

## CHAPTER II

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter is aimed to explain specifically about the approach and the theory that are going to be used as the tool in analyzing *Midnight's Children*, a novel written by an Indian novelist, Salman Rushdie. Since the novel will be analyzed deeply, it is important to consider every aspect of the work in detail as the crucial source of interpreting the main character. Thus, it is appropriate to use the intrinsic approach as the main device of the analysis as Abrams stated, quoted in Kenan's *A Handbook to Literature*, that the literary work is most significant an object in itself (305).

The theory of postcolonial identity is used to help the writer in analyzing the work itself, especially on the main character, Saleem Sinai, that brings out the story for the reader. The writer will try to analyze deeply about the main character's crisis of identity. Therefore, the analysis is considered appropriate to use Bhabha's and Stuart Hall's theory about postcolonial, which focus on conflict of identity theory. This theory is hoped to give significant support to the analysis of Saleem's identity crisis from its cause(s) until its resolution.

#### **A. Intrinsic Approach**

The intrinsic elements are to be discussed in order to give clearer and deeper understanding about the story of the novel itself. Rene Wellek and Austin Warren in *Theory of Literature* have stated about the importance of understanding the work itself. According to them, "the natural and sensible starting point for work in literary

scholarship is the interpretation and analysis of the work of literature themselves” (139). Wellek and Warren also emphasize that the first and the most prominent concentration on this study should be directed toward the work itself (157-158). The application of this intrinsic approach in a process of analyzing and interpreting a literary work should be based on the internal elements of the work itself. The intrinsic approach means that the analysis is to include the intrinsic elements in considerations to be discussed and analyzed further in order to achieve the expected results regarding the objective of the study. Intrinsic approach is focused to reveal the message and meaning behind the literary work’s description in its elements. In this thesis, the elements that will be analyzed are character, setting, and plot in relation with the analysis later.

## 1. Character

According to Edgar V. Roberts in *Writing Themes about Literature*, character is an extended verbal representation of a human being, the inner self that determines thought, action and commentary, and behavior (65). It means that through the characters’ dialogue, action, and commentary, the reader can analyze and develop conclusions about their qualities and strength in the story.

In *Approach to Literature*, Graham Little suggests the reader to observe the depth of characterization to the degree of richness or completeness of presentation of character (91). A deep portrayal takes into account the complications of human mind and personality. One of the most important features of deep-character portrayal is the presentation of development and change, especially as a result of the changing personal relationship (Little 91). In *Midnight's Children*, the main character here,

Saleem Sinai, becomes the focus of the writer's analysis. Saleem plays dominant roles throughout the story. That is why, it is important to dig deeply in his character. Since conflicts and other problems mostly overwhelm and linger with the main character, it is essential to comprehend and fully understand about his feeling, attitude, mind, thought, inner-self, personality, opinion, and anything or anyone that influences him, including his surrounding and environment. All of that information can be obtained by analyzing Saleem's character.

Furthermore, E.M. Foster defines two kinds of literary characters, that is "round" and "flat"(qtd. in Roberts 65). A round character is one of the major figures in literature that profits from experience and undergoes a change or development. Round characters are relatively fully developed. From this reason they are considered protagonists, which are central to the actions, move against antagonists, and exhibit the sense qualities of living and adapting characters since round characters undergo change or growth, and they are both individual and unpredictable, they are dynamic. Obviously, round characters are central to serious literature, for they are the vocal points of conflict and interest. They may lead no more than ordinary lives, and they may face no more than the common problems of living, but they are real human because they grow and develop as they win or lose their struggles (Roberts 66). In the novel, the round character is fully represented by Saleem Sinai as the main character because his character lively moves, grows, and develops as the conflicts up and down and as the story goes.

Contrary to the round character, the flat character does not grow, no matter what the circumstances. Flat characters are not individual, but rather useful, and usually minor. They end before they begin, because they are static, not dynamic

(Roberts 66). In the novel it can be found that the character who exactly represents the flat character is Padma. She is decided as the representation of flat character because in the novel she acts passively as the consequence of her position there as the first listener to Saleem's biography.

## **2. Setting**

According to Roberts and Jacobs in *Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing*, setting refers to the natural and artificial scenery or environment in which characters in literature live and move (230). It can have a great effect upon the personality actions and the way of thinking of the character (40).

Setting makes us familiar with the reality in which the character, in this case Saleem Sinai, lives. In literary work, mood of the characters and situation of the characters can also be found out through setting analysis because there is connection between setting and the two items. These two items of setting is suggested by Richard Gill in *Mastering English Literature*. He said that setting may reveal a great deal about the feeling of the characters and it may also show how a character is situated (107).

James Pickering explains the function of setting in his book entitled *Literature* as follows:

- a) **Setting as background for actions.** It means that fiction needs a setting to place its events. Nothing can happen anywhere. There is no event without place.

- b) **Setting as antagonist.** The setting that is forces of nature often function as casual agents helping to establish conflicts and to determine the outcome of events.
- c) **Setting as a device of creating appropriate atmosphere.** The author uses setting to create atmosphere. Atmosphere is the psychological appearance of circumstances.
- d) **Setting as a device of revealing character.** Setting is used to reveal the mood and the personalities of the character (103).

While the type of setting is suggested by William Kenney in *How to Analyze Fiction*, who divides setting into two types, physical setting (place and time) and spiritual setting (atmosphere). Physical setting deals with place and everything in certain environment where the readers can catch the meaning from its appearance. The psychological or the spiritual setting is the one that has symbolic value. Physical and spiritual setting cannot be separated due to the meaning so that the spiritual setting implied by the physical setting. It happens because as the physical setting becomes more specifics and more vividly rendered, and so does the spiritual setting. By the spiritual setting, then, we mean the values embodied in physical setting (39).

### **3. Plot**

Plot in literature is “a plan or groundwork of human motivations, with actions resulting from believable and realistic human responses” (Roberts 51). Once an author has established a narrative or sequel order, however, a sequence must be integrated with human motivation. Sequential order is important not because one

thing happens because of another. It is human response, interaction, causation, and conflict that make a plot out of a series of actions (51-52).

The most significant element of plot is conflict. In fact, it is the “essence of the plot” because in conflict, “human energy is brought out to the highest degree” (Roberts 52). The establishment of tension caused by conflicts thus attracts the reader’s interest toward the story of the novel. Concerning to the development of the suspense, conflict finally reaches climax—a major crisis or turning point in the whole action of a plot—at which the essential decision made which results in the action including one way or the other. Thus, suspense continues from the point of climax to the end of the plot. The resolution is the rounding-off the action, or the conclusion of the conflict (Little 84-85).

## **B. Postcolonial Identity Theory**

The analysis of the novel is mainly related with the problem of crisis of identity which happens upon the main character. Looking at the intrinsic and the extrinsic elements that build up the novel, *Midnight's Children* is categorized as postcolonial novel. Since the conflict in the work mainly discussed about the main character’s efforts to define and gain his identity, it is suitable to use particular theory of identity in postcolonial field. The writer finds, then, that the most appropriate postcolonial identity theory that will be used to analyze the novel based on the statement of the problem is postcolonial identity theory that has been suggested by Homi K. Bhabha through his interrogating identity theory. Bhabha’s theory is supported and completed by Stuart Hall’s theory, that is cultural identity theory. By applying these two theories that support each other, the writer is convinced that it

will really be helpful to analyze the novel and to get the comprehensive result in the analysis later.

### 1. Bhabha's Interrogating Identity Theory

Bhabha uses Frantz Fanon's theory as the foundation for his own theory. In his book entitled *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha said by concluding Fanon's opinion, that he [Fanon] recognizes the crucial importance, for subordinated peoples, of asserting their indigenous cultural traditions and retrieving their repressed histories (9). But he is also far too aware of the dangers of the fixity and fetishism of identities within the calcification of colonial cultures to recommend that 'roots' be struck in the celebratory romance of the past or by homogenizing the history of the present. Bhabha adds that the negating activity is, indeed, the intervention of the 'beyond' that establishes a boundary: a bridge, where 'presencing' begins because it captures something of the estranging sense of relocation of the home and the world – the unhomeliness – that is the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations. Bhabha explains further that to be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the 'unhomely' be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres (9). He said that "the unhomely moment creeps up on you stealthily as your own shadow ..." (9). It is similar with Hall's theory above about being rootless. Then, in Saleem's conflict of identity, his being of unhomeliness and rootless makes him feel that he does not belong to certain side. He feels alienated then goes to the state of meaningless life.

Closely related to the colonialism, Bhabha insists on that the extremity of the colonial alienation of the person — this end of the-'idea' of the individual —

produces a restless urgency in Fanon's search for conceptual from appropriate to the social antagonism of the colonial relation (41). Further, Bhabha explores that the vanishing idea of individual occurs because the struggle against colonial oppression not only changes the direction of Western history, but challenges its historicist idea of time as a progressive, ordered whole. So that, the analysis of colonial depersonalization not only alienates the Enlightenment idea of 'Man', but challenges the transparency of social reality, as a pre-given image of human knowledge (41). In *Midnight's Children*, because pre-given image from his environment is attached to him since he was born, Saleem feels that this label alienates him from himself. It happens since he begins to realize that his pre-given image is really different from his view about himself. Bhabha argues that this condition will lead to some reactions from the self. Forms of social and psychic alienation and aggression — madness, self-hate, treason, violence — can never be acknowledged as determinate and constitutive conditions of civil authority, or as ambivalent effects of the social instinct itself. They are always explained away as alien presences, occlusions of historical progress, the ultimate misrecognition of Man (43). Saleem's failure to get final identity leads him to self-hate and violence, too. It is obviously seen that until the end of the story, Saleem hates himself for not being 'right' since he was a child until grown up. His hatred to himself also ignites by his being different from the other. In the story Saleem is told that he often faces rejection and neglect from people in his surrounding.

According to Bhabha, there are three conditions in the process of identification. In relation with the study of this novel, the writer regards that this process of identification is closely related with the crisis of identity. It goes along



with Bhabha's explanation that the process of identification is shaped as the result of the colonial alienation of the person (41), 'overdetermined from without' by the colonial subject (43), alienation within identity (43), and split representation of body and soul (44). Those causal factors can also be read as the symptom of crisis of identity. In the novel, Saleem also shows the hint that he undergoes such symptoms before the crisis of identity comes upon him. That is why, it is necessary to give a spotlight to Bhabha's explanation about the process of identification, so that the analysis about Saleem's crisis of identity will be coherent with the theory. In Bhabha's opinion, the process of identification can be recognized from three conditions as follows:

- a) First: to exist is to be called into being in relation to an otherness, its look or locus. This process is visible in the exchange of looks between native and settler that structures their psychic relation in the paranoid fantasy of boundless possession and its familiar language of reversal. It is always in relation to the place of the Other that colonial desire is articulated: the phantasmic space of possession that no one subject can singly or fixedly occupy, and therefore permits the dream of the inversion of roles (44).
- b) Second: the very place of identification, caught in the tension of demand and desire, is a space of splitting. 'Black skin, white masks' is not a neat division; it is a doubling, dissembling image of being in at least two places at once that makes it impossible for the devalued, insatiable *evolue* to accept the colonizer's invitation to identity. It is precisely in that ambivalent use of 'different' – to be different from those that are different makes you the same – that the Unconscious

speaks of the form of otherness, the tethered shadow of deferral and displacement (44-45).

- c) Third: the question of identification is never the affirmation of pre-given identity, never *self-fulfilling* prophecy — it is always the production of an image of identity and the transformation of the subject in assuming that image (45).

In the analysis later, it will show that Saleem's crisis of identity undergoes those three conditions in the process of identification. Beginning from his own realization that the pre-given image he gets, indeed, does not represent his true image, then it leads him to a self-depersonalization, which will cause to self-hate, suspicion, hatred, violence, and finally self-destruction. In the end, after undergoing all processes of self-identification, Saleem will come to the conclusion, in which it will be represented by the third process above.

## 2. Hall's Cultural Identity Theory

Hall's theory here is positioned to support Bhabha's theory, so that the full and complete meaning of the theory that will be applied later in the analysis is intact and well organized. Stuart Hall suggests about cultural identity in his article entitled "Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora'" attached in Kathryn Woodward's book of *Identity and Difference*, that identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps, instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation. This view problematizes the very authority and authenticity to which the term, 'cultural identity', lays claim (51). It is reflected in

Saleem's character in *Midnight's Children* that he always searches for his exact identity, however he can never complete this process.

Furthermore, Hall explains that what we seek, here, in examining cultural identity is to open a dialogue, an investigation, on the subject of cultural identity and representation. The subject here means to the 'I' in the context of the novel. Of course, the 'I' who writes here must also be thought of as, itself, 'enunciated'. Hall adds that we all write and speak from a particular place and time, from history and a culture which is specific. Then, according to him, what we say is always 'in context', positioned (51). From here, it can be linked that Saleem in the story searches for identity in various contexts. Because identity is always positioned in context, Saleem's identity will always change from time to time, place to place, and context to context. That is why his way to define his identity in his childhood is not the same as his identity in his teens and in his adulthood, although these three identities in different stages of his life may still have strong connection.

In order to get the specific meaning of cultural identity, Hall mentions that there are at least two ways of thinking about 'cultural identity'. The first position defines 'cultural identity' in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves', which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common (51). In this case, Saleem shared collective identity with his family when he was a child before the revealing secret of his true parentage. The identity he shared with his family in his childhood is middle-class Kashmiri ancestry that grows up in liberal-Islamic family education. To make it clearer, Hall describes that within the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and

shared cultural codes. In which, these provide us, as 'one people', with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history. He argues that such a conception of cultural identity played a critical role in all the post-colonial struggles which have so profoundly reshaped our world. It continues to be a very powerful and creative force in emergent forms of representation amongst hitherto marginalised peoples (51).

The second is related but different view of cultural identity. This second position recognises that, as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant *difference* which constitute 'what we really are'; or rather – since history has intervened – 'what we have become'. Hall explains further about this second point of view that cultural identity is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere and always have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narrative of the past. It is far from being grounded in a mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity (52). This definition is closely related with the main character in the story, who wants to gain his meaning of identity when he feels different from people around him. It happens to him since he knows his true parentage and also since he finds that he has miraculous talent which cannot be accepted by people around him.

Hall's theory also suggests that the inner expropriation of cultural identity cripples and deforms. If its silences are not resisted, they produce, in Fanon's vivid phrase, as quoted by Hall, 'individuals without an anchor, without horizon, colourless, stateless, rootless – a race of angels' (53). In this perspective, according to him, cultural identity is not fixed essence at all, lying unchanged outside history and culture. Moreover, cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification of suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. It means that it is not an essence, but a *positioning* (53). The feeling of being rootless comes upon Saleem when he gets back his memory of the past—after being amnesia for period of time—unfortunately, he soon regrets it because he knows that actually his past is better to be forgotten. It leads him to be rootless, missing person, and a person without identity. For the deepest explanation in detail, it will be revealed in Chapter III.

**CHAPTER III**  
**ANALYSIS ON SALEEM'S**  
**IDENTITY CRISIS**