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Borrowing and the Art of 'Batcheat': Intertextuality and Dialogism in a Post-Colonial Study of Salman Rushdie's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*

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Abstract: *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* by Salman Rushdie evokes a world of binaries and oppositions. The land of the Gups and the Land of the Chups, the Guppees and the Chupwalas, speech and silence, Rashid and Khattam-shud, light and darkness, so on and so forth. A story-telling, speech-making world, that is threatened by silence and a singularity of perspective finds an accidental hero in Haroun as he embarks upon a journey to the Land of the Gups to bring back to his father his lost gift of story-telling and ends up saving an entire nation of Guppees from the Prince of Silence and the Foe of Speech- the dubious Khattam-shud. *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is replete with allusions to both western and eastern cultures-epic, oral, filmic and a host of other mediums. This multiculturalism is further explored in its polyvocality and linguistic experimentations. It is, as Rushdie suggests in this novel, through the free-play of multitudinous voices and multitudinous perspectives that the totalizing influence of one monolithic idea, cultural, social or linguistic opinion can be combated. That is the reason why Princess Batcheat needs be rescued from the clutches of Khattam-shud; 'Batcheat' being a Hindi equivalent of conversation, since it is only through conversation and not reticence that the problems of the world can come to an end. It is as true in the world of fantasy as it is in our everyday world. It is a text that essentially upholds the idea of the novel evolving as an effect of the act of cultural hybridization which, according to the Russian linguist

Mikhail Bakhtin, takes into consideration the intense and vital interactions of fundamentally differentiated social groups. In Rushdie, the hybridization of languages is a part of a more complex process of cultural assimilation and not merely confined to the study of linguistic structures as in Barthes. Herein lies the novelty of Rushdie's authorial offerings and its essentially post-colonial outlook. As such, a close reading of *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* reveals a narrative that is not merely structured as a fantasy and a political allegory but a defense of his unique novelistic discourse, of intertextuality and subversion of the meta-narrative of British fiction. It is a metafictional tale of the creation of the essentially Rushdian mode of story-telling and its relevance in the modern world, explaining why Haroun must swim across the ocean of the Sea of Stories to stop the villain, Khattam-shud, from plugging the mouth of the story spring from which new story streams keep emerging to renew and replenish the existing stories. Therefore, like Haroun, Rushdie tries to unite and reconcile cultures so as to create a unique and liberated space for articulation but ends with a note of pessimism and a possibility of such an ending turning out to be a mere contrivance. Firstly, an attempt has been made to study the inter-textual references and influences of western and eastern cultures, texts and ideas in the novel and ascertain their role and significance in the narration of the story through a comparative study of three of his novels, *Midnight's Children*, *The Moor's Last Sigh* and *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* in the light of Mikhail Bakhtin's, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, to show how in keeping with his earlier novels for 'adults', this novel too attempts a subversion of the grand-narrative and becomes a sort of authorial mouthpiece in support of the genre and an advocate of the post-colonial novel.

Secondly, this paper tries to ascertain if *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* can indeed be categorized as children's literature and suggests that by considering a child as the hero of the novel Rushdie only makes it evident that there are certain things in this world which only a child has the insight to fathom and that it is through them, therefore, he tries to communicate with the adults.

Keywords: intertextuality, multiculturalism, Salman Rushdie, dialogism, post-colonialism

Introduction

Storytelling is an ancient medium of communication and cross-pollination of lore, myths and legends. The earliest form of storytelling was oral. Stories were communicated through simple chants which originated with people performing daily chores, tales of ordinary people with extraordinary powers. Later on they were either corroborated through songs or pictures or enactments performed by wandering minstrels or troubadours in the western cultures and the shamans or kathakthakurs in the eastern cultures. The histories of a culture, a community, or a people were handed down through generations in the form of yarns. Perhaps that explains the reverence that is still accorded to storytellers across diverse cultures, be it the African griot or the Irish seanchai. Michel Foucault in his essay "What is an Author?" refers to the Arabian storyteller Scheherazade, the narrator of *One Thousand and One Nights* who spins one yarn after the other for one thousand and one nights for the king in a bid to save her life and eventually the king falls in love with her and spares her life. Foucault goes on to claim that our culture no longer associates life with narrative or writing but rather with that of the idea of death. According to him, writing effaces the author. *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* contends this very idea as it tries to re-affirm our faith in both the story and the raconteur. In the sequel to *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, titled *Luka and the Fire of Life*, Rushdie invests Luka Khalifa with magical powers to bring back his father, the story-teller, Rashid Khalifa to life. It is the story-teller that Luka endeavors to save just as Haroun struggles for the salvation of the story.

The only son of an Indian immigrant Anis Ahmed Rushdie and his wife Negin Bhatt, Salman Rushdie grew up to become a man with quite a few feathers to his cap. A novelist, an essayist, a critic, a copywriter, a filmmaker and a short-story writer, Rushdie has successfully juggled multiple challenging roles throughout his life. Meanwhile he has also earned notoriety for his flagrant and scathing remarks on Islam and the controversial nature of his novels. His works try to do away with everything traditional or orthodox and constitute a creative space which is unique and which subverts all the time-honoured literary traditions of the past. It is possible to draw parallels between the works of Rabelais

and Joyce with those of Rushdie. Sadik Jalal Al-Azm in *Reading Rushdie: Perspectives on the Fiction of Salman Rushdie* writes:

> In the fiction of Rabelias and Rushdie we find a fabulous satire of contemporary life meant to shock, bewilder and awaken, while at the same time formulating beneath its exaggerations, ironies, parodies and criticisms very important truths about their respective ages and societies. (qtd. in Fletcher 258)

If we compare the two texts, James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, the Joycean influences on Rushdie are discernible. The multilingual nature of the texts, the heteroglossic, inter-lingual modifications, puns, slang usages, double entendre coupled with the multiplicity of styles, idioms, cannibalization of various languages, traditions and dialects such as Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Hindi, Turkish, Indian English, informing his work, according to Sadik, makes the point amply clear. Rushdie is never too concerned with the originality of his technique; rather, his secular art, his novels advocate the profound importance of a give and take of ideas, of this plurality and assimilation of cultures, although it would be unfair to say that all these influences overshadow the creative genius of Rushdie. On the contrary, his mythmaking and fictionalizing of history, his characteristic humour and literary pyrotechniques give his works a unique flavor of their own. His novels are always something more than just novels, sometimes they are fictional projections of little realities of existence, dark satires in the garb of hilarious vignettes of everyday life or a medium of political and religious criticism in the form of some children's fantasy.

Every form of communication then, is essential to our civilization. It is an effort to keep silence at bay and create a space for verbal as well as literary exchanges. Whether inter-personal or inter-textual, communication is the Shibboleth and holds the key to understanding both *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* and the Rushdian mode of novelistic discourse. The referential range of Rushdie's fiction is extremely wide. He alludes to epic, mythic, filmic, historic, scientific, photographic and a host of other models in his fiction. Andrew Teverson in his book titled *Salman Rushdie : Contemporary World*

Writers in a bid to provide us with an explanation on his choice of such diverse models in the writing of his fiction points out :

> Rushdie's reasons for practicing such a referential art form may be explained in various ways; but certainly one of the central explanations must be that Rushdie writes in this way because he believes, and because he wishes to assert that he believes, that the act of authorial creation does not happen in a vacuum, is not a product of a moment of original genius, but depends upon, indeed springs from innumerable preceding acts of authorial(and artistic) creation effected by other writers, storytellers, artists and intellectuals. (Teverson 55)

Herein lies the relevance of Bakhtinian "Dialogic Imagination" in the study of *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*. It states that every word has certain elements in it that refers to something that exists outside it. In a "dialogic" work of literature, pre-existing discourses inform new ones while adding new elements to it. In the process both the old and the new elements are altered. It is somewhat analogous to T.S. Eliot's ideas as expressed in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" where he informs that "the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past," (Eliot 37) emphasizing upon the notion of the mutability of discourses as they evolve with time and give rise to new and altered expressions.

When literary works from every culture, language or society thus "blend and clash" to quote Barthes, the dialogism must give rise to the question of cultural hybridity and linguistic hybridity or heteroglossia.

Haroun and the Sea of Stories has largely been considered a personal allegory or a fantasy or a fable. Although it deals with tropes such as the freedom of speech and the importance of communication in the face of a fatwa claiming the author's life, that is not all. It is essentially a story about storytelling and it does much more than highlight a personal issue. It is about the highly experimental, inspired, and iconoclastic Rushdian narrative, about a tradition and historiology that needs be preserved. Therefore, Haroun must save this authorial voice from being muzzled forever.

But such complicated and wide ranging issues, seems not the subject of a childrens' fiction and yet Haroun and his adventures has the right mix of all the ingredients to enthrall a child's imagination. Therefore, it becomes imperative to see how and why it is so, as we delve deeper into a textual analysis of the novel.

Allusions and Associations

In an attempt to justify the composition of his most controversial novel, *The Satanic Verses,* Rushdie points out:

> Those who oppose the novel most vociferously today are of the opinion that intermingling with a different culture will inevitably weaken and ruin their own. I am of the opposite opinion. The Satanic Verses celebrate hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformations that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs. It rejoices in mongrelization and fears the absolutism of the Pure. (Rushdie 1991, 394)

It is also the central idea that dominates many of his works. *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* not only adheres to this Rushdian aesthetic but also defines and defends it. Therefore, the cross-cultural influences and allusions, the semiotic innovations and syntactic calisthenics are of great import in the study of the novel as a metatext on intertextuality.

At the very outset we are introduced to the father and the son whose adventures would decide the fate of stories in the times to come. The son is called Haroun while the father, Rashid; together their names are reminiscent of the very popular Caliph of Baghdad, Harun al-Rashid and the hero of many a tale from the celebrated *Arabian Nights*, most likely to have been a staple literary diet of almost all the children around the world. The communication across texts and cultures begins with the very first pair of names that open the text setting the distinct style and the technique of the author at play. Rashid's wife is called Soraya and all hell breaks loose in their household when one fine day Soraya just stops singing and Rashid, too engrossed in weaving yarns fails to observe it. Soraya, sad and hurt elopes with their neighbor, Mr.

Sengupta and poor Rashid, all of a sudden loses his ability to tell stories - Soraya perhaps alluding to the popular Latin American singer and composer of the 1990s. Soon after, his father is invited to campaign for some politicos from the Valleys of G and K, alphabetical representations of Jammu and Kashmir, a country, recurrent in many of Rushdie's novels. Rashid, in a bid to avoid the gloominess at home decides to accept their offer. But he finds it impossible to invent any more stories. Just a day ahead of the campaign, Haroun stumbles upon his father's biggest secret. He accidentally comes across a Water Genie in Rashid's bathroom, who tells him that all his father's stories came from the Great Story Sea and that one needed to subscribe to its services to be able to say such stories as did his father. That is when he learns that his father no longer wished to avail the services of the Genie, Iff and would stop telling stories all together. Haroun recognizes the irrationality of his father's decision and decides to help him. The Genie tells him that Haroun would have to meet the Grand Comptroller to be able to re-subscribe to the story streams and that he would have to travel to the P2C2E House of Gup City to meet him. P2C2E is reminiscent of the android R2-D2 in the *Star Wars* series. Haroun realizes that the only person who can take him to this magical wonderland was the Water Genie. But the Genie refuses, and Haroun uses his Disconnecting Tool, which he leaves behind in a hurry, as a bait to trick the Genie into helping him.

The very notion of the Story Sea immediately calls for an association with the collection of legends, folktales and fairytales called the *Katha-Sarit-Sagar* that was written in the eleventh century by a Brahmin called Somadeva, literally meaning the ocean of the streams of stories. The boat where Snooty Buttoo, a pun on the Bhutto clan as is most probable, arranges for their stay is called Arabian Nights Plus One. Clearly suggesting the compendium of tales called *One Thousand and One Nights* as a point of reference. Iff then conjures up a Hoopoe, a mechanical bird that flies at a great speed to transport them into the world of Gup city. Once they reach their destination though, Iff asks Haroun to have some story water from the Ocean and assures him a splendid experience. Having partaken a few drops of that water from Iff's golden cup, Haroun watches himself dueling with legendary monsters like the two-tongued snakes or the four headed dogs, across a

landscape resembling a chessboard, to find his way to the tower where lives the captive princess he is meant to rescue; the chessboard image evoking scenes from Lewis Carroll's *The Adventures of Alice in Wonderland*. The author calls it Princess Rescue Story Number S/1001/ZHT/420/41(r)xi which seems to suggest a science-fiction version of the original fairy-tale involving Rapunzel; only in Haroun's version the princess gets a haircut, thereby effecting a playful subversion of the original narrative. This is not the only place where he draws a direct inter-texual reference to a book. The tower with a captive princess has constituted innumerable narratives in folklores, medieval romances, epics, legends, poems etc. not only in the western but in the traditions from the east as well. How can we forget the tower from Rapunzel or Robert Louis Stevenson's Kidnapped where the young hero, David Balfour is sent by his nasty uncle Ebenezer into the dark House of Shaws, culminating in the boy's terrifying realization that the stairs end mid-way? On his way up the tower Haroun watches himself getting magically transformed into a spider reminding us of two texts pertaining to two separate genres being recalled at the same time; Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, where Gregor Samsa wakes up one morning to find himself transformed into a hideous insect-like creature and the popular comic-strip hero Spiderman which relates the story of Peter Parker, a teenage high school student who is bit by a spider and turned into a strong and agile, web-shooting and wall-climbing superhero. It is interesting to note that proper names such as those of Kafka, Gogol or Zola, appear in the novel as the nonsensical utterances such as "Gogogol and Kafkafka" (*Haroun* 129) of the Shadow Warrior whom the Guppees meet at the border area of Chup city. It is the entire exercise of finding out and fixing these cross-texual, cross-cultural and cross-lingual associations that makes the perusal of this text all the more fascinating. It is precisely this idea that the author wishes to convey home. But an unexpected alteration in his vision of the story takes Haroun by surprise. The Genie explicates:

> Don't you understand? Something or somebody has been putting filth into the Ocean. And obviously if filth goes into the stories they go wrong…this could mean war. (Rushdie 1990, 75)

When asked about their enemies, the one's against whom the war has to be waged, Iff informs, "With the Land of Chup, on the dark side of Kahani…this looks like the doing of the leader of the Chupwalas. The Cult master of Bezaban…his name is Khattam Shud" (*Haroun* 75). The name of the place is Kahani, a Hindi equivalent of 'story'. Kahani is being threatened by Khattam-Shud and they must not let the villain have his way. In the Land of the Guppees, Haroun befriends a Floating Gardener called Mali and a pair of Plentimaw Fishes, Goopy and Bagha. Goopy and Bagha, again are names which Rushdie borrows from the two delightful characters of Satyajit Ray's film for children, *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* which he had adapted for the celluloid from his grandfather Upendrakishore Roychowdhury's popular story bearing the same title. In an essay in *Imaginary Homelands*, Rushdie writes:

> Ray came from a family of fantasists, creators of nonsense verse and fabulous hybrid animals-Shortle, Whalephant, Porcuduck-and both Ray's father Sukumar and his grandfather Upendrakishore were famous for their children's stories and illustrations...but this was also a family of dazzling and varied intellectual and spiritual gifts. (Rushdie 1991, 111-12)

Perhaps Rushdie's fascination with Satyajit Ray and his fantastic creations explain his own interests in incorporating such fantastical incidents and creatures in *Haroun* quite in keeping with Ray's style. Ray's influences go far beyond the creatures in the novel. Meenakshi Mukherjee in her essay, "Haroun and the Sea of Stories: Fantasy or Fable?" draws the possible parallels between the text and the film where the songs in the films attain quite an identical feat as the stories in the novel which is "countering the principles of silence, suspicion and strife with the celebration of art articulation and consequently of life" (qtd. in Bharat 187). The battle between the people of Jhundi and Shundi, where again the people have lost their speech, in Ray's film is finally averted by Goopy and Bagha through their songs. These songs convey the same sense of heteroglossia and a "plurality of voices, privileging polyphony over an enforced unity of silence" (qtd. in Bharat 187) that Rushdie valorizes in Haroun. The reference to the "pleasure-domes" (Rushdie 1990, 88) in the Pleasure Garden echoes Coleridge's *Kubla*

Khan and the pleasure-dome which he built in the air as an epitome of artistic perfection. The "Library Army" (Rushdie 1990, 88) again harks back at Umberto Eco's, *The Name of the Rose*. The work revolves around a Franciscan friar, William Baskerville and his assistant, the novice Adso who investigates into a series of murders taking place at their monastery where the clue lies in disentangling a dense web of trans-textual and trans-lingual interconnections within the novel, thereby widening the scope of intertexual exchanges further. It is also held as a metatext on intertextuality. In the person and mannerisms of the Shadow Warrior lies an allusion to the classical art of dramaturgy. He communicates through "Abhinaya" (Rushdie 1990, 130) or gesture language and is called Mudra. Mudras are the gestures through which the dancers express themselves. Bharat's *Natyashastra* is suggested as a possible point of reference here. The references flit from the past to the present to the futuristic world. The dark ship of Khattam-Shud could be anything, the Jeroboam from Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, Nellie from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Nautilus, the submarine from Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* to The Walrus, the pirate-ship from R.L.Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. Interestingly, the Grand Comptroller of the P2C2E house is also called the Walrus and thus the associations get denser and denser with the turning of each page. From Katha-Sarit-Sagar, Thakurmar Jhuli, Rapunzel and similar such fairy tales to myths, legends, beast-fables, science-fiction and post-structuralist texts; from the traditional to the recent; from the old texts to the new ones everything has been brought into the purview of one sole novel, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* in what has been commended by critics as one of his most humorous and accessible works till date.

The Influence of Bakhtin on Rushdie: A Comparative Study

"My voices far from being scared, turned out to be as profane, and as multitudinous as dust" (Rushdie 1981, 232). Thus Saleem Sinai, the hero of the *Midnight's Children*, voices the very foundational aspect of Bakhtinian novelistic discourse. Mikhail Bakhtin's study of 'dialogism' began as criticism of Dostoevsky's art. The contributions of Bakhtin's metalinguistic theories to the field of Dostoevsky studies opened up new and varied hermeneutical possibilities. Bakhtin's analysis ranges from the Menippean tradition followed by authors such as Plato and

Apuleius, to the carnival tradition in Cervantes, Rabelais and Dante to the culmination of these traditions as he sees it in the modern novels of Dostoevsky. The "Dialogic Imagination" contains an extended understanding of the idea of "polyphony" or "dialogism" originally propounded in *Problems in Dostoevsky's Poetics* by Bakhtin. The novel, observes Bakhtin, is essentially a "polyphonic" genre and he compares it with the epic to elucidate upon their differences based on the "dialogic principle". Whereas he shows us that the epic is a way of writing rooted in the "monological", a word used by Bakhtin in *The Dialogic Imagination*, where all elements of the narrative conform to an architectonic, holistic logic; the novel is not merely a stylistic break but a philosophical break from the conventional form, that takes place in conformity to a single logic. The novel according to Bakhtin is the literary mode of the "dialogical" and of many voices or "heteroglossia" and removed from the traditional perspective of a clichéd, monolithic narrative, quotes Bakhtin:

> At any given moment in history language is not only stratified into dialects but into languages that are socio-ideological languages belonging to certain professions, genres, generations etc. This stratification and diversity of speech has the potential to spread wider and accrue deeper levels of signification in the process of becoming. Due to this social stratification a "verbal performance," acquires the ability to, infect with its own intentions certain aspects of language that had been affected by its semantic and expressive impulse, imposing on them specific semantic nuances and specific axiological overtones; thus it can create slogan-words, curse-words, praise-words and so forth. (Bakhtin 290)

Therefore, language is essentially "heteroglot". Languages of "heteroglossia" intersect with one another to form new socially representative languages. In a novel it is the conflict between the different speeches of the characters, the narrator and the author that defines it. It arises from the interaction of various discourses in a "polyphonic" novel. In a "polyphonic" novel the author allows great freedom of mutual interaction to the characters. They argue with one

another and also in certain cases with the author. Therefore a linguistic platform is erected upon which many voices, many consciousnesses and many socio-ideological utterances can operate.

Haroun and the Sea of Stories is replete with characters, some humans, others non-human, invested with some sort of magical and fantastical qualities. They belong to different sections and classes of the society and it is their "dialogicity" that represents the stratification that Bakhtin theorizes about. Haroun, Rashid, Soraya and Mr.Sengupta all belong to humble middle class societies; therefore it comes as a rude shock to Rashid when he learns that his wife has eloped with their neighbor. As a consequence, Haroun's father loses his ability to spin anymore yarns. Whereas the father and the son air familial concerns, the politicos represent the voice of the greater national establishment. They are opportunistic, cunning and self-seeking. They have their eyes set on winning the general elections and they endeavour to enlist Rashid's story-telling abilities to ensure their win at the polls. Snooty Butto the politico is certain about his requirements from Rashid:

> Terms of your engagement are crystal clear! For me you would please to provide up-beat sagas only. None of your gloom-puss yarns! If you want pay then just be gay! (Rushdie 1990, 49)

But following Rashid's inability to keep up with the politician's requirements and Haroun's discovery of Iff , the Water Genie, they embark upon a journey to the magical wonderland of the Gups, where lies the vast ocean of the Stream of Stories, the essential source of all his father's story-telling powers. This magical world also has a hierarchy. There is a monarch, King Chatterjee, his daughter, Princess Batcheat and his fiancé, Prince Bolo. Then there is the working class ruled by the monarch and the Walrus, the powerful comptroller of the P2C2E house of Gup City; it can be seen as the representative of a giant corporate from the modern times, which controls the flow of story streams in the ocean, who are responsible for the working and the maintenance of the story waters. There is Iff, the Water Genie who carries out the subscription works; there is Butt, the Hoopoe, a mechanical bird, who is responsible for speedy transportation across the

territory; there is Mali, the gardener who is responsible for reclaiming complex and jumbled up tales representing the working class. They also represent the voice of the common people, perturbed by the nuisance spread by the Cult Master of Bezaban, Khattam –Shud. They are trying to avert the destruction of the story streams. Khattam –Shud wants to rule over a land enveloped in silence, where only he would have a say and others would merely follow him. Where there would be no stories, no conversations and no free speech. Haroun has a dual purpose in the novel. Batcheat, the princess has been kidnapped by the villain; therefore he must rescue her and in its course rescue the entire nation of Guppees from their imminent doom. The voices are given a free play in the course of the novel and each character expresses their own opinion on the situation. All these characters in the course of their conversations reflect an attitude towards the art of story-telling and the wonders of imagination. The " dialogicity" acts as a medium for communicating Rushdie's perceptions on fiction, fiction writing and also communication across cultures as well as texts. A style which he religiously follows in all his works and *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is no exception. Although it has elements and allusions which are meant solely for adults, it never-the-less garbs them conveniently within the narrative of children's fiction. The multiplicity of perspectives on creative writing, story-telling and the plurality of cultures documented in the form of the inter-textual references and use of languages in the novel can be read as Bakhtinian. This plurality of voices is also seen in *Midnight's Children*. Saleem Sinai, the narrator in the novel, born at the exact hour of midnight and at the precise moment of India's independence from the British yoke, suddenly realizing his imminent death, decides to chronicle the tale of his life. In the phantasmagoria that ensues, voices of every kind, of every nature predominate the narrative and runs riot in the narrator's consciousness. Saleem's mysterious gift of telepathy enables him to hear the "inner monologues of all the so called teeming millions, of masses and classes alike" (Rushdie 1981, 232). Saleem recognizes a language problem. Saleem's realization can be seen as a manifestation of "heteroglossia".

Similarly in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, the "internal stratifications" of language and the transgressive and trans-cultural utterances are manifested in Moraes Zogoiby's narration of his family genealogy. Just

as Saleem Sinai establishes concurrent identities, at once individual and national, through his narrative, Moraes, or the 'Moor' achieves a similar feat in the representation of his variegated and hybrid family history. A narrative technique employed in *The Moor's Last Sigh* that desserves attention is 'ekphrasis' (Sue 205), derived from the Greek etymons, 'ek' which means 'out of' and 'phrasis' which means 'phrase' or 'to tell'. Therefore, it signifies the art of verbal painting or the verbal representation of something visual. Since, Moraes's story is intricately associated with his mother's eclectic paintings, 'ekphrasis' as a mode of narration more than justifies the end. The multitudinous streams of thoughts and visions that are corroborated to Saleem through voices and dreams and that Haroun visualizes in the story streams, Aurora, Moraes's mother, emblazons across the walls in her house in vibrant colours and artistic expressions.

It is to be understood that the notions of "heteroglossia", "intertextuality" and "hybridity" are complementary tropes in Rushdie's fiction. Of the three terms, the first and the third are Bakhtin's own, whereas the second is only intended. The term "intertextuality" (Moi 1986, 34) was first coined by Julia Kristeva in her essay "Word, Dialogue and Novel" published in *The Kristeva Reader* (Moi 1986). In this essay Kristeva aims at concretizing and further enumerating on Bakhtin's notion of "heteroglossia" by combining Saussure's semiotics with Bakhtin's "dialogism" in a post-structuralist reading of the same. "Dialogism" and "intertextuality" remains two major pre-occupations in Rushdie. His post-colonial and post-modern narratives find excellent representations through these linguistic, cultural and literary codes. These create a space within the text where the inter-ethnic, inter-racial and cross-cultural identities and languages overlap and influence one another.

In *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, speech is a metaphor for all kinds of cultural exchanges, like story-telling and also the freedom of expression. It must be remembered that *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* was a post-fatwa novel. It has an underlying political message to convey, which makes it a political allegory too. On fourteenth of February, 1989, the supreme leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini declared a death sentence against Rushdie for authoring *The*

Satanic Verses, a book where Khomeini had been ridiculed along with alleged insults against Prophet Mohammad and his wives. Immediately Rushdie went into hiding. In an interview given to James Fenton, Rushdie talks about his inability to compose anything after the fatwa. As an author he deserved some amount of freedom for unbridled expression of his mind. In the wake of the fatwa he felt it was being denied. He tells Fenton that he required a reason strong enough to re-motivate and initiate him to write again and what could be more compelling than a father's promise to write for his son. So at his son's behest he found himself writing once again and thus the book was born. So in a way it is also about finding a lost voice and it is woven into the story. This freedom must be defended and so must the world of Kahani from the Khattam-Shuds or Khomeinis of this world. For precisely the same reason, a son must travel across a magical world to restore his father, the man's greatest asset, the gift of story-telling. He must give back the master juggler (the juggler of tales) his fancy juggling balls.

The characters in a "dialogic" novel are left outside a rigid authorial control. The author has a strange presence in a "dialogic" novel. He is subtly omnipresent. His hero is as important as he is himself to the novel. The hero is a self-conscious individual. Rather than the author describing his personality, it is the protagonist himself describing his person, not only his own assessment of himself but that of the other characters as well. He is not the quintessential hero of the "monologic", he is dynamic and ever-changing and sometimes not even so positive and ennobling a presence in a work as in a monologic narrative. The hero in a "dialogic" novel comments on himself and the world around. He has a view on every aspect of the world. The author in a dialogic novel is often found in conversation with his characters. In *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, the protagonist is after all a child. Therefore, unlike a Saleem or a Moraes, whose narration might sometimes reflect an authorial perspective but they speak for themselves, Haroun's self-consciousness is bound by a somewhat constant authorial presence. In *Midnight's Children* and *The Moor's Last Sigh*, the first-person narration offers its heroes a rather unfettered free-play within the narrative form. In Haroun though, the narration is in the third-person. But it must also be remembered that in the end, it is a story about story-telling and the defense of story-telling and fictionalization of reality in

the face of every form of deterrent. As such it is also a defense of the authorial method. Therefore, the author's inclusion of his own voice among all the other voices that speak in the novel explicate his method.

The study of "dialogicity" remains incomplete without a detailed study of the languages itself and their implications upon the text. All languages of "heteroglossia" constitutes some specific views on the world, "forms for conceptualizing the world in words" (Bakhtin 292) certain worldviews , each characterized by its own meanings and values. And about the 'word' Bakhtin states:

> To study the word, as such, ignoring the impulse that reaches out beyond it, is as senseless as to study psychological experience outside the context of that real life toward which it was directed and by which it is determined. (Bakhtin 292)

Before delving into the 'beyond' of the word, it is imperative to see how the word functions in a "dialogic" text. In Rushdie, languages and words represent the very socio-lingual "hybridizations" his novels profess. "Hybridizations" refers to:

> The mixture of two social languages within the limit of a single utterance, an encounter within the arena of an utterance, between two different linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another, by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor. (Bakhtin 358)

Haroun and the Sea of Stories, an essentially English novel, incorporates various Asian languages and alters or modifies English words or proper nouns to represent the cross-cultural and inter-linguistic flux. The princess is called 'Batcheat' which is a Hindi equivalent of conversation, the prince is called 'Bolo', the gardener, 'Mali' or the villain 'Khattam-Shud', which in Hindi stands for 'to say', 'gardener' and 'finish' respectively. A soldier in the gentry of the monarch is called 'Blabbermouth" which literally means loquacious and the monarch himself is called King Chattergy, an Indianised word derived from the English word 'chatter'. His general is called 'Kitab'

which means book in Hindi. So each character is called by a name that is related to speech, conversation or fiction. Indianized or hybridized English is liberally used in most of his novels. Words such as 'mindofy', 'escapofied', 'pudding-shudding', 'totah', 'funtoosh' or 'westoxication' being few of his semotic innovations. The very notion of the purity of the word or the language is being challenged. It caters to Bakhtin's notion of linguistic creations, which proposes:

> All devices in the novel for creating the image of a language may be reduced to three basic categories: 1. Hybridizations, 2. The dialogized interrelation of languages and 3. Pure dialogues. (Bakhtin 358)

Intertextuality" and Post-Colonialism

"Dialogism" can also refer to the interaction between texts. According to the critic R.B. Kershner (1992), as explicated in his work, *Joyce, Bakhtin, and Popular Literature: Chronicles of Disorder*, 'dialogism' in Bakhtin is strictly confined to the notion of the languages, yet Julia Kristeva has shown us that it presupposes the interaction between the texts as well. In post-modern novels, this trend is most discernible. In Rushdie intertextuality is an integral aspect of the narrative. In *Midnight's Children*, the influence of *One Thousand and One Nights* is overt. As in the *One Thousand and One Nights*, Saleem Sinai is aware of the fact that the moment his readers lose their interest in his stories, he would cease to be. As such, the narrator Saleem is almost paranoid to retain our interest and our fascination throughout the process of narration. In Padma, we not only see a reader of the text but also the reflection of the readership which constitutes us. Padma's persistent advice to Saleem to maintain the credulity of his tales and make them more believable to the readers recalls King Schahriah, the king from *One Thousand and One Nights* who had the power to control the fate of Scheherazade and her stories. Then there is an intertextual reference to Gabrial Garcia Marquez, another magic realist like Rushdie whose *One Hundred Years of Solitude* deals with the parallel trajectory of the Buendia family and the history of Colombia. It alludes to the narrative features of Lawrence Sterne's *Tristam Shandy*, its anecdotal nature and personal sketches. The narrator of Gunter Grass's *Tin Drum*

is as complex and self-contradictory as Saleem. There are references to texts as diverse as *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* to the Superman or League of Heroes comics.

The Moor's Last Sigh is a source of vast cultural associations and subject to prior readings of almost every form of discourse - history, geography, myth, art and also filmic. Moraes Zogoiby, recalls the relationship between the historical Boabdil and his mother. It was due to her disappointment at his inability to defend their kingdom from the Spanish domination that resulted in the 'sigh'. Aurora's highly abstract, post-modernist paintings are reminiscent of Frida Kahlo's work. Again, the text alludes to fairy tales such as Snow White and Rip Van Winkle. Rushdie writes:

> Now, therefore, it is meet to sing of endings; of what was, and may be no longer; of what was right in it and wrong. A last sigh for a lost world, a tear for its passing. Alas, however, a last…A Moor's tale complete with sound and fury. (Rushdie 1995, 1-2)

Thus, the intertextual allusions to Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* serve as motifs to describe the treacherous and corrupt world. The filmic references also have a significant bearing upon the novel. In a brilliant summation of the relationship between his father Abraham Zogoiby and himself, Moraes alludes to multiple films like Mr. India, James Bond and Godfather and also comic capers such as Blade Runners and Star Wars. There is also an allusion to Sherlock Holmes. Moraes addresses his father as "the arch villain, the dark capo, Moriartier than Moriarty, Blofelder than Blofeld, not just Godfather but Gone-farthest" (Rushdie 1990, 72), who eventually surfaces as Aurora's murderer.

Again, the spirit of "carnival" that calls forth "heteroglossia" essentially suggests a state of social intermingling effected in order to subvert established social norms or administrative control. By the incorporation of a multiplicity of perspectives and an all-encompassing approach to its subject, his multi-faceted narrative seeks to destabilize fundamentalist and absolutist versions of the truth. Saleem's mind acts as a repository of voices, that converse in diverse indigenous languages

among eachother. A notion that subverts the post-independence drive of re-organizing the states in India based on dialects. Saleem narrates:

> It is a matter of record that the States Reorganization Committee had submitted its report to Mr. Neheru as long ago as October 1955…India had been divided anew…but the boundaries of these states were not formed by rivers, or mountains, or any natural features of the terrain; they were instead walls of words. Language divided us… (Rushdie 1981, 261)

A similar socio-political issue is dealt with in Moraes's tale of his family adventures. His mother's erstwhile lover and eventual enemy Raman Mainduck Fielding, a politician and a cartoonist attempting a cultural overhaul by eliminating non-Hindu and foreign elements from the society is a source of great intrigue in the novel. He is presented as a figure equivalent to Bal Thackrey, the leader of 'Shiv Sena', a Hindu fundamentalist faction and also reminiscent of Chaggan Bhujbal, from Rushdie's documentary, "The Riddle of Midnight". In their discriminatory and persecutory attitude towards Muslims, Raman Fielding represents a threat to multiculturalism. The text in its caricature of Bal Thackrey, condemns and undermines such an absolutist notion of truth. When Haroun asks Khattam-Shud the reason behind his extreme hatred for stories. He remarks:

> Your world, my world, all worlds…They are all there to be Ruled. And inside every single story, inside every Stream in the Ocean, there lies a world, a story world, that I cannot rule at all. And that is the reason why. (Rushdie 1990, 161)

Fictions can completely destroy such absolutist power-structures and so can the plurivocality of diverse perspectives within a socio-cultural space. Rushdie must save the story and so must Haroun.

While dealing with the notion of "intertextuality", one must also consider the basic difference between the Barthian notion of "intertextuality" and the one that Rushdie advocates. While Barthe rejects the creative "genius" (Lodge and Wood 165) or originality of the

author, Rushdie believes in the author's ingenuity in shaping a new world, coloured by the author's own imagination and perceptions of life and reality from the old and the already existing worldviews. This is focal in all kinds of anti-establishment or post-colonial narratives where the author's primary function is to resist the presuppositions and constructs of the past. Therefore, Rushdie adopts an originally European genre, the novel, and adds elements from various cultures, predominantly those which had been colonized by it, giving it a peculiarity that is seldom found elsewhere. Novel becomes a highly exhaustive cultural media. Again, Barthe's idea of textual interaction is limited to the linguistic structures and their abstract relations and the cultural and ideologinal significations are contained within the limited scope of these relations. In Rushdie, it primarily depends upon the inter-relations of vast cultures and civilizations. He is not merely concerned with the language but with the cultures and communities, nations and histories. As such it is akin to what Homi Bhabha writes in "The Location of Culture":

> It is the trope of our times to locate the question of culture in the realm of the beyond. At the century's edge, we are less exercised by annihilation-the death of the author-or epiphany-the birth of the subject. Our existence is marked by a tenebrous sense of survival, living on the borderlines of the 'present'…the 'beyond' is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the pat…we find ourselves in a moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. (Bhabha 1994)

The in-betweeness produced by the 'diaspora' or displacements from one culture to the other is vividly portrayed in Rushdie's works, himself a product of the phenomena. According to Bhabha (1994) it is this diasporic situation that has given momentum to a movement towards a global, international cultural ascendancy from the diminutive and degrading notions of 'imaginary' differences made on the basis of class, race, culture or gender, an urge to unite and locate culture within a sphere of plurality in every possible aspect of life, literature or

languages. Post-modernism can only account for the disintegration of the self. Rushdie is more post-colonial in his insistence on the formation of a unique cultural consciousness, a thought which we can trace back to Bakhtin again. It is the same consciousness that one finds in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*.

Conclusion: Child is the Father of Man

Despite the personal and the political allegories implicit in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, its adult contents, its parallels with Rushdie's adult novels and the multiplicity of thoughts and creative concerns implicit in the story, Rushdie does not lose sight of the child. It is after all about the relationship of a loving father and a doting son. It is about a family, befallen by a tragedy uniting in their loss, in case of Rashid, a double loss, that of his wife and his story-telling powers, standing up for what they believe in. If one is to see the novel purely for the story it relates and not its underlying allusions, then what emerges is a simple tale of love, courage and adventure that any child would enjoy. The lovable Iff, the intelligent Butt, the funny King Chattergy and idiotic Prince Bolo constitute a magical world that the genre of children's literature is too familiar with. Here Rushdie constructs a world that offers visions of varied possibilities and promises of childhood. The death of his father had left an indelible scourge in the author's heart and he was forced to grow up before his time. When grown-ups fail, the children hold themselves responsible for the failure, they take up the responsibility to set things right on their own, a realization that he shares in one of his articles as a response to the 1930's Hollywood film, "The Wizard of Oz". It seems to offer us an insight into Haroun's own mindset. About the film says Rushdie:

> A film whose driving force is the inadequacy of the adults, and how the weakness of grown-ups forces children to take control of their own destinies, and so ironically grow up themselves. (qtd. in Fletcher 336)

So the child here becomes no less important than the adult. Rushdie constructs for Haroun a world where everything that is incredible, unbelievable is 'real'. Again and again the author stresses upon the 'reality' of the child's experiences. Of Haroun, Rushdie writes:

> He knew what he knew: that the real world of full of magic, so magical worlds could easily be real. (Rushdie 1990, 50)

The child here contests all the adult opinions and in the true Bakhtinian mode, becomes the hero of a topsy-turvy world that is beyond every form of authority. The child can fight arm in arm with the arch villain, be a consultant to the King and his General, dismantles the Plug that was being used to clog the source of the story streams and makes the final, most vital wish to alter the movement of Kahani and make the sun shine over the Land of Chup resulting in the melting away of their enemies who were really nothing but shadows.

In the study of the "dialogic" text the chronotope has a significant usage. The term was originally associated with Newtonian physics and considered a subjective variable depending on the position of the observer. But Bakhtin, in his literary theory, employs the term to denote an artistic device that helps us read beyond the science of the 'setting' and invests it with an ideological value as something objective and changeable in relation to the observer's positional variations. It does not differentiate between time and space and they form a uniform socio-cultural platform where power relations become visible and certain fictions can take place. As such, in a "heteroglossic" text , this time-space continuum is bound to assume a complex and multi-dimensional function; the "chronotope", hence, signifying the changing attitudes, beliefs and histories of societies. In Rushdie, childhood forms a chronotope within which most of his stories come to life. It includes chronotopes of fantasy or adventure and creates a unique perceptive area. Whether it is adult fiction or children's, the child has a special place. The children in his fiction are always almost adults. Whether it is Saleem , the child with a vast knowledge of the world or Moraes, the child who looks like one twice his age, involving in an affair with his teacher, they are adult-like in their disposition.

But Rushdie does not want the child to lose its perspective trying to fit into the adult world. The children in his adult stories are akin to the child from Hans Christian Andersen's fairy-tale, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, who can see through the sycophancy of the king's adult

subjects and tell him quite honestly that he is actually naked. The profanity and diversity of notions and opinions should not and must not pollute the innocent mind. Therefore, Haroun must stop the contamination of stories, unlike his creator, because the age-old stories have a sanctity which must be preserved for the sake of the child. Although the chronotope of childhood includes the adult author's own political or artistic defenses but the child is given its own share of importance. *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* leaves a message for both the adult and the child and also the adult the child will become. In her essay, "Childhood: A narrative chronotope," Rosemary Ross Johnston writes:

> For it seems to me that, if there is one particular distinctive characteristic of the chronotope of childhood in narrative, it is the creation of a present that has a forward thrust. (qtd. in Sell 146)

So eventually the novel does not disappoint the child. Neither does it disappoint the adult. It thus qualifies as a book for all times and generations

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