Prize for Fiction, the James Tait Black Memorial Prize (for fiction), an Arts Council Writers' Award and the English-Speaking Union Award, and in 1993 was judged to have been the 'Booker of Bookers' (special award made to celebrate 25 years of the Booker Prize for Fiction). This novel also brought him international fame. The critic, Malcolm Bradbury, acclaimed the novel's achievement in *The Modern British Novel* as a new start for the late-twentieth-century novel. He has been given to death sentence for his famous novel, *The Satanic Verses* (1988), because it is said to have gone against all Muslim beliefs, but it won Whitbread Novel Award in 1988. Rushdie is Honorary Professor in the Humanities at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. He also has received eight honorary doctorates. His narrative style, blending myth and fantasy with real life, has been described as connected with magical realism.

Midnight's Children is a novel about two Indian children both born at midnight on August 15, 1947, which is the exact time that India became an independent nation. These two children were then switched at the hospital by the nurse, Mary Pereira. The 'poor' child (Saleem) was sent to a rich family, and the 'rich' child (Shiva) was sent to a poor Hindu family. Their coincidental birth with the birth of the new nation made an instant fame. Since Saleem was raised to a wealthy family, the fame then only highlighted upon him. His upbringing in relation to this fame, his distinctive appearance, and his unique talent carried its own

problematic matter. Identity crisis troubled him when he found the truth about his true parentage eleven years later. This discovery leads him to the finding that he is an Anglo-Indian. Finally he realizes that his pre-given image (as the result of his over-exposed fame of his birth time) does not guarantee a bright future. It even sharply contradicts with the reality he faces later. The problem of unsuitable pre-given image, anglophile parents, and westernized environment leads him to the confusion due to its complicated matters. Since the crisis of identity troubles him, he finds that it is urgent to redefine his identity and position on the right and clear place.

Considering the problem above, the writer finds it is interesting to analyze this matter, that is the main character's crisis of identity in the novel. Since the story is closely linked to postcolonial literature, which one of its aspects has something to do with quest for identity, it will be suitable if the analysis later using postcolonial theory and some related theories as the point of view in guiding the research. The study will also be supported by intrinsic approach mainly in the analysis of characterization, plot, and setting. In order to make a focused analysis, the points that will be analyzed is detailed in the statement of the problems.

B. Statement of the Problems

After reading the novel and determining the topic as it has already been explained above, at least there are several questions that could be raised. It is expected to make easier the process of arranging the analysis easier so that it will be a systematic and coherent study. The questions are:

1. What are the causes of the main character's identity crisis?
2. How is the main character's identity crisis as it is viewed from postcolonial perspective?

C. Objectives of the Study

In organizing this study, of course there are several objectives that are desired by the writer to be achieved. The objectives of the study will be intended to answer every coming out question, as it has already been detailed in the statement of the problems, using the chosen theories as the tool to analyze it. The objectives that are supposed to be reached are:

1. The study is intended to explain clearly about the causes of the identity crisis, which happens to the main character in the novel.
2. It is also aimed to reveal the main character's identity crisis as it is viewed from postcolonial perspective.

D. Significance of the Study

The writer expects that this study can contribute a significant meaning to both self and the readers. By analyzing the novel for the thesis, it is hoped for getting a deep understanding of using the novel (in particular) and literary works (in general) as the medium to make a research or an academic study for intellectual purpose. This study is also aimed to give advantage to the reader who wants to know about identity crisis in postcolonial perspective. At last, it is hoped to give a significant contribution for those who want to make a further study about this thesis.

E. Scope and Limitation

Before starting to analyze the work, it is important to give the limitation to keep the analysis later on the intended track. Therefore, it is needed to determine the central focus of the analysis. Since this study is going to observe the main character in the novel, then the scope and limitation certainly will focus on Saleem's character. In order to get a thoroughly understanding about him and his problem, it is necessary to analyze him using intrinsic approach, which includes some intrinsic elements to help the writer organizing the analysis. In this case, using the analysis of plot, character, and setting is considered helpful. Finally, because in any analysis will always need the tool to guide the attention to particular point of view, the importance of using certain theory as its lighthouse is obvious. The writer, then, decides to use postcolonial theory in relation to crisis of identity theory to wrap the analysis, so that it can avoid from unneeded excess.

F. Theoretical Background

In analyzing *Midnight's Children*, the writer will use an approach and theories as a fundamental point of view for getting a focused result. The approach, which is obviously used in the analysis, is intrinsic approach. It is considered appropriate to support the analysis of intrinsic elements in the novel, which is going to involve the analysis of plot, character, and setting as significant elements that build up the story.

While for the theory, the writer will use postcolonial theory which one of its contents focuses privately to identity problem. This theory is suggested by Homi K. Bhabha, named Interrogating Identity Theory. Bhabha's theory is supported by

Stuart Hall's theory of Cultural Identity. By elaborating these two theories, the writer hopes getting an intact definition of identity crisis in postcolonial point of view. Those theories serve a comprehensive coverage for the problem of identity crisis, from its cause, process, until its effect. Through these theories, too, the analysis of Saleem's crisis of identity will reveal the cause, process, and result of his search for identity.

G. Method of the Study

In the process of writing this study, especially because it is dealing with the work of fiction, the writer uses the library and online research. This research is done by collecting data from various books, articles, encyclopedias, critics, reviews, commentaries, dictionaries, and other printed materials from both library and internet which are needed to support the analysis. Those printed materials include the main source of the analysis, that is the novel and its other supporting information about the novel itself, the author, the background, the history, and everything that has something to do with *Midnight's Children*. Beside that, the printed materials also include the approach and theories (especially about identity crisis and postcolonial) that will be used in the analysis later.

Then, after collecting such complete data, the writer will arrange it in order to study it, so that the good understanding about the novel and the problem that is going to be analyzed can be deepened and sharpened. Afterwards, it will be easier to begin the analysis by using those provided sources based on the approach and theories as the boundary to keep the analysis on the right track. In analyzing the data, the writer intends to use descriptive analytic as its method of analysis. This method is

considered suitable to be applied in the analysis because it supports properly the description of the problems which is going to be analyzed. Finally, the next step after making the analysis is drawing the conclusion, so that the study is complete based on the academic research requirements.

H. Definition of Key Terms

In this study, there will be some important terms used several times later. That is why, this definition of key terms section is provided as the dictionary compiled by the writer to help the readers in understanding the analysis in this thesis. Therefore, some reliable sources to define the terms are fetched in order to get an accurate meaning.

1. Identity crisis : in postcolonial perspective, it refers to the condition of the colonized who experiences uncertain feeling of dispossession and dislocation (physically and socially) as the result of a long lasting oppression, marginalization, and internalization of pre-given image, stereotype, and prejudice which successfully alienates the colonized from their own identity.
2. Postcolonial : 1) in literal sense, postcolonial is of, relating to, or being the time following the establishment of independence in a colony. While the denotative definition suggests otherwise, it is not only the period after the departure of the imperial powers that concerns those in field, but that

before independence as well (Introduction to Postcolonial Studies, Online 2003).

2) The term 'post-colonial' covers all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day. This is because there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression. It is most appropriate as the term for the new cross-cultural criticism, which has emerged in recent years and for the discourse through which this is constituted (Ashcroft, et al 2)

3. **Pre-given Image** : the image that is given to a person /race from the dominant authority based on stereotype and prejudice.
4. **In-between** : the spaces that provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity. It also the innovative sites of collaboration and contestation in the act of defining the idea of society itself (Bhabha 1-2).

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK