

1. Salman Rushdie and *The Satanic Verses*

This research on Salman Rushdie's most controversial novel *The Satanic Verses* (1988) aims at analyzing the novel in the light of the pluralistic, non-totalized and open ended form of postmodern discourse to make a point that a single discourse about the history, religion and nationality of India is insufficient. By bringing various discourses like that of historical, political, religious and national, Rushdie privileges a non-totalized, pluralistic, open-ended form of discourse making a point that a single discourse about any truth is insufficient.

Rushdie, an Anglo Indian, postcolonial writer of Muslim origin was born in June 19, 1947, in Bombay, India and educated in Britain. He is especially renowned for his fictional writing in literary world. His first published novel, *Grimus*, appeared in 1975. He stands as a remarkable writer after gaining an international fame by winning the Booker Prize, awarded for his novel *Midnight's Children* (1981), which was an unexpected critical and popular success. *Midnight's Children* is an allegory of modern India which examines historical and philosophical issues. Similarly, his another book, *Imaginary Homelands* (1991) is a collection of essays in which Rushdie addresses the postcolonial scenario. The essays in this collection deal with the postcolonial issues of diaspora, hybridity, identity crisis, representation and Commonwealth literature. His other famous works of literature are: *East, West* (1994), *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995) and *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999). He wrote *Fury* in 2001, in which a doll maker deserts his family to seek a new life in New York.

His fourth novel *The Satanic Verses* (1988) appears as its commentary on Islam, at the center of its thematic agenda. *The Satanic Verses* is, in first and foremost, about how human beings have been developing and practicing the notion of good and evil, especially how this notion is determined by religion. The novel, immediately after being published, encountered a controversial reception. It aroused the ire of Muslims, who considered the novel as a blasphemous attack on the *Koran*, Muhammad, and the Islamic faith. Muslim community leaders were outraged and the book was banned in India, Pakistan, South Africa, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. In 1989, Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Khomeini publically condemned the book and issued a "fatwa" against Rushdie. He declared that Rushdie and everyone involved in the publication of the book should be put to death. Rushdie went into hiding, making isolated and unscheduled appearances and allowing a few interviews.

Rushdie asserts that his novel champions "doubts, uncertainties". "It dissents from the end of debate, of dispute, of dissent" (396). In defending his right to defend all issue endlessly, to postpone closure indefinitely, to oppose certainties of all kinds whether they originate in the East or the West, Rushdie is clearly positioning himself as a writer in a postmodern world where nothing can be asserted with assurance. "I am a modern, and modernist, urban man," he insists in the same essay, "accepting uncertainty as the only constant, change as the only sure thing" (404-5). This refusal to countenance any of the grand narratives that have governed Eastern or Western civilization is precisely the stance that Jean-Francois Lyotard identifies as central to the postmodern condition.

The novel *The Satanic Verses* has been read and interpreted from various perspectives. However, the approach of present study is to look at Rushdie's pluralistic attitude towards historical, political and religious aspects of the society. Effects of imperialism in terms of history, the mythologized past of the origin of Islam, questioning the unitary discourse of nationality are some of the dominant issues in *The Satanic Verses*. This research aims at finding out the answer of why and how Rushdie colors the novel with these issues.

For Rushdie, official history is no longer a set of fixed, objective facts. The facts do not exist unless they are interpreted. Moreover, it is an ideological construct which functions in favor of state ideology. So, history, like fiction needs to be interpreted and reinterpreted. Historians interpret the events of history, present them chronologically, and make it intelligible to us. Historians are also those who give a pattern to history using their imagination too. Thus, the historians play a vital role in the making of history, and, in this sense, history is, like fiction, a subjective phenomena.

Since, history is a subjective phenomena, there can be many versions of it. For Rushdie, history is no longer a homogeneous and final version. It has heterogeneous and multiple meanings like literature. By history, we generally understand the official version of it, because it is the only version of history available to us. Official history, means that version of history which is approved by the state authority as true and is generally accepted both inside and outside the nation. However, Rushdie interrogates the validity of official history by providing an alternative version of Muslim's sacred book *Koran*, through the novel *The Satanic Verses*. He views the official historical

discourse as one of the many versions of history and it is not necessarily absolute and final version. It is rather an artifact which is affected by a vast web of economic, social and political factors of that era. Moreover, Rushdie views it as an ideological product and which, in turn always supports that ideology.

As in *Midnight's Children* (1981) and *Imaginary Homelands* (1991), Rushdie uses a variety of narrative techniques to present his ideas. Juliette Myers comments: Rushdie exploits the “ability of postmodern fiction to draw on innumerable fictional and factual sources as a means of representing the world” (67). However, for Rushdie *Midnight's Children* is merely his version of Indian modern history. In *Imaginary Homelands*, he discusses the writing of *Midnight's Children* as: “What I was actually doing was a novel of memory, so that my India was just that: ‘my’ India a version and no more than one version of all the hundreds of possible versions” (10).

The Satanic Verses explores themes relating to good and evil, religious faith and fanaticism, illusion verses reality, and the plight of Indians who have relocated to Great Britain. It embodies various postmodern features - confusion and violation of the borderline, adaptation of a self-conscious narrator, questioning of the totalizing impulse, and discussion about the act of literary creation itself. It also explores the boundary between history and fiction; its many narrative strategies compete with, and undermine each other and serve to question the relation of history to fiction. Thus, the novel undermines any claim of absolute truth, and in this respect Rushdie is a postmodern writer.

Creating several levels of meaning by frequent use of puns, metaphors, similes, and allusions to popular culture and the sacred beliefs of Islam, the novel opens with the miraculous survival of two expatriate Indian men, Gibreel Faristha and Saladin Chamcha, who survive in a 2900 feet fall from an exploding plane into an English beach. These alter ego represents good and evil. Gibreel, a movie star in Indian religious films experiences vivid dreams in which historical events of the founding of Islam are depicted in epic detail. Saladin who metamorphoses into a Satanic figure, journeys to London and encounters police brutality, prejudice, and other so many elements that reflect deep-rooted social problems. The narrative follows these characters through the intertwining of past and present, various locations, reality, dream and films until their final confrontation on a movie set.

The unknown narrator narrates this event dramatically. The narrative structure of novel is based on a series of events narrated in various forms, thus, forming a web of references: dream and film like scenes. Through its technique of narration, Rushdie hints the reader that other readings are possible, will be possible and indeed, necessary in future. At times, he makes parody of the excessive, artificial, melodramatic and garish aspects of popular Indian films; on other occasions he adopts the self reflexive strategies of metafiction.

The novel opposes any sort of master discourses by the use of the magic realist genre. Magic realism mingles the ordinary and miraculous, the semi supernatural and the correct detail in a mosaic survey in which time, number, repetition, superstition, magic and natural phenomena are all charged with a curiously heightened power and color. This genre is characterized by

the juxtaposition of apparently reliable, realistic reportage, anti-reportage and extravagant fantasy. It is a tool that even fictionalizes the reality itself. In *The Satanic Verses*, history is constantly challenged and replaced by histories, reality by dreams and dream-like events. What is taken to be true is potentially false; what appears to be false is also true. Everything that is sacred is susceptible to satanic provision and contamination. Revelations become a means of political control. These are the moments when the confused subject begins to ask: "What kind of idea am I?" in *The Satanic Verses*. This self-searching and self-questioning treatment indeed predicates the text with a particular postmodern appeal.

A linguistic and stylistic analysis of the novel shows that with the use of different kind of narrative, a mixture of oral narrative style with colloquialism, Rushdie succeeds to break the binary of center and margin. By placing the monologic discourses of Islam and nationalism with the polyglossic and heteroglossic discourse of fiction, Rushdie is able to decenter them. He repeatedly dramatizes the heteroglossic quarrel between language that he, like Bakhtin, considers the special province of fictional discourse. Heteroglossia, according to Bakhtin is "another's speech in another's language . . . a special type of double-voiced discourse" (324). Rushdie's sheer linguistic inventiveness produces neologisms whose uncomfortable conjunctions expose the contradictions inherent in the original word-- "Bungledish" and "BabyLondon" come to mind. Similarly, he strings words together, the effect of which is to undermine the conventional distinction between them: "angelicdevilish" or "information/inspiration." Another linguistic feature that enables Rushdie to make seemingly impossible

connections in this particular novel is his multiple use of the same proper names.

Another characteristic of fictional discourse which Rushdie uses to subvert the truth claims of unitary discourse is its ability to exploit a disparity between tone and substance. Rushdie uses 'black comic' element to present a comic tone to serious matter, to undercut the religious or political discourse. Black comedy is much used by postmodern writers confronted with a world on the brink of self-annihilation. Rushdie's use of black comedy is particularly evident in the passage concerning politics, capitalist greed and racism, all of which tend to mutually support one another's rhetoric. The epitome of this ethos is a minor character in the book, Hal Valance, an advertising executive who used to employ Chamcha for the voice-overs in his commercials. Hal uses market research to justify removing all signs of black immigrants from his commercials, ending up by sacking Chamcha for being "a person of the tinted persuasion" (267).

This research tries to show how Rushdie uses the concept of truth in a postmodern way in order to place his story in *The Satanic Verses*. At its center, is the episode in which prophet Muhammad first proclaims a revelation in favor of the old polytheistic deities, but later renounces this as an error induced by shaitan. This is the reason that the former Iranian spiritual leader, Ayatollah Khomeini declares the "Fatwa" up on Salman Rushdie. Rushdie as an author is like Ball, the poet in the novel, who are, in Rushdie's words "one of the two categories that power can not tolerate, next to whore" (107). To make his idea about the postmodern writer's freedom of speech, Rushdie portrays and defends the Jahilian poet-satirist's vocation in *The*

Satanic Verses as: “A poet’s work [is] to name the unnamable, to point at frauds, to take sides, start arguments, shape the world and stop it from going to sleep” (97).

Rushdie challenges the sacredness of the *Koran* by challenging the hegemony of closed discourses. He tries to subvert the claim of “Truth” in Islamic discourses by historicizing the Islamic discourses. As it is language that creates meaning, it is prophet who has created Allah and not Allah who has created the prophet. Various Muslim leaders point several elements in *The Satanic Verses* as defamations of their religion. The title of the book refers to a disputed episode that was first recorded by historians over a century after Mohammad's death. In this alleged incident, Mohammad, who had the verses of the Koran relayed to him by the archangel Gabriel, attempts to win favor for his monotheistic teaching in a region that recognizes hundreds of deities by granting semi-divine status to three local goddesses. According to some historians, Mohammed later recanted after realizing he had been inspired to make this decree by Satan, who mimed the voice of Gabriel. While Rushdie presents these events ambiguously within a dream sequences, perturbed Muslims questioned the appropriateness of drawing upon an incident that many Islamic scholars and leaders have refuted. Some Muslims claim that Rushdie violated taboos by making reverential references to people, places, and objects sacred to Islam. But, the most Western commentators defend Rushdie's freedom of expression, pointing out that he explores the accepted truths of Islam in a tradition of metaphysical speculation, inviting the readers to ponder their observations and making insightful comments about the elusiveness of absolute truths.

Rushdie, through this novel tries to show that the closed and absolute belief systems are very much dangerous and misleading. Religion tries to privilege one set of value and one text above all others. Rushdie repeatedly exploits the poly-semantic nature of language to make us conscious about the possibility of alternative meanings. And by doing this, Rushdie puts the official historical records under question and undermines the claims of absolute truth in such history.

Rushdie's *The Satanic Verse* has been praised, appreciated and interpreted by different scholars across the world with various perceptions. Since its publication different critics have tried to analyze the novel from different perspectives like: post colonialism, diaspora writing, migrant ambivalent position etc. Those approaches, no matter whether they are author oriented, context oriented or language oriented have tried to reformulate the meaning of the text, interpret it or invest the text with meaning.

An Indian critic Dipesh Chakravarti famous for his subaltern and modernity concepts looks at the novel from the perspective of modernity in the following words:

There is an Indian character in *The Satanic Verses* who says (and I imagine here the “Indian” shaking of the head and a heavy upper-class Delhi accent): “Battle lines are being drawn in India today, secular versus religious, the light versus the dark. Better you choose which side you are on.” It is precisely this choice that I am going to refuse in this analysis. I want to explore instead some of the complex and unavoidable links that exist in Indian history between the phenomenon of ethnic

conflict and the modern governing practices that the British introduced in India as the historical bearers of Enlightenment rationalism. (80)

Another critic, C. L. Innes talks about the novel from the perspective of the heritage of Indian writings in English. He concentrates on the major issue that of religion in the novel. He says:

Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988) was banned in India, Pakistan and many other countries on religious grounds because some authorities denounced it as blasphemous and offensive to Muslims. In Britain and the United States, copies of the book were burned by indignant Muslim protestors, and many bookshops were unwilling or afraid to have copies of *The Satanic Verses* or other works by Rushdie available for sale. Indeed, Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini declared a *fatwa*, of sentence of death, on Rushdie, so that he was forced to live in hiding for almost a decade. (199)

Similarly, Homi K. Bhabha in his *Nation and Narration* views that *The Satanic Verses* celebrates the ability to self-creation for diaspora people in postcolonial scenario. He says:

The Satanic Verses hat attempts to redefine the boundaries of the Western notion, so that 'the foreignness of language' becomes the inescapable cultural condition for the enunciation for the mother-tongue . . . Rushdie seems to suggest that it is only through the process of dissemination of meaning, time, people, cultural boundaries and historical traditions that the radical

alterity of the national culture will create new forms of living and writing. (317)

Likewise, another critic Christine Cavanaugh views *The Satanic Verses* in relation to the issue of prophecy and prophet that leads to the violence in orthodox religious discourse. He regards this novel not only success to reveal the relation between power and violence in the tradition of *Koran* but also boldly confronts the violence that now surrenders prophesy. He says “Rushdie portrays prophesy and prophets with myriad variation on present and past tradition or revelation speaking . . . So that the reader can examine their relation to violence” (2).

In this way, *The Satanic Verses* has received lots of criticisms which have made the novel rich in itself. Rushdie himself views that a novel may have multiple interpretations and every times a second interpretation is possible. However, present research aims to analyze how Rushdie uses the idea of plurality and small-narratives to attack the belief of grand narrative and truth creation especially in the issue of history, religion and nationality.

The present research has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents an introductory outline of Salman Rushdie and postmodern nature of his writings. The second chapter is about the methodological discussion to establish a perspective to study *The Satanic Verses*. This chapter gives the analysis of postmodernism with the reference to the theoretical concept of Lyotard, Bakhtin and Foucault. The third chapter deals with the textual analysis of *The Satanic Verses* on the basis of second chapter. This portion of the work serves as a core of this study. Similarly, the fourth chapter

is the conclusion of this research in which the arguments and explanation put forwarded in the preceding chapters will be concluded.

II. Postmodernism: A Critique of Grand Narrative

Postmodernism is a wide ranging theoretical perspective which adopts a skeptical attitude to many of the principles and assumptions that have underpinned western thought and assumptions, which constitute the core of what we call modernism. Modernism include a belief in the inevitability of progress in all areas of human effort, and in the power of reason as well as a commitment to originality and truth in both thought and artistic expression. But postmodernism involves a radical questioning of the grounds upon which knowledge claims are made, and is thereby linked to a sense of liberation from earlier practices.

Postmodernism has conceptual and procedural similarity with deconstruction, which is a method of reading text to reveal conflicts, silences, and fissures, and it is a theory that can be applied to any sort of discipline and cultural products. Derrida opines that deconstruction is a radical challenge to the three thousand year history of western metaphysics and anthology. It is often regarded as undermining all tendency towards systemization. The most fundamental project of deconstruction is to display the operation of “logocentrism” in any text or belief. The term logocentrism refers to any system of thought which is founded on the stability and authority of the *logos*, the divine word. The scholar C. H. Dodd explains that the root of the Hebrew equivalent for *logos* means “to speak,” and that this expression is used of God’s self-revelation. In other words, it is the spoken *Logos* that language and reality ultimately coincide, in an identity that is invested with absolute authority, absolute origin, and absolute purpose or teleology. Having the view that there is no “God” or “Truth” or any “Center” of such, Derrida says:

As center, it is the point which the substation of contents, elements, or terms is no longer possible. At the center, the permutation or the

transformation of elements is forbidden . . . Henceforth, it was necessary to begin thinking that there was no center, that the center could not be thought in the form of a present-being, that the center had no natural site, that it was not a fixed locus but a function , a sort of nonlocus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions came into play. (1118)

Most importantly, the postmodernists challenge any philosophy of totalization, one that creates a closure around itself and claims preeminence in access to universal principles and timeless truth. This is the basis of their critique of religious history, nationality and even Marxism, anthropology and the notion of reason. The critical edge of post modernity's deconstructing of the modern universalizing tendency comes from its awareness of the value and significance of respecting difference and otherness: an acknowledgement of the impossibility of reaching any absolute and final "Truth". Thus, one of the main message of postmodern is that the cultural values are always local and particular and not universal and eternal.

Generally, the term 'postmodernism' refers to certain radically experimental works of arts and literature used in the post-World War II scenario especially since 1960s. It is typically used in a wider sense than modernism referring to a general human condition, or society at large, as much as to art or culture. To write about postmodernism is to get involved in a variety of problematic issues because it is a concept that appears in a wide variety of disciplines or areas of study, including art, architecture, music, film, literature, sociology, communication, fashion and technology. It is very hard to locate temporally or historically, because it is not clear exactly when postmodernism begins.

So, the easiest way to start thinking about postmodernism is by thinking about modernism, the monument from which postmodernism seems to grow or emerge. Generally, it is assumed that modernity refers to industrialization, urbanization, new type of economic relation, scientific development, rationalism, capitalism, optimism and so on as Renaissance (1500-1660) being the transitional period between medieval and modern time.

Showing the relation between modernism and postmodernism, Jean-Francois Lyotard in his essay, "Answering the Question: What Is Postmodernism?" writes:

What, then, is the postmodern? What place does it or does it not occupy in the vertiginous work of the questions hurled at the rules of image and narration? It is undoubtedly a part of modern . . . A work can become modern only if it is first postmodern. Postmodernism, thus understood is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state, and this state is constant. (122)

In this way, postmodernism seems very much like modernism while it differs from modernism in its attitude towards lots of trends of modernism.

Modernism tends to present a fragmented view of human subjectivity and history as something tragic, something to be lamented and mourned as a loss. Many modernist writers try to provide the unity, coherence, and meaning which have been lost in most of modern life. Whereas postmodernism, in contract, does not lament the idea of fragmentation, rather celebrates that:

The Enlightenment pictured the human race as engaged in an effort towards universal, moral and intellectual self-relation, and so as the subject of universal historical experience; it also postulated a universal human reason in terms of which political and social tendencies could be

asserted as 'progressive' or otherwise. Postmodernism rejects this picture: that is to say, it rejects the doctrine of unity of reason. It refuses to conceive of humanity as unitary subject striving towards the goal of perfect coherence or of perfect cohesion as stability. (Best and Kellner 178)

In this way, the term postmodernism is used to describe a major shift away from modernity's universalizing and tantalization drive - a drive that was first fueled in the seventeenth century, by Descartes' fundamental ambitions and his faith in reason. Rene Descartes (1596-1650) is considered as a founder of modern philosophy who fueled the totalizing drive by employing skepticism as a method achieving certainty. As being a contemporary to Galileo and immediate predecessor of Newton, Descartes was representative of new scientific spirit. The idea of Galileo, Kepler, Copernicus and Newton provided the scientific revolution in the early modern period. In another side, along with the ideas of philosophers like Kant, Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Rousseau, modernity was developed as Enlightenment modernity. And that modern concept tried to establish western logo-centric idea or metaphysic which seeks unity in diversity. So modernity focuses on universalizing and tantalization tendency which is not possible for postmodern theorists who claim that knowledge, truth and reality do not originate in experience, it is a construct of western logocentric view, thereby relativizing and demystifying the meta-narratives of western modernity and thought.

Similarly, showing the problem of modernity process, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche declared the death of God in modern life. By the death of god, Nietzsche means the loss of faith, value and truth. In his view, crisis of reason in modern society brought the corruption and decadence in the society. He further says:

I shall tell you. We [modern people] have killed him – you and I. We are all his murderers. But how have we done this? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? . . . Do we not smell anything yet of god's decomposition? Gods decompose. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have billed him. (906)

Nietzsche's critique of the fundamental categories of western philosophy provided the theoretical premises for many poststructuralist and postmodern critics. He attacked philosophical conception of the subject, representation, causality, truth, value and system, replacing western philosophy with a perspectives orientation for which there are not facts, only interpretations and no objective truths, only the constructions of various individuals or groups. Nietzsche scorned philosophical systems and called for new modes of philosophizing writing and living. By this, he demonstrated that 'will to truth' and knowledge is in dissociable from the 'will to power.'

Similarly, Martin Heidegger views the whole existence of human being to drift away into nothing. He developed a critique of the modern, representational subject and analysis of the corrosive effects of technology and rationalization. For Heidegger, the triumph of humanism and the project of a rational domination of natural and human being is the culmination of a process of the "forgetting of Being" that began with Socrates and Plato. Heidegger undertook to destroy the history of western metaphysics and called for a new mode of thinking and relating that rejected western modes of thoughts in order to attain a more 'primordial' relation of Being.

Remarkably enough, modernism and postmodernism share most of the common ideas as: rejecting the boundaries between high and low form of art, denying rigid genre distinction, experimentation, avant-gardism, fragmentation, discontinuity etc. However, postmodernism differs from modernism in many ways. Modernism, for

example, tends to present a fragmented view of human subjectivity and history, for instance *The Wasteland* (1922) by T. S. Eliot, but presents that fragmentation as something tragic, something to be lamented or mourned as a loss. Many modern writers try to bring unity, coherence and meaning which has been lost in modern life. That is a search of grand narrative which postmodernism rejects and claims on multiple narratives. Postmodernism in contrast, doesn't lament on the fragmentation or loss rather it celebrates them. postmodernists believe in multiplicity of meaning or truth, and play of words.

Lyotard argues the totality, stability and order are maintained in modern society by the means of 'grand-narratives' or 'master-narratives' which are stories a culture tells itself about its practices and beliefs. Every belief system or ideology has its own 'grand-narratives' according to Lyotard. In this connection, for Marxism, the grand-narrative is the idea that "capitalism will collapse in on itself and a utopian socialist world will evolve" (9). Similarly, a grand-narrative in American culture might be the story that democracy is the enlightened form of government and that democracy can and will lead to universal human happiness. He further explains, "All aspects of modern societies including science as the primary form of knowledge depend on these grand-narratives" (11). In this reference, Jim Powell points out grand-narratives as "big stories, stories of many mythic proportions that claims to be able to account for explain and subordinate all lesser, little, local narratives" (29). In this respect philosophies of Marxism or narratives of Christian salvation or other religious ideas can be the example of 'grand-narratives.'

Totalizing theories of society and history, in Lyotard's view, lead inevitably to totalitarianism: to politics which seeks to suppress or eliminate difference, to turn the Other into the Same. From the prospective of what Lyotard calls the postmodern

“incredulity towards grand-narratives,” universal or capital-H history has become unwriteable. Once all claims to possess the inherent ‘truth’ of history are recognized as projections of the specific interests of one social group or another - one class, one race, one culture, or gender - then historical fact is relativized and distinctions between record and invention, event and desire, become difficult to sustain.

By rejecting totality, Lyotard stresses on fragmentation of language games, of time of the human subject, of society itself. Rejection of organic unity and embracing with the fragmentary, he has close relation with avant-garde movement. The adherents of the avant-gardist movement questioned the coherence of the work, and deliberately twisted the coherence of the text for their dissolution of organic unity or totality. This idea of totality and organic unity brings the legitimating concept connected with the grand-narrative. The grand-narrative is construct of western thought for the postmodern because of the legitimating of knowledge by imposing the western logocentric view. Thus, postmodern society celebrates upon the delegitimation by rejecting such kind of view. As Lyotard claims:

In contemporary society and culture - postindustrial society, postmodern culture - the question of the legitimation of knowledge is formulated in different terms. The grand-narrative has lost its credibility, regardless of what mode of unification of uses, regardless of whether it is a speculative, narrative or a narrative of emancipation . . . If [this] “delimitation” is pursued in the slightest and if its scope is widened, the road is then opens for an important current of postmodernity. (37-38)

For Lyotard, in postindustrial or society of globalization, social classes and national or other identities are erased because of pluralistic concept. Now, power is not

monolithic, concentrated in one class or state. We have now entered in an age of fragmentation, loss of identity and multiple points of view.

Lyotard takes the adherence to some grand-narratives to be characteristically modern and argues against it in favor of the postmodern pluralistic insight that human affairs are more fragmented and less neatly structured than such meta-narratives allow. In “The Postmodern Condition” (1984), Lyotard distinguishes the modern by its association with what he calls grand narratives:

I will use the term modern to designate any science that legitimates itself with reference to a meta discourse of this kind making an explicit appeal to some grand narratives, such as the dialects of spirit, the hermeneutics of meanings, the emancipation of the rational or working subject or the creation of wealth (xxiii).

According to him, all those meta narratives are guilty of having declared themselves universally valid and they have all contributed to the West’s oppression, if not actual enslavement of a good deal of the world.

What we need, Lyotard tells us is little narratives, small scale, and modest system of beliefs that are strong enough to guide us, but are always aware of their provisional nature and their local rather than universal validity. In his essay “Answering to the Question: What is Postmodernism?” Lyotard warns us: “We can hear the muttering of the desire for a return of terror,” and suggests us to “wage a war on totality: let us be witness to the unpreventable” (80)

Following Lyotard, Dipesh Chakraverty views European history as a grand-narrative. He criticizes the assumption that Europe represents a standard that the non-European can aspire to but cannot exceed or replace. Chakravarty writes:

[I]nsofar as the academic discourse of history that is, history as a discourse produced at the institutional site of the university is concerned, Europe remains the sovereign theoretical subject of all histories including the one we call 'Indian', Chinese, Kenyan and so on. There is a peculiar way in which all these other histories tend to become variations on a master, narrative that could be called the history of Europe. (383)

Thus, rejecting the totality of modern discourse, Lyotard and other postmodernists stress fragmentation of language, of the human subject and of society itself. It is the rejection of organic unity and espousal of fragmentary. They want the dissolution of organic unity in art and literature. The features like coherence, autonomy and organic unity of a work of art are questioned by them because of the fragmented life, what they claim.

Postmodernism, then is the critique of grand-narratives, the awareness that such narratives serve to mask the contradictions and instabilities that are inherent in any social organization or practice. In other words, every attempts to create 'order' that always demands the creation of an equal amount of 'disorder' but a 'grand-narrative' makes the constructedness of these categories by explaining that 'disorder' is really chaotic or bad, and that 'order' really is rational and good.

In this way, postmodernism, rejecting grand narratives favors the 'mini-narratives,' that explain small practices, local events, rather than large scale universal or global concepts. The way that modern societies go about creating categories labeled as 'order' or 'disorder' has to do with the effort to achieve stability to which Lyotard equates with the idea of 'totality' or totalizing system. In a footnote to *Just Gaming* (1985) Lyotard states that:

Postmodern (or pagan) would be the condition of literature and arts that have no assigned addresses and no regulating ideal yet in which value is regulating measured on the stock of experimentation or to put it dramatically in which it is measured by the distortion that is inflected upon the materials the forms and the structures of sensibility and thought. (16)

Here, the postmodern is associated with the pagan, with the absence of rules, criteria and principles and with the need for experimentation and producing new discourses and values.

On the same ground, Foucauldian postmodern politics attempts to break with unifying and totalizing strategies to cultivate multiple forms of resistance to destroy the prisons of received identities and discourse of exclusion, and to encourage the proliferation of differences of all kinds. The political task of genealogy then is to recover the autonomous discourses, knowledge, and voice suppressed through totalizing narratives. The subjugated voice of history speaks to hidden forms of domination. So, genealogy problematizes the present as eternal and self evident, exposing the operations of power and domination working behind neutral or beneficent facades. In Foucault's words:

It seems to me that the real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the working of institutions which appear to be both neutral and independent, to criticize them in such a manner that the political violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight them. (171)

Foucault concentrates on the domination of the individual through social institutions, discourses and practices. He sees the classical era as inaugurating a powerful mode of

domination over human beings that culminates in the modern era. Foucault, therefore adopts a stance of hostile opposition to modernity, and this is one of the most salient postmodern features of his work.

In *The Archeology of Knowledge* (1972) Foucault pursues a meta-theoretical reflection on his project and methodology in order to clarify his idea. Drawing from the work of French historians of science, Bachelord and Conguihem, Foucault self-consciously announces that “a new form of history is trying to develop its own theory” (5). From within this new conceptual space, the modern themes of continuity, technology, genesis and totality are no longer self-evident, and are reconstructed or abandoned. Foucault opposes his postmodern concept of total history that he attributes to the figures such as Hegel and Marx. Foucault summarizes the difference in this way: “A total description draws all phenomena around a single center a principle, a meaning, a spirit, a world view, an overall shave, a general history, and the contrary, would deploy the space of a dispersion” (10). The types of totality that Foucault rejects include massive vertical totalities such as history, civilization, and epoch, society or period, and anthropological or humanist conceptions of a centered subject. His work is a symptom of breakdown and mutation in the social function of knowledge in postmodern times.

To Foucault, literature is essentially an act that is “placed in the bipolar field of the sacred and the profane, the licit and the illicit, the religious and the blasphemous” (268) which creates a floor for multiple narratives rather than grand narratives. This means that literature becomes dangerous, or increases its subversive potential, the moment “the old bipolar field of discourse is rediscovered and violated by a systematic practice of transgression” (268). In view of that, a trespassing kind of literature does not observe any rules of taboo, exclusion or prohibition exercised by

existing discourses. It exploits a position of discursive unattachment to step in and out of established regimes of truth and disturb the boundaries between such absolutes as the holy and the profane, truth and falsity, reality and fantasy, and so on.

Similarly, to Deleuze and Guattari, currently two of the most popular discourse theorists in literary studies, literature form what they call a *rhizome* with the world. A rhizome is a *subterranean* stem with an intangible net of roots - differing from common roots, bulbs and tubes whereas “common roots are principles of connection, plotted points and fixed orders, rhizome is an open system in constant movement without any stable center. It can be connected to anything other and is heterogeneity” (6). There is no center to serve as a unifying axis in the object and rather than reality on any stability and fixity provided by notions of origin and authenticity, everything is set in motion in a process of continual becoming. At its best, the novel is anti-logos. The work of art is not created on the basis of any pre-existing model. Rather it continually destroys existing closed and locked systems which means rejection of meta-narrative or grand-narrative.

Postmodernism has made a great impact on historiography. It has focused on its own genre of historical writing with mere denunciation of conventional history. It rejects the master narrative as hegemonic stories told by those in power. Moreover, rejecting faith in reason and progress, postmodernist historiography has directed much of its attention towards the irrational, and add the magical in human life.

Another theorist, Mikhail Bakhtin considers “heteroglossia” and “dialogization” as the basic distinguishing features of literature. Heteroglossia refers to the condition that governs the production of meaning in all discourse. It asserts the way in which context determines the meaning of language use. For Bakhtin, the meaning of a literary text is not determined by some sort of impersonal play of

language, culture and economic force rather literary text is a site where multiple voices are engaged in a interaction with each other and it characterizes the literary text not merely as a linguistic construct, rather as a social phenomena. In Bakhtin's term "any given language is actually stratified into several other languages." It is this heteroglossia, says Bakhtin, is "the indispensable prerequisite for the novel as a genre" (263). So, literature has no authorial individuality which endorses a singular, unifying language, discourse and truth. Instead, it is 'multi-styled and often multi-linguaged.' Hence, it welcomes and seeks to exhibit disunity and diversity. It recognizes a "Heteroglossia of languages and makes them enter into a dialogical relationship where they intersect rather than exclude each other" (263-64).

In lines with all these, literature seems, as Rushdie points out, "Best suited to challenging absolutes of all kinds" (1992: 424). And this is exactly what his famous novel *The Satanic Verses* proposes to do. It is a novel, says Rushdie in "In Good Faith" that dissents from "imposed orthodoxies of all types from the view that the world is quite clearly 'This and not That'" (396). *The Satanic Verses* is extremely evanescent in its form and content and not a single renunciation in the novel seems to be allowed to stand unchallenged by machinations of contradiction, doubt and ambiguity. It includes a heteroglossia of languages that are normally considered mutually exclusive: religious belief in sacred truth intersects with profane doubt and blasphemy, and material realism is crossed with magical and fantastic events. Within this universe, the language of literature serves to undermine any discourse that seeks to exclude alternative version of truth and reality.

Rushdie seems to see in fictional discourse a neutral discursive space in which he can give free play to competing discourses that opposes both the discourse of Islam and that of Thatcherite nationalism. He is an exemplary exponent of postmodernist

literature who understood literature as a practice of writing in which the apparent truth-claims of any narrative, or any other kind of representation, are put radically into question in ways that relativise all notions of historical authority, cultural value, and ethical judgment.

Thus, postmodern theorists, like Nietzsche, Foucault, Derrida and Lyotard accordingly reject the totalizing macro perspectives on society and history favored by modern theory in favor of micro theory and micro politics. Postmodern theory also rejects modern assumption of social changes and notions of causality in favor of multiplicity, plurality, fragment action and indeterminacy. In addition, postmodern theory abandons the rational and unified subject postulated by much modern theory in favor of a socially and linguistically fragmented subject. They challenge the grand-narrative or meta-narrative concept of modern theorists and advocate for the multiple and local truths and heterogeneous discourses.

III. Multiple Truths in Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*

Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* counters the hegemonic discourses like religion, ethnocentrism and traditional discursive features like claims to truth, dichotomizing imagery and strategies of exclusion. Instead of finding 'truth' in long established shared verities of ideas, Rushdie privileges a non-totalized, pluralistic, open-ended form of discourse that coincides with postmodern writing practices. Truth-value in belief favored by his view is multiple and conflicting pattern; it comes closer in definition to the satisfactoriness of pragmatic philosophers. Rushdie's position entails an assumption of superiority over those claiming to represent the truth by demonstrating the impossibility of doing so. As a postmodern writer, he implicitly elevates the 'multiple and conflicting nature' of the fictional discourse to a position of higher "truth." This 'multiple and conflicting nature' is the fundamental trait of Postmodernism.

The Satanic Verses, then can be seen as the process of making or assembling something from various materials at hand, of conflicting discourses framed by the contrasting discourses of fiction. In the novel, Rushdie writes about both the secular as well as scared, nationalist or racist as well as transnational or migrant, historical as well as ahistorical and above all authoritative against fictional frames of discourses. He looks for an alternative religious experience outside the restrictive confines of an organized religion unlike Islamic fundamentalists; he does not seek to compete anyone to accept his aesthetic ideology. He has no wish to compel, but a strong will to persuade.

Literary subversion in *The Satanic Verses* is most clearly demonstrated in the novel's challenge of the single sacred belief of the *Koran*. Salman the Persian in the novel, is an entirely unconvinced follower of Mahound (Muhammad) for whom he

works as a scribe. When God in Mahound's Revelations comes to sound like the businessman, Mahound had once been, "to whom organization and rules came naturally", Salman's "skepticism towards their divine source grows" (364). Within Rushdie's fictional universe, most certainties crumble. Uncertainty is the only unchanging certainty that Rushdie perversely posits in the novel. The novel opens with the miraculous survival of two expatriate Indian men, Gibreel Faristha and Saladin Chamcha, who survive in a 2900 feet fall from an exploding plane into an English beach. An unseen narrator narrates the event:

Just before dawn one winter's morning, New Year's day or thereabouts, two real, full-grown, living men fell from a great height, twenty-nine thousand and two feet, towards the English Channel, without benefit of parachutes or wings, out of a clear sky. (1)

In his 1990 essay, "Is Nothing Sacred?" Rushdie writes: "The acceptance that all that is solid has melted into air that reality and morality are not givens but imperfect human constructs . . . is what J. F. Lyotard called, in 1979, *La condition Postmoderne*. The challenge of literature is to start from this point . . ." (422). As for Lyotard, so for Rushdie wearing his postmodernist hat, the 'grand-narratives' which have motored Western modernity- the totalizing, theological metanarratives of Enlightenment philosophy, historical materialism, and liberal capitalism- have signally failed to deliver the teleological goods and belied their emancipator promises. The challenge of literature, according to Rushdie, is to start from this point. Novelists like Thomas Pynchon, Kurt Vonnegut and E.L. Doctorow- to name three canonical North American postmodernists who are subjects of Rushdie's own literary journalism- take up the received texts of history into their fictions and refract and

fragment them into a plurality of conflicting stories and voices, which can never be resolved into a synthetic totality or unity. Using devices like multiple and unreliable narrators, disjunctive styles and genres, the postmodern texts reopen historical narratives to an endless play of rereading and rewriting, none of which carries the authority of an original or ultimate truth, the first or last word. Rushdie describes the function of the novel: “[T]he novel has always been about the way in which different languages, values and narrative quarrel.” He also points out that “The novel doesn’t seek to establish a privileged language, but it insists upon the freedom to portray and analyze the struggle between the different contents for such privileges” (7).

The Satanic Verses is a novel of multiple narrative frames, stories within stories, dreams within dreams. No sooner is a narrative sequence framed in the plot as the fictional fabrication of some dreamer or narrator than the frame of fiction breaks down, its contents leak out and the narrator becomes contaminated with the fictionality of his own plot. Within his own discourse, Rushdie performs what Foucault terms a genealogical analysis on the discourse of Islam. Such an analysis involves investigating how that discourse was formed, what were its norms, and what were the conditions for its appearance, growth and variation (231-32). Indeed it is precisely this interest in what Foucault terms genealogy that predominates in the novel:

How does newness come in to the world? How it is born?

Of what fusion, translations, conjoining are it made?

How does it survive, extreme and dangerous as it is? What

compromises, what deals, what betrayals of its secret nature must it

make to stave off the wrecking crew, the exterminating angel, the

guillotine?

Is birth always a fall?

Do angels have wings? Can men fly? (8)

Mahound's discourse is founded on the instance that there is only one God. He imposes this monotheistic idea on the polytheist people of Jahilia, who have constructed their city out of the shifting sands of the desert. Mahound's instance on repetitive ritual washing is itself a threat to the survival of their multifold structures build of dry sand, as well as offering a paradigm of the difference in their ideological positions. The Jahilian polytheists (like contemporary postmodernists) can accept a greater degree of linguistic discontinuity in their belief in gods with overlapping powers and domains that can Mahound, who belongs to what Foucault terms the "critical group" which imposes "forms of exclusion, limitation, and appropriation on the threatening linguistic universe" (231).

The alteration of the sacred words is the act of literary transgression, of challenging the hegemony of closed discourses with the playful language of literature. When language is used to perform transdiscursive acts: such as the intrusion of a profane language on holy ground, the primary object of writing shifts from a concern with the ontological, or extra-textual, world to language itself. When Salman's corruption of the 'divine poetry' proves itself possible, the discourse of Islam loses the source of its authorization and its claim to authority. Allah, if existing at all, certainly does not sanction Mahound's words and hence the transcendent truth behind the Recitation evaporates like hot air. The *Koran* itself is demystified to become a text like other text which has no more right to determine the nature of reality than Salman's discourse of "doubt and skepticism" (368). Accordingly, Salman the character, and Salman Rushdie, foreground language as the primary vehicle of establishing reality, truth and authority as J. L. Austin views that meaning is

determined by context. It is language that creates meaning and power rather than the other way round, it is prophet who has created Allah and not Allah who has created the Prophet.

Inside one of the narrative, Salman, the legendary amanuensis of the illiterate Muhammad, Salman Al-Farisi, is a professional scribe, initially a disciple of Prophet Mahound, whose role is to take dictation of the prophet's revelations of Holy writ and law transmitted in God's own words by the archangel Gabriel. Salman soon notices the political expediency and convenient timing of the Prophet's revelations of holy law and he begins to lose faith in their authenticity and the tale with which the prophet wags the archangel's tongue. Eventually he decides to test the sanctity of the Recitation by violating its borders of divine purity with his own secular language. This sort of challenge on the established religious norms and values is a kind of violation of creation of 'truth' by concealing the potentiality of other truths. To test his suspicions, he introduces deliberate corruptions into the verses dictated by the Prophet. He starts replacing minor words like 'all-hearing' with 'all-knowing' when he transcribes Mahound's God-given verses, and later major signifiers like "Christian" with "Jew" (337-38). Salman intrudes the sacred discourse, through the medium of literary invention, and tests it by disregarding the holy mysticism that authorizes it. The act is referred to by Salman as "polluting the world of God with . . . profane language" and to his great consternation the "wrath of God remains absent" (367). Salman describes his act of revelation as:

If Mahound recited a verse in which God was described as all-hearing, all-knowing, I would write, all-knowing, all-wise. Here's the point: Mahound did not notice the alterations. So, there I was, actually writing the book, or re-writing, anyway, polluting the word of God

with my own profane language. But, good heavens, if my poor words could not be distinguished from the Revelation by God's own Messenger, then what did that mean? What did that say about the quality of the divine poetry? (367)

When Salman's acts go unnoticed, his cynicism and apostasy are confirmed. His contaminations of scripture with fiction are eventually detected, however, and he's fired from his job and turns his talents to another kind of 'profit,' earning himself a small fortune as an all-purpose pavement scribe, composing business and love letters for customers impressed by his "gift for inventing beautiful falsehoods that involved only the tiniest departure from the facts" (385-86). Here by rejecting the established norms and values of Islamic religion Rushdie has tried to violate the grand-narrative of Islamic religion.

Within a couple of years, Salman has earned enough money to buy his ticket home, but where this migrant writer's 'home' might be, or where he might go when he leaves the frame of the novel, is unexplained. If Salman is one of the author's alter egos in *The Satanic Verses*, another character is Baal, a dissident poet and satirist of the Prophet and Islam, who is accused of blasphemy and eventually tracked down by the Prophet's vice-squad in a brothel, disguised as eunuch with a blackened face, and sentenced to beheading. Of course, the last phrase - "to the devil with historicity or truth" - is ironic coming from the author where the devil narrator treats the Prophet precisely as an image that can be "borrowed, used, distorted, and reinvented" (89). This is evidently a meta-narrative reference to the novel itself and its author's overall enterprise. The alteration of the Sacred Words concertize the act of literary transgression, of challenging the hegemony of closed discourses with the language of literature.

Similarly, while attacking the grand narratives in *The Satanic Verses*, Rushdie questions the ideal notion of pre-colonial Indian society and the mythologized past of the origin of Islam. By this, he brings into question the notion of Indian nation as a place of 'great culture', and the 'place of prophecy'. While talking about India, the narrator of *Kim* (1901), Rudyard Kipling's classic orientalist adventure, predicts "All India is full of holy men stammering gospels in stranger tongues; shaken and consumed in the fires of their own zeal; dreamers, babblers, and visionaries: as it has been from the beginning and will continue to the end" (45). Kipling's this portrait of the religious zeal of prophecy persists in the imagination of the West. But a century later, Salman Rushdie shows that holy zeal has lost its innocence: the frenzy of the visionary - now called fanatic or fundamentalist - is charged with violence. Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, with its infamous inversions of the prophecies that shaped Islamic culture and Indian society, boldly confronts the aura of violence that now surrounds prophecy.

As Bakhtin says "heteroglossia is the indispensable prerequisite for the novel as a genre"(263), Rushdie invites the readers to listen attentively to a multitude of babbling voices as they clamor against each other. He challenges the readers to adjudicate his novel's founding competition between prophecy and its falsifications, between inspired verses and satanic verses. The narrator asks by saying:

I know the truth, obviously. I wanted the whole thing. As to omnipresence and - potency, I'm making no claims at present but I can manage this much I hope. Chamcha willed it and Faristha did what was willed.

Which was the miracle worker?

Of what type - angelic, satanic - was Faristha's song?

Who am I?

Let's put it this way: who has the best tunes?(10)

Because some of the prophet's "tunes" are deadly, the task of adjudicating among manic voices is all the more urgent. Narrator gives the hints that some babblers and visionaries are dangerous, and their violence stem from prophecy itself and the falsifications of prophecy.

The literary topology of prophecy often harkens back to a longstanding purpose of prophecy: 'to rebel against tyranny'. In writing about prophecy, Rushdie does more than addressing religion; he uses prophetic speech as a trope to address problems of oppressive power, violence and terror. Instead of permitting two simple categories of authentic and unauthentic prophecy, Rushdie depicts hybrids of prophecy and its falsifications. Rushdie portrays prophecy and prophets with myriad variations on present and past traditions of revelation - manic speaking, the receipt of visions and revelation, the transcription of the divine world, inspiration or divine possession, inspired dreaming, eschatological pronouncement, and prediction – so that the reader can examine their relation to violence. Rushdie's portrait of violence in the prophecy and prophets attacks the grand narrative of India as a place of great culture and prophets as described in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, which sets the view of India to the West.

In *The Satanic Verses*, Rushdie shows the violence of prophecy in different prophets to challenge the single discourse about Indian society. The most prominent prophet figure is Mahound, who represents Mohammad. He appears in a crucial moment of prophetic activity: receiving the divine words. Alleluia Cone, another seer figure, receives visions while mountain climbing. Ayesha, the "butterfly girl," styles herself as messianic leader, calling her followers to a deadly pilgrimage into the sea.

The most sinister of other seer figures are Ayatollah Khomeini and Tavleen, the female hijacker. Gibreel Farishta is perhaps the most complicated seer figure: much of the book occurs as part of his dreams, which he believes to be divinely inspired. He names himself after the Angel Gabriel and imagines himself as “God’s postman” (112).

The plurality of prophets described above and the exposure of flaws in all the stages of prophesying prompts questions about whether prophecy assist justice, or, on the contrary, tyranny. Rushdie portrays Mohammad in the act of sacrificing prophetic accuracy for expediency; this act is a departure from the tradition of prophecy: ‘to rebel against tyranny’. Thus, the narrator’s indictment of the prophet does not so much mark religion against secularism as prophecy against its falsifications. The critique of the Prophet opens prophecy itself to a rigorous testing of its nature, its imitations, and its possibilities. Showing violence as one of the possibility of prophecy, the novel also contains the peaceful prophets as well but the violent prophets endanger them. Allie Cone, for instance, perishes - apparently at the hand of Gibreel. Innocents are among the casualties of the violent prophets: Ayesha directs her followers to stone an infant to death. Other prophets kill on a large scale. Similarly Gibreel, Ayatollah Khomeini, and Tavleen are blood thirst.

An incendiary combination of prophecy and its falsifications in the beautiful Tavleen initiates the novel’s action. The rows upon rows of hand grenades she wears under her robe like “fatal breast” indicates a lack of mercy (89). Instead of breasts of milk of human kindness, she offers fifty grenades of dynamite and gelignite for suck. She suffers from what Heschel, in his analysis of Old Testament prophets, calls “hypertrophy of sympathy,” a kind of sickness of the visionary who is supposed to speak for the divine. Apart from the amplification of divine wrath, Tavleen also

distorts prophecy by collapsing prediction and fulfillment. She predicts an eternal community that her homicide and suicide are supposed to achieve: “martyrdom is a privilege . . . we shall be like the stars; like the Sun” (88). In communion with the other martyrs, she hopes to achieve the timelessness and glory of the celestial bodies. While she bargain earlier for the earthly justice she wants to achieve, the reference to martyrdom hints at the real nature of her ambitions for society on “independent homeland and justice” (80). In this context the narrator says:

What did they want? Nothing new. An independent homeland, religious freedom, release of political detainees, justice, ransom money, a safe-conduct to a country of their choice. Many of the passengers came to sympathize with them, even though they were under constant threat of execution. If you live in the twentieth century you do not find it hard to see yourself in those, more desperate than yourself, who seek to shape it to their will. (31)

She has a desire for society the same thing she desires for her martyrdom: an unequivocal identity as visible, as universal, and as unchanging as the Heavens. To achieve this unchanging community she is willing to utilize the deaths of herself and her companions. By igniting her bombs, she tries to achieve the community of martyrs. And by executing Jalandri, she inaugurates with this “first sacrifice,” a perfect society- a nation free of “apostate” and “traitor” elements (87). The narrator narrates:

Tavleen walked up to the little goateed hostage, Jalandri, and motioned with her finger. Our patience has been exhausted, she announced, we have sent repeated ultimatums with no response, it is time for the first sacrifice. She used that word sacrifice. She looked straight into

Jalandri's eyes and pronounced his death sentence. 'You first. Apostate traitor bastard.' She ordered the crew to prepare for takeoff, she wasn't going to risk a stammering of plane after the execution, and with the point of her gun she pushed Jalandri towards the open door at the front, while he screamed and begged for mercy . . . Jalandri had become the first target because of his decision to give up the turban and cut his hair which made him a traitor, to his faith, a shorn Sirdarji. Cut-sird. A seven-letter condemnation, no appeal. (87)

Similarly, Alleluia Con's mother expresses the terrorist's adaptation of the prophetic voice with the phrase "bombs are the destiny" (447). Tavleen thinks that the only way to reach destiny, or a foreordained order of history, is with an apocalyptic intervention. While Allie's mother asks, "what does a famine, a gas chamber, a grenade care how you lived your life?" Tavleen asks "Are we uncompromising, absolute, strong, or will we show ourselves to be timesavers, who compromise, time and yield" (447)? For both women, the impression of an inevitable destiny and the fulfillment of history are manufactured and preferred by violent events.

Rushdie's confrontation of violent prophecy helps us to come to grips with the nature of terrorism and with its horrifying internal ethical contradictions. Terrorists like Tavleen commit murder while claiming the cause of justice. These contradictions proceed in part from the refusal of the mantic consciousness to distinguish between truth and justice and the resulting confusion of divination with judgment. Talveen's demands for justice make a perverse contrast to her execution of Jalandri. Moreover, her combined suicide and homicide might so easily fall into the category of violence called "senseless." What is dangerous about Tavleen is not her lack of faith rather her lack of patience to await the divine fulfillment of prophecy. The mentality that

requires an apocalyptic intervention or a brutal sign shows not faith but an impatient prophetic consciousness. This impatience is dangerous especially when it pre-empts an apocalyptic prophecy. Rushdie's terrorists use bombs to magnify a Jeremiah like rebuke to society and to manifest and conform for one instant the apocalypse that awaits the unjust society.

This ethical contradiction of violent prophecy appears in another terrorist incident in *The Satanic Verses*. In a wrathful response to unjust social practices, Gibreel firebombs a London cafe and an office building. He walks through London with a trumpet named "the exterminator, Azrael" deciding that he will be "the agent of God's wrath" (472). On his journey he gives way to the temptation to fulfill the prophecy he conveys. Gibreel decides to manifest the prophesied apocalypse by blowing the "last trumpet." He sees himself as "the Archangel Gibreel, the angel of the Recitation" (476) with the power of revelation in his hands. Using this power he sets about burning the city until he sees "the hair and teeth of the citizenry . . . smoking and red as glass burns, and birds fly overhead on blazing wings" (477). Among other casualties is a "heavily pregnant" woman who emphasizes Gibreel's indifference to guilt and innocence. His act of deliberately setting fire is a judgment, the manifestation of the threat of divine wrath that he magnifies. Thus, Gibreel's tendency to reduce prophecy to prescription and to cast himself as both prophet and fulfiller of prophecy is tyrannical, dangerous and alienating: both homicidal and suicidal. The narrator describes his suicide in this way:

‘I told you a long time back,’ Gibreel Farishta quietly said, that ‘if I thought the sickness would never leave me, that it would always return, I would not be able to bear up to it.’ Then very quickly, before

Salahaddin could move a finger Gibreel put the barrel of the gun into his own mouth; and pulled the trigger; and was free. (546)

Like Tavleen, Gibreel collapses prophecy and fulfillment, *althea* (truth) and *dike* (justice).

Another distortion of prophecy that leads to violence is the reversal of the prophetic mandate to newness which also is an important factor in the novel's apparent indictment of sacred text. In the figure of Ayatollah Khomeini, Rushdie investigates the power of written revelation reduced to prescription and transformed to law. Similarly, by depicting the Imam's pharisaical pre-occupation with text and authority, Rushdie also describes the tyrant's attempts to resist time and tyrant's alienation. Prophecy is undoubtedly a tool of tyranny for the Imam. Indeed, he utilizes it in his radio polemics, calling his political enemy "the Babylondon whore" (19). Revelation is not a tool for this tyrant because it is inscribed and confined, but because it is declared closed and unchanging. He declares "history" as:

[T]he blood-wine that must no longer be drunk. History, the intoxicant, the creation and possession of the Devil, of the great Shaitan, the greatest of the lies – progress, science rights . . . History is a deviation from the Path, knowledge is a delusion, because the sum knowledge was complete on the day Al-Lah finished his revelation to Mahound. (210)

If the sum of knowledge is already contained in a single book, and all revelation complete, then nothing new can proceed from either mantic speech or ordinary discourse. The completeness of revelation that the Imam describes would render other creative and critical enterprises not only superfluous, but presumptuous and risky.

The Imam's claim that prophecy can be frozen and completed in sacred texts for all time is echoed in his treatment of timepieces. In his effort to achieve timelessness he smashes clocks and imagines that:

Human beings who turn away from God lose love, and certainty, and also the dense of his boundless time that encompasses past, present and future; the timeless time, that has no need to move . . . After the revelation there will be no clocks, we'll smash the lot. The word *clock* will be expunged from our dictionaries. After the revelation there will be no birthdays. We shall all be born again, all of us the same unchanging age in the eye of Almighty God. (214)

With regard to the prophetic tradition, the primary significance of the Imam's declaration is that it militates against a vital function of prophecy: the introduction of newness to the relations between words and things and among persons.

Rushdie's parody of prophecy is much more visible in Ayesha's unsuccessful and violent trip to Mecca. In this long serial narrative imagined by Gibreel alludes to the bloody and unsuccessful military campaign conducted after Muhammad's death by his favorite wife, Ayesha, against the fourth Khalifa, the prophet's son-in-law, Ali—a historical reference often cited by fundamentalists as proof that women should not enter public life. Rushdie transposes this incident of feminine futility into twentieth-century odyssey of a young Indian Muslim woman of the same name who leads a band of credulous villagers of a pilgrimage to Mecca, the "Haj" that all devout Muslims hope to make once in their lifetime. Rushdie's Ayesha convinces the Indian villagers of Titlipur, as well as the cancer-stricken wife of the village's wealthy modern landlord, that the Arabian sea will part, allowing them to walk to Mecca. The

odyssey ends in a catastrophic lemming-like mass suicide through drowning, off the coast of Bombay.

The theological typology of prophecy discloses as one of the prophecy's functions, the alteration of discourse and the generation of "alternative consciousness: the possibilities for social change" (Andrae 13). On the other hand, every "totalitarian effect" has the "aim to stop the language of newness" (9) because this language can potentially undo the regime. Any sort of tyrant indulging what Andrae calls the "royalist fantasy" has an antagonistic attitude towards time: "the king does not know, never knows, what time it is" (53). "Because the king wants banish time and live in an uninterrupted eternal now," he smashes clocks. The tyrannical king "would have it be like a casino in Las Vegas where there is no clocks and no time, but only an enduring and unchanging now" (53). The Imam, with his destruction of time pieces and his personal "stillness" and "immobility" embodies his royal fantasy (Rushdie 216).

While prophesy is not internally violent, Rushdie shows, it is also not a safe enterprise. It threatens the *status quo* and in that sense a genuine prophecy must always be "extreme and dangerous" to established regimes (Andrae 8). Nonetheless, one can adjudicate between genuine prophecy and its violent distortions and recreations. When prophecy is teemed by a regime, it is oppressive. When it is undertaken wrathfully and in the absence of hope it is terrifying. Rushdie's portrait of this violence in prophecy opens the way to see the Indian society and culture with multiple perspective which makes *The Satanic Verses* a postmodern novel.

Similarly, English Nationalism with its imperialism and racist codes is another master narrative that is in the firing line in *The Satanic Verses*. Rushdie, here, applies the strategy of letting literature encounter the language game of the established truth to disclaim its logo centric authorization. In the case of Islam, the extra-textual

authority is Allah, in the discourse of English ethnocentrism, it is Nature as represented through empirical realism. To disrupt the *realist* presentation of representing a world beyond the text, Rushdie deploys the literary mode of the fantastic. Basically, the fantastic element in this context consists of a concretization of the metaphors with which English nationalism ‘others’ the unwanted. Rushdie makes a satire on British prime minister, who appears as “Mrs. Torture,” and is held culpable for the neofacist tactics of the British police force. To counter her fascist nature towards ‘other’, the public involve in “burning wax images of Mrs. Torture as Maggie the Bitch” (139).

The stories, to which Lyotard refers, the master narratives, the language games, are especially powerful in the ‘hegemony of English language’. Multiplicity of voice and the unavoidable plurivocality is a governing theme in Rushdie’s writing. Rushdie writes against the hegemony within the English language as:

The language, like much else in the newly independent societies, needs to be decolonized, to be remade in other images . . . English, no longer an English language, now grows from many roots; and those whom it once colonized are carving out large territories within the language for themselves (8).

Here, Rushdie protests against the hegemony of the imperial English, just like Lyotard’s manifesto represents ‘a call to wage a war on totality.’

In the depiction of the hybrid, tension-fraught world of British immigrants and of Farishta’s helpless captivity in a magical landscape, the novel presents itself on many levies as a reader of myth. It recounts the stories of Saladin Chamcha, a Bombay-born stage actor who lives in London, and Gibreel Farishrta a super star of the Indian film industry who decides to give up his sparkling career in order to go to

London and join the women he loves. Having miraculously survived a hijacking and plane crash, the two main characters begin a series of adventures as they attempt to come to terms with their respective histories.

As the two principle characters fall from the sky towards the English Channel in the opening episode of *The Satanic Verses*, we hear them singing a strange air: “O my shoes are Japanese,” translating the old Hindi film song into English in semi-conscious deference to the up rushing hoist-nation, “These trousers English, if you please, On my head, red Russian hat; my heart’s Indian for all that” (5). This song carries a “late capitalist” conjecture, in which current worldwide contradictions between aggressive nationalism and the unified global market render an individual’s clothing into multi-ethnic postmodern pastiche.

Saladin Chamcha’s confusion about his identity stems from his inability to escape his cultural past, embodied, most fittingly, in the figure of a perversely powerful father. On arriving in England, Chamcha devotes himself to an adoration of all things British, caught in the thrall of an absurd if touching romance with an imagined island- an occidentals fantasy. The problem begins when, instead of becoming the perfect Englishman, he changes in to a monstrous beast, the “native” devil of the colonial and Christian imagination, complete with hoofs, horns, tail, and a certain embarrassingly prominent member. Indeed in acting as the eternal today to the glories of English culture and wishing to forget his Indianness, Chamcha represents one of the most typical qualities of many metropolitan Indians. The figure of the devil demonstrates a classic case of repression: the more he runs away from his Indianness, the more he is confronted with it from all sides- especially when he is forced to take refuge, in his metamorphosed state, under the roof of the Bangladeshi eatery, the Shaandaar Cafe, run by twentieth-century transpositions of the Meccan couple who

defied Muhammad, Hind and Abu Sufyan. While taking rest in the bed of Shaandaar Cafe, Chamcha finds that his carefully crafted British life has fallen apart.

Gibreel Faristha's anguish is also caused by a severance with tradition-in his case, a religious tradition of Islam-which he rejects suddenly and violently after years of unquestioning belief. Once again, it is not a clean severance. Unable either to embrace or renounce belief, Faristha is haunted by a series of dreams in which he finds himself playing the role of a skeptical and powerless Angel Gabriel. By this, the novel confronts and unravels the mythic construction of home and community, of England and India, of rational modernity and the triumph of secular thought.

The novel's main character, Saladin, is arrested by the immigration police and before their very eyes he metamorphosis as an 'billy-goat'. The narrator describes:

When they pulled his pyjamas down in the police van and he saw the thick, tightly curled dark hair covering his thighs, Saladin Chamcha broke down for the second time that night; this time, however, he began to giggle hysterically, infected, perhaps, by the continuing hilarity of his captors. . . His thighs had grown uncommonly wide and powerful, as well as hairy. Below the knee the hairiness came to a halt, and his legs narrowed into tough, bony, almost fleshless calves, terminating in a pair of shiny, cloven hoofs, such as one might find on any billy-goat. Saladin was also taken aback by the sight of his phallus, greatly enlarged and embarrassingly erect, an organ that he had the greatest difficulty in acknowledging as his own. (157)

Evidently, Saladin's new fantastic features dramatize the metaphors that generally inform the representation of the 'Other' in racist discourse, as the undesirable, the

adversary, the menacing alien. Saladin turns into the very names that are hurled at him by the police - 'animal', 'uncivilized'; 'the very devil' (159).

When metaphors, or tags, are used like this, a complete collapse of the gap between signifier and signified occurs. Language ceases to 'stand for' a given object and instead it materializes as that object itself, the institutions supporting the discourse and the supposed logos of the tags, is suspended. The tags now have to represent themselves, so to speak, revealing their naked absurdity. As with the transgressive acts of profane literature, the fantastic draws attention to language and the act of representation itself, which are exposed as the primary producers of reality rather than the other way round. Saladin explains: "They describe us. . . That's all. They have the power of description, and we succumb to the picture they construct" (168). As a parallel to Salman's discovery of Mahound's 'trick', it is revealed that the truth as proclaimed by the ethnocentric discourse, upon which Saladin has devoutly built his entire sense of reality, turns out not to be the indisputable, pre-given truth of reality. It is a construct like the *Koran*, and the idea Saladin has always had of non-Europeans as some sort of inferior and perverse beings turns out to be as manipulated design serving the sole purpose of keeping him and his kind under continued white dominance.

In an extension of the novel's disestablishment of the world's fixating discourses, like religion and ethnocentric nationalism, Rushdie sets everything free in a rush of energy. In an outstanding analysis of the form of *The Satanic Verses* as a Deleuzian rhizome in constant movement and without a fixed center, Soren Frank says, "Both of the novel's enunciation and composition prevent any form of centralization of one discourse above another" (170). The novel comprises several ontological levels, where characters, narrative strands and voices metamorphose into

each other, which sets everything into motion and unfixes the novel's point of view. To exemplify this, a signifier like the devil image jumps from character to character, pairing with one signified then another, at times denoting something antipathetic, Mahound as the Devil's messenger handing down a religion of cruel intolerance; Saladin as a damned assimilator who subjects himself to ideas of Western supremacy, and, at other times, something sympathetic. Mahound is the devil hero who launches a social and spiritual revolution against a barren materialistic and hierarchical order; Saladin, the impish immigrant, who rises against racial purity and English superiority. Similarly, in metanarrative reference, Rushdie himself weaves in and out of characters like Salman the Persian, Baal, and at one point in the novel Saladin's counterpart, Gibreel, sees his 'creator', a man with an omniscient vocation that forms a spitting image of Rushdie; "[A] man of about the same age as himself, of medium height fairly heavily built, with salt-and-pepper beard cropped close to the line of the jaw. . . balding, seemed to suffer from dandruff and wore glasses" (318). And the 'creator' Gibreel sees alternately and simultaneously matches "Oopervalva, the Fellow upstairs" and "Neechayvala, the Guy from Underneath" (318).

Accordingly, characters and situations are *angeldevilish*, offering *salviondamnation*, and received dichotomies like East and West, transcendent and profane, high and low, take turns being benevolent and malevolent until they merge in a 'blurb of velour' in which only their relativity makes sense. In a meta-narrative reference to the form of *The Satanic Verses* itself, Baal muse on the nature of his writing as essentially shifting and nomadic:

The landscape of his poetry was still the desert, the shifting dunes with the plumes of white sand blowing from their peaks. Soft mountains, uncompleted journeys, the impermanence of tents. How did one map a

country that blew into a new form every day? Such questions made his language too abstract, his imagery too fluid and his metre too inconstant. It led him to create chimeras of form, lionheaded goatheaded serpanttailed impossibilities whose shapes felt obliged to change the moment they were set. (370)

Rushdie sees international migration as a liberating global force that may bring about a new consciousness of discursive relativity materialized in the novel's form. In accord with Baal's poetic cartography, the novel situates itself in a liminal position, in a space of mobility and fluidity where all certainties lose their gravitational pull - indeed a zone of constant metamorphosis, where facts, truths, meaning, reality constantly escape any attempt to fix them with certainty. All this is then linked to an idea of the international migrant as mankind's post-national bringer of this revolutionary philosophy.

The narrator records the significant impact of air travel on the world's mental landscapes echoing Baal's idea of the liquefying faculties of his literature:

Up there in air-space, in the soft, imperceptible field which had been made possible by the century in which, thereafter, made the century possible, becoming one of its defining locations, the place of the movement and of war, the planet-shrinker and power-vacuum, most insecure and transitory of zones, illusory, discontinuous, metamorphic, - because when you throw everything up in the air anything becomes possible. (5)

This poetic distinction of the world is airways, the 'defining location of the century', heralds the contraction of the distances of the world, between places and peoples, and the dilution of all forms of segregating territories and categories. All political and

demographic demarcations seem to collapse into a borderless space. Human identity shifts from rootedness to rootlessness and causes disturbances of the binary distinction between inclusion and exclusion, sameness and difference. Ideas of homogeneity are disqualified by ideas of heterogeneity, stability by flux and purity by impurity.

To Rushdie, the international migrant images the experience in modern times of 'uprooting,' 'disjunction' and 'metamorphosis' and elucidates the fictive nature of all certainties (394). International migrants are the heroes of the periphery who have 'stepped out of the frame' to see the limitations caused by endless, uncompromising battles between master narratives and their counter-discourses. Not only do migrants discover reality as construction and the relativity of everything from a marginal perspective of any absolute discourse. In *The Satanic Verses* Saladin embodies Rushdie's image of the migrant hero. Whereas Gibreel remains unbendingly 'continuous', 'pure', 'truth' and 'untranslated' in his devotion to Islam, postcolonial Indian nationalism and anti-English anger, Saladin, the mimic man, realizes that he remains 'fade' in all absolute discourses. The narrator describes him:

A man who sets out to make himself up is taking on the creator's role, according to one way of seeing things; his unnatural, a blasphemer, an abomination of abominations. From another angle, you could see pathos on him, heroism in his struggle, in his willingness to risk: not all mutants survive. Or, consider him socio-politically: most migrants learn, and can become disguises. Our own false descriptions to counter the falsehoods invented about us, concealing for reasons of security our secret selves. (49)

He is persecuted an adversary to the established order of truth games and separate authenticities because of his status of not belonging and not meeting the demands of purity anywhere, not in England, nor in India. But not having space for resting one's feet, no certainties to hold on to, is not a loss. Rather the migrant has escaped the confines of fixed, authoritarian discourses. He has realized the Foucauldian ontology where discourses are what they are: versions of the world that can and must be constantly relativized, reversed, altered and renewed.

Gibreel's sequential dreams about the life of Muhammad/Mahound begin after he recovers from a long illness and that the recovery itself begins exactly at the moment when he confronts his own loss of faith. The illness has been for him a period of constant prayer and pleading-the plea for recovery slowly changing to the more desperate plea for an interlocutor. From questioning the nature of God, he now begins to questioning the very existence of God: "Ya Allah, just be there, damn it, just be." It is at that terrible moment of isolation, when he realizes that "there was no nobody there at all," his illness gives way to recovery. The narrator calls this a "day of metamorphosis" (30), and thus records this as one among the several scenes of metamorphoses that occurs in a text.

Metamorphoses thus becomes a guiding trope of the novel: a metaphor that responds at once to the lives of migrants, the transformations of tales, and even to the sly slippage between desire and intention, the hidden and the acknowledged, that becomes crucial to Mahound's story. The connection between migracy and metamorphoses is fairly obvious as in the book 10 of Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, Venus describes metamorphoses as a punishment "halfway between" (241), exile and death thus, collapsing the spatial and temporal coordinates of identity. It surfaces in the novel's distinction between exile and migrant: the exile guards against change,

stubbornly holding on to the dream of return, “frozen in time” (205); the migrant becomes invaded, transformed or metamorphosed. Thus, on a thematic level, the drama of metamorphoses is enacted in the stories of various migrants whose lives are transfigured in postcolonial cities, while on a formal plane, this drama is played out in the mutations of literary traditions and genres that produce widely allusive body of the cosmopolitan text.

After Saladin’s ordeal at the hands of the British police, when he finds himself suddenly transformed into a bestial creature, the change is explained in terms of a loss of identity that has left him vulnerable to the power of description vested in his captors, the police and more generally, in the entire state apparatus. The text suggests that Saladin’s transformation is partly the result of his having succumbed to that power of description, and also that he was particularly vulnerable to it because he had already lost a refuge or home that a more stable sense of identity would have provided.

In some ways, Gibreel’s metamorphoses appear to be more violent, especially in terms of its final consequence perhaps the violence of the change-from believer to skeptic-registers more deeply with Gibreel because he is someone who wishes to remain the person he always was: “continuous-that is, joined to and arising from his past . . . at bottom an untranslated man” (427), as the narrator says much later. Despite his avowed renunciations of faith, he finds that he cannot dissociate himself quite so easily from the passion that has hitherto sustained his life and now manifests itself in the extravagance of his dreams. Through the final implicit victory of Saladin the novel suggests that Gibreel’s greatest error might well lie in his overriding desire for continuity and authenticity.

Thus, Rushdie's alternative discursive mode appears to be arrived at from outside the truth games of dominant discourses and counter-discourses. It is combined by the perception of literature as an unattached discursive stage and an idea of international migration as a force of discursive detachment that relativise all forms of power discourse. It constitutes a third space in-between racial and cultural ideas of East versus West, in-between religious doctrines of good versus bad, in-between divisions of the mundane and the miraculous, and so on. From this liminal position, it may engage and blend the language of oppositional discourses in a gesture of heteroglossic inclusion, to paraphrase Bakhtin, without endorsing any of their separate claims to truths. In fact, Rushdie's nomadic literature persistently interrupts and undermines the truth formations, not only in a selection of target discourses, but in all discourses. It is not directed at the political content of discourses as such, but at the politics of the discursive game itself.

Rushdie presents the space in literature which would involve a multitude of voices with no preference of one above other; it would be a space of inclusion that makes discourses enter into dialogic relationships rather than basing its truth on discrimination and exclusion, a center less, heterogeneous space where ideas, language and truth are in constant movement. There is no question that Rushdie manages to prove literature as a unique stage where truth and power games of totalizing discourses may be revealed and countered.

Throughout *The Satanic Verses*, it is illustrated in various metaphorical expressions how discourse is an artificial construct that violates an otherwise free and constantly changing reality. The desert town of Jahilia (a fictional version of Mecca) is according to the narrator in the novel:

A sight to wonder at: walled, four-gated, the whole of it a miracle worked by its citizens, who have learned the trick of transforming the finer white dune-sand of those forsaken parts, – the very stuff of inconstancy, - the quintessence of unsettlement, shifting, treachery, lack-of-form, - and have turned it. . .into the fabric of their newly invented permanence. (94)

The image of Jahilia's creation captures the basic representation of existence in *The Satanic Verses*. Nature outside human settlement is, like the encircling desert, an intangible, limitless and unpredictable space, and 'the very stuff of inconstancy, the quintessence of unsettlement', 'shifting, treachery, lack-of-form'. And the 'trick' of transformation with which the Jahilians fabricate their 'newly invented permanence' corresponds to Foucault's theory of human reality as being built entirely by words, the bricks of discourse.

In line with all this, literature seems, as Rushdie points out, "best suited to challenging absolutes of all kinds" (424). And this is exactly what his novel *The Satanic Verses* proposes to do. It is a novel, says Rushdie in "In Good Faith", that dissents from "imposed orthodoxies of all types from the view that the world is quite clearly This and not That" (396). The novel is extremely evanescent in its form and content and not a single enunciation in the novel seems to be allowed to stand unchallenged by machinations of contradiction, doubt and ambiguity. It includes a heteroglossia of language that are normally considered mutually exclusive: religious belief in sacred truth intersects with profane doubt and blasphemy and material realism is crossed with magical and fantastic events. Within this universe the language of literature serves to undermine the discourses like religion, nationality, language and migracy that seek to exclude alternative versions of truth and reality.

IV. Conclusion

Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* is a critique of grand-narratives which presents the possibility of multiple truths in any discourses. Rushdie shows the multiple aspects of Indian society by writing from the perspective of pluralistic, non-totalized and open-ended forms of postmodern discourse to counter the certainties of all kinds whether they originate in the East or West. He is clearly positioning himself as a postmodern writer where nothing can be asserted with assurance "accepting uncertainty as the only constant, change as the only sure thing" (405). This refusal to accept any of the grand-narratives that have governed Eastern or Western civilization is precisely the stance that Jean-Francois Lyotard identifies as central to the postmodern condition.

According to Lyotard, every belief system or ideology has its own 'grand-narratives.' For him, the totality, stability and order are maintained in modern society by the means of 'grand-narratives' or 'master-narratives,' which are the stories a culture tells itself about its practices and beliefs. Lyotard takes the adherence to some grand-narratives to be characteristically modern and argues against it in favor of the postmodern pluralistic insight that human affairs are more fragmented and less neatly structured than such meta-narratives allow. So, all these meta-narratives are guilty of having declared themselves valid. Postmodernism, for Lyotard, questions grand-narratives and favors the 'mini-narratives' that explain small practices, local events, rather than large scale universal or global concepts.

Along with these lines, Rushdie, in his novel *The Satanic Verses*, challenges the notion of creating a single truth by creating contradiction, doubt and ambiguity. The novel includes the heteroglossia of language that

are normally considered mutually exclusive. He pits secular against sacred, nationalist or racist against transnational or migrant, historical against ahistorical and above all authoritative against fictional forms of discourses.

Rushdie presents the issue of hybridity as unavoidable form of multicultural scenario, and in the present world people could not stick towards any orthodoxy. He sees international migration as liberating global force that may bring a new consciousness of discursive relativity materialized in the novel's form. For Rushdie, international migrants are the heroes of the periphery who have 'stepped out of the frame' to see the limitations caused by endless and uncompromising battles between master narratives and their counter discourses. International migration is force of discursive detachment that relativises all forms of power discourses. So not having a space for resting one's feet, no certainties to hold on, is not a loss. Rushdie provides the only way to overcome this circumstance is individual's power of imagination or dream. To convert the world into live worthy, one has to modify, intermix and rewrite all the official versions of history into multiple versions in a way it suits the present world. The radical metamorphoses of two Indian characters Gibreel and Chamcha shows the complicated situation of individual identity in society, which stem from the singular dogma that exists in the history of nationality.

Rushdie, in the novel emphasizes the multiplicity of truths by presenting history as Gibreel dreams, through the memory of an unknown narrator. Gibreel's uncontrolled imagination though drives him commit suicide at the end, provides the power of radical imagination to liberate himself from the historical burden. When Gibreel encounters himself on the

situation where he finds Mahound less prophet and more businessman, the version of Koranic history becomes unreliable as Foucault believes human artifact could never go beyond the ideology in which it is written. Thus, bringing various discourses like national, political, historical and religious in the line of postmodern discourse, Rushdie brings the 'grand-narratives' in attack, and shows the possibility of 'mini-narratives' or other truths. Rushdie himself views that a novel may have multiple interpretations and every times a second interpretation is possible.

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