

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS ON SALEEM'S IDENTITY CRISIS

Kobena Mercer, in Kathryn Woodward's *Identity and Difference*, said that just now everybody wants to talk about 'identity'; and identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable, is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty (15). Crisis of identity, actually, mostly causes trouble for Saleem Sinai's life in *Midnight's Children*. Related to prior statement given by Mercer, the writer finds the similarity of general symptoms between this opinion and the case of Saleem's problem in the novel. It must be something—some unexpected disturbances—mess his fixed or ideal established frame, which has been strongly settled in his mind. That is why, the writer intends to explore it in the form of analysis. The exploration will be detailed into two main parts. One part of analysis will strongly connect to the next analysis, because between these two parts have a cause and effect relation. The first part discusses about the essential causes and reasons of the crisis. Then, the second part focuses strongly on the crisis of identity itself and the outcome of the crisis.

A. The Cause(s) of Saleem's Identity Crisis

In analyzing the main character's crisis of identity problem in *Midnight's Children*, it is appropriate to observe this problem from the very early of the detected symptom. For this matter, the writer finds that at least there are three major causes of the crisis of identity that happens to the main character, Saleem Sinai. These three

causes are over-exposed pre-given image, conflict in family, and conflict from environment.

1. Over-Exposed Pre-Given Image

Looking back at Homi K. Bhabha's theory of Interrogating Identity, it was concluded that colonialism has created a fixed identity to the colonized, which in Bhabha's term, it was called as *pre-given image* (41). It can be analyzed that pre-given image is purposely created as the result of power (in this case is the colonizer's power) who dominates the authority. It is used as a hegemony of the colonizer's position as 'self' and put the colonized's position as 'other'. If it is applied to individual, the power also grants a pre-given image (that is a distinguished label or a determined identity) to the subordinates. This identity, then, becomes unavoidable, difficult to refuse, and is taken for granted. It was also what has happened to Saleem Sinai.

Being born at the precise instant of India's arrival, he gets special attention from people around him. His mother, Amina, has long prepared his birth as the winner of a prize from *Times of India* as a mother who could arrange to give birth at the precise instant of the birth of the new nation. It makes Saleem's arrival carry huge expectations about what he would and should be. Here, pre-given identity has been created to the newborn baby, which consequently, will unavoidably attach to his later life. In this case, people around him can be positioned as 'the colonizer' because they have hegemonic power over him. The position of 'self' is ascribed to these people and Saleem is positioned as 'other'. Since this pre-given identity is

closely linked to his birth, he considers that his birth is very special. It can be observed from the way he describes about it:

Newspaper celebrated me; politicians ratified my position. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote: 'Dear Baby Saleem, My belated congratulations on the happy accident of your moment of birth! You are the news bearer of that ancient face of India which is also eternally young. We shall be watching over your life with the closest attention; it will be, in a sense, the mirror of our own.' (122)

From his point of view in seeing his birth as a special thing, it can be seen that a pre-given identity influences him so much. It successfully leaks to his self, gives a great deal of influence to his opinion, and shapes his character stealthily.

In addition, his expression in telling that special moment in his life shows that he needs acknowledgment from the others that he is important. It is the reflection of internalization process from pre-given image into his self-image. For Saleem, it leads him to be self-centered and self-important in early stage of his life. As the consequence of being born at a special moment, he gets vast popularity. He is his parents' pride and it makes the neighbors envy, so that they were soon involved in 'a competition' to lend the popular baby to their homes and shower him with praises and gifts. It is reasonable, then, when Saleem concludes himself as a lucky baby. He believes that his arrival has a place at the center of the universe, and someday he will give meaning to it all (126).

Moreover, he has a babysitter (Mary Pereira) whose lullaby song imbibes to his childhood-mind and imagination, then creates a strong belief in him that he can hold the world. He wants to convince that it is true and says, "you don't believe me?"

Listen: at my cradle-side, Mary Pereira is singing a little song: *Anything you want to be, you can be: You can be just what - all you want* (126).” Babysitter’s lullaby song was internalized as the fuel of his puffed self-pride. However, such high-perceived self he got, it could not avoid him from perplexity of defining his true identity. But soon, he admits that finally nothing he could do to this confusing pre-given identity as the consequence of being popular. His confession reveals that “even a baby is faced with the problem of defining itself, and I’m bound to say that my early popularity had its problematic aspects, because I was bombarded with a confusing multiplicity of views on the subject (129).” It was the proof that praises, gifts, best wishes, great-expectations, all other things that have something to do with his bombardment of popularity only leaves unanswerable puzzle. It makes him come to dissatisfied conclusion: “but what, after all, can a baby do except swallow all of it and hope to make sense of it later? (129).” This statement indicates the starting point of little Saleem beginning to criticize his pre-given identity. It is just like what Kobena Mercer had stated above that pre-given identity is disturbed when there is doubt and uncertainty. Questions about meaning and purpose linger in Saleem’s mind when he feels that fixed identity that he took for granted is too heavy to carry like a burden. It happens when he comes to older age (that is when a child’s brain gains a significant development, so that he begins to mirror his physical appearance and also begins to compare it to people around him). He finds that, instead of popularity, he realizes that he is not good-looking child.

Observing his baby’s picture, he knows that he was not a beautiful baby. He saw that his large moon-face was too large. He thinks that it was too perfectly round, so that something lacking in the region of the chin. His disappointment adds when he

looks at his birthmarks that disfigured his fair skin. This dark stains spread down his western hairline and a dark patch also colored his eastern ear. His sadness grows deeper when he also observes his temples. It was too prominent according to him. He describes it as bulbous Byzantine domes (123) or stunted horns (124). But, the worst thing of his ugliness, in his opinion, is located on his nose. He has too big nose, so that he calls it as the rampant cucumber of the nose (124). Terrified by his picture, he ignores the ice-like eccentricity of his sky-blue eyes. He loathes his physical appearance and it is uncontrollable when he sees that his babyhood picture exposed his nose vulgarly, because it looks monstrous and it drips mucus continuously. Vexed by it all, he is unable to accept prior great expectations from the other. He loses his self-confident because he worries too much about his ugliness. He imagines that his future will be a dark matter. "Intriguing features of my early life: large and unbeautiful as I was, it appears I was not content (124)." His disappointment leads him to suspect former popularity he got. He assumes that people around him just try to make it up for him. He is sure that everyone at that time actually knew that he was not nice-looking baby. But only because he was born at glorious time and Prime Minister sent him personal congratulations letter, everyone then was forced to praise him. They also, according to him, had a significant contribution in blowing up such pseudo-fame.

➤ Self-hate, suspicion, and envy overwhelm his childhood mind as the result of disappointment. Bhabha explains this condition, as it has been stated in previous chapter that it leads to further result of self-misrecognition. From this explanation it can be analyzed that Saleem undergoes self-alienation because he thinks that he is tricked. Besides, he is uncomfortable with his physical appearance, he then chooses

to avoid his early 'pseudo-fame' by withdrawing himself from social interaction because he is ashamed of his ugliness.

As he grows older, he feels more alienated than before because he finds that day after day the contrast of difference between him and the others (in this case is with his sister and his friends) turns sharper. Moreover, he envies his sister because her presence makes their parents, neighbors, and friends turn away their attention from him to her. His jealousy to his sister, Jamila, appears when he finds that she got more attention from family members. Afraid of losing his place, he begins to use his former special title of The Blessed Baby to replace envy from his heart. By this effort, he can justify his action until he succeeds to draw a conclusion that actually he is still more privilege than she is. A bit relieved, he told himself, "she was my sister, after all; but no prime minister wrote letters to her, no sadhus¹ watched her from their places under garden taps; unprophesied, unphotographed, her life was a struggle from the start (149-150)." Unfortunately, when he compares his physical appearance with hers, he must admit that she is, in fact, beautiful, while he is not. His justification effort becomes dull whenever he comes to comparison of quality of beauty. Seemingly, jealousy and envy are more dominant consuming him, so that he keeps refuse his failure. The action he chooses then is taking advantage from his sister's naughtiness. In her childhood, his sister is very naughty, so that she is called by nickname of The Brass Monkey. It eases his way to defend his self-esteem by using that nickname instead of her real name whenever he talks with her.

Approaching the age of nine, his suffering caused by feeling neglected is rampant. It is also the age when his self-confident is in the lowest state. His ugliness

¹ It is a word from Urdu language, which the meaning refers to a Hindu's honorable or religious person. It can also refer to a mystic person.

troubles him much and becomes serious problem whenever he interacts with his friends. Facing such humiliation, he can only be silent in his inferiority feeling when his friends call him by various silly nicknames, such as: Snotnose, Sniffer, Pinocchio, Cucumber-nose, Goo-face, Fat nose, and Stainface. Losing self-confident and being inferior in social interaction, Saleem withdraws himself from any interaction with human beings. He is disappointed too much, so that he feels that he is simply left away, thrown away, and unneeded. This condition fertilizes the seed of hatred and skepticism in him. It can be seen from this statement:

Already, at the age of nearly nine, I knew this much: everybody was waiting for me. Midnight and baby-snaps, prophets and prime ministers had created around me a glowing and inescapable mist of expectancy... [But] cursed by a multitude of hopes and nicknames (I had already acquired Sniffer and Snotnose), I became afraid that everyone was wrong—that my much-trumpeted existence might turn out to be utterly, void, and without the shred of purpose. (151-152)

It indicates his skeptical argument to all the things that create pre-given image upon him. It also shows his objection to this burden in the form of worry and doubt. It seems that actually he never expect to be born at a special moment so that he gets popularity, but afterwards he is nothing, simply abandoned without meaning.

Adrift in uncertainty, he finds it difficult to bear. He is still too young to think about wise solution, therefore he chooses to avoid the problem. Unable to carry such burden, he escapes from it by burying himself in fairy-tales. By blurring fairy-tales with everyday-life, he hopes that he can simply regard that every unpleasant thing happens to him is just the same with fairy-tales, it is just unreal thing. His withdrawal

also leads him to the idea of hiding himself from the others' eyesight. Thus, his mother's large white washing-chest becomes his choice for hiding-place. His action is as a way to avoid the terrible reality, or as he says: "...and thus avoided, for the most part, the terrible notion that I, alone in the universe, had no idea of what I should be, or how I should behave (152)."

Washing-chest as his chosen refuge is also the place for him to bury his head in dirty clothes, so that he can conceal his ugliness. Because, according to him, it is as a way to forget it, although only for a time. Besides, he is irresistible to face his friends' humiliation over his face. Therefore, hiding in washing-chest is the best way to escape from them. In his opinion, "there are no mirrors in a washing-chest; rude jokes do not enter it (155)." This year is difficult for him, so that it becomes uncomfortable childhood's memory for him.

Saleem is longing for getting attention from other people, mostly from his parents. His loneliness in hiding-place makes him think it too much, so that it is rotten badly in him. On one side, he accuses the others for his condition, but on the other side, he is blaming himself. Guilty-feeling creeps inside him until it dominates his point of view. He feels useless because he sees nothing good in him. No wonder, his dignity raises when accidentally one day he finds that he has peculiar ability, that is telepathy. It is miraculous gift for him, considering how much he is anxiously waiting for something that can be proud of. His telepathy is the ability to look into hearts and minds of other people. Saleem takes it too seriously. It leads him to discovery of a purpose. A purpose behind his given talent, in his mind, is interpreted as an invention of a meaning in his life. Shortly, it is considered gaily by him as defining his own identity. It is as he concludes that "finally, in some way I did not

then fully understand, the door...in my head had been forced open; and through it I could glimpse — shadowy still, undefined, enigmatic—my reason for having been born (162).” His excitement defeats the rationality. He considers it as something to recompense to his parents for everything behind his ugliness.

After being alienated for a period of time, then finding this magical talent, he imagines some nice expected respond from the others. “Now there will be pats on the back, sweetmeats, public announcements, maybe more photographs; now their chests will puff up with pride (162-163).” High expectation overwhelms him, so that he does not anticipate if it will turn to different reaction. What happen next is that he must face family’s hard-criticism. It occurs because he says to them that Archangels have started to talk to him. After this revelation, no one defends him, since they regard it as blasphemy. His mother, sister, and even his babysitter are angry at him. However, their anger is nothing compared to his father’s outrage. Hearing such shameful confession, his father slaps him hard on the side of Saleem’s head, so that from that day he can never hear properly in his left ear. Saleem is very shocked at the reality he faces. He does not have any preparation mentally to face such unexpected reaction. He never imagines that his talent is unacceptable. It breaks his heart and knocks his mental down. It messes his beautiful imagination, which he builds very hard before. It also scatters his discovery of identified self, which defined his purpose for having been born, as it has been already mentioned above. He describes this scandalized atmosphere like this:

...having been certain of myself for the first time in my life, I was plunged into green, glass-cloudy world filled with cutting edges, a world in which I could no longer tell the people who mattered most

about the goings-on inside my head; green shards lacerated my hands as I entered that swirling universe in which I was doomed, until it was far too late, to be plagued by constant doubts about what I was *for*.

(163)

It shows that the incident above leaves a deep mark of trauma in his mind. It also consequently influences much to his heart as well. He is, then, afraid of the idea that his parent's outrage may lead to a withdrawal of their love. It is the worst thing he is afraid of. Further, he thinks that even if they begin to believe him, they will see his gift as a kind of shameful deformity. This way of thinking indicates that Saleem loses his self-confident drastically.

From that day, he feels that he turns to be alien in the world. It alienates him more than before so that he drowns in a deep solitude. Of course, it is unbearable condition for a child in that age. For Saleem, his father's hand, which once hit him full in the face, obliges him to reconsider his disgraceful revelation. He also obliges to abandon his talent, which in his family member's point of view, it is far from being sacred, but it is considered as profane, useless. Therefore, although it is difficult to cover the truth, Saleem chooses to keep it secret. He does it in order to avoid another worse reactions. That is why, he decides that he will never mention the deafness in his left ear because he knows that it only deepens family shame. He knows that his parents had become accustomed to his facial birthmarks, cucumber-nose, and bandy legs, so that certainly they refused to see any more embarrassing things in him. Bearing such miserable matter, he lets himself grow in pain and agony.

Unable to get acknowledgement from his family due to his unacceptable miraculous gift, Saleem does not know what it uses for. He, then, is contented

himself with using it to smuggle into anybody's mind. Of course, it is not good for his growth because he is still nine years old. For a child in the age like him, he knows everything too early and too much. It is like his confession, that his action — sneaking into adult's mind — disturbs his innocence of childhood. "I tell you when a boy gets inside grown-up thoughts they can really mess him up completely (169)." He admits that it is painful passing his days with such activity. He must adjust to this transformation alone, because he is afraid if anybody knows about it. In addition, he is still afraid of the possibility that his parents will be difficult to love him as before due to his disgraceful revelation. He wants to improve his parents' opinion of him whatever the way. Pushing by the urgency of it, he chooses to use his new faculty to help out with his schoolwork. In other words, he begins to cheat in class. In every school exams, he tunes into the inner voices of his teachers and his clever classmates. His marks, finally, begin to improve dramatically. But, still, he tries to do it very carefully in order to avoid any suspicion. He realizes that his action is wrong, but at that time his self-evaluation of right and wrong is blurred by too many unpleasant things he gets in his childhood. So that, in the case of his voyeurism and petty cheating, he gives comment: "This behaviour—not, I confess, the behaviour of a hero—was the direct result of a confusion in his mind, which invariably rather more dubious desire to do what is approved of (170)." Unfortunately, improving marks for seeking parents' praises does not simply change the situation radically. It only makes his parents try to forget about his blasphemy. But, still, Saleem does not feel happy and self-relieved — he still feels lonely. He understands that they will never accept his telepathy talent, even though it is true for him. He cannot deny his

disappointment, however he must hide it. Thus, in order to escape from this situation, he decides to isolate himself from his family and friends.

In this solitude, he concentrates to practice his newfound talent. His inner ear adventures anywhere and it brings him to a very long journey. Finally, this action guides him to the discovery of other children who experience the similar fate. Through this discovery, he knows that every child in India, who was coincidentally born at the same precious midnight just like him, is granted its own miraculous gift. He is amazed by his new finding, which it successfully collects 1,000 other midnight's children. This discovery, too, makes him happy because, for a moment, he does not feel lonely anymore. It gives him a sheer hindsight about who he is and what he is for. Through this slight clue, his spirit to keep in touch and to share problems with them is ignited. It also gives him an idea to make 'a conference' for midnight's children in order to discuss a problem that always puzzles him, that is formulating the purpose of their existence and defining clearly about their identity. It can be understood for unhappy child like him, finding new friends and then carving beautiful dreams together makes him difficult to avoid exaggeration. However, he is still trauma to find another disappointment, his self-defense works to convince himself that this time, his wish is far from empty thought. "Don't make the mistake of dismissing what I've unveiled as mere delirium; or even as the insanely exaggerated fantasies of a lonely, ugly child (197)." This statement indicated that in fact behind his words, he hides unforgettable trauma and he still struggles to shoo away his fear of being cross-examined by the others.

As aforementioned, Saleem is not popular among his school friends. Even he tends to be rejected by them. Practically, he almost has no friend. In addition, he is

expelled from his peer-group on his tenth birthday. His failure in social interaction leads his attention to form his own peer-group with midnight's children. "Having been expelled from one gang, I decided to form my own, a gang which was spread over the length and breadth of the country, and whose headquarters were behind my eyebrows (203)." It seems that he is already very sure to get a better opportunity with midnight's children. He entrusts his fate to them. Unluckily, among them, he is less considered. They disobey him and even laugh at his idea of formulating purpose and meaning. They regard him just talking non-sense. They neglect him without care. He is disappointed so much in them. He judges that their reaction is going too far. To himself, he expresses his annoyance:

...I had found that I was not immune to the lure of leadership. Who found the Children, anyway? Who formed the Conference? Who gave them their meeting-place? Was I not the joint-eldest, and should I not receive the respect and obeisances merited by my seniority? And didn't the one who provided the club-house run the club?...I won't deny I was disappointed. (222-223)

Midnight's children's indifference destroys every dream and hope he builds with difficulty. It leads him back to skepticism, hatred, and despair. This terrible condition only approaches him to the state crisis of identity.

However, still there is one more accident that brings him to the real battle of crisis of identity. It is also rather dreadfully corrupts his self, because it is the peak of every hurtful event in his life. It refers to the uncovering truth of his true parentage. Mary Pereira, the babysitter, reveals the secret about it. One day in his eleventh years old, Saleem finally knows that he is not his parents' true son. It is the answer of his

confusion about the cause of his parents' quarrel over his blood type, which is not suitable with both of them. It was the crime of the babysitter who purposely changed name-tags on the two huge-infants, giving the poor baby a life of privilege and condemning the rich-born child to accords and poverty (116). Based on her confession, he gets the vexed information that he is the son of a poor couple. His father is an ex-conjurer and peepshow-man, and also singer — named Wee Willie Winkie. His mother died instantly after delivering the baby. Like getting a shock from electricity, Saleem becomes numb. He loses words and does not know what to say. "I couldn't tell it any other way...too painful; I had to just blurt it out, all crazy-sounding, just like that (272)."

But it does not stop at that, because he gets another shocked clue. Wee Willie Winkie (no one knows his real name) was actually not his true father. Because from a further investigation, it was unveiled that Saleem was born as the result of adultery between Winkie's wife (named Vanita) with William Methwold (the soon departed English colonizer). In short, Saleem was an illegitimate son. It only darkens his confused mind, because he even knows nothing about them. He never imagines to be put in this contemptible status. At once, he feels to be estranged by the situation. It is too complicated for him to think about what will happen next and what must he do next. It is also unbearable for him to predict about what will his parents do to him, what will their true son do to him, and what will the neighbors and friends do to him. He is in crisis. Perplexity, fear, worry, anxiety, and sorrow create its own storm in his heart. This situation is like stripping him at all until he feels like a human without identity. He is unable to blame himself anymore because he knows that it is beyond control. He cannot blame anyone else, either. Therefore, eventually he entrusts this

matter in despair as a fate, by saying: “I’ve been the sort of person *to whom things have been done...*(232)” Too many unpleasant facts he must accept, too many bitter things he must swallow, until he cannot accommodate his suffering and sorrow anymore. His childhood passes him away without saying. It, then, puts him in unavoidable crisis of identity.

2. Conflict in Family

Detecting on the factor which causes Saleem undergoing identity crisis, it will lead to the finding of his family side. Undeniably, this family factors cannot be separated from the most influencing matter in shaping his identity. That is why it is important to analyze this factor closely until the red line, which connects it to his conflict of identity, can be found. It is reasonable because a family contributes a significant value and culture to the personal inside it. Then, it will show the direction of a child’s development of personality and character. This development, normally, is followed by self-identification, which leads to the formulating identity. From this conclusion, it can be seen that it matches with Hall’s theory that identity is produced by culture (51). Woodward explains it further by saying that culture shapes identity through giving meaning to experience, making it possible to opt for one mode of subjectivity (15). Therefore, family background can be used as one of media to observe the cause of any anomaly happens to the individual inside it, mostly to a child.

Saleem Sinai is brought up in a middle-upper class Muslim family. His businessman father and Germany educated doctor’s daughter as his mother lead him to secular and liberal way of life. It makes him far from religious side, because

although he lives in a Muslim environment, his parents have very little attention to introduce their religion value to him. Once, he ever describes it by saying that his family had espoused the ethics of business, not faith (301). This point is important to be revealed because it has a strong connection with what kind of identity he searches for. In detail, this religious aspect is estranged from him by his parents since his childhood stage. It influences his opinion about the importance and the meaning of religious practices. It is mentioned in the novel that in his childhood, he gives the meaning to the fasting month as the most favored month because his parents takes him to the movie as often as they could. It is opposed to Muslim habits during Ramadhan (the fasting month), in which they minimize any activities that can reduce their fasting value in front of God. Saleem's family habits show that this family determines their life style apart from their religion side. It can also be seen from this description: "There was not much praying in our family (except on Eid-ul-Fitr², when my father took me to the Friday mosque to celebrate the holiday by tying a handkerchief around my head and pressing my forehead to the ground)...but we were always willing to fast, because we liked the cinema" (178). Considering that Muslim population in India is smaller than Hindu population, Saleem's parents seem to lead their children apart from Muslim identity. Undeniably, it is successfully alienated Saleem from his Muslim identity. It is important to be observed because years later, when he faces the conflict of identity, it is difficult for him to mingle with Muslim identity because he finds no roots that unite him with this identity from the beginning.

² One of the biggest Islamic holidays which is celebrated every year right on the next day after a full month of fasting on Ramadhan.

Related with his parent's principle of business in nurturing family, it creates its own anxiety in Saleem's mind. Considering his ugly feature and his moderate intelligence, he worries much about the probability that he cannot give pride to his parents due to these two things. It shows that, business principle becomes an ethic in his family. No wonder, since he was a child, Saleem's point of view is dominated by profit orientation.

It had already occurred to me that our family believed implicitly in good business principles; they expected a handsome return for their investment in me... Parents are impelled by the profit motive – nothing more, nothing less. For their attentions, they expected from me, the immense dividend of greatness. (155)

Inspiring by such thought, Saleem begins to seek the possible answer to that implicitly demanded dividend. However, since the accident of his unacceptable revelation (it has been explained in A.1. section above), it makes him distress. Besides he fears that he will fail to make them happy, Saleem also worries that they will withdraw their love to him. This distressed condition forces him to think hard about reward he must give to them, so that those problems are solved altogether. Thinking in this depressed condition finally leads him to perplexity between good and evil. Unable to resist uncomfortable situation, he begins to think about a short cut way out. He wants to improve his parents' opinion of him by using his telepathy talent to cheat in class. The result is, he succeeds to improve his marks dramatically but he fails to get all his parents' attention to him. However, another anxiety consumes his heart; he worries about the other's suspicion about his cheating. Besides, deep in his heart he knows that it is wrong, so that it creates its own

personal conflict in him. This action, in fact, brings regret and self-hate to him when he is adult. Bitterly he admits that the motive behind it is understandable, but for the wrong way he had chose, he regards it as unforgivable mistake. It is seen from this statement, "This flaw in his character can partially be excused on the grounds of his tender years; but only partially. Confused thinking was to bedevil much of his career" (170).

Even though he had tried many things to regain parents' love so that he can be the pride of family, seemingly he does not really succeed it. Still, the thought of his ugly appearance is the source of his parents' shame, haunts him anytime. He can conclude it like this way because he often hears the quarrels between his parents over his nose. His father, Ahmed, never tired of blaming Amina's father as the one who contributes dominantly the heredity of big nose to Saleem. He will never forget about it for a lifetime. He thinks that his father cannot love him because of his nose. It is obvious that his father disappointment of his face is not only addressed to Amina, but also to Saleem directly. One night, there is accident, which makes Saleem think that he is forever unlovable child for his father. When he was eight and a half, Ahmed (who was drunk at that time) came into his bedroom to rip the sheets off him and demand: "What are you up to? Pig! Pig from somewhere?...*Chhi-chhi!* Filthy! God punishes boys who do that! Already he's made your nose as big as poplars. He'll stunt your growth..." (154). Painfully, he knows that his physical appearance, which is seen outside, is shameful enough for his parents. That is why, he keeps his deafened left ear secret because he does not want to add his parent's shame over him. No wonder, all of these painful facts he keeps inside rotten his character, which later it will become the cause of his identity crisis.

The quarrels between his parents are not only because of his big nose, but it also because of the disharmonious relationship between them since the beginning. Ahmed and Amina were married not because of love; and love still does not come to both of them although they had married for years. Ahmed married Amina because he likes her nature that she loves children. Amina was a widow when she married to Ahmed. She still loves his ex-husband although she has married to Ahmed. Her first marriage ends because her father (Aadam Aziz) forced her first husband (Nadir Khan) to divorce her since Amina's father knows that he is a sterile man. That is why, for Amina, her reason to agree with Ahmed's proposal is for solace and for children. No doubt, this ill-matched couple brings the situation of the family to far from being harmonious. Even, when they have children, Ahmed is less enthusiastic in welcoming the children's presence to the world. Since Saleem often saw his father always in bad-mood, he never gets a good image about his father even until he is adult. Instead of hating his father, Saleem dominantly regards Ahmed's lack of love to him as his guilt. It can be observed from his analysis about the cause of his father's bad-tempered: "Ahmed Sinai never forgave his son for breaking his toe...Because, with my birth, everything changed for Ahmed Sinai. His position in the household was undermined by my coming...My father was a self-important man" (130). Ahmed's disappointment for losing his dominant role in family due to his son's birth actually is also caused by his wife's reducing attention from him to their son. This condition leads Ahmed to release his stress to whisky. His untamed anger to his wife's preoccupation with her child brings him to the idea of flirting with his secretaries. From this, it can be predicted that the family's building begins to decay.

In addition, it is getting worse when Ahmed's business leads to downfall due to mismanagement and Ahmed's carelessness as the effect of his drinking habit.

The disturbance of family's harmony certainly effects Saleem's psychological development. The feeling of being rejected and alienated overwhelm his childhood mind and heart. He is more than sad, even it can be categorized as depressed. His merry period of childhood is lost as the family's happiness is gone. His guilt deepens when his father begins to stay away from family gathering. Although Ahmed never shows a proper affection to him, Saleem finds its hard to resist his father withdrawal. Beside that, although he never feels to be loved by his parents, but he never expects a family disintegration. His disappointment to his father's retreat is described sadly as follows:

The ritual of our home began to decay...But a more depressing indication of his withdrawal from family life was that he rarely told us bedtime stories any more, and when he did we didn't enjoy them, because they had become ill-imagined and unconvincing. Their subject-matter was still the same, princes goblins flying horses and adventures in magic lands, but in his perfunctory voice we could hear the creaks and groan of a rusting, decayed imagination. (198)

Deep in his heart, Saleem actually loves his father no matter what he gets. It is obvious because he feels terribly missing his father's presence after such withdrawal from family life. This disappointment then leads Saleem to unhappy childhood, which it finally makes him pessimistic and skeptic to any affection.

Saleem's disappointment actually is not only addressed to his father, but also to his mother. Incidentally, one day when he was ten years old, he reveals his

mother's contact with her ex-husband. From this, he knows that his mother's love to her ex-husband is still undimmed. Hideously, he follows his mother's rendezvous with Nadir Khan. Finally he must bear witnessing unexpected scene which frames his mother with another man. Although he knows that the family situation is getting worse due to his father's withdrawal, he never expects his mother to do such disappointing thing. Anger, hatred, and agony fill his heart. He cannot accept his mother's unfaithfulness to his father. Even though he tries hard to understand her mother's motive, but still, he finds it difficult to forgive her. Consumed by unleashed anger, Saleem begins to think about revenge. His inner heart's voice reveals this matter: "Perhaps she did it because of the growing impoverishment of her own life; but at the age of ten I wasn't disposed to be sympathetic; and in my own way, I began to dream of revenge" (213). For a period of time he still can manage his vengeance spirit. However, it is just like a time bomb, which can explode anytime when the situation forces him to do an action. Such way of thinking ruins his innocence, so that his childhood's natural character is messed badly. Saleem, in his very young age, already lost his purity. No wonder, in adolescent period, he gets more conflicts and finally meets his crisis state.

Saleem feels more alienated after the accident at school which causes his middle finger bleeding. By spilling blood, his unmatched blood type with his parents is revealed. It creates another quarrel between his parents over his blood. In his confusion, Saleem heard his father's statement that he is not his father's son. Ahmed also accuses Amina of committing adultery. But, on the other side, Amina swears and claims that she is faithful and Saleem is really their son. This quarrel resolves to

send Saleem to his uncle's home. Unable to comprehend the problem, Saleem perceives it as rejection. It hurts him badly.

I had guessed, of course, that there were one question I must never ask; that I had been loaned out...for some indefinite period; and that when my parents wanted me back, they would send for me. When, or even if: because I blamed myself not a little for my banishment. Had I not inflicted upon myself one more deformity to add to bandylegs cucumernose horntemples staincheeks? Was it not possible that my mutilated finger had been...for my long suffering parents, the last straw? That I was no longer a good business risk, no longer worth the investment of their love and protection? (234)

It means that parents' decision to refuge him to uncle's house only makes him suffer more than ever. This action, too, only makes Saleem's psychological condition get worse. Even if, when his parents' quarrel soothes away and Saleem goes home again, he finds that everything has changed. His presence is no longer noticed by his parents. "In the first place, my father seemed to want nothing more to do with me, an attitude of mind which I found hurtful but (considering my mutilated body) entirely understandable" (246). It is his sister, who receives the biggest attention and love from their parents now. Although there is jealousy in his heart, but he does not complain at all. He thinks it as a chance for him to adjust himself to be mature. However, he admits that it is difficult for him, so that he welcomes his puberty with gloomy atmosphere because he does not like the consequences. He cannot erase his perception that all this change happens because his parents no longer have any interest in him. He is obliged to admit to himself: "my parents' apparent loss of

interest in me should have given me a greater measure of freedom; but I was mesmerized by the transformations which were taking place in every aspect of my life, and fun, in such circumstances, seemed hard to have” (247). It makes him think that he is alone. He perceives it as the sign that he should do anything by himself onwards. He knows that he cannot expect his parents’ attention anymore because he realizes that nothing from him can be proud of.

During his staying at his uncle’s house, he learns to love his uncle (Hanif Aziz) and aunt (Pia). He wants to reward them for their kindness in offering love and affection when he feels so wretched. He tries hard to be a good nephew just like a good son to Hanif. To Pia, he makes a strong effort to behave as obedient as possible. Saleem admires his aunt so much because she shows a real affection to him. That is why it is upsetting him when he sees his aunt grieve and hurt due to the other man. Because of it, his uncle’s marriage is messed and his uncle gets depressed until he finally commits suicide. Saleem, who has ever been possessed by the desire to take revenge, once again sees that unfaithfulness leads to misery. He has ever witnessed it on his mother. Now he sees it breaks his aunt’s life. Triggering by such situation, he resolves to take his real vengeance. He does not deny that too much hatred piles in his heart, so that he calls it as driven by his demon when he is able to do the most evil thing. His revenge is aimed to Homi Catrack (the man who disturbs his aunt’s household), Lila Sabarmati (Pia’s rival; Homi’s new fancy woman), and his own mother. His revenge is done by sending his secret unknown letter to Lila’s husband (Commander Sabarmati). It is Mr. Sabarmati himself who does the rest of Saleem’s revenge. It is told that driven by jealousy, Commander Sabarmati shoots Homi and Lila. Homi is dead, but Lila is saved. Soon this action attracts public attention, so that

it becomes a scandal and the hottest affair in newspapers and televisions. But Saleem's contribution is unrevealed because he does it by imitating the action of the snake; he strikes from the cover of a bush, so that he is secret. Commenting on his successful action, he is not too proud of it. It is because fear and guilt turns to overwhelm his heart. "No, I am no longer proud of what I did; but remember that my demon of revenge had two heads. By unmasking the perfidy of Lila Sabarmati, I hoped also to administer a salutary shock to my own mother...I only wanted to...a scandal, yes, a scare, a lesson to all unfaithful wives and mothers (253-255)." From the description above, it can be seen how hatred ruins Saleem's childhood's heart, so that his character is already messed up by revenge. It seems his crisis is not far anymore.

As it had been explained above, that Saleem's baby sitter's revelation that uncovers his true parentage has a deep impact on him. He is psychologically wounded, so that his self comes to crisis condition. It can be concluded that the revelation brings him to face double fears. First, he fears if the Sinais will expel him to the streets. Second, he is afraid that Shiva (the Sinais' true son) will discover the truth and claim his position in the family. His anxiety to the first possibility seems a bit reduced by observing his parents' reaction after the revelation. Certainly, their life will never be the same again. There must be some adjustments to new situation. There is also a relationship to rebuild: between mother and son, between father and son, and between brother and sister. However, although his mother and sister tries hard to break the numbness of relationship between them and Saleem, he still feels that there is a distance behind their gentleness. He tries to express what he exactly feels by giving his opinion like this way: "It was my sense of this gap which showed

me that, despite their use of *son* and *brother*, their imaginations were working hard to assimilate Mary's confession; not knowing then that they would be unable to succeed in their re-imaginings of *brother* and *son*" (278). While for Saleem's second worry, he can feel a bit relieved because he finds that never once to his knowledge in all the time since Mary Pereira's revelations, his parents set out to look for the true son of their blood. To himself, he says that he remains their son because they cannot imagine him out of role. Still, Saleem cannot erase a pang in his heart due to the discovery of his true status. It causes him to be more aloof and gloomy. In the midst of uncertainty feelings, he withdraws from them into his secret world due to his fearing of their possibility of hatred. Worse, he does not admit the possibility that their love is stronger than his ugliness, or even stronger than blood. Saleem feels, at a time, unidentified. It is the feeling that comes to a person in which he feels himself as a person without identity. In *Location of Culture*, Bhabha categorizes this condition as a missing person or invisible man. This condition, too, usually leads a person to search for his identity. It also happens to Saleem, after experiencing many pressures, he resolves to search for his identity. It can be read as the sign that identity crisis has come.

3. Conflict from Environment

Hall argues that culture produces identity and environment has an essential role to shape identity. It means that undeniably environment is a determined medium, which has a function to give an identity a room to grow, develop, and change dynamically. To trace the factors that bring Saleem to identity crisis, it is needed to observe the environment where he lives and interacts with other people. It has been

studied that there are at least three kind of environment which has the biggest influence to his character and personality. Those three environments consist of neighborhood with all its customs, school with all its rules, and setting of places with all its cultures.

Saleem's childhood is spent mostly at his house in an estate formerly possessed by William Methwold, a departing Englishman. The estate (onwards it will be called Methwold's Estate) is designed in four identical houses in a style befitting their original residents. It is a large, durable mansions with red gabled roofs and turret towers in each corner, ivory-white corner towers wearing pointy red-tiles hats. It is also houses which their owner, William Methwold, had named majestically after the palaces of Europe: Versailles Villa, Buckingham Villa, Escorial Villa, and Sans Souci. Bougainvillaea creeps across them; goldfish swims in pale blue pools; cacti grows in rock-gardens; tiny touch-me-not plants huddles beneath tamarind trees; there are butterflies and roses and cane chairs on the lawns (94-95). The Sinais occupies Buckingham Villa. From the description about the house and its surroundings, it can be seen that since childhood, he used to live in a European model of house. Meticulously, it also can be read as the colonial influence which tries to leak stealthily into Indian life, particularly into Saleem's family and the neighbors.

Furthermore, the estate is not sold just as an empty building by Mr. Methwold. There are conditions prescribed by William Methwold that must be fulfilled by the buyers. He wants that the houses be bought complete with every last thing in them, so that the entire contents are retained by the new owners. Methwold also wishes that the custom, which is already practiced for years by the former

owner, should be continued by the new owners. This custom is including the cocktail hour every evening in the garden. From that proposition, it can be seen how the colonial tries to westernize the colonizer through the introduction to western culture, which further it is aimed to form the colonizer opinion that it is a better way to live in modern and civilized life as the colonial.

Saleem's father is an anglophile. He praises and worships everything about English which he thinks is more privilege than his own culture. No wonder, he welcomes Mr. Methwold's requirements warmly. He even tries to imitate English accent as best as he could in order to charm William Methwold. When Amina protests about the former owner's goods, Ahmed even put his position on the Englishman's side by saying that Mr. Methwold is a fine man; a person of breeding; a man of honour (96). When Amina reminds Ahmed that the Englishmen's habits are not always good, Ahmed snaps her, "So what? Mr. Methwold is a little eccentric, that's all – can we not humour him? With our ancient civilization, can we not be as civilized as he?" (98). So, it is it, Saleem is brought up in a family which loves to live as Englishmen. Ironically, William Methwold is Saleem's real father. But in later years, Saleem still confuses about his identity. He does not know, whether he must mingle with English identity or Indian identity. While his heart says that he does not fit for both. In this case, the binary opposition of self-other can be seen clearly and explicitly. William Methwold represents directly the colonizer position who is still keeping his preoccupation over the estate's residence. He is ascribed 'self' position and the estate's residence is considered as 'other'. Focusing on Saleem's position, he is forever tainted to the position as 'other' when Mr. Methwold, his anglophile father, and his westernized environment is interpreted as 'self'.

Meanwhile, the situation which is conditioned by William Methwold, begins to take its turn to change the people in the Estate. They, who at first objects the things and the customs to fit with, finally comes to term with it in a short time.

Things are settling down, the sharp edges of thing are getting blurred, so they have all failed to notice what is happening: the Estate, Methwold's Estate, is changing them. Every evening at six they are out in their gardens, celebrating the cocktail hour, and when William Methwold comes to call they slip effortlessly into their imitation Oxford draws; and they are learning, about ceiling fans and gas cookers and the correct diet for budgerigars, and Methwold, supervising their transformation, is mumbling under his breath... All is well. (98)

The transformation happens to the dwellers of Methwold Estate, in Bhabha's term is to be called as mimicry. It is the effort to imitate the colonizer's live and culture in order to get an acknowledgment of self-presence and self-actualization from the colonizer, which in this case, they consider the colonizer is more privilege than they are. It can also be analyzed as the colonizer's effort to alienate and estrange them from their own identity. It is done in order to ease the colonizer to control the colonized who are kept in his inferiority. It is similar to William Methwold has done to the dwellers of the Estate. Although he must depart from India land immediately, he is satisfied enough to make a change in Methwold's Estate. By making such transformation, he never feels defeated. Unable to occupy the land forever, he already succeeds to occupy its people's culture. That is why, when he sees that the transformation is done according to his wish, then he says that all is well.

The transformation also leads to another impact. It created a kind of dependence. Because all that foreign customs are already a habit (like the cocktail hour), it is too powerful to be broken although there is no presence of the Englishman anymore. Some of them even fall in love with the goods they get. Lila Sabarmati preserves her piano. Old man Ibrahim comes to terms with ceiling-fans. Ahmed Sinai keeps his whisky-cabinet. By preserving it, Saleem's father discovers the delights of fine Scotch whisky. Beginning from the introduction to this new pleasure, Saleem finally has an alcoholic father in his childhood. Methwold's Estate with its variation to the dwellers leads Saleem to a blurred idea of identity. The result is, he finds that he and his neighbors are not westerners, but also not quite Indians.

The factors that estrange Saleem from his Indian identity actually do not only obtain from his house and neighborhood. It also comes from the institution of school, which his parents have already chose for his education place. As it has been explained above, Saleem's parents are categorized in a middle-upper class social status in society. At any rate, they always want the best quality product no matter what mission or background lies behind that product. This principle is also applied in choosing education institution for the children. In addition, the Sinais are not quite paying attention to the religion, so that they register Saleem to a Christian school. When Saleem is approaching his nine years old, he begins to attend the Cathedral and John Cannon Boy's High School. Again, it is an institution which was built by the colonial government. The choice of the school cannot be separated from the contribution of the Sinais' anglophile.

Taking education at Christian institution, Saleem consequently must follow the school rules and curriculum regardless of his genuine belief and religion. For

example, every Wednesday morning, there is Optional Cathedral to attend. There is also the event of the Cathedral School Social where Saleem is introduced to dance the box-step and the Mexican Hat with European girls from his school's sister institution. All of this school rules and customs make Saleem come to such familiarity with European culture, and at the same time, it also makes him alienate from Indian culture, especially its Muslim culture.

Another sign that indicates Saleem tendency to be anglophile is his admiration to Hollywood movie stars when he was merely a child. His most favorite movie stars are Robert Taylor, Jay Silverheels, and Clayton Moore (178). Since his parents often take him to watch movie, his likeness to western stars also grows. It creates a measurement in his mind about the standard of beauty. The little Saleem argues that the most beautiful appearance in the world is possessed by westerners. No wonder, it influences his experience of love. His first love is addressed to Evelyn Lilith Burns, an American girl. Even though only lasts for six months, his love to her able to push him to suck into a grotesque mimicry of European literature (182) in order to impress her through his broaden knowledge about it.

Most of his childhood is spent in India. He is already accustomed to a metropolitan life in Bombay. Therefore, when his parents resolves to move to Karachi, Pakistan, Saleem finds it difficult to adjust. Besides, as the effect of political matter in which causes children in India is taught to grow a hatred to Pakistan and vice versa, it is also because Saleem is already enjoy his upbringing in secular way in secular country. It leads its own conflict in him when he must face a new environment in which religious value colors its citizens' life. Overwhelming by disappointment, he declares his confession of hatred to his new environment. "I

won't deny it: I never forgave Karachi for not being Bombay. Set between the desert and bleakly saline creeks whose shores were littered with stunted mangroves, my new city seemed to possess an ugliness" (299). This moving, which emerges its own conflict of adjustment in his self, leads Saleem to the end of his childhood and brings him to adolescence with its own problem of identity crisis.

B. Saleem's Identity Crisis in Postcolonial Perspective

Bhabha clarifies that in postcolonial atmosphere, people tends to be disoriented in identity. This 'depersonalization of man', which is usually called identity crisis, is observed by Bhabha as the process of identification. There are three stages in this process of identification, namely a) accusative eyesight, prejudice, and stereotype from the other so that he feels different, b) caught in 'in-between' space so that he feels uncertain, and c) an image of identity that bears the mark of splitting so that he feels rootless (44-45). The analysis below will explain Saleem's identity crisis based on Bhabha's process of identification.

1. Alienated by Difference

The first stage of Bhabha's process of identification can be interpreted as the condition of a person who feels alienated by difference. It makes people see himself as an alien because he finds too many differences around him. This difference estranges him from people, time, and place, so that he finds it difficult to mingle with the situation. This condition comes to Saleem in the end of his childhood. Specifically, it happens right after he knows that he is not his parents' true son. This accident breaks everything that has been long established in his mind about family

and any other related things since he was a baby until eleven years old. It seems that every detail of recorded memory in his brain is forcibly removed because it has a wrong label now. The feeling of getting lost dominates him. Suddenly, he feels to be in the wrong place, wrong time, wrong situation, and even wrong identity. At a time, he is puzzled by he situation and carried away by his confusion. The effect of unsuitable pre-given image, traumatic childhood, and unexpected revelation of baby sitter's crime lead Saleem to a period which he is unable to identify his self and his position because it has already split and fragmented. It makes him feels different than ever. This condition urges him to reconstruct his position and role because it is already changed.

Beside that, it has already known that adolescence is a period in which almost all of teenagers experience identity crisis. But, what happens to Saleem is a double problematic condition. For Saleem, this transformation brings its own problem. He even does not like its coming because he thinks that it is too soon. As it has been explained, Saleem does not have a happy childhood so that when his adolescence comes, he considers it as the robber of his childhood. It is obviously seen from his words in expressing his dissatisfied feeling toward the coming of his adolescence, such as "transformation without end" (233), "new world in which everything seems to be going too fast" (233), "all too fast" (234), and "my second period of hurtling growth" (275). Saleem also regards that the end of childhood destroys the harmonization of his relationship with midnight's children, so that it seems that adolescence becomes a particular foe for him. It can be seen that his hatred to this period is blazing like this statement: "because children are the vessels into which adults pour their poison, and it was the poison of grown-ups which did for us...if

there is a third principle, its name is childhood. But it dies; or rather, it is murdered” (249-250).

At the same time, he must adjust himself with his new position in relation with his new knowledge of his birth. In that adolescent dilemma, he struggles for his own defense to keep the secret of his birth. He decides to do it because he is afraid of Shiva (his rival) if he discovers the truth and insists on claiming his birthright. He also afraid of his fellows midnight’s children if they know it, they will surely leave him. That is why he resolves to guard his secret with his very life. He proves this vow by taking many efforts so that none of them knows about it. “Time and my own efforts had erected the necessary barrier around Mary’s secret” (289). However, consequently this action creates its own distance between him and his friends. It only makes his crisis grows acutely worse because he chooses to bear it alone. He alienates himself from the other just for keeping his secret. However, finally this midnight’s children conference really comes to the end. It is not because their knowledge about Saleem’s secret, but it is more because of the distance and barrier he builds due to his effort to keep the secret. In fact, distance and barrier grow bickering, prejudice, boredom, and selfishness among them so that eventually they lost faith in him.

They attacked on a broad front and from every direction, accusing me of secrecy, prevarication, high-handedness, egotism; my mind, no longer a parliament chamber, became the battleground on which they annihilated me...I listened helplessly while they tore me apart; because, despite all their sound-and-fury, I could not unblock what I

her husband behind. Unfortunately, the situation is not getting better when Saleem follows his mother moving temporarily to Pakistan. He, who since childhood is introduced to hate this destination country by political atmosphere, finds that it is difficult to like Pakistan. "I should have felt excited; but the heat and recent events were weighing me down... 'Pakistan, I said aloud, 'What a complete dump!' And we hadn't even arrived" (276). It shows that his move to Pakistan frustrates him. He cannot mingle with this country although he lives there for four years. Dislike is already planted deeply in his heart and mind so that it inhibits his process of adjustment to his new environment. However, it seems useless because he already builds a barrier to limit the possibility of being part of its settlers. "Anyway, it was not 'my' country – or not then. Not my country, although I stayed in it – as refugee, not citizen" (283). He is sure that he does not belong to Pakistan. He claims that he is as the part of India. That is why, when there is a telegram which informs that his father is sick badly, then Amina resolves to go home, Saleem welcomes it merrily. "Back-to-Bom!' I yelled happily, alarming airport coolies. 'Back-to-Bom!' I cheered, despite everything... thinking how Mumbai's city made Rawalpindi look like a village" (288). He is happy because he is back to the city he likes much, which he claims as the city he feels to be possessed. He is happy also because he can open the connection with midnight's children again. However, this time he only finds the end of the relationship between him and them. The children accuse him of being changed by his living at Pakistan. It makes him hate Pakistan more than ever.

The reunion of his parents finally succeeds to integrate the family again. His father recovers fully from the illness by the help of Amina's love. It makes Ahmed eventually fall in love with his own wife. This renewal of love is even able to make

Ahmed quit his drinking habit. But the political situation in India is in unstable condition so that it urges Saleem's family to move. It is Amina's idea to persuade her husband to go to Pakistan as a fresh start of the family integration. This time they do not build their new home at Rawalpindi, but they choose Karachi. Saleem cannot conceal his disappointment to this moving. " Saleem's parents said, 'We must all become new people'; in the land of the pure, purity became our ideal. But Saleem was forever tainted with Bombay-ness, his head was full of all sorts of religions apart from Allah's... and his body was to show a marked preference for the impure... I was doomed to be a misfit' (301). The feeling of being placed in the wrong place makes him difficult to adjust himself. It happens, as Bhabha's explanation, as the result of feeling different. In the case of Saleem, since childhood he was used to live apart from any religious bound, so that his coming to a new environment, in which religion becomes its rule, is considered as a process of alienating him from his new environment. Being different drags him to disappointment and disagreement. His disappointment and disagreement makes him have no compromise with any effort which tries to mingle him with the new environment. His refusal to adjust himself to the place grows the seeds of hatred in him. This hatred cause he does not even try to understand its custom and tradition. It is just the same like when he does not like its scenery and weather because he already hated the country since he was a child regardless of the fact that he never visits it before.

The pushing factors of his hatred to the new place actually can be analyzed. It derives from two causes. First, it is as the result of India political education which teaches its people that the enemy of the state is also the enemy of the citizen. Second, it is as the result of family secular education which makes him apart from religious

taught. No wonder, it gives him a little shock when he must face a country with its religious value cannot be separated, while he is already used to live in secular way so that he is also used to be 'free' from all sorts of religion boundary. In his opinion, it is weird when he sees that his new school friends take out processions to demand a stricter Islamic society. Then, he chooses to make no friend because he cannot find the 'suitable' one who matches with his way of thinking. This decision can be seen as another sign of his failure of self-adjustment to a new social situation. In his adolescence, he not only fails to adjust to new environment because he never feel a part of the country, but he also fails to make acquaintance with new friends because he cannot tolerate the difference between him and them.

2. Ambivalent Position

After knowing his true parentage, in his adolescence, Saleem begins to see everything in ambivalence. This ambivalent point of view is especially in relation with his position in Sinais family. As it has already mentioned above that Saleem remains to live with them and continue to play a role as the first son in the family. However, this role only happens in the surface of the family's transformation, but beneath this new atmosphere each family member, particularly Saleem, tries to reset a new position for him. As a result of this arrangement, the intimacy between them and him draws farther than before. Even though they work hard to rebuild their relationship after the revelation, they know that it will never be the same. The ambivalent point of view makes him uneasy to interpret his position in the family because he must force his brain to consider that Ahmed is his father, Amina is his

mother, and Jamila is his sister; but at the same time he also must realize that they are not.

Ambivalence leads him to be less care to the ups and downs of the relationship between Amina and Ahmed. Since Saleem put himself as the victim of any incidents around him, he welcomes coldly to his parents reunion. "I was the sacrificial lamb with which they anointed their love" (289). He said like that because he thinks that it has no different whether their parents have good or bad relationship because it will never change the reality that he is not their true son.

His ambivalent position becomes more obvious when he rebuilds relationship with his sister, Jamila. He finds it is difficult to make a sibling friendship like previous time because there is transformation in her, especially in her appearance and attitude. Jamila grows into a beautiful girl whose attitude is nice and polite now. In her transformation, she also discovers her talent that she is able to impress anyone who hears her voice quality when she sings. Shortly, Jamila becomes a famous singer in Pakistan. Saleem realizes for the first time, that his ambivalent position put him in uneasiness when he must re-interact with his newly changed sister. He feels that something happens in himself

When my sister began to sing, I was certainly assailed by an emotion of such force that I was unable to understand it (284) I discovered within myself the ultimate impurity of sister-love (298) Looking back, however, I think I was already in love with her...I shall say only that I was unaware of what had happened to me (306) But I swore to confess everything, and I insist that I learned the unspeakable secret of

my love for Jamila Singer from the mouth and scent-glands of that most exceptional of whores. (310)

Having understood that he really falls in love with his sister, Saleem cannot conceal his shame and guilty feeling. At first, he tries to deny his love feeling, but finally he cannot avoid the fact that it is true.

Consumed by shame, guilt, and sin, he resolves to take denial action. "...with a scooter between my sixteen-year-old thighs, I began to follow the spoor of whores" (306). It expresses that his choice to run away from the puzzlement of his love feeling to his sister is read as his effort to hide his shame and guilt. It means that his first acquaintance with the whores is actually beyond his own willing. In the other words, he feels forced to go to the whores' arms because he wants to avoid his unadmitted feeling to his sister. That is why, he said that he is not happy with this denial action. "I will not say he was not sad, refusing to censor my past, I admit he was as sullen, often as uncooperative, certainly as spotty as most boys of his age... Escaping, whenever possible...I was, for a time, like a drugged person, my head reeling beneath the complexities of smell" (307). It means that he still does not know how to determine this feeling in a clear position. He is in the ambivalent judgement in seeing his problem. One side, he thinks that his feeling is natural and allowed because he is actually not the real brother of his sister, but in the other side, he also thinks that his love is forbidden considering he is still regarded as the son of the Sinais. His terrible situation can be categorized as in the middle of the crisis.

Finally, it is unbearable for Saleem to be in uncertainty. Driven by jealousy and fearing to lose his sister for another man, he resolves to pluck his courage to confess his love to her. He argues to her by saying that "there was no sin, he had

worked it all out, and after all, they were not truly brother and sister; the blood in his veins was not the blood in hers” (314). Unfortunately, after his love confession, the ambivalence and ambiguity do not fade out. Soon, he realizes that problem is not solved all, but even he knows that another problem comes to be real. In the process of identification, Bhabha said that in this second process people feels himself splitting as the result of ambivalence.

In the breeze of that insane night he attempted to undo all the knots which not even Mary Pereira’s confession had succeeded in untying; but even as he spoke he could hear his words sounding hollow, and realized that although what he was saying was the literal truth, there were other truths which had become more important because they had been sanctified by time; and although there was no need for shame or horror, he saw both emotions on her forehead, he smelt them on her skin, and, what was worse, he could feel the smell them in and upon himself. (314-315)

His unrequited love brings him to the deepest level of feeling sorrow. His confession makes him even feel sinful than before. “I could smell, on myself, the cess-pit stink of my iniquities... Purity – that highest of ideals! – ...seemed very far away” (319). It can be interpreted that Saleem cannot find the best way out of his problem. The decision he takes to end his ambivalent position even leads him to the worst result. The affect is he even resolves that his sin is unforgiveable, even by himself. “Saleem, under the doubly dislocating influence of his awful love and Alia’s food, began to blush like a beetroot whenever his sister appeared in his thought” (320). It can be

seen that he is the victim of ambivalent position which is created by the other, not Saleem himself.

The unsolved ambivalent problems bring him to the self-withdrawal and continuous regret. Unable to tell the other about his problem because of fearing to face another horror eyesight, he chooses to keep it for himself in silence. "He also developed a penchant for lapsing into long broody silences, which he interrupted by bursting out suddenly with a meaningless word: 'No!' or, 'But!' or even more arcane exclamations, such as 'Bang!' or 'Whaam!'" (321). It is a difficult situation for the individual who experiences of post-splitting self because commonly he cannot bring his previous wholly self-image. "I glowered silently in my own private withdrawal" (321). That is why, because he cannot 'be intact' again, he determines to hide his partial presence in the form of withdrawal.

Saleem's nonsense words in the quotation above can be interpreted as the words that he actually intended to say to himself. For example: the word 'no!' is his expression to refuse the bitter reality. The word 'but!' can be translated as his inner effort to defend himself from mistakes. While for the word 'bang!', is the common onomatopoeia for the voice of gun's explosion, but for his case, it can be read that as the sign of his deepest wish to end his dilemma by killing himself as the shortest way out. At last, the word 'whaam!' can be interpreted as his inner wish to get rid of the problem by simply thinking that it is better for him to vanish at once so that he is totally disappeared. It is just like to be swallowed by a whale, or to be struck by lightning, or to be swallowed instantly by the earth. While in the novel, Saleem himself tries to explain it as his inner struggle to against accusative dialogue within him. It is also explained that his capacity to endure the pain is already out of limit so

that he unconsciously bursts out his fragmented inner dialogue. “[It is] nonsense words amidst clouded silences: as if Saleem were conducting some inner dialogue of such intensity that fragments of it, or its pain, boiled up from time to time past the surface of his lips” (321). In this stage, Saleem is already passing the second period of process of identification because what comes next is his wish to be invisible. Late, he tries to grasp the meaning of it, but he only comes to the finding of difference between his childhood and adolescence which are equally unpleasant. “Maybe this was the difference between my Indian childhood and Pakistani adolescence – that in the first I was beset by an infinity of alternative realities, while in the second I was adrift, disorientated, amid an equally infinite number of falseness, unrealities and lies” (315). That is why, at the end of his adolescence, he is no longer enthusiastic to place himself in the center of everything as he boast in his childhood because many tragic experiences he already got reminds him to avoid the superiority. The next episode of his life, Saleem prefers to place himself in the periphery rather than privilege. In short, he resolves to see much rather than to be seen, like the invisible man.

3. The Missing Person

Overwhelmed by shame and guilt of love iniquity, Saleem tries to conceal the parade of mistakes by living in silence. He does this action very carefully as if he refuses to see another mistake which is enable to lead to the fatal effect. Although no one knows about it, he keeps his regret for a lifetime. In addition, the family condition and the political situation of Pakistan at that time are also not in a good news. His mother is pregnant again after a gap of seventeen years, but she looks

older than her real age. It drives her wild and shame as though the baby is a scandal in a lady of her evident antiquity (322). Then, Saleem is watching her mother's disintegration in its suddenness. He also observes her father's business failure comes again. As the effect of this failure, Ahmed begins to drink again. In the end, Saleem is watching his father to be paralyzed all way down his left side by the stroke attack. While in the political air at that time, Indo-Pakistani war of 1965 was occurred. Unable to resist seeing too many damaged scene in his family, including the flinty refusals of his sister to countenance his love (327), Saleem becomes in the grip of despair. "Utterly distracted by the double insanity of the war and my private life, I began to think desperate thoughts..." (329). If in his broody silence, he exclaim his deepest wish to end his life through that nonsense fragmented dialogue, now in the war situation, he sees the chance to make his wish comes true.

The terrible fatalism which had overcome me of late had taken on an even more terrible form; drowning in the disintegration of family, of both countries to which I had belonged, of everything which can sanely be called real, lost in the sorrow of my filthy unrequited love, I sought the oblivion of – I'm making it sound too noble; no orotund phrases must be used. Baldly, then: I rode the night-streets of the city, looking for death. (330)

However, he must accept the fate that the bombs of war successfully annihilate all of his family and relatives (except his sister), but it leaves him saved in amnesia. It seems displeased him because he is still alive after the war it can be seen when he retells this story to Padma (the listener of his retelling biography) by saying, "Mourn

for the living...The dead have their camphor gardens. Grieve for Saleem! Who, barred from celestial lawns by continued beating of his heart” (335).

His amnesia can be partially interpreted as the fulfillment of his wishes to escape from irresistible ambivalent problems. Being amnesia means forgetting his past with all its good and bad memories. It also means that he can totally forget the shame and guilt which always haunt him in the past. Since then, he begins his new life from the beginning like to be reborn again. Then, he is recruited by Pakistan army as the tracker like a police dog because his only ability to help the army is with the help of his hypersensitive nose. In the camp, he gets a new name (because he cannot remember his name) from his new friends. They give him the nickname of ‘buddha’ which means ‘old man’ in Urdu because he is considered older than his new friends. From this phase, he enters the beginning of the third process of identification. Bhabha’s preposition gives the explanation that invisibility, as the part of the process of interrogating identity, erases the self-presence. This ‘Invisible-Ness’ creates a crisis in the representation of personhood because it can be read as the effort to present the absence. Thus, it opens up an *in-between* space (55). In relation with the novel, Saleem’s amnesia, which makes him unable to recall his memory and history, is categorized as his crisis of personhood. He lives like a missing person. Furthermore, his new role as the army tracker like a dog symbolizes his partial presence. It means that he is present but his presence is less bothered by the other. In postcolonial point of view, partial presence is generally felt by individual in diaspora. This is what happening to Saleem in his new phase of life.

When his new friends tries to connect him with his past life, Saleem obviously refuses it. It is because now he seems enjoying his new existence. That is

why he even tries to block every attempt which enable to separate him to his new role. "Don't try and fill my head with all that history. I am who I am, that's all there is" (340). He said it as if he is actually happy that he had lost his brains. His refusal, in context, is analyzed as the analogue to the migrants, who usually prefers to live in 'invisibility'. They like to be like that because they do not have to face the interrogation of their identities with the other. They avoid it because actually they themselves are still confused with the answer. Similarly, it also happens to Saleem. He simply refuses to remember his past because he does not remember and he does not want to remember.

Another analysis that can be obtained from this phase is the way he describes himself in that amnesia time to Padma. In the text, it is often found that he always uses 'he' in referring to himself. It indicates that he creates a barrier to make an obvious distant between him in present context and him in past context. He prefers to see himself in the past just like a stranger. It can be observed in this comment of his: "He and I, I and he...I no longer have his gift; he never had mine. There are times when he seems a stranger" (165). On the other side, his way to see himself in the past also can be analyzed that it shows his refusal to admit himself as the subject in the past. It is interpreted that he (seems) does not want his listener considers that 'he' in the past and 'he' in the present is the same. Saleem is likely tries to build dignity in front of his listener by creating a barrier of time in differentiating himself. It can be seen from this dialogue: "'I am glad,' my Padma says, 'I am happy you ran away.' But I insist: not I. He. He, the buddha" (349). His strong rejection indicates his denial to his identity in previous stage of life. It also indicates that he hates his prior self.

All of this can be analyzed as Saleem's confusion in defining himself. It shows the proof of Saleem's identity crisis.

In this phase, it also can be found that the text contains less statement given by Saleem. It also seems that there is less emotional feeling expressed. It shows the totality of his invisibility. On the other side, it also shows the far away distance and gap between him in the present and him in the past. Looking back at the theory, Bhabha suggested it as being absence in the presence. It also becomes the part of partial presence. In identity crisis, it is impossible when two kinds of partial presence happens to a person. It means that being absence in the presence and being presence in the absence can happen at the same time. In the case of Saleem's identity crisis, he experiences both partial presences. Both ways are the strategy of self-concealment in the crisis of identity. However, none of them guarantees the solving problem. Saleem, then, feels that invisibility is not the solution.

Finally, the buddha feels restless with his 'invisibility'. He begins to define fair and unfair. When he finds himself to be more transparent (355) as the effect of being invisible for a long time, he feels the urge to recall his past. No people are satisfied live in invisibility. Again, it is like a reminder to migrant people that someday they will claim their true identity. Saleem also begins to see his amnesia as unfair thing. It is ironical because at first he wants to forget his past, but now he desperately wants to rejoin his past. He realizes that anyone should possess his own history. History is important in gaining identity. "In the aftermath of the Sundarbans, my old life was waiting to reclaim me. I should have known: no escape from past acquaintance. What you were is forever who you are" (356). When Saleem gets his memory back, unluckily he still feels dissatisfied. Rejoining his past cannot guide

him to find the certainty in life as he had expected before. In the accident of his meeting with Parvati (one of his midnight's children friend), he is introduced to be the real missing person through the basket of invisibility. It makes him realize more that invisibility never offers the essence because it only keeps a person in insubstantiality.

Memories of invisibility: in the basket, I learned what it was like, will be like, to be dead...Present, but insubstantial; actual, but without being or weight...Dimly hazily faintly... The dead die, and gradually forgotten; time does its healing, and they fade – but in Parvati's basket I learned that the reverse is also true; that ghosts, too, begin to forget; that the dead lose their memories of the living, and at last... fade away.

(369)

At last, he gets the spirit to continue his search for a meaning in his identity. he begins to contact his only remained relative, that is his uncle, Mustapha, in New Delhi, India. However, the result is not good because he must accept the news of all his family annihilation in the war. Knowing his past and his involvement to Pakistani army, his uncle rejects his presence. Leaving his uncle's house, he does not know where to find his root. Now he is rejected anywhere and find no place claims him back. He is like homeless. Pakistan is not his 'place', but India refuses to gives him 'place'. The missing person in Bhabha's theory is also described as a person without root and home. It is also called as rootless and 'unhomeliness'. Having passed all the process of interrogating identity, Saleem comes to a new finding that he is rootless and unable to determine himself. The exhausting journey to search for a mere identity only convinces him that his journey has no end. He only knows that his

identity is not like pre-given image he ever got. It is also not the identity of partial presence because he tries to get the full meaning. Bhabha gives answer that in the postcolonial text, the problem of identity returns as a persistent questioning of frame and the space of representation, where the image of missing person is confronted with its different, that is its Other (46). It means that Saleem must leave his identity like an open question because, in fact, it always a space for 'in-between-ness'.

4. Endless Search

In the end of his journey of searching for identity, Saleem finds that it is still far from grasping the certainty. At first, he is only convinced that his pre-given image does not provide the sufficient clue to his future identity. He even finds that his pre-given image leads him to the fallacy. It can be seen through this quotation: "Soothsayers had prophesied me, newspapers celebrated my arrival, politicians ratified my authenticity. I was left entirely without a say in the matter" (11). It means that his pre-given image as a child of the nation's important property seems exaggerating the reality. That is why it leads to fallacy because this pre-given image can never help repairing his broken life. Knowing this finding, he said that time is having no further use for him because he has no hope of saving his life (11). As it already mentioned above, Bhabha reveals his theory that identity is never the affirmative of pre-given image. It also never a self-fulfilling prophecy (45). It means that what is exactly called identity is totally different from people's assumptions. It is out of imagination. It more looks like something beyond something. It always leaves a void, a space, and an open question. In short, identity is always 'in-between'. If it is applied to Saleem's case, it comes to the conclusion that actually he will never comes to a fixed identity.

It is because his identity is always unfinished and unidentifiable. This realization actually comes to him in the end, but he assumed it too late because in his mental fatigue, he already turns to be hopeless. "Hindsight comes to me now, too late, now that I am finally consigned to the peripheries of history, now that the connections between my life and the nation's have broken for good and all" (382). Because he finds that his journey to find identity is endless, he is in disillusionment and is sure that death will come first to him than that identity.

A struggle for gaining identity always created some resistance in its silence. Hall argues that however, if its silences are not resisted, they will produce 'rootlessness' (53). Saleem is categorized as individual who cannot resist the harshness of struggle for identity, so that he seems surrender to hopelessness.

We should either – optimistically – get up and cheer, because if everything is planned in advance, then we all have a meaning, and we are spared the terror of knowing ourselves to be random, without a *why*; or else, of course, we might – as pessimist – give up right here and now, understanding the futility of thought decision action, since nothing we think makes any difference anyway; things will be as they will. (79)

From the quotation above, it can be seen that his pessimism is caused by his failure to get 'a meaning' in his life after knowing he is to be random by his life. The word 'random' here can be interpreted as incomplete and fragmented. In connection with the theory, Saleem's identity is always returned as the fragmented one because in postcolonial atmosphere, there is no completeness in the formation of identity. It as Hall explains that identity is always 'in context' (51). It means that defining identity

always depends on who and how it is seen. That is why identity always suggests the instability, the permanent unsettlement, the lack of any final resolution (54). In Saleem's case, it can be analyzed that in the end, he find that himself is in disintegrated because his position always change depends on the situation. Unfortunately, he fails to translate it. "What is waiting to be told: the return of ticktock³. But now time is counting down to an end, not a birth; there is, too, a weariness to be mentioned, a general fatigue so profound that the end, when it comes, will be the only solution..." (317) This expression shows his impatience in seeking the answer. Postcolonial identity always unfinished because identity is matter of 'becoming' as well as 'being'. It means that identity is always in process because identity is not a fixed essence at all.

Saleem's despair also caused by his desire to get a meaning in life is in vain. Hall gives the explanation that actually meaning is never finished or completed, but keeps on moving to encompass other (54). Saleem is afraid of being meaningless. Therefore, since he has no chance to repair all mistakes in the past and he thinks that he has no time to continue his journey to search it, he decides to sum-up his life through a biography. "I must work fast, faster than Scheherazade⁴, if I am to end up meaning – yes, meaning – something. I admit it: above all things, I fear absurdity" (11). By doing this, he hopes that at least he gets an understanding from the other who reads his biography. He will assumes this understanding as a meaning. Unfortunately, in the middle of his effort to arrange his story of life, he is still afraid of losing the hope. "Am I so far gone, in my desperate need for meaning, that I'm

³ The sound of clock. In this context, it indicates time.

⁴ The fastest Germany train at that time

prepared to distort everything... For me, there can be no going back; I must finish what I've started, even if, inevitably, what I finish turns out not to be what I began" (164). It can be analyzed that actually what bothered him is the distortion of meaning. Meaning can change anytime. As Hall has said above, meaning always has the possibility to distort. Further, Hall adds his previous statement that, in fact, meaning is always either over- or under-determined, either an excess or a supplement. There is always something 'left over' (55). In the novel, Saleem is consumed by fear of losing his meaning, so that he becomes too obsessed by it. This over obsession leads him to the paranoia of over-determined meaning. Therefore, as Hall said, he is unaware of the excess he has created as the side effect of his obsession of meaning.

Saleem's fragmented identity is symbolized by the cracks on his skin, which hastens him to finish his writing soon because it draws him close to the death. In the novel, he repeats it many times as if he always reminds the reader that he will die soon. "My own hand, I confess, has begun to wobble... because I have noticed a thin crack, like a hair, appearing in my wrist, beneath the skin... No matter. We all owe death a life" (37). Fragmented identity as the result of a never complete process also be defined as a not fixed but a fluid identity. The fluidity of identity is suggested by Hall, who stressed that identity is never quite fixed or complete, so there is always some slippage (21). It means that Saleem's skin disintegration is a sign of his failure to understand that identity is never fixed. In daily life, people can only define himself in one place, and it will suddenly change when he moves to another place. There is no fixed identity because there is only fragmented identity. There is no segregation among the fragmented pieces because of its fluidity. Saleem tries to describe this

fluidity like this: “Things – even people – have a way of leaking into each other... the past has dripped into me... so we can’t ignore it” (39).

The discovery about its fluidity seems displeased him. It is beyond his expectation. It leads him to despair. When he tries to trace back his history, he finds that he cannot be part of it anymore. His resistance to contested identity is not strong enough to let him mingle with his new place. He finds that he has already lost the root. In short, he is rootless. It can be seen from his disappointment when he tries to ‘come home’: “yes, it was my Bombay, but also not-mine” (435). Like a derelict, he has no place to settle. Being rootless without a fixed identity is what Saleem got at last. This is also what commonly happens to the migrant and people in diaspora. For Saleem, this condition is considered as the end of his life because he is confused by ‘multiple’ identities. “[I] only a broken creature pilling pieces of itself into the streets, because I have been so-many too-many persons” (445). His hopelessness of life indicates his disillusionment to the finding that he has already struck out from his root. He assumes this ‘rootlessness’ as an effort “to forsake privacy and be sucked into annihilating whirlpool of the multitudes, and be unable to live or die in peace” (446). It is then, being rootless means losing its origin which makes him float in uncertainty. Bhabha said that it will be the experience of dispossession and dislocation – psychic and social – which speaks to the condition of the marginalized, the alienated (63). Certainly the feeling of dispossession and dislocation is disturbing one’s peace. That is why, Saleem is sure that he will die before he is dead due to this rootless life.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION