The translation of identity in the satanic verses: a love song to our mongrel selves

Lori Ann Kanitz

THE TRANSLATION OF IDENTITY IN THE SATANIC VERSES: A LOVE SONG TO OUR MONGREL SELVES

by

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines the translation of character identities within Salman Rushdie's novel, The Satanic Verses, and seeks to demonstrate how the dynamics of translating a text can be used as a model for discussing the transformations of characters within the book.

Rushdie uses the term "translation" as a metaphor for the migrant experience of uprootedness that is a result of being "borne across" from one culture to another. From it, however, can be derived a metaphor for the universal experience of alienation that is a part of our shared humanity, and which describes the process of responding to a sense of "otherness" within ourselves and within a pluralistic culture.

The framework which will be used to examine characters within The Satanic Verses responding to such conditions is George Steiner's translation hermeneutic outlined and discussed in his book, After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation.

The Introduction will set the context for the use of the term "translation". Chapter One will discuss Steiner's position within translation theory and Rushdie's affinity to it as well as explain the basic translation model. Chapters Two through Five will look closely at Rushdie's text, analyzing the two protagonists, Gibreel and Saladin, as they undergo, or fail to undergo, the translation process.

Finally, the conclusion will suggest that the Rushdie affair engendered by this novel is, ironically, a linguistic debate provoked by a text that urges its readers to be translated. By making its readers acutely aware of what is "other" to them, the The Satanic Verses proposes and attempts to answer a single, profoundly religious, question: "How are we to live in the world?"

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Declaration

The work presented in this thesis was carried out at the University of Durham between September 1990 and August 1991. This material has not been submitted previously for any degree at this or any other university.

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PREFACE

I am deeply indebted to the Centre for the Study of Literature and Theology at the University of Durham for the innumerable opportunities it has provided for stimulating and exceptionally rewarding discussions, academic fellowship and research during the past year. I am particularly grateful to Dr. David Jasper who supervised my research. His patience, enthusiasm, humor and tireless support for this project from its first moments onward have made this endeavor an enriching and enlightening experience.

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Finally, more thanks than I could ever repay go to my family and friends whose steadfast support and interest helped carry this project through to its completion.

NOTE ON BIBLIOGRAPHY

All works cited in the text can be found referenced in a "Works Cited" page at the end of each chapter. A general bibliography has been placed at the end of the thesis listing those works cited in the text and others that provided background material which, no doubt, in some way influenced the final outcome of this project.

NOTE ON ABBREVIATIONS

Within the text the following abbreviations have been used in the parenthetical references:

AB - After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation

SV - The Satanic Verses

INTRODUCTION

In 1989, Sara Suleri wrote about Salman Rushdie:

> How long Rushdie will remain newsworthy is disquietingly uncertain, placing on the academy an even greater responsibility to read [The Satanic Verses] and the dilemmas it represents in terms that are as culturally specific as possible (605).

Nearly three years after the publication of the novel and two years after Suleri first wrote these words, Rushdie remains newsworthy. On Christmas Eve 1990, Rushdie met with leaders of the Muslim community in Britain to announce his conversion to Islam. Repeatedly this year, news from Iran has reaffirmed the fatwa, the Ayatollah Khomeini's declaration of a death sentence for Rushdie. Most recently, his Christmas Eve declaration of faith has been rejected. Two of the Islamic leaders who met with Rushdie and accepted his Christmas Eve conversion to Islam, (the chief imam of the London Council of Mosques, Sheikh Gamal Manna Solaiman, and his deputy, Sheikh Hamed Khalifa) announced that their meeting with him had been a "'mistake'" and that Rushdie "could not be accepted as a Muslim because he had not completely withdrawn his book, . . ." (Hinds, "Islam" 2). The leaders have been pressured by an increasingly threatening and divisive fundamentalist faction at the mosque to reject Rushdie's claims. The response to this latest development in what Rushdie himself has called the "sad, protracted" saga of the Rushdie affair, wearyingly, has the same tone, the same content, as the responses from three years ago. The radical fundamentalist Islamic position, given voice by Dr. Kalim Siddiqui who wrote his response to the imams' decision in a 13 May, 1991 letter to The *Independent*, is still uttering threats and absolutism. The secular public, represented by a man responding to Siddiqui in a letter to The *Independent* dated 13 May, 1991, is still expressing "disgust and contempt" and a general sense of bewilderment toward such views (Whitby). Moderates on both sides are working determinedly to heal the wounds and rebuild bridges in the hopes of finding common ground. And yet, as this most recent

incident unfortunately suggests, the two worlds brought into conflict three years ago appear to have moved very little toward possessing a sympathetic imagination that allows one to understand, or at least imagine, the position of the other 1.

The problem lies partly in the fact that much of the discourse surrounding the book has not been, as Suleri advised it should be, culturally specific. The academy she speaks of has, as she warned, more often than not "translat[ed] whatever is vexing about the Rushdie affair into pieties concerning aesthetic freedom of expression," and in so doing, as she suggests, revealed itself "to be at the limits of [its] own ideas of otherness", the otherness, of course, being Islam (604).

But it lies partly too, in the fact that although it is certainly important to imagine the Islamic reaction to the book in as culturally specific terms as possible and thereby to have sympathy for it, it is very difficult to read the text only in culturally specific terms, or to assess what Suleri calls the "context of Islamic secularism" into which the book has emerged. The difficulty lies in the fact that both the book and the context in which it exists are both culturally specific and culturally diverse. Rushdie is an immigrant to Britain with close connections to at least three countries (India, Pakistan, and Britain) and his novel is an eclectic celebration of these countries' political, literary, and religious traditions (Appignanesei and Maitland 2-5). Further, the Muslim audience it seems to have injured is largely an audience composed of immigrants as well, who come from myriad countries spanning the globe and whose

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1 An article appeared in the 19 June 1991 issue of the The Independent in which Diana Hinds interviewed Professor Akbar Ahmed, the Iqbal Visiting Fellow at Cambridge. Professor Ahmed expressed, optimistically, that the Rushdie affair at this stage now offers hope of reconciliation between the secular and Islamic communities pitted against one another after the publication of The Satanic Verses. He observes that the furor surrounding the novel has generated a healthy curiosity about the Islamic faith. One can only hope that this curiosity will work toward the reconciliation that has, in small measures, begun.

acceptance of the Western culture in which they live ranges from whole-hearted adoption to angry rejection of its "polluting" influences. Aziz Azmeh writes, "Muslims generally, including British Muslims, belong to many nationalities, cultures, classes, and are divided, like everybody else, by different and contradictory ideological and political directions" (230).

And, as critics of Rushdie and he himself have made clear, although his fiction draws heavily on the history of Islam in order to express what Sara Suleri call his "fidelity to disbelieving" (607), the novel is a celebration of cultural unspecificity. Its creation is an act of devotion to and affection for pluralism. Sara Suleri recognizes this paradox and admits that although the novel needs to be read in culturally specific terms, "The Satanic Verses revels in cultural diversity rather than opting for a simple dichotomy between East and West" (609). M. Keith Booker also draws attention to this fact and explains that Rushdie's fiction "consistently embraces contradiction, privileging the plural over the singular, the polyphonic over the monologic" (978). He continues:

> One of the clearest ways in which it does so is through the careful construction of dual oppositions, . . . only to deconstruct those oppositions by demonstrating that the apparent polar opposites are in fact interchangeable and mutually interdependent (Booker 978).

Indeed, within the novel, the "profane" protagonist, Saladin (Shaitan), competes with the "sacred" protagonist, Gibreel (Gabriel), for acknowledgement, women, prestige, survival, and power, and yet the two are continually attracted to and conjoined with one another, their union fusing the realms of good and evil. Likewise, the monotheistic world of Islam competes with the polytheistic world of Hinduism. The cool and moderate world of England competes for dominance in the characters' sentiments with the hot and excessive world of India. The world in which utterances of doubt are considered blasphemous competes with the world in which claims of certainty are immediately questioned. The world of one's past struggles for recognition in the world of one's present. And ultimately, within the inner world of

the self, various aspects of the characters' selfhood compete for dominance in their psyche and expression in their actions.

Fundamentally then, The Satanic Verses, seeks to give artistic representation to the deconstructive and yet powerfully creative powers of metamorphosis–more particularly, the kind of metamorphosis that occurs when two or more conflicting worlds in dual opposition find themselves competing for the same space and discover, as Booker suggests, that by fusing they can become magnified beyond the scope of either of them separately (990). Thus, to read the novel in culturally specific terms, is, in one sense, to miss its point entirely and to keep the novel in the realm of controversy, the realm of one culture versus another.

In order to move beyond this dualism that culturally specific terms construct, the novel must be read as testimony to the power of metamorphosis by fusion. The term that Rushdie himself very often uses to express the metamorphosis that occurs when change comes about by the fusing of worlds is translation. Indeed, translation is not only a central theme of The Satanic Verses, but it is also a theme that dominates Rushdie's concerns as a writer.

In his 1982 essay entitled "Imaginary Homelands," he unfolds his definition of translation within a discussion of Indian writers who have emigrated to English speaking countries. He asserts that it is crucial for these writers to begin forging a new identity within the English language. He writes:

> [English] must, in spite of everything, be embraced. (The word 'translation' comes, etymologically, from the Latin for 'bearing across'. Having been borne across the world, we are translated men. It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained" ("Homelands" 17).

He goes on to observe that

> to be an Indian writer in this society is to face, every day, problems of definition. What does it mean to be 'Indian' outside India? How can

> culture be preserved without becoming ossified? How should we discuss the need for change within ourselves and our community without seeming to play into the hands of our racial enemies? What are the consequences, both spiritual and practical, of refusing to make any concessions to Western ideas and practices? What are the consequences of embracing those ideas and practices and turning away from the ones that came here with us? These questions are all a single, existential question: How are we to live in the world? ("Homelands" 18).

Undoubtedly, this question lies at the heart of The Satanic Verses. The characters continually ask or are asked, "What kind of idea are you?" "Do you bend or do you yield?" The novel is the story of their attempts to answer these questions of being and through their struggles, Rushdie illustrates his answer to the question of how we are to live in the world; it is by becoming translated men.

What does it mean to be a "translated man"? It means, to use Rushdie's own term, to become a mongrel. It means embracing the multiplicity of selves within one's self that is an inevitable result of living in a multi-cultural society 2 and of being creatures whose lives are narratives situated within a historical context and shaped by a multitude of experiences. To become a mongrel means embracing the fact that no

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2 The phrase "multi-cultural society" has been used frequently to describe the pluralism in modern British culture. However, the validity of the term is much debated. Professor Edward Hulmes, in a lecture given at the University of Durham, explained that the rhetoric surrounding the term "multi-cultural society" is premature. Britain has not embraced the diversity within its borders and created a unified "society". Further, the phrase may simply be a contradiction in terms. How can a nation possess a unified sense of identity when sub-cultures with fundamentally antagonistic ideologies live side-by-side within its borders? (Hulmes, "Dilemmas"). The question remains unanswered and is, perhaps, unanswerable.

person is a homogeneous entity, and understanding that one is always creating and recreating, reshaping and remolding oneself with each new experience. In short, one is continually undergoing a translation of identity, bringing newness into the world by fusing the old and the new. As Rushdie explains in his 1990 essay, "In Good Faith", The Satanic Verses:

> celebrates hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation 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. Mélange, hotchpotch, a bit of this and a bit of that is how newness enters the world. It is the great possibility that mass migration gives the world, and I have tried to embrace it. The Satanic Verses is for change-by-fusion, change-by-conjoining. It is a love song to our mongrel selves (394).

Hence the title of this thesis: The Translation of Identity in"The Satanic Verses": A Love-Song to Our Mongrel Selves.

The change-by-fusion which the term "translation" describes is expressed continually throughout The Satanic Verses in a proliferation of themes, images, recurring phrases and synonyms expressing change. The translation, or transformation, of fixed identities and entities, occurs, as Booker suggests, through the construction and deconstruction of dualisms within the novel, dualisms such as good and evil, blasphemy and sacred revelation, angels and devils, monotheism and polytheism, time and timelessness, birth and death (978). Rushdie's argument for translation also surfaces in the novel's aggressive postmodern skepticism toward and deep suspicion of any fixed narrative–historical, theological, personal or otherwise (Malak 181-183). It appears in recurrent phrases such as "To be born again, first you have to die," which, like translation, assert the paradox of death giving birth to newness. The translation theme appears in images, for example, the image of the 747 jet Bostan which is both a grave and a womb for Saladin and Gibreel, of the fall and "baptism" in the English Channel that ensues, of the Chimeran graft tree Saladin

discovers while watching television, of the image of Ganesh and Krishna, of the transfiguration of Allie on Mount Everest, and of the butterflies that transform Ayesha. The translation theme abounds in the language of the text which utilizes countless synonyms and phrases echoing the word "translation"–synonyms and phrases such as "universal beginning", "the birth of time", "big bang", "sloughed off selves", "watery reincarnation", "transmutation", "mutation", "transitory", "changes", "born again", "phoenix-from-ashes", "resurrection", "transmigration", "metamorphosis", "transformed", "new beginnings", and "altered states". Finally, the theme emerges through the literal metamorphoses of characters, most notably, Saladin's transformation into a goat and Gibreel's sporadic transfiguration into an angel.

As this brief sampling suggests, the text of the novel is rich in the images and themes of literary texts which span numerous cultures, religions and ages. Like his character Zeeny Fakil, an art critic who has written a book on "the confining myth of authenticity" which she seeks to replace with "an ethic of historically validated eclectism" (SV 52), Rushdie has himself written a book which celebrates an ethic of eclectism, and he borrows freely from a wide range of literary traditions, mining their wealth to create a novel of sparkling richness 3. Rather than confine himself to one

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3 Timothy Brennan's book, Salman Rushdie and the Third World: Myths of the Nation, contains an excellent discussion in the first chapter of the relationship between nationalism and the novel. Within this discussion, he explains that for Third World writers such as Rushdie, the novel "objecti[fies] the nation's composite nature: a hodgepodge of the ostensibly separate 'levels of style' corresponding to class; a jumble of poetry, drama, newspaper report, memoir and speech; a mixture of the jargons of race and ethnicity" (10). Hence, his discussion connects eclectism such as that found within Rushdie's work with the function of creating, or recreating, a national identity–a function Rushdie openly acknowledges as part of his purpose as a writer. His essays "Is Nothing Sacred?" and "Outside the Whale", found in Imaginary Homelands: Essays an Criticism 1981-1991, reveal his views on such matters.

mythic tradition and call it authentic, he has drawn on a host of traditions validated by time and used them to illustrate the timelessness and universality of the theme of translation ("Good Faith" 403).

Its universality can be discovered by briefly noting its presence in major world religions and looking at a few examples of how Rushdie draws upon them as sources.

Of course, the text is rich with the metaphors of Islam. To illustrate the theme of translation, in the sense of its transforming and renewing possibilities when two worlds merge, Rushdie borrows from it the pilgrimage motif. In the powerful, final moments of the sequence "The Parting of the Arabian Sea," Mirza Saeed Akhtar, near death, opens himself to the possibility of revelation and crosses the Arabian Sea, finding salvation in the moment of death, a waterless path on which to walk in the very moment of his drowning. Similarly, Rushdie draws on apocalyptic images within Islam to portray Saladin dying in the flames of the Brickhall fire at the feet of the death angel Azreel (Gibreel).

From the Christian tradition he borrows the images of the fall and of baptism to describe the transforming moments in the first few pages of the novel in which Saladin and Gibreel begin their processes of transmutation that continue throughout the book. Plummeting from the exploded Bostan, the two descend from the heavens and land in the English Channel to begin subsequently their journeys of self-discovery and self-destruction. References to the sacrament of communion, second comings, and the transfiguration of Christ also find their place within the novel's pages. At the Shaandaar Café, Saladin learns to eat Indian food again, thereby re-ingesting the India of his past. In an apocalyptic second coming, Gibreel, the "Dark Star," descends upon London in cinematic glory the night he attempts to make a film career come-back. On Mount Everest, Allie, Gibreel's mountain-climbing lover, is transfigured miraculously and clothed in a blinding white light in a moment of ecstasy and revelation that haunts and inspires her for the rest of the novel.

Of course, from Hinduism, Rushdie borrows images of the avatars of Vishnu and the themes which are its hallmark: "rebirth, reincarnation, or the transmigration of

souls" (Zaehner 57). The notion that the self is continually rewriting and reshaping itself, in other words that it is continually undergoing translation, parallels the Upanishadic idea that "the world was not created once for all nor was there any end to it: from all eternity it had been recreating itself and dissolving back into its unformed and 'unmanifest' condition" (Zaehner 61). This theme, interestingly, also allows Rushdie to illuminate his position as a postmodern writer in which "he sees reality (whatever that may mean) as an unfinished project, a flux phenomenon that resists containment or closure and remains open to multiple renditions and projections" (Malak 182).

The theme of translation also, in a limited sense, expresses the Buddhist concept of "nibbäna", or "nirvana", a state in which the illusions of the present existence fall away and one enters into enlightenment (Ling 93). Certainly, his characters, Saladin and Gibreel, are on a journey of translation in which old versions of the self, old cultures, old memories pass away through integration with new versions of the same. At the end of the novel, Saladin reflects, "If the old refused to die, the new could not be born" (SV 547).

And finally, the theme of translation, expressed in terms of death and rebirth, echoes the language of the Jewish apocalyptic literature of which the books of Daniel, Ezra and Enoch are examples. The prophets warn of the impending day when God's judgement will descend upon the people of Israel and bring an end to the world as they know it. A new order will emerge in the aftermath of the destruction.

Each of these religious traditions (which are also literary traditions), as well as other literary legacies too numerous to discuss here, body forth to a considerable degree the translation theme. Rushdie's unabashed borrowing from them allows The Satanic Verses to speak powerfully to a universal audience about the renewing and transforming possibilities of translation.

Given that change is a central theme in the novel, particularly the change he defines as "translation", this thesis seeks to demonstrate how the term "translation" and the dynamics that are associated with the actual process of translating a text can be

used as a model for discussing the transformation of character identity within The Satanic Verses. In other words, it seeks to show how a model of the translation of texts can be used to illuminate a novel about the translation of persons. It should be noted that because of the universality of such a theme, this thesis will not deal with the novel in culturally specific terms. The culture and religion of Islam permeate the text, but it is my hope that by revealing the universality of the novel's themes rather than their cultural specificity, more light might be shed on its potential to transcend controversy and speak to humans in every culture.

Also, a few words need to be said about using the term "translation" to describe a transformation of identity and about using the metaphor of the self as a text, particularly as a text that is translated. Timothy Brennan, referring to Rushdie's description of himself as a "'translated man'", states "Translation–a term provocatively borrowed from the realm of the purely literary–is a political programme" (61). His statement seems to suggest that translation does not refer to a change in identity so much as it describes a point of view. And yet, clearly, to claim that "translation" is merely Rushdie's label for a political agenda concealed within his novels, or even that it is a term that describes his personal "political programme" is inadequate. For as Rushdie himself has stated, The Satanic Verses is about individuals facing the problems of translating themselves into a new culture ("Good Faith" 394) and the use of the word "translation" in the text of the novel itself occurs as a word descriptive of one's sense of identity. The character Hind Sufyan, finding that as an Indian woman in England she has been forced to sink "into the anonymity, the characterless plurality, of being merely one-of-the-women-like-her", observes that "[e]verything she valued had been upset by the change; had, in this process of translation, been lost" (SV 249). Her identity is translated, "upset by the change", in the migration to England. Further, when Rushdie's narrator steps into the text to offer a heavy-handed explanation of the difference between Gibreel and Saladin, he offers:

> Should we even say that these [men] are two fundamentally different types of self? . . . . Saladin Chamcha is a creature of selected

> discontinuities, a willing re-invention; his preferred revolt against history being what makes him, in our chosen idiom, 'false'? . . . While Gibreel, to follow the logic of our established terminology, is to be considered 'good' by virtue of wishing to remain, for all his vicissitudes, at bottom an untranslated man (SV 427).

Clearly, this passage uses the term translation to refer to character identity. It can be concluded, then, that translatedness and untranslatedness can, and do, refer to states of identity, or as the narrator says, "types of self" within The Satanic Verses. Consequently, the terms can, and will be used throughout the argument to describe changes in character identity.

To use the term in this sense is to construct automatically the metaphor of the self as text. And indeed it is. To objectify one's person in the act of self-reflection is to create oneself. Viewed from the outside, the individual must select a particular version or versions of himself as those by which he can identify his being. The bits and pieces are assembled into a more or less cohesive picture that provides a way of "seeing" the self. This process of selection and exclusion that goes into the construction of an identity is essentially the process of creating a narrative. It becomes something objective, a story or set of stories that explains one's self-perception. As a result, the individual can say "I hardly recognized myself" when acting out of accord with this identifying narrative. Rushdie, in his essay entitled "In God We Trust" uses the metaphor of "picture-making" to explain the human ability to construct identities; the process is the same. He writes, "Given the gift of self-consciousness, we can dream versions of ourselves, new selves for old" ("God We Trust" 377). In this sense, the self is a creation, a work of art, a picture, a text. And, as Rushdie suggests, for reflective human beings, it is a text that is continually undergoing revision. Each new experience forces that identity to be adjusted as one assimilates that experience into the memory and understanding. In other words, the text of the self is, and must be, continually translated.

To discuss the translation, or failed translations, of character identities within

The Satanic Verses, specifically those of Saladin and Gibreel, a four-stage model of the translation process, created by George Steiner and outlined in his book, After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation, will be used as a framework (AB 296-303).

Chapter One of this thesis seeks to provide a thorough explanation of Steiner's position in linguistic theory, his theory's affinity with Rushdie, and a description of the four-stage process of translation he devises.

The second chapter demonstrates how the character Gibreel is the portrait of an untranslated man. His rejection of faith causes his psyche to split. Believing on one hand that God no longer exists, and haunted on the other by dreams in which he is the Archangel Gabriel, he is driven to insanity and finally, suicide. He does not, as the narrator of the novel points out, understand the power of metaphor (metaphor, like translation, etymologically means "'bearing across'" (SV 15; "Homelands" 17). He is, therefore, unable to reconcile the two halves of himself which are foreign to each other.

The third chapter of the thesis argues that Saladin's translation from a Bombayite into a zealous Anglophile is a false because an incomplete translation. It lacks the fourth and final stage of the translation process in which balance between the two worlds is restored. Consequently, the buried but still living Indian self inside him begins to assert itself, and his English world subsequently begins to fall apart.

At the end of that chapter, the discussion moves to an analysis of the novel's opening "fall scene." The argument suggests that the explosion of the Air India jet is also the moment when Saladin's English veneer shatters and he wills the rebirth of himself, the self that informs him "it wanted nothing to do with his pathetic personality, that half-reconstructed affair of mimicry and voices" which he had manufactured in England (SV 9). In surrendering to this invading force, he moves through the first two stages of a new, and authentic, translation. The surrender to it is an affirmation of trust that the new and foreign self will offer new meaning, or at least, authentic experience. Its forceful intrusion is an aggressive penetration of the old Saladin by the new and propels him along the course of a true translation of identity.

The fourth chapter discusses how Saladin's metamorphosis into a goat which takes place immediately after the "fall" from the Bostan illustrates the moment of translation by suggesting a confrontation with otherness, a Dionysian liberation from the prison-house of a false English identity, a scapegoat existence that enables Saladin to take the "sins" of his past upon his head and redeem himself, and a liberating "Blakean" devilhood.

In the fifth chapter, the discussion centers on the proposition that Steiner's fourth stage of the translation process is enacted by Saladin through the reconciliation he finds with Gibreel, his father and himself. Ultimately, it is this final stage of the translation process that enables Saladin to emerge from the novel at the end as Salahuddin, a translated man, reborn into the knowledge of his mongrel status and the ongoing transformation of his identity.

Finally, the conclusion suggests that the furor surrounding The Satanic Verses is, in fact, a linguistic matter, "'a clash of languages'" as Rushdie describes it, between two worlds–literary and religious–that has been precipitated by a novel that urges translation upon its readers ("Book Burning" 26). It is a novel that asks its readers to be transformed or perish, and perhaps in the asking, it might be said, becomes blasphemous.

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Chapter One

TRANSFORMING TEXTS AND SELVES: TRANSLATION DEFINED

Whether or not one believes that the successful translation of texts is possible depends on one's philosophical position in language theory. As George Steiner explains in After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation, any number of positions exists between two radically opposed poles, those poles being the "monadist" position and the "universalist" position (AB 73-74).

The monadist position, at its extreme end, argues that given the enormous and easily recognizable differences between languages, authentic translations cannot occur. "Deep structures" or universal properties of language that the universalists claim exist, are (if they exist at all) so deeply buried as to be "fathomless to logical and psychological investigation, of an order so generalized as to be well nigh trivial" (AB 74). The common ground between languages would be something so obvious, such as "all men use language to communicate," that it would add nothing to an original understanding of the actual mechanics of speech. Therefore, any translation would be, at best, merely a rough approximation of the original and only so if the two languages share a common root. The translation would be, at worst, a complete sham, as would be the case if a translation between languages from alien sources and cultures was attempted (AB 74). Radical monadists such as the German linguist Johann Herder have gone so far as to suggest that not only are successful translations impossible, but the translation of a foreign text into a native language can pollute the recipient tongue, bastardizing the language of a people by importing a foreign idiom (AB 78).

In contrast, the universalist position "declares that the underlying structure of language is common to all men" (AB 73). Any differences between languages are merely superficial. No matter how extreme the surface disparities between languages, all have ". . . deep-seated universals, genetic, historical, social, from which all grammars derive . . ." which ". . . can be located and recognized as operative in

every idiom . . .". Translation, consequently, is possible precisely because of these universals, the deeply embedded commonalities which make possible the successful transfer of meaning between languages. For, "[t]o translate is to descend beneath the exterior disparities of two languages in order to bring into vital play their analogous and, at the final depths, common principles of being" (AB 73). This position implies that translations are not only possible but also desirable because of their potential for enriching the native and foreign languages and cultures.

Of course most language theories are neither purely monadist nor purely universalist. Many positions exist between the two extremes. And in fact, the two positions have a common root in the language theories of Leibniz (AB 74). But, of course, to establish the position of the theory of translation that will be the underpinning of this thesis, it is important to note where Steiner aligns himself on the scale that spans these two extremes. He could be considered, in general, to hold the universalist position for a number of obvious reasons.

First, his book After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation is in its entirety a testimony to the difficulty but also the possibility (and ultimate mystery) of translations that are, in the end, inexplicably successful transfers of meaning across linguistic and cultural boundaries. His text is full of examples of translated texts that, though never achieving a perfect transfer of every subtlety of texture and meaning, nevertheless surpass the original in some ways and enrich both cultures in the process. Perhaps one of the most notable examples he provides is his account of the translation of Shakespeare into German in the eighteenth century through which "the German language, in attempting to penetrate and represent Shakespeare, . . . realized its own modern potential and limitations" (AB 382). The transfer of meaning was so remarkable that Friedrich Gundolf was led to observe that the translation had captured the "'soul-substance'" of Shakespeare and that, in Steiner's words, "[t]he English text ha[d] not been translated into the German language, . . . it ha[d] become that language (AB 382).

Second, as a polyglot himself, he argues quite forcefully from experience that contrary to the monadist view that asserts language governs thought patterns and shapes perception of reality in such a way as to create disparate views of the world, humans can and do learn several languages successfully and are able to think, even simultaneously, in more than one language. The human mind, it seems, is not bound to a single linguistically-governed picture of reality. Humans think and imagine across linguistic borders, fusing what might seem to be irreconcilable versions of reality with little difficulty.

Third, the central thrust of his book is the development of a hermeneutic, a non-formalized theory of translation, that is a model "part deductive, part intuitive, of the operation of language itself" (AB 414). Translation illustrates and augments the problems inherent in any interpretation. For "translation proper, the interpretation of verbal signs in one language by means of verbal signs in another, is a special, heightened case of the process of communication and reception in any act of human speech" (AB 414). Obviously, Steiner's careful development of such a hermeneutic argues strongly for the fact that he believes in the creative potential for the transfer of meaning that translation, and indeed any act of interpretation, offers. In this sense, then, he is within the universalists' position.

However, his position within it needs to be qualified. For he makes it quite clear that the universalist theories, in particular, their attempts to systematize and explain away the workings of language in terms of commonalities, or deep structures, fall short of the mark. In fact, they fail to recognize two crucial, life-giving, aspects of languages–their "'messiness'" or resistance to systematic explanation and, most importantly, their differences, wherein lies the potential for creating new worlds. He asserts unequivocally:

> [T]he cardinal issue is this: the 'messiness' of language, its fundamental difference from the ordered, closed systematization of mathematics or formal logic, the polysemy of individual words, are neither a defect nor a surface feature which can be cleared up by the analysis of deep

> structures. The fundamental 'looseness' of natural language is crucial to the creative functions of internalized and outward speech. A 'closed' syntax, a formally exhaustible semantics, would be a closed world. 'Metaphysics, religion, ethics, knowledge–all derive from man's will to art, to lies, from his flight before truth, from his negation of truth,' said Nietzsche. This evasion of the 'given fact', this gainsaying is inherent in the combinatorial structure of grammar, in the imprecision of words, in the persistently altering nature of usage and correctness. New worlds are born between the lines (AB 228).

In other words, the analysis of deep structures, indeed any attempt to confine language to "exhaustible semantics" does not account for language's "messiness" or "looseness," for its potential both to evade reality and to represent it in an infinite number of ways. Formalized theory cannot explain the most powerful aspect of language–its potential to negate the truth.

Further, universalism does not adequately account for the world's proliferation of languages, each of which offers, fundamentally, "its own reading of life" (AB 473). In fact, Steiner makes the point through his agreement with Dell Hymes, that

> 'the more one emphasizes universals, in association with a self-developing, powerful faculty of language within persons themselves, the more mysterious actual languages become. . . .The many differences do not disappear, and the likenesses, indeed are far from all Chomskyan universals. . . . Most of language begins where abstract universals leave off' (AB 472).

And, significantly, to erase the differences between languages would be to deny the existence of a fundamental impulse of human existence–that of "individuation" (AB 473). For through language, Steiner asserts, man creates "'alternities of being'" through which he can create "privacy and territoriality vital to [his] identity" and also through which he can deny the "empirical inevitability of the world". The "potentials of fiction, of counterfactuality, of undecidable futurity" which enable this escape from

inevitability "determine the unique, often ambiguous tenor of human consciousness and make the relations of that consciousness to 'reality' creative" (AB 473). Each language expresses uniquely that relationship to reality and possesses its own potential for a creative denial of its "empirical inevitability." The vital nature of this feature of language cannot be overstressed. In an earlier passage from the text, Steiner describes its necessity:

> Through un-truth, through counter-factuality, man 'violates'. . . an absurd, confining reality; and his ability to do so is at every point artistic, creative . . . We secrete from within ourselves the grammar, the mythologies of hope, of fantasy, of self-deception without which we would have been arrested at some rung of primate behaviour or would, long since, have destroyed ourselves. It is our syntax, not the physiology of the body or the thermodynamics of the planetary system, which is full of tomorrows. . . . We speak, we dream ourselves free of the organic trap (AB 228).

It follows then, that the differences between languages offer a multitude of ways through which to escape the "organic trap" and each is resplendent with possibilities for expressing what Steiner calls "'alternities of being'".

Consequently, to move between languages through the act of translation, "to translate, even within the restrictions of totality, is to experience the almost bewildering bias of the human spirit towards freedom" (AB 473). Through translation one moves between the lines of two versions of 'reality' shaped by two languages and is made aware of the liberating power of language by seeing reality anew through the eyes of a different language. Reality, in a sense, is reborn, or as Steiner succinctly puts it, "[n]ew worlds are born between the lines" (AB 228). When two worlds merge through translation, the potential each language has for offering alternative visions of reality are joined, and the possibilities for newness and liberation from the confines of one's own linguistically-determined view of the world are endless.

Rushdie's understanding of translation mirrors Steiner's. He too believes new

worlds are born between the lines and has written The Satanic Verses as a testimony to the creative possibilities that arise when two often conflicting versions of reality come into contact with one another. He uses the plight of the immigrant, specifically a Third World post-colonial immigrant, as a metaphor for the phenomenon of positive "change-by-fusion" that is possible for all humanity ("Good Faith" 394). Of course, Rushdie uses the term "translation", to refer to the self whereas Steiner uses the term to refer to a text. But as the introduction argued, the self is a text created by memory, circumstances and choices that is continually undergoing revision and transformation. In this sense, it is a text undergoing translation.

Therefore, this discussion attempts to establish carefully George Steiner's position within, but more importantly, beyond, the universalist position in language and translation theory in order to demonstrate why his non-formalized theory of translation has been chosen as the underpinning for a discussion of translated character identities within The Satanic Verses.

Steiner has been chosen for the following reasons: first, because of the uncanny similarity between his and Salman Rushdie's understanding of the fictive potential of language to create, or recreate, reality and release man from the "organic trap." Second, because of their kindred understanding and use of the process of translation to shape and renew reality. And third, because of their common concern for the ethics of translation.

First, both Rushdie and Steiner believe that the fictive potential of language harbors the power to transform reality. Salman Rushdie as a novelist, particularly as one within the magical realism genre, utilizes language in order to reshape reality, to transform it into fiction or fantasy and liberate man from the "empirical inevitabilit[ies]" of the world. Like Steiner, quoted earlier as stating, "Through un-truth, . . . man 'violates'. . . an absurd, confining reality; . . . We secrete from within ourselves the grammar, the mythologies of hope, of fantasy . . . without which we . . . would, long since, have destroyed ourselves" (AB 227), Rushdie invokes fantasy in his novels as "a genre that serves an ideological role as a genre: namely, as the imaginative expression

of 'freedom' . . ." (Brennan 67). Fantasy, or magical realism, allows Rushdie to "translate" an oppressive reality into a liberating force. It provides an "imaginative expression of 'freedom'" that liberates one from the constraints of fictional realism, from the confines of a third world colonial experience, from the oppression of immigrant status, or from self-imposed and restraining views of selfhood.

Explaining fiction's unique ability to transform the colonial experience, Timothy Brennan writes, "the 'unbridled reality' of the colonial world cannot simply be reported; it has to be 'translated' or 'borne across' . . ." into the world of fantasy (68). For through describing the colonial experience through fantasy, the "power of the former rulers is in fact diminished, for the conqueror himself has apparently been conquered by a reality which he is powerless to describe in any way other than the language of fantasy" (68). Working toward the same end, Rushdie retells the colonial experience through magical realism and in the retelling, liberates those who have experienced it. In other words, he "show[s] not only the inevitability but the benefits of what has been left behind [by colonists]. [His] discourse, instead of telling a story reviling Europeans for their dishonourable past, stylistically alludes to that past and appropriates it for [his] own use" (Brennan 69). By appropriating the appropriators, he shows how their legacy may be used to constructive ends (Brennan 70). Like Steiner, therefore, Rushdie understands how language, particularly the language of fantasy, can be used to escape and subvert the suffocating reality of the Third World. Powerfully, he creates what Steiner calls an "alternity of being" that transforms colonial and immigrant experience through fiction. But more generally, both Rushdie and Steiner believe that the fictive power of language contains the means of liberating all humanity from the crushing weight of reality, the means of transforming any experience of uprootedness or oppression and escaping the confines of dogmatism and history. As Rushdie himself explains:

> Fantasy, or the mingling of fantasy and naturalism, is one way of dealing with these problems. It offers a way of echoing in the form of our work the issues faced by all of us: how to build a new, 'modern' world out of

an old, legend-haunted civilization, an old culture which we have brought into the heart of a newer one ("Homelands" 19).

Rushdie's novel, Shame, provides a powerful example of his use of fiction to this end. In the novel, he writes ironically:

Realism can break a writer's heart.

Fortunately, however, I am only telling a sort of modern fairy-tale, so that's all right; nobody need get upset, or take anything I say too seriously. No drastic action need be taken, either.

What a relief!" (70).

Because realism breaks a writer's heart, he uses fiction to write quite bitterly and transparently of Pakistan, a reality he finds unbelievable, and which he must, therefore, express in terms of a "modern fairy-tale." But in telling the modern fairy-tale, he provides new insights into the reality which has become Pakistan in order to create a fiction to counteract the fictions he believes constituted its creation as a separate state. He tells a story, a "lie," to expose the lies of its history, and thereby liberate his readers from the fictions (passed off as truth) that were created to instigate and sustain Pakistan's existence. He explains in his essay "Imaginary Homelands," "the novel is one way of denying the official, politicians' version of truth" (14). The fictive powers of language allow Rushdie to accomplish what Steiner calls a violation of "an absurd, confining reality" (AB 227).

Second, Steiner's theory of language and translation has been chosen for this analysis of The Satanic Verses because of his shared position with Rushdie as a staunch advocate of the idea that successful, and indeed beneficial, translations occur. Both writers are, in this general sense, universalists who argue vehemently for the decisively positive potential of translation, despite its inherent risks and losses. Steiner states:

Unquestionably there is a dimension of loss, of breakage [in translation]--hence, as we have seen, the fear of translation, the taboos on revelatory formulas in many cultures. But the residue is also, and

decisively, positive. The work translated is enhanced (AB 300).

He proceeds to explain that the process of translation, "[b]eing methodical, penetrative, analytic, enumerative, . . . like all modes of focused understanding, will detail, illumine, and generally body forth its object". It increases its scope and revitalizes the text by enabling it to be "born" in the minds of new readers. Further, just to suggest that a text is worth translating is to "signify it immediately and involve it in a dynamic of magnification" (AB 300).

Similarly, as the introduction noted, Rushdie argues that although most believe that in translation something is lost, he "cling[s], obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained" ("Homelands" 17). And further, in his essay "In Good Faith," he denounces the idea that the translation of "foreign" cultures, movies, songs, or humans into a native culture will pollute it. On the contrary, the intermingling that occurs when foreignness is imported is "how newness enters the world" ("Good Faith" 394). The fusion of two worlds brings exciting, and liberating, possibilities for seeing the world anew. Thus, both Steiner and Rushdie understand translation to be a decisively positive and vital process.

Further, Steiner argues that the new text arising from translation is not an exact or sub-standard replica of the original text merely rendered into a foreign language. The translated text is a truly new creation that, ideally, transcends the boundaries of both the original language and the language of the translation (AB 302). Likewise, Rushdie is careful to point out that the hybrids, the mongrels, created through the translation of individuals maintain (and must be recognized as maintaining) their status as humans with inalienable rights. The immigrant, the symbol of all translated individuals, is not, as the immigration scenes in The Satanic Verses ironically suggest, a sub-species of the native inhabitant. Shaped by the fusion of two (or more) worlds which he has inhabited, he becomes a new creature. The merging of worlds alien to each other gives rise to entirely new possibilities for art, music, architecture, religion, food, politics, literature, and, of course, for the understanding of one's selfhood.

Importantly, Rushdie, in keeping with Steiner, maintains that new worlds are

born between the lines. The difference, the gap between the worlds of colonizer and colonized, past and present, old and new, or between any two versions of 'reality,' creates the potential for sparks to fly when the two come in contact with each other. Contrast makes the union both potentially explosive and potentially creative ("Good Faith" 394).

Third, Steiner's model of translation has been chosen because, like Rushdie, he is concerned not only with the economics of translation, but also with the ethics of it. Steiner's four-stage hermeneutic model of translation pivots on the idea that the final translated text must strike a balance between the two languages, minimizing the breakage that he acknowledges must occur and maximizing the potential of both the foreign and the native language. Justice must be done to both. He concludes, "The hermeneutic act [of translation] must compensate. If it is to be authentic, it must mediate into exchange and restored parity" (AB 300).

Certainly, Rushdie is concerned as well with the idea of reciprocity, reconciliation, and restoration of balance. As an Indian writer in England, he is continually questioning himself about the extent to which one surrenders Indianness and embraces Englishness ("Homelands" 17-18). Where is the balance to be struck between the two? Deeply aware that this problem confronts Muslims in Britain today, he attempts to address this dilemma in The Satanic Verses. He writes:

> Standing at the centre of the novel is a group of characters most of whom are British Muslims, or not particularly religious persons of Muslim background, struggling with just the sort of great problems that have arisen to surround the book, problems of hybridization and ghettoization, of reconciling the old and the new ("Good Faith" 394).

As these comments imply, Rushdie also realizes that within the Muslim community struggling to address these problems there is an enormous range of views concerning the extent to which Muslims in western societies should translate themselves into the new context. The points of view range from liberals like the Muslim writer Akeel Bilgrami to traditionalists like the Islamic scholar Dr. Shabbir Akhtar of the Bradford

Council of Mosques. Bilgrami writes:

> [A] movement toward reform of Islam depends now more than ever on greater economic and political integration of the Islamic world with the national community of modern and progressive nations. Such integration alone will allow for modernization (176).

He goes on to condemn even moderate opposition to Rushdie's book on the grounds that any resistance to a text which allows Islam to fall prey to Western skepticism is a "gross symptom of . . . insularity" that only strengthens the forces of the fundamentalist right which seeks to defend Islam against "pernicious Western skepticism and permissiveness" and which "repudiate[s] the procedures of argument and debate that a reformed Islam must strive for" (Bilgrami 177). Bilgrami advocates, in other words, whole-hearted integration into Western culture.

In contrast to this, Dr. Akhtar states in "The Case for Religious Fundamentalism", an article written for the 27 February 1989 issue of The Guardian,

> [a]ny faith which compromises its internal temper of militant wrath is destined for the dustbin of history, for it can no longer preserve its faithful heritage in the face of corrosive influences (240).

The Muslim views in Britain alone concerning the extent to which "translation", a fusion of the worlds of Islam and the West, should take place range from Bilgrami to Akhtar. To put the issue into linguistic terms, they range from the universalist position which welcomes translation and the possibilities it offers to the extreme monadist position which regards the infiltration of a foreign language or text as a corrupting influence. The dilemmas of Muslims in Britain today are, therefore, the dilemmas of translation and Rushdie has attempted to address them in The Satanic Verses.

The novel's characters, like the author himself, find themselves struggling with the ethical problems of translation and they undergo the same rigorous self-examination that he, and indeed all Muslims in western societies, face. The novel suggests, as Chapter Five discusses, that translation of identity is not complete until a balance between the conflicting worlds has been achieved. And of course it must be

remembered that the dilemma of Muslims in Britain is in reality a dilemma facing all people. As Rushdie himself acknowledges, the ethical questions they face "are all a single, existential question: How are we to live in the world?" ("Homelands" 18).

In sum, then, Steiner's non-formalized four-stage hermeneutic motion of translation has been chosen as the scaffolding on which to construct an argument for the translation of identity within The Satanic Verses because of the affinity between Rushdie and Steiner's understanding of the fictive power of language to transform reality, because of their common understanding of the risks, benefits and conditions of the translation process, and finally because of their mutual concern for the ethical dimension of translation which seeks to restore parity and balance between two versions of the world.

Steiner's four-stage model of translation begins with trust. The translator must first, in an act of faith, believe that the translation effort offers a potentially successful transfer of meaning and that by decoding the linguistic "symbolism" of the foreign text, newness will emerge. As Steiner explains:

> We venture a leap: we grant ab initio that there is 'something there' to be understood, that the transfer will not be void. All understanding, and the demonstrative statement of understanding which is translation, starts with an act of trust. . . . It is an operative convention which derives from a sequence of phenomenological assumptions about the coherence of the world, about the presence of meaning in very different, perhaps formally antithetical semantic systems, about the validity of analogy and parallel (AB 296).

The translator then, in adopting an attitude of trust, ventures forth and makes, by way of acting in faith, a statement about the symbolic nature of the world. "'[T]his' can stand for 'that', and must in fact be able to do so if there are to be meanings and structures" (AB 296). The first step in translation, then, is trust in the potential for the transfer of meaning between two possibly conflicting versions of reality.

The second stage of Steiner's model is one of aggression. Steiner also refers to

it as "penetration" (AB 303). The translator aggressively invades the foreign text in an attempt to comprehend it and extract from it every possible nuance and subtlety of meaning. To describe this stage, Steiner draws on Heidegger's proposition that "understanding, recognition, interpretation are a compacted, unavoidable mode of attack" (AB 297). This stage of the translation process is "incursive and extractive" and he makes the point clear that comprehension of a foreign text, indeed "each act of comprehension must appropriate another entity . . . Comprehension, as its etymology shows, 'comprehends' not only cognitively but by encirclement and ingestion" (AB 298). Meaning, to use St. Jerome's image, is brought home captive by the translator (AB 298).

The third stage of the hermeneutic motion is "incorporative, in the strong sense of the word" (AB 298). The translator brings home, so to speak, the foreign text, importing it into the "native semantic field" (AB 298). Of course, no text translated or otherwise enters into a void; the "native semantic field" into which the new text emerges "is already extant and crowded" (AB 298). Therefore, the extent to which a new text is naturalized, or assimilated into the native cultural and linguistic context, varies a great deal, and it is crucial to note that the act of importation and incorporation is a dialectic. The importation of foreign material changes the native context as well as the foreign one. Steiner explains, "No language, no traditional symbolic set or cultural ensemble imports without risk of being transformed" (AB 299). The foreign text has the potential to enrich but also to dislocate or even subvert the native language and its cultural context. Herein lies the danger of translation. Steiner uses two metaphors to describe its potential effects: the metaphor of sacramental intake and the metaphor of infection. The incorporation of a translated text can enrich the native semantic field depending on its state when it ingests the foreign material, or the translated text can paralyze and consume the "native matrix" if it is "disoriented or immature" (AB 299).

The final and pivotal stage of the model is one in which balance is restored. As Steiner explains, through trust, aggression and incorporation the translator has

"'leaned towards'" the foreign text and

> come home laden . . . having caused disequilibrium throughout the system by taking away from 'the other' and by adding though with possibly ambiguous consequence, to [his] own" (AB 300).

Consequently, economic and ethical adjustments must be made to the translated text to ensure what Steiner calls "mutual benefaction" (AB 300). In fact, Steiner argues that if translation lacks this final act of restored parity, the translation is not tenable. For "[t]he enactment of reciprocity in order to restore balance is the crux of the métier and morals of translation" (AB 300). He insists:

> The translator, the exegetist, the reader is faithful to his text, makes his response responsible, only when he endeavors to restore the balance of forces, of integral presence, which his appropriative comprehension has disrupted. . . . There is, ideally, exchange without loss (AB 302).

Consequently, although translation inevitably involves "breakage," both the original work and the cultural and linguistic context it enters through translation can be enhanced and magnified when the process seeks "mutual benefaction" (AB 300). The reciprocity upon which the whole process of translation hinges is, then, a dialectic through which "new 'formats' of significance are initiated by distance and by contiguity" (AB 301).

This four-stage model for the translation of texts, a model which Steiner admits is "non-formalized . . . part deductive, part intuitive" and at times "hopelessly vague" (AB 302, 414), will form the framework for the remainder of this thesis. Its terms and processes will be used to describe the translations, or failed translations, of the identities of the characters Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta in The Satanic Verses. Their transformations are at times equally vague and difficult to formalize (both for the reader and the characters themselves). And yet, their translations offer models, like Steiner's, of the potential for enrichment and magnification of the human condition, a new "'format' of significance initiated by distance and by contiguity" (AB 301).

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Chapter Two

GIBREEL: A PORTRAIT OF AN UNTRANSLATED MAN

The purpose of this chapter, as explained in the introduction, is to offer a portrait of the "untranslated man" through an analysis of The Satanic Verses' "sacred" character, Gibreel Farishta. A brief review of the criteria for translatedness and untranslatedness is necessary before beginning.

Translatedness, as it will be used here, refers not to a literal migration of characters from one country or culture to another, although Rushdie uses migration as a literary metaphor for representing translated characters. It refers, instead, to an internal migration of the characters' identity. The translation involves the fusion and reconciliation of conflicting versions of the self. Therefore, the translated man is one who manages to fuse two (or more) potentially disparate worlds within himself to create a "mongrel" identity. "[A] bit of this and a bit of that" jostle within the individual and, ideally, by embracing all of them, the individual constructs a patchwork identity that is coherent and whole but not homogeneous ("Good Faith" 394). It "admits" that countless fragments of experience have given it its shape and its beauty. Untranslatedness means, simply, failing to put together (or refusing to put together) the unmatched pieces of one's identity coherently.

Gibreel Farishta, fails to integrate and reconcile the discordant aspects of his own being, and therefore remains throughout the novel an untranslated man. Fundamentally, the two "unmatched" aspects of his being are the realms of the sacred and the profane. This chapter will begin by simply looking at four examples of how the internal struggle between these two poles manifests itself in his life and character and how his destruction is a matter of incoherent narratives. Specifically, the conflict materializes in his appearance, in the contrast between his public and private selves, in the struggle between his existence as an apostate and his role as the Archangel Gibreel, and last, in the conflict between his greatest character strength and character flaw. The last half of the chapter will explore reasons for his inability to reconcile the

sacred and profane elements within himself.

Rushdie begins characterizing Gibreel in terms of the conflict between the sacred and profane by giving him a face that embodies both elements. His countenance, the reader learns, is

> oddly un-starry. Those low-slung eyelids could give him an exhausted look. There was, too, something coarse about the nose, the mouth was too well-fleshed to be strong, the ears were long-lobed like young, knurled [sic] jackfruit. The most profane of faces, the most sensual of faces. . . . And yet, in spite of profanity and debilitation, this was a face inextricably mixed up with holiness, perfection, God-stuff (SV 17).

Paradoxically, his appearance contains the unquestionably earth-bound, or "profane" qualities of weakness, debilitation, and sensuality while simultaneously embodying elements of the sacred. A physical manifestation in an imperfect world of a supernatural world marked by perfection, his visage appears to be that of an incarnated deity. Outwardly, it manifests the dual nature that he will wrestle with throughout the novel.

As he becomes an increasingly popular film star, his audience becomes blind to the profane aspects of his being and confuses the man with his roles. Gibreel comes to be recognized by his fans as the incarnation of God in his multifarious forms[1]. The narrator explains:

> For over a decade and a half [Gibreel] had represented, to hundreds of millions of believers in that country . . . the most acceptable, and instantly recognizable, face of the Supreme. For many of his fans, the

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1 Timothy Brennan notes that Gibreel is generally understood to be a parody of the Indian film star, Amitabh Bachan, who reigned from the late 60's to the early 80's. Just as Rushdie describes, he was a friend of the Nehru family, suffered a freak illness, and played in "theologicals", a film genre popular particularly in the south which contains a large Hindu population (153).

> boundary separating the performer and his roles had longago (sic) ceased to exist (SV 16,17).

Their confusion not only makes a god out of Gibreel, it makes a perfect god. "Mister Perfecto", Saladin's sarcastic nickname for him, is "called angelic by one and all, . . ." (SV 426) 2. Thus the audiences he plays to, by bestowing upon Gibreel the role of an incarnated perfect god, intiates the split between the sacred and profane aspects of his life, and the sacred/profane split becomes inescapable for Gibreel on and off screen.

Gibreel-worship reaches absurd proportions, and the extent to which his public has sacralized him is portrayed comically in the scenes when Gibreel encounters a fan, John Maslama, in a railway carriage. Farishta is in London incognito trying to keep the fact that he survived the explosion of the Bostan a secret when Maslama approaches him and announces that he knows exactly who he is. He exclaims:

> Naturally I know who you are, . . . you are the famous, the may I say legendary Mr Gibreel Farishta, [sic] star of screen, and, . . . of pirate video; . . . You, sir, are a rainbow coalition of the celestial; a walking United Nations of gods! You are, in short, the future. Permit me to salute you! (SV 191-2).

Maslama's obvious inability to distinguish between the man and his roles is highly ironic in that he prefaces his comments by announcing that questions of identity are the supreme concern of modern man. "These are problematic times, sir, for a moral man. When a man is unsure of his essence, how may he know if he be good or bad?" (SV 192). However, he remarks to Gibreel that "of course you are not in the least confused about your identity, for you are the famous, . . . legendary Gibreel Farishta" (SV 192). Clearly, Maslama's comments suggest he makes no distinction between

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2 A more detailed discussion of two traditions, religious and literary, which Rushdie has drawn from to create the angelic profile for Gibreel can be found in the appendix to this chapter.

Gibreel and his role. Gibreel is the "rainbow coalition of the celestial", and he never questions that Gibreel is anything other than the deities he plays on film.

It becomes clear that the actor is not the sacred being which he portrays, and Maslama becomes indignant. Discovering that Gibreel does not know the name of God, he accuses Gibreel of being a "'Charlatan! Poser! Fake! You claim to be the screen immortal, . . . and you haven't a foggy!'" (SV 192). Caught up in the anger of his disillusionment, he misses the irony of his own statement. An actor is a "fake"; he plays the roles but is not the role.

Though comical, Maslama's reaction reveals the strength of man's compulsion to make his gods faultless. René Girard, in The Scapegoat, observes that as deities evolve within a culture, "There comes a time, . . . when men want only models of morality and demand gods purified of all faults" (79). Indeed, Gibreel's evolution as a film god has transformed him into a perfect deity which is divorced from its profane aspects. To his fans, he is the "model of morality". To protect the image and cover up his decidely profane private life, Gibreel becomes a devil and a deceiver.

Incapable of resisting the women who find him irresistible, he becomes a "philanderer of the worst type," and buries himself–quite happily–in an "avalanche of sex" (SV 25). Executing a cover-up for the "scandal and debauch" requires that he become an expert in the "arts of dissimulation, because a man who plays gods must be above reproach" (SV 25). Consequently, while acting on screen, he learns to act off screen, and the truly demonic art of lying becomes second nature. The sacred and profane Gibreel divorce themselves from each other; only the movie screen stands between them.

The women suffer the consequences of his demonic underground activity. His recklessness breaks hearts, initiates countless pregnancies and, of course, abortions, and drives his jilted lover, Rekha to kill her children and commit suicide. His proficiency as a deceiver, however, prevents scandal from attaching itself to his name until the very end of his career. But significantly, one character who has been to the underworld and back knows Gibreel's true nature and returns able to call him by his

true name. The apparition of Rekha haunts him throughout the novel and reveals that with death comes honesty, "so now I can call you by your true names", one of which is "devil" (SV 7-8).

A more comic but nonetheless revealing and symbolic manifestation of Gibreel's dark side is his halitosis. He breathes "ochre clouds of sulphur and brimstone" and his co-star, Pimple Billimoria, makes the astute observation that it is "'Damn good for him the movies don't smell, . . .'". For "in life, unlike the cinema," the narrator explains, "people know if you stink" (SV 13). The hellish halitosis rises up from the gehenna of his being, testifying to the infernal decay beneath the surface.

To sum up, his status as a film god intiates and perpetuates the sacred/profane split between his public and private selves. He lies to protect his public image, but the public image demands that he lie. The split identity does not become an agonizing struggle, however, until after Gibreel's formal rejection of the sacred–his public declaration of his status as an unbeliever and his abandonment of his acting career in India. The dreams that ensue engage him in a tortuous struggle between the sacred and the profane forcing him to wrestle with conflicting identities as an apostate and as the Archangel Gabriel. In the end, the struggle dislocates his psyche and leaves him insane.

Gibreel has defined his identity and view of the world since childhood in terms of the sacred, and both are shaped by the conviction that higher powers have looked after him and set him apart as a chosen one. The narrator explains that he grew up "believing in God, angels, demons, afreets, djinns, as matter-of-factly as if they were bullock-carts or lamp-posts, and it struck him as a failure in his own sight that he had never seen a ghost" (SV 22). As a teen, and later as an adult, he attributed his adoption by a rich benefactor and remarkable success as an actor, especially given his lack of ambition, as confirmation that a guardian angel had been looking after him (SV 24-25).

Consequently, when near death he calls out to God whom he believes has been his life-long protector and hears nothing, he suffers a crisis of faith which later

becomes a crisis of identity.

> [H]e realized he was talking to thin air, that there was nobody there at all . . . ya Allah, just be there, damn it, just be. But he felt nothing, nothing nothing [sic], and then one day he found that he no longer needed there to be anything to feel (SV 30).

To publically declare his new-found unbelief and to prove to himself once and for all God's non-existence, he makes his first meal out of the hospital a blasphemous sacrament celebrating his abandonment of faith. Breaking the Muslim dietary taboo of eating pork, he crams all the pig meat he can find into his mouth and rejoices in the absence of any immediate divine retribution (SV 30).

The event signifies his willing ingestion of the profane, declaring his move from the status of a believer to an unbeliever. Having heretofore defined his being, in fact his very existence, in terms of his belief in God, this is a radical shift. It thrusts his identity to the opposite end of the spectrum and signifies a drastic redefinition of self-hood. He becomes an apostate. Seeing things as black or white only, he discards the cloak of belief and dons the mantle of apostasy as completely and quickly as if he were changing clothes. With the old god no longer alive, he makes his new one Allie, who like the deities, dwells in high places (she climbs Everest, the home of Hindu deities (Morgan 115)),who sets herself apart with an air of inaccessibility. In a secular quest for his "god", he leaves his film career in India and flies to England to find her. He simply transfers love for a sacred god to love for a secular one; sacred love for God is translated into "profane" love for a mortal.

The break between sacred and profane is not clean, however, and on the plane to England, the struggle between the two halves of his identity begins. The sacred residue within him begins leaking back into his life through the serial dreams that cast him as the Archangel Gabriel. These "visions of doubt, visions of skepticism" are intended to portray "a soul in crisis" ("Good Faith" 398-9). Believing the dreams to be a divine directive, he is torn between the desire to do the will of God as his chief Angel and the desire to live a "profane" life loving Allie. He oscillates back and forth

between days spent with her recovering from his illness, and days spent wandering London in a sleepless delirium claiming to be the Angel Gabriel. Above all, he wants to purge himself from the tortures of doubt and uncertainty and live one role or the other. Either way, he remains angelically "pure" by wishing to remain purely sacred or purely profane.

His reaction to the vision of God illustrates this either/or mentality. Gibreel declares, "[H]e saw now that the choice was simple: the infernal love of the daughters of men, or the celestial adoration of God" (SV 321) 3. The comment indicates that the choice before him is a matter of living a demonic existence with Allie, or a sacred existence fulfilling his call to be the Angel Gabriel. The crisis of identity demands, he believes, a choice to be one or the other; in this matter he cannot be double-casted.

The choice of one at the exclusion of the other proves to be unhelpful. Zealously opting to be the Angel Gabriel, he discovers that every effort to convert London is unsuccessful and within a few days, he "[finds] blasphemies surfacing once again: . . ." and doubts concerning his identity as an angel consuming him (SV 331-332). Through his struggle, Rushdie quite graphically illustrates his conviction that a life of certainty is not only impossible, it is also unliveable. Gibreel's identity crisis illustrated here becomes the means by which Rushdie reveals the novel's "most crucial dynamic": the hybridized identity's supremacy over the pure identity ("Good Faith" 403).

One final illustration of the sacred/profane split is the paradox which reveals

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3 His comment strongly alludes to several stories in which the demonic seeks to possess the mortal; ie. the Genesis 6:1-4 story of the sons of God lusting after the daughters of men and the story of Dionysus and Eros. The allusion clarifies further Gibreel's belief that his choice of roles is to become either demonic by loving Allie or angelic by serving God. (The discussion of these stories and others in terms of the demonic attempting to bridge the gap between worlds came to my attention in Robert Stock's book Flutes of Dionysus: Daemonic Enthrallment in Literature (60).

itself in a love that becomes murderous. Early in the novel, the narrator discloses that despite Gibreel's philandering and thoughtlessness, he has a remarkable capacity "for loving genuinely, deeply and without holding back, the rare and delicate gift which he had never been able to employ" (SV 25). His love affair with Allie is marked by this abandon; he deserts his life in India to be with her and loves her deeply and intuitively. Yet, their "grand passion" becomes murderous when his truly demonic jealousy, enflamed by Saladin's "satanic verses", pushes Gibreel's teetering mind over the edge of sanity and moves him to murder Allie and kill himself. Paradoxically, his truly sacred ability to love unconditionally, is perverted by the demonic, consuming jealousy that also resides within him.

Through Gibreel, Rushdie has created a character trying to deal with untranslatedness. The "unmatched" pieces of his identity–the sacred and the profane–battle for supremacy in Gibreel's internal world. But Gibreel is, essentially, a fundamentalist, in the sense of being one who, as Malise Ruthven decribes them, has fallen prey to "textual fetishism" seeking "impious certainties in language" (142-143). He desires that his internal text be inimitable–a fixed and static identity. Struggling for purity and certainty of self, he reveals that he does not understand the very nature of language which is the nature of the self. "Language. . .", Steiner asserts, ". . . is in perpetual change. . . . [It] is the most salient model of Heraclitean flux. . . . [O]rdinary language is, literally at every moment, subject to mutation" (AB 17-18). Gibreel, though, desires a world in which the relation between "words and the world [is] one of complete inclusion and unambiguous correspondence" (AB 203.) He fears the world in which words are slippery and whose meaning at any given moment might be indefinable or debatable; all interpretations, all translations must be a perfect transfer of meaning. He believes (erroneously) that he will be able to translate himself perfectly, without shadings or ambiguity or loss, from the sacred to the profane or visa versa. But, as Steiner points out, "[i]t is the anomaly, . . . the ambiguity, . . . which give coherence to the system. A coherence, if such a description is allowed, 'in constant motion' (AB 203). Ironically, in wishing to maintain a "pure" internal text which denies

the language of the self motion in the grey areas between the fixed poles of the sacred and profane, he weakens his internal text, and its brittleness causes it to eventually shatter.

With chilling realism, Rushdie portrays his self-destruction which is the inevitable consequence of his continual denial of one role or the other. Signficantly, he employs the metaphors of the self as narrative and the self as language to describe Gibreel's disintegrating identity. It becomes, Rushdie reveals, an incoherent, multi-layered, jumble of narratives. At a moment of excruciating dereliction, Gibreel wanders through Brickhall dazed. The narrator reveals that

> Gibreel: . . . understands now something of what omnipresence must be like, because he is moving through several stories at once, there is a Gibreel who mourns his betrayal by Alleluia Cone, and a Gibreel hovering over the death-bed of a Prophet, and a Gibreel watching over the progress of a pilgrimage to the sea, . . . And there is a Gibreel who walks down the streets of London, trying to understand the will of God. . . . Wrestling through his many stories, he proceeds (SV 457).

Gibreel's identity at this point exists only as a terrifying confusion of conflicting narratives that are literally deconstructing him. He is powerless to give one narrative privilege over another, and the language of each is equally opaque (Norris 22-23). Refusing to submit to the rules of time or space, they place themselves outside his frame of reference and thus become incomprehensible. Day fuses into night, past mingles with present, dream world leaks into reality, and lover becomes the Death Angel Azreel. Unable to order the narratives or pin meaning to any one of them, he submits to their anarchy.

A few pages later, Rushdie makes the same point when he writes, "He wanders through a confusion of languages. Babel: a contraction of the Assyrian 'babilu'. 'The gate of God.' Babylondon" (SV 459). In Gibreel's internal world, the incongruous narratives stalking his psyche cannot communicate with each other. He believes that there are no "universals" common to the narratives of the sacred and the

profane, and thus there is no fundamental, shared aspect of language which would allow one to be translated into the other and visa versa. Each narrative wandering in his head speaks in its own tongue, and Gibreel is unable (though earlier simply unwilling) to be the interpreter and stop the confusion. The internal language, denied its natural elasticity, has splintered into pieces, and his identity has become a Babel; the gate of God has become the portal of Hell.

In the final moments of his life, the incoherence of narratives expresses itself in incoherent speech. Rushdie again employs the metaphors of narrative and language to describe the final confrontation between Gibreel and Saladin. When Gibreel arrives at Saladin's home in Bombay, he tells Chamcha, "'Sit down and shut up, Spoono,' . . .' I'm here to tell you a story" (SV 543). The story that follows is an incoherent, nearly uninterpretable narrative of confession. Sentence fragments mix with single words and phrases of Saladin's satanic nursery rhymes. The narratives double back on each other and invalidate previous claims. Moments of confession trail vehement denials. Assertions follow retractions (SV 544-5). The lack of any transitional or unifying elements in the narrative parallels the state of Gibreel's mind which, too, at this point lacks connectedness. This final, splintered narrative reveals the remains of a disintegrated selfhood. The narratives reflecting the realms of the sacred and profane have become so disconnected that no hope of reassembling them, let alone reconciling them, remains. Facing the prospect of ultimate untranslatedess, Gibreel destroys himself.

In terms of the translation hermeneutic, the reasons for his untranslatedness can be reduced to the absence of one principle: trust. By nature, translation involves risk: the endeavor certainly alters (and can potentially dislocate) both the foreign and native languages and cultures. In the process of translation where two language systems that are potentially antagonistic meet and merge, the fixedness of both is momentarily suspended. Boundaries separating the two fall and meaning put forth in one language is transformed into another (AB 299). The translator also risks the possibility of finding that some points are simply untranslatable. The sense of trust

that the translator initially possesses can be "betrayed, trivially, by nonsense, by the discovery that 'there is nothing there' to elicit and translate" (AB 296). But to reap the benefits of translation, fear of these risks must be overcome by an initial and continually renewed sense of trust in the potential for a decisively positive exchange between two language worlds. A character, like a translator, who does not or cannot engage in this hermeneutic remains untranslated. This is the case with Gibreel.

His character development involves merely the struggle to remain untranslated, but he *struggles primarily* out of the fear that the changes translation brings will create nonsense, an incomprehensible self. Ironically, as pointed out earlier, his resistance to translation creates a Babel within him, a chaotic flury of narratives and languages that reveal a disintegrating identity.

His anxiety about its uncertainties colors his entire existence within the novel. His response to the serial dreams haunting him illustrates his fear of the two worlds merging. But it is not the dreams themselves he fears, but the translation of his identity that occurs within them (SV 109). He tells Saladin that he actually becomes the Archangel Gabriel: "I don't mean interpreting a role, Spoono, I am him, he is me, I am the bloody archangel, Gibreel himself, large as bloody life" (SV 83). Being transformed into something that he no longer believes exists threatens Gibreel's very sense of reality, and he finds the uncertainty it creates impossible to deal with. "The terror of losing his mind to a paradox, of being unmade by what he no longer believed existed, . . . was so big in him that it was impossible to look at it for long;" (SV 189). He understands himself, now, to be an unbeliever. But in the dreams, he actually <u>becomes</u> an archangel–that which is entirely "other" to his present self. This alterity presented by his dreams literally deconstructs and transforms his waking identity and hence, produces acute confusion and anxiety. Gibreel does not want the sacred to be translated into the profane or visa versa. "[H]e fears above all things the altered states in which his dreams leak into, and overwhelm, his waking self, making him that angelic Gibreel he has no desire to be (SV 427).

Gibreel's aversion to the inherent risks of the translation process are displayed

in his reactions in a railway car when, for a moment, he is released from the visions plaguing him. The narrator explains:

> a small series of prohibitions and instructions [on the train] gladdened his heart. . . . Gibreel had been somewhat soothed by these manifestations of law, and began to perk up and invent rationalizations. . . . As the train carried him further and further away from the twilight zone of his arrival and subsequent mysterious captivity, bearing him along the happy predictability of parallel metal lines, . . . his old gift of hope reasserted itself, . . . (SV 190).

Like the railway lines that remain happily and predictably parallel, never crossing, Gibreel yearns for a state of being where the two antagonistic realities with which he struggles, the sacred and profane, never mix. Rules and regulations remove from him the terrible burden of ordering a world which is becoming increasingly chaotic. His response also, of course, signifies his desire to give up his freedom to make decisions; he finds the burden of sifting through the grey areas far too painful. Rules and regulations, imposed certainty, make life much easier.

His methods for converting London provide further evidence of his deep distrust of lawlessness and antipathy for "altered states". He embarks upon his mission of redemption by pulling out of his pocket a copy of Geographer's London: A-Z and setting out to reclaim the city for God page by page (SV 322). However, Gibreel finds that

> the city in its corruption refused to submit to the dominion of the cartographers, changing shape at will and without warning, making it impossible for Gibreel to approach his quest in the systematic manner he would have preferred (SV 327).

To Gibreel, ambiguity, change, and rebelliousness toward law and order are the marks of corruption. Slippery and indefinite boundaries signify moral decay. In contrast, fixed and definable realities operating in a predictable, systematic manner signify sanctification. Nietzsche, whose thought is echoed throughout The Satanic Verses,

describes Gibreel's mindset in the The Gay Science. He states, "The new is always the evil, as that which wants to conquer, to overthrow the old boundary stones and the old pieties; and only the old is good" (Nietzsche 93). Gibreel's dreams do in fact "overthrow the old boundary stones" that defined his identity and his understanding of the world. They destroy his notions of the self as a fixed, pure, definable entity and his notions of the world as either black or white. His reaction is to classify the newness as evil. However, by choosing to remain "good", he chooses to remain "at bottom an untranslated man" (SV 427).

He embodies the attitude which Rushdie argues against throughout the novel. The Satanic Verses dismantles bastions of rigid ideologies and theologies and satirizes characters who cling to certainty. Gibreel, naturally then, falls prey to Rushdie's deconstructing pen, for he embodies the antithesis of the ideals Rushdie most fervently lays claim to: the mindset that "accept[s] uncertainty as the only constant, change as the only sure thing" ("Good Faith" 405), a mindset which is also reflected in the postmodern attitude "[t]hat the self can no longer be considered a unified and stable entity . . .", (Smyth 10). Gibreel becomes, therefore, Rushdie's straw man–a character created and destroyed to make a case for translation.

Besides revealing Gibreel to have a fundamental lack of trust in the translation process, Rushdie hints that he is devoid of other qualities that would make his translation impossible even if he submitted to its transforming power.

One of these character deficiencies is his passivity. It manifests itself in his choice of names, his career, his image, his relationship to his fans, his role in his dreams, and his second birth–in short, it turns up in every area that determines his identity. Unable to engage his will and act (ironic, considering he is an actor), he lacks the quality crucial to the aggressive, incorporative and restitutive modes of translation. Further, his willessness makes him the victim of other people's desires. Like the immigrants in the novel who are made monstrous at the assylum, he falls prey to those who have the power to describe him (SV 168).

His mother is the first to circumscribe his identity by attributing to him the

capacity to be a dream-fulfiller just by being. His mother tells the young Gibreel "that simply to lay eyes on him made all her dreams come true, . . ." (SV 19). At a loss as to how he has acquired this talent, Gibreel nevertheless accepts the passive role as a given, but attributes his ability to an outside force. Since he does not do anything to fulfill people's dreams nor has he consciously worked to acquire this ability, he concludes that the ability must be a gift bestowed upon him by deities. Thus, he becomes a dream-fulfiller not by choice but by election (SV 19). And not only does he acquire the role passively, but the role he has been given is passive. No action of mind or body is required from him in order to fulfill it.

Further, he acquires passively the career through which he continues to fulfill the fantasies of women. Orphaned when his father died, he is taken under the wing of a wealthy benefactor, Babasaheb Mhatre, who arranges a screen test as a last gift to Gibreel (SV 22-23). Remarkably unambitious, Gibreel quietly assumes roles assigned to him and gets his first acting break playing the masked roles others reject (SV 24). The career that becomes his identity (to his fans, he actually becomes the roles he plays) he has acquired passively.

His stage name, like the career itself, is also given to him. Born "Ismail Najmuddin", he takes the pseudonym "Gibreel Farishta", once he begins his acting career as "his way of making a homage to the memory of his dead mother" (SV 17). He had been her "personal angel," her "farishta" (SV 17). Not only is this nickname, later to become his stage name, obtained passively, it is also a false signifier. The name is indicative of one of the roles Gibreel played in his mother's life. He was her angel. Likewise, when it becomes his stage name it also refers to a role Gibreel plays: an angelic, faultless deity created by his admirers to fulfill their fantasies. Disturbingly, then, his name refers to a fictional being created by Gibreel's admirers (this includes his mother), not to the "real" Gibreel. Further, Gibreel adopts the name his mother chose for him because it reflects her perception of him. It does not reflect an identity that Gibreel himself has constructed out of a sense of self-awareness. In fact, he seems incredulous that the name ever accurately described his nature. He remarks,

"'[S]he called me, farishta, because apparently I was too damn sweet, believe it or not, I was good as goddamn gold'" (SV 17). The name therefore signifies and further perpetuates the false public image that compromises his identity and augments Gibreel's own illusions about his nature.

His fans bestow upon him the image of a faultless incarnation of the Divine, and "the infinite generosity of women" who forgive him all his crimes of passion allows Gibreel to fall prey to "the deepest and sweetest corruption of all, namely the idea that he was doing nothing wrong" (SV 26). His fans give him his angelic image and then convince him of its authenticity by allowing him to believe he is, indeed, faultless. He pursues neither his image nor the women. Nor does he investigate his own identity through reflecting on his actions. Being faultless, he has no need to. The "real" Gibreel is left undiscovered behind the angelic mask, and he loses sight of his own desires, namely that he had ever "hoped to lose his heart" and love one woman deeply and unconditionally (SV 26). He and his admirers are accomplices in the crime of creating an identity which inevitably makes finding an authentic one impossible.

The passivity characterizing his roles in life and career are mirrored in his serial dreams. Ironically, they reflect his waking condition. In each sequence he is manipulated, often against his will, by the characters who see him and use him as a dream-fulfiller or as the Archangel Gabriel. Rosa Diamond reconstructs an ending to a love-affair by forcing him to remain with her. Mahound on Mount Cone forces his lips to move and deliver both satanic verses and divine revelation, "making the voice, the Voice, pour out of [him] once again, made it pour all over him, like sick" (SV 123). The Imam in London forces him to carry him into holy war with Al-lat, despite Gibreel's intense opposition to the battle and its destruction (SV 212-214). Likewise, Ayesha the butterfly girl forces him to lie down with her while she extracts from him divine sanction to lead the people of Titlipur on a pilgrimage to the Arabian Sea (SV 234).

Finally, and most significantly, Gibreel gains his second life passively. When he

and Saladin tumble through the atmosphere after the explosion of the Bostan, Saladin's will to live is of such intensity, it permeates the conjoined pair and instructs Gibreel to fly and sing. He obeys and they land miraculously in the waters of the English Channel. But the secret of the miracle is that "Chamcha willed it and Farishta did what was willed" (SV 10). The moment, lacking any trace of will or re-creative vision, is not a transformative one for Gibreel as it is for Saladin. His second life is no more free from the anguished struggle between the sacred and profane than was his previous life.

As this scene indicates, his lack of trust and his willessness is compounded by resistence to the deconstructive and recreative powers of the imagination which also prevents his translation from taking place. The imagination envisions how meaning might be transferred across cultural and linguistic barriers and re-formed in a new medium that maintains the integrity of the original but also reveals the prowess of the native language. The metaphorical leap from one language system to another can only be made by engaging the imagination. It alone has the power to visualize the transfer of meaning from one thing to an entirely different, and potentially antagonistic, other. Both "metaphor" and "translate" mean etymologically, "to carry across". The imagination is the bearer.

Gibreel, however, if he had his choice would dispense with this faculty altogether. In a moment after his imagination has created painfully vivid dreams, he exclaims,

> Mother-fucking dreams, cause of all the trouble in the human race, movies, too, if I was God I'd cut the imagination right out of people and then maybe poor bastards like me could get a good night's rest (SV 122).

The dreams ask him to make a metaphorical leap between the sacred and profane. Within them, they force him to see the sacred as the profane: to see "Submission" from behind a brothel curtain or from behind a gun barrel, to see revelation from the point of view of a manipulated Archangel, to see a walk across the Arabian Sea

through the eyes of one who does not drown. Further, they ask him to see himself–an apostate–as an archangel, and they ask him to see an archangel as merely himself. The leap is one he is unwilling to make. The fear which prevents him from jumping originates in an incomplete understanding of imagination's processes.

The imagination which creates his dreams is both deconstructive and reconstructive. Coleridge, in his crucial explanation of the imagination in Biographia Literaria, describes this dual nature of the imagination, specifically the secondary, or poetic, imagination. In Book XIII of Biographia Literaria, he gives the following definition:

> The secondary imagination I consider as an echo of the former [primary imagination], co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead (Coleridge 202).

Gibreel understands only the deconstructive power of his dreams to dissolve the boundaries between the sacred and profane, between wakefulness and sleep, between consciousness and unconsciousness, between the natural world and the supernatural. However, as his demise at the end of the novel reveals, he does not see that the deconstructive moment in the imagination is only half the process. The imagination "dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate". Its end is re-creation. Likewise, his dreams deconstruct his understanding of reality, but they also contain the power to reconstruct his identity. As an "essentially vital" faculty, the imagination has the power to transform static, "dead" ideas and identities and suggest that the sacred and the profane can co-exist as the novel itself does, utilizing the imagination to acknowledge the validity of mystical experience but to reject blind faith in revealed religion (particularly in the chapter "The Parting of the Arabian Sea"). As Coleridge

suggests, the primary imagination is always striving "to idealize and to unify". By resisting it, Gibreel resists the means by which his identity might be re-envisioned and re-created into a unified, coherent whole.

Outside The Satanic Verses as well as within its pages, Rushdie stresses the fundamental importance of the imagination as the faculty through which the world can be re-envisioned and revitalized. In his essay "In God We Trust", he writes:

> The dream is part of our very essence. Given the gift of self-consciousness, we can dream versions of ourselves, new selves for old. Waking as well as sleeping, our response to the world is essentially imaginative: that is, picture-making. We live in our pictures, our ideas. I mean this literally. We first construct pictures of the world and then we step inside the frames ("God We Trust" 377-8).

The imagination Rushdie speaks of (the equivalent of Coleridge's secondary imagination) assembles bits and pieces of perception, memory, experience, and creates a picture of the world in which to live. The pictures can be deconstructed (indeed, must be deconstructed) and reconstructed endlessly to express the transformations experience brings to reality, just as language itself is in "perpetual change" in response to cultural changes (AB 17-18). The process is a continual one of creating and recreating that which one calls reality. Through Gibreel, Rushdie illustrates the devastation brought upon a human whose response to the world is fundamentally unimaginative. He has created a character who builds a rigid frame through which to view reality. When it becomes apparent that the frame no longer contains his experience, he finds he does not have the trust, the will, or the imagination to take apart the old frame and make a new one to contain the larger picture.

The art form which is, in Rushdie's opinion, the theatre of the imagination is the novel. In his essay, "Is Nothing Sacred?", he writes that not only is it the art form "involving the least compromises",

> but it is also the only one that takes the 'privileged arena' of conflicting

discourses right inside our heads. The interior space of our imagination is a theatre that can never be closed down; . . . ("Nothing Sacred" 426).

In the theatre of the mind, the novel can stage great debates between disputing worlds. Worlds that in "reality" might never exist, let alone hold discourse become animated by the imagination. Again, Gibreel illustrates the individual who does not want a debate between conflicting worlds, nor does he want, for that matter, a "theatre" in which to house it; he wants answers, and he would, if he had the choice, "cut the imagination right out of people" (SV 122).

Carlos Fuentes, writing about the Rushdie affair in an article in The Guardian 24 Februrary 1989, predicts the fate of such individuals and re-emphasizes the novel's potential for bringing together conflicting worlds. Fuentes writes:

> The novel . . . is born from the very fact that we do not understand one another any longer, because unitary, orthodox language has broken down. Quixote and Sancho, the Shandy brothers, Mr. and Mrs. Karenin: their novels are the comedy (or the drama) of their misunderstandings. Impose a unitary language: you kill the novel, but you also kill the society' (247-248).

Unquestionably, through The Satanic Verses Rushdie seeks to dramatize the humor and the pain when "unitary, orthodox language" breaks down. Gibreel's "break down" illustrates the comedy and drama that ensues when a man tries to impose a "unitary language" on himself, a single voice (either sacred or profane) that will govern his identity. Refusing any dialogue between the sacred and the profane factions within him, he brings on his destruction. "Impose a unitary language: you kill the novel . . .". Impose a unitary language on an individual, and you kill the individual. Neither the narrative that is the text nor the narrative that is the self can survive the confines of a single language.

One must conclude that the goal of the debate between conflicting worlds is not, in the end, to have one solitary, victorious voice. The Satanic Verses, Rushdie, and Fuentes all imply quite the opposite. The goal is indefinite wrangling in a theatre

that never closes. Ideally, through debate, each world can be translated by the other; the novel is the vehicle that brings them together and allows them to struggle towards translation.

Finally, the poetic imagination can, therefore, be understood as the faculty that translates. The translator aggressively deconstructs the foreign text and the native one, dissolving the boundaries between the two semantic worlds and opening the "closed" picture-frames of both worlds by penetrating one and incorporating it into the other. In the process of incorporating the foreign language into the native, the translator must creatively re-envision the meaning in the text, transferring it from one language to another in an act that is, fundamentally, reconstructive. Through the final act of restoring balance between the two languages in the one, new, translation, the translator achieves, ideally, unity of vision and meaning between the two languages, reconstructing linguistic picture-frames expressive of the new "reality".

In sum, Gibreel lacks fundamental qualities essential for engaging in the process of translation. Confined by fear, he is unable to trust that the deconstructive visions invading his psyche are potentially reconstructive. Bound to the roles given him by his passivity, he is unable to reconcile the antagonistic aspects of his identity and creatively reconstruct his life. Finally, his response to his world is decidedly unimaginative, and unable to grasp the metaphorical nature of being, he remains unable to integrate the sacred and profane halves of himself simply because he is unable to imagine one in terms of the other. He remains, therefore, an untranslated man.

The next chapter will examine the character Saladin, who in contrast with Gibreel, wilfully and aggressively ventures two translations of identity. The first and unsuccessful attempt, as well as the beginnings of the second and successful attempt, will be the focus of the discussion.

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Appendix

THE NATURE OF ANGELS

The few points about the nature of angels, as described in two sources Rushdie has drawn heavily upon, must be briefly addressed in this appendix because of the illumination they provide in understanding Gibreel's nature. Those two sources are the angels of Islam and the angel in William Blake's The Marriage of Heaven and Hell.

In the Islamic tradition, angels belong to the realm of the "jabarut" which is third down the heirarchical scale of the "five divine presences" (Glassé, "Divine Presences" 128) and the angels themselves are arranged in a heirarchy at the head of which are the four archangels: "Jibrail or Jibril (Gabriel), the Angel of Revelation [or Recitation], Mikail or Mikal (Michael), Israfil, . . . and Izrail, the Angel of Death" (Glassé, "Angels" 42).

With the exception of these four archangels (who still have limitations in knowledge and are subordinate to man), angels in the Islamic tradition "do not possess a central state (a state with objective self-knowledge and capacity to know the Essence), and unlike man, the angels do not possess free will. Therefore, although closer to God, they are not superior to man in the perfection of his unfallen primordiality" (Glassé 42). Their subordination to man is made evident at creation when Adam, not the angels, is commanded by God to name everything, including the angels themselves. Adam "[knows] the names of the Angels and objects in creation, while the Angels [do] not" (Glassé 42). Even Gabriel seems to be limited in a way that man is not; a story exists in which Gabriel, escorting the Prophet Muhammad to heaven, has to stop at a certain point beyond which he is not allowed (Glassé 42). These points have interesting repercussions when applied to the character of Gibreel Farishta, who is, after all, the angelic figure of The Satanic Verses.

First, if he is understood to be an angel, the point that he lacks objective self-knowledge answers many questions about his cruel and thoughtless behavior toward

others, especially women, and about his uncanny lack of awareness of the effect he has on others. As Saladin describes it, he has a remarkable ability to fail "to notice when he [makes] people angry" (SV 83).

To be able to see oneself as others do, one must have the capacity to objectify the self. The process requires a sympathetic imagination through which one can envision how others must feel in response to one's actions. The ability to self-reflect requires, in other words, objective self-knowledge. It seems that, indeed, Gibreel lacks this self-knowledge. His "thousand and one pieces of thoughtlessness" (SV 26), his cold, emotionless reaction to Rekha's suicide, and his unbridled, abusive jealousy toward Allie all testify to his inability to imagine himself in their position, or even to self-reflect about his actions. This "angelic" trait also explains his inability to self-reflect and choose a role for himself, an identity, other than those given to him by mother, lover, fans or God.

Secondly, the point that angels in the Islamic tradition lack free will does much to explain Gibreel's inherent passivity. Angels do the will of God. They obey the authority in command. As discussed in the latter half of Chapter Two, Gibreel is undeniably passive and allows himself to be described by those who have authority over him. His mother gives him his name, his benefactor bequeaths him his career, his fans give him his deity, Saladin gives him his life, God gives him his archangelic mission. These voices of authority shape his identity, and he lacks the strength of will to revolt against them in the way his satanic counterpart, Saladin, does. Consequently, he becomes the victim of his acquired roles.

Third, as a final and minor point related to the second one, the angels do not know their names. Their names are given to them by Adam. Likewise, Gibreel is given his name, his pseudonym, by his mother. As established in the latter half of Chapter Two, it is not a name he has chosen because it signifies an aspect of himself which he acknowledges is representative of his own understanding of himself. It is a name which describes the role he played for his mother. So, like the angels, Gibreel is forever detached from that which is one of the most crucial items in terms of a

human's identity–his name. His name describes an identity he has passively assumed; it does not describe an identity he has come upon through self-understanding.

This angelic lack of a sense of self-identity revealed through an inability to name himself also explains further the irony of Gibreel's confusion when his fan, John Maslama, claims to know who Gibreel is and Gibreel replies "I? Who am I?" (SV 191). Maslama speaks of the importance for a man to know his essence, for to not know one's essence is to not know whether one is "good or bad" (SV 192). Gibreel, in a very real sense, does not know his essence. He cannot determine whether he is a man or an angel. As a result, he does not know whether he is good or bad, sacred or profane.

The second influential text, in terms of shaping an angelic profile for Rushdie to draw upon when creating Gibreel, is Blake's The Marriage of Heaven and Hell ("Good Faith" 403). Blake's text makes it clear that the angelic figure is the demonic figure. The angel is characterized by passivity, conformity to the stagnant and confining rules of authority and tradition, a desire to stifle all that is unorthodox and therefore potentially deconstructive (but also, as Blake knew, reconstructive), and a lack of creative, revitalizing energy fueled by the will (Blake, Keynes' commentary). In short, in the figure of the angel Blake has concentrated the qualities he most loathes because of their anesthetizing, stagnating effect on humanity.

The vision of hell created by the angel with whom Blake converses in the The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Plates 17-20, is an illusion produced by the angel's conventional ideas. The harper's message to Blake is "'The man who never alters his opinion is like standing water, and breeds reptiles of the mind'". Delivering a similar theme, the "dragon-man" in the "printing-house in Hell" described on Plate 15, clears away the rubbish, symbolic of the decay of convention, in order to make room for the expansion of the imagination (Blake, Keynes' commentary). The imagination, as Sir Geoffrey Keynes explains, is the faculty which is divine and therefore empowering and redemptive. "[F]or living Man with his divine and creative Imagination is now equated with God". Therefore, Blake can write, "For everything that lives is holy"

(Blake, Keynes' commentary). In sum, the entire poem seeks to display the contrast between the creativity, imagination, power, and vital energy of the rebellious devil and the suffocating, stagnating nature of the angel.

Gibreel can easily be recognized as the Blakean angel. He is, as shown earlier, passive and possessed by an obsession for fixed categories and "happy predictability" (SV 190). He is the man who never alters his opinions, and the madness in him is a reptile of the mind slowly consuming his sanity. As the latter half of Chapter Two described, he is also resistant to the deconstructive but liberating power of the imagination. Further, he is a man obedient to the will of others. As Gibreel himself asks rhetorically, "What is an archangel but a puppet?" (SV 460).

The angels of Islam, and the Blakean angel both, then, serve as models upon which Rushdie has drawn in order to portray Gibreel as an angel–a figure who is symbolically an untranslated man.

Chapter Three

SALADIN: A TRANSLATION ATTEMPT EXPLODED

As the last chapter suggested, Rushdie has created in Gibreel the "untranslated man." A desire for systemization and firm boundaries between good and evil, dreams and reality, the sacred and the profane determines his profile. He is a passive figure who resists revelation and the power of the imagination and who is, thereby, confined by the desire for a fixed and easily definable identity and world. He resists "hybridization:" the phenomenon of integrating various, perhaps conflicting, histories, desires and natures within himself into a whole.

In contrast, the translated man is thereby both active in and receptive to the process of transformation that Gibreel resists. By will, he steps into and moves through the four stages of the translation hermeneutic: trust, penetration, embodiment and restitution. Movement through these four stages requires that the translated man be one who trusts that his "identity" can be a multiplicity of potentially conflicting selves–some new, some old, and some evolving, and that by fusing self with its "other(s)", he will find authenticity and potential for growth far beyond that which he is presently able to see. Possessing this trust, he then wilfully and aggressively undertakes (or undergoes) the process of embodying the "other" and incorporating it into the self. The process is a dialectic which redefines both the self and other. Finally, he balances the self with its other(s) in order to achieve parity between them. He becomes neither one nor the other exclusively, but a new "text," a new identity that is a fusion of two (or more) selves and that expresses the richness and potential of the combination. Fundamentally, his identity is, and is acknowledged to be, a mongrel.

The "mongrel" character in The Satanic Verses is, in the end, Saladin who, in contrast to Gibreel's desire to maintain an angelically "pure" identity, leads a demonic rebellion against his "pure" English self and allows it to be translated. The translation of Saladin's identity within the novel is a matter of two translating processes. The first

is his wilful transformation of identity from that of a Bombayite to an Englishman. This first translation involves movement through the stages of trust, penetration, and embodiment, but lacking the fourth and pivotal stage of the translation process, it is false and incomplete. Indeed it is false because it is incomplete. The second translation of his identity which will develop an authentic self begins with his fall from the Bostan and concludes with the death of his father.

This second and authentic translation, however, can only be understood in light of the first and unsuccessful attempt. The discussion must begin with exploring the process and nature of his first and failed attempt at translation.

As explained in Chapter One, Steiner argues that the translation process begins with a moment of trust. There is initially on the part of the translator "an investment of belief, underwritten by previous experience but epistemologically exposed and psychologically hazardous, in the meaningfulness, in the 'seriousness' of the facing or, strictly speaking, adverse text" (AB 296). The translator "venture[s] a leap." He "grant[s] ab initio that there is 'something there' to be understood, that the transfer will not be void" (AB 296).

The young Salahuddin living in his father's mansion in Bombay possesses this faith in the potential of translation. The language he believes will give him a unique voice through which to speak his identity and divorce himself from his father is English. He finds Changez' formidable presence of person intimidates his identity into a suffocating silence, and he is endlessly frustrated by his father's "magic-lampism"–the phenomenon of tantalizing Salahuddin with the promises and yet forever postponing their fulfillment. So much so that at the age of thirteen, Salahuddin ". . . became convinced that his father would smother all his hopes unless he got away, and from that moment he became desperate to leave, to escape, to place oceans between the great man and himself" (SV 36, 37).

His desperation drives him to put his faith in the power of "analogy and parallel", which underpins any translation, and dream of the day when he can escape to ". . . that cool Vilayet full of the crisp promises of pounds sterling"–England (SV 37).

From the beginning, "ab initio", he has unwavering faith in England's potential to translate him into the person his father never will be: " that is, a goodandproper [sic] Englishman" (SV 43). The translation will, he believes, give him a voice in a new medium.

Consequently, when his father offers to send him to boarding school in England he accepts. Once arriving there, he sets about the task of consuming every part of the culture and assimilating it into himself. In short, he aggressively undertakes the task of translating his Indian identity into the idiom of English, and his unwavering belief in England's superiority and potential for remaking him propels him through the second and third phases of translation–penetration and embodiment of the foreign "text" which is, of course, England.

Steiner describes the second stage of the translation hermeneutic as an act of aggression that is "extractive and incursive", an act that appropriates the foreign text and is, therefore, violent. It penetrates the text, searches it out for the "'Da-sein'" (Steiner borrows Heidegger's term), "'the thing there,' 'the thing that is because it is there,'" which "only comes into authentic being when it is comprehended, i.e. translated" (AB 297, 298).

Appropriately, the scene in which Salahuddin does battle with a kipper the first morning at boarding school symbolizes his aggressive consumption of England. In this episode, Salahuddin finds himself staring at a kipper on his plate. Not knowing how to eat it, he battles his way through mouthfuls of bones. Ninety minutes later, he finishes. "His fellow-pupils watched him suffer in silence; not one of them said, here, let me show you, you eat it in this way" (SV 44). But he had learned his first lesson in conquering a country:

> He discovered that he was a bloody-minded person. 'I'll show them all,' he swore. 'You see if I don't.' The eaten kipper was his first victory, the first step in his conquest of England (SV 44).

His aggressive consumption of the fish is symbolic of his zealous penetration of English culture and digestion of its every nuance. The metaphor is stated explicitly:

"England was a peculiar-tasting smoked fish full of spikes and bones, . . ." (SV 44). It is, in other words, something "other" and foreign to him, but something that he is determined to ingest (SV 44). In this first act, then, he symbolically demonstrates the first two stages of the translation process–penetration and embodiment–and he discovers the "bloody-mindedness" that will propel him through the subsequent efforts at translation.

After this first act of ingesting the foreignness of England, he continues the process of translation by changing his name. His first name he anglicizes by shortening it from Salahuddin to Saladin "...after the fashion of the English school,..."(SV 45), and he later changes his last name from Chamchawalla to Chamcha at the direction a theatrical agent 1. The name change is a literal translation of his Indian past into his English present, and it becomes representative of a change in identity. For, when translating, the word which identifies an object must, obviously, change. The object must be given a new signifier in a new language, otherwise it cannot be identified by the native reader. Likewise, Saladin, aspiring to become identifiable and significant in English, must (he is convinced) anglicize his name, and he must render it

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1 Malise Ruthven, in A Satanic Affair: Salman Rushdie and the Rage of Islam, explains that the word "chamcha" which Rushdie has chosen for Saladin "means 'spoon' in Urdu . . . : in Bombay street argot chamcha means something like camp-follower, groupie or toadie, with homosexual overtones" (16). In other words, a chamcha is a "yes-man" a person who panders to those he admires or from whom he wishes to receive favors and acceptance. Clearly, Saladin is in this sense a chamcha. He denies his own individuality and heritage and subsequently creates masks for himself as an adolescent and as an actor in order to be accepted by the British society he worships. That the name has homosexual overtones also illuminates the homo-erotic desires that are hinted at in his relationship with Gibreel and which Sara Suleri discusses in her article, "Contraband Histories: Salman Rushdie and the Embodiment of Blasphemy." Yale Review. 78.4 (1989): 604-624.

into a language that is intelligible to his English "readers".

To gain a voice once he becomes identifiable by name, he finds he has to look English and sound English. Consequently, as a schoolboy, he begins to manufacture voices and masks that transform him into something his classmates can recognize and "hear". Their exclusion makes him determined "to find masks that these fellows would recognize, paleface masks, clown-masks, until he fooled them into thinking he was okay, he was people like us" (SV 43).

Moving into adulthood, he settles on a mask and a voice which translate him into an upper-class English idiom. Describing the transformed Saladin, the narrator states:

> This face was handsome in a somewhat sour, patrician fashion, with long, thick, downturned lips like those of a disgusted turbot, and thin eyebrows arching sharply over eyes that watched the world with a kind of alert contempt. Mr. Saladin Chamcha had constructed this face with care–it had taken him several years to get it just right–for many more years now he had thought of it simply as his own–indeed, he had forgotten what he had looked like before it. Furthermore, he had shaped himself a voice to go with the face, a voice whose languid, almost lazy vowels contrasted disconcertingly with the sawn-off abruptness of the consonants (SV 33).

Through rigorous penetration and careful extraction of English culture and attitude, Saladin has accumulated the raw materials from which to create this English mask. The result is a face and voice entirely "other" than his own, but one which he has assumed so convincingly that he has convinced himself of its authenticity. Having forgotten what his "real" face looked like, the mask has become his identity.

Though Saladin's translation of his voice and appearance gives him access to the privileges of upper-class English society and a successful career, the translation process is not complete, in his mind, until it includes the penetration and embodiment of the woman who is herself symbolic of the culture he wishes to inhabit. He

authenticates his translation of identity, he believes, by union with Pamela Lovelace (whose name is a composite of Samuel Richardson's wilting upper-crust English protagonist, Pamela, and her malicious would-be suitor, Lovelace (Ruthven 21)). She has a voice,

> composed of tweeds, headscarves, summer pudding, hockey-sticks, thatched houses, saddle-soap, house-parties, nuns, family pews, large dogs and philistinism,. . . (SV 180).

The aggression which marks his earlier endeavors to penetrate and incorporate England into his identity also marks his pursuit of Pamela. Embodying all that is English, she becomes necessary to him for two reasons. By falling in love with his re-made English self, she confirms that Saladin has become authentically English, or at least a convincing enough version to persuade an English woman to marry him. Second, by possessing her, he can by process of union, possess England. So, Saladin's pursuit of her is motivated by the conviction that Pamela is the ". . . custodian of his destiny, . . . if she did not relent then his entire attempt at metamorphosis would fail. . . He needed her so badly, to reassure himself of his own existence, . . . " (SV 50). The success of his translation rests in the success of his union with a woman who symbolizes everything he seeks to become. The consumating act of embodying England is embodying Pamela 2.

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2 It is worth noting that for both Rushdie and Steiner, the translation process is quite noticeably phallo-centric. Saladin inhabits cultures and seeks to transform his identity through the women he penetrates and embodies. He states "I put down roots in the women I love" (SV 59). Further, only male characters undergo translation in the sense that it is being presented here (presumably because only men can penetrate and embody). Steiner, too, uses sexual metaphors to describe the process of translation. At times the language even echoes the language of rape. Not surprisingly, Rushdie has received criticism from feminists who argue that his female protagonists have no voice; they are merely instruments facilitating the movement of the male characters,

But, for all Saladin's trust, penetration and embodiment of England through wife or otherwise, the translated life he has made for himself begins to crumble. Areas of his life which sign-post his translation of identity from Indian to English–his marriage to an English woman, his English voice, and his successful career in the voice-over business in London–begin to disintegrate.

Both Pamela and Saladin attribute the failure of their marriage to bungled translation efforts. Desperately needing her English "golden girl" image to complete his own translation of identity, he fails to see that her brightness is a mask. Saladin, the fictional Englishman marries Pamela the fictional English woman. Her frustration over his inability to distinguish reality from the fictions he constructs is plain. "'You couldn't get him to look at what was really real'", Pamela explains. "'I was bloody Britannia'" (SV 175). Consequently, attempts to communicate are frustrated by Saladin's failure to see beyond the "surface stuctures", Pamela's mask, to the "deep structures" of her real being. The failure of their relationship is, essentially, a failure to understand each other's "languages" at the level of their deep structures. Relating to each other only superficially, they communicate like traveler's with phrase books who know only the word-for-word, literal meaning of a text; they have no grasp of the essence of the word as it lives and breathes in its original semantic context. Any translator will agree that the translation which tries to translate a text word-for-word by patching together dictionary definitions will be a hopelessly inadequate and largely false translation. Likewise, Saladin's translation, or interpretation of Pamela, is inadequate (and false) because he understands her only in terms of the superficial,

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merely bodies used to confirm or change male identity. This criticism seems more than valid in light of the quite obvious fact that for Saladin, *inhabiting* a culture is synonymous with "inhabiting" women who are representative of it. Rushdie has conceded that, in fact, the female characters in the novel <u>have</u> been denied the opportunity to speak and that their stories are crying out to be heard ("Rushdie with W. L. Webb").

"dictionary definition" of an Englishwoman, rather than in terms of the deeper essence of her personhood which is "really real" and which lives in a world of pain and loneliness.

She does, in fact, compare her sense of isolation and their lack of authentic communication to a story about love dying because of a failed translation. The story describes a Parsi woman living in Germany who falls in love with a Turkish man; German is the only language they share. However, in time, the woman's ability to converse in German deteriorates while her lover's ability to converse in German improves. His letters to her become "increasingly poetic" while she becomes increasingly unable to decipher them. "Love dying . . . ," Pamela observes, " . . . because of an inequality of language, what do you think of that?–Love dying. There's a subject for us, eh? Saladin? What do you say?" (SV 183).

Her frustration parallels the Parsi woman's. She cannot express who she really is or what she really feels in a language he can hear. Saladin's ears are prepared only to hear "that voice stinking of Yorkshire pudding, and hearts of oak, that hearty, rubicund voice of ye olde dream-England which he so desperately [wants] to inhabit"–and which Pamela possesses (SV 180). The inequality of the languages each thinks the other speaks (or that each is prepared to hear) results in their love dying.

Saladin's inability to "hear" the real Pamela speak is, of course, due to his own deafness toward the voice that is his "real" self, and he recognizes this. His internal dialogue on the plane to India reveals nicely the struggle between these two voices–the one which has tried for so long to convince himself that he is happy to be married to Pamela and the contrasting voice which knows this is a "paltry fiction". He reflects, "[H]e was thinking how lucky he was to have her, I'm lucky yes I am don't argue I'm the luckiest bastard in the world" (SV 51). The dissenting voice of truth which injects itself mid-sentence is silenced by the voice that desperately wishes that he did love her.

Further, Pamela is, as she recognizes, symbolically "Britannia". Thus, this internal struggle also illustrates Saladin's misgivings about his love affair with England.

The mere existence of the dissenting voice is evidence that within him is a more authentic self which recognizes the falsity of his constructed Englishness, and which wishes to be free from the bondage of living a lie. The failure of his marriage to Pamela is, then, an important indicator of the failure of his translation of self "into English", revealing that his love affair with "Britannia" is crumbling.

This dissenting voice manages to externalize itself on the flight to India. To Saladin's horror, he finds that inexplicably the Bombay accent he has weeded out of his cultivated voice suddenly re-emerges. It is an accent ". . . he [has] so diligently (and so long ago!) unmade. . . . What a nasty surprise! How [has] the past bubbled up, in transmogrified vowels and vocab?" (SV 34). The faltering English accent indicates that the identity it has helped construct is also giving way to a new, but as yet indefinable Saladin. His water-tight English shell is beginning to crack and the Bombay accent is slipping through the fissures. Thus, the voice of the past initiates a reversal of his initial translation "into English", as if to reclaim the text which he left behind when he made his exodus. He abandoned the Bombay lilt and adopted an English drawl after his flight to England. Now, on his flight to India, he finds his English accent abandoning him, and the Bombay lilt performing a reverse translation.

Steiner warns that translators can often be translated by the text. He writes, "[T]he voice of the foreign text [can] come to choke [the translator's] own" (AB 299). This is, in fact, what is happening to Saladin. Working diligently for a quarter of a century to translate a "foreign text" (his Indian self) into English, he is terrified to find that, in fact, the "foreign text" is now translating him. Ironically, he remarks, "I am not myself. . . ." (SV 34). Indeed, he is not, but the question that remains is, of course, who exactly is he?

During his stay in India, his supressed misgivings about the success and authenticity of his attempts at metamorphosis are fully exposed by Zeeny Fakil's ruthless honesty. Her sometimes crass truthfulness is a foil to his half-hearted reservations, and the contrast reveals the extent to which his English world is a teetering house of cards. Through her, both the reader and Saladin are made to see

that along with his collapsing marriage and faltering voice, his acting career in England is further proof of a failed translation rather than a successful one.

Saladin has returned to India, in part, to act with the Prospero Players' production of The Millionairess in Bombay 3. He is met the first night by his old acquaintance Zeeny. She learns from Saladin of his life and career in England. There, he never manages to get a stage job, and so instead, he has made his fortune on the airwaves, virtually monopolizing the voice-over racket. Known as the "Man of a Thousand Voices and a Voice" he and his partner, Mimi Mamoulian, have become legends but ". . . crippled legends, dark stars. The gravitational field of their abilities [draws] work towards them, but they [remain] invisible, shedding their bodies to put on voices" (SV 61).

Saladin's career in the voice-over business metaphorically portrays the falsity and powerlessness of his translated self. A marginal figure, a "dark" star (an Indian immigrant), he wilfully assumes false voices in order to be "heard" by the community in which he desperately seeks acceptance. He has to shed his body for a voice (actually a thousand voices) and must remain invisible in order to remain successful. Yet, despite the fact that he has a thousand voices, not one is authentic. Not one is "embodied"–that is, emanating from and expressing the desires of an authentic self. Without a body behind the voice, his identity is crippled. His "true" self has been "voiced-over" by the English facade he has carefully constructed around it, and this transmuted self, like his transmuted radio voices, rings hollow.

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3 The significance of the fact that Saladin is an actor is easily discernable. He has been "acting" since his first days in England at boarding school where he learned to pull faces, mimic voices and clown in order to gain acceptance. He has become a highly sophisticated "actor" as an adult, so sophisticated in fact that he has convinced himself that the English role he has assumed is not a role but reality. The fact that he is an actor by profession is, then, a rather obvious part of his characterization that amplifies his fundamental character trait.

The same hollowness and masquerading characterizes Saladin's acting career. Unable to work on the stage, Saladin becomes one of the stars of a children's situation comedy, The Aliens Show 4. Though now working in a visual medium, the

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4 Timothy Brennan, in Salman Rushdie and the Third World: Myths of the Nation, discusses briefly Rushdie's use of humor to portray the migrant condition and subvert notions of "racial and ethnic 'other'". He explains that Rushdie's use of Milan Kundera's phrase, "pitting levity against gravity," provides a clue to understanding Rushdie's humor. Brennan writes:

> Staring in the face of misery, and with serious doubts about the future of the human race, Rushdie insists on the comic. At the same time, the phrase echoes the idea that the 'weightlessness' of the migrant sensibilty is universal–both in the sociological sense of the effects postwar immigrations and mass media have had on our collective thinking, and in another sense. He is, in other words, attacking the creation of a racial or ethnic 'other' by suggesting that we are all, in a way, migrants because we have all migrated to earth from our home 'out there' (151).

The applications this has for understanding the humor behind The Aliens Show are manifold. It satirizes the immigrant, Saladin, by poking fun at the lengths to which he will go to shake his "alien" status and become one of the natives. (Saladin portrays a mutant who wishes to be a movie star.) And yet, at the same time, it makes a very pointed remark about the bigoted attitude of the English audience who finds the only acceptable aliens caricatured ones and who refuse to acknowledge the aliens in their midst unless they disguise all tell-tale alien features. Further, The Aliens Show, a smash hit with the British audience, allows the immigrant to subvert the oppressor in a moment of irony. The stars of the show, who are in fact true outsiders–an Indian and a female Jew–have made their fortune exploiting the audience that in "real life" rejects

latest prosthetic make up and computer simulated imagery alters his appearance beyond recognition. The cause of England's unwillingness to look Saladin in the face is made clear by the show's creator, Hal Valance. When explaining to Chamcha why he has been fired from the show, Hal states, "Your profile's wrong, if you follow: with you in the show it's just too damn racial. The Aliens Show is too big an idea to be held back by the racial dimension" (SV 265).

Zeeny, keenly aware of these attitudes, confronts Saladin head-on with his own blindness to them. She states bluntly:

> Such a fool, you, the big star whose face is the wrong colour for their colour TVs, who has to travel to wogland with some two-bit company, playing the babu part on top of it, just to get into a play. They kick you around and still you stay, you love them, bloody slave mentality, I swear, Chamcha (SV 61).

She articulates the incongruence between his adoration for all that is English when England has refused to acknowledge his individuality and personhood because of his color. Ironically, his career has won him a sizeable measure of success in England–he has become a "star" of sorts. But the "he" that British society accepts is not an authentic Saladin at all. His success has been achieved at the expense of his authenticity. He has had to deny himself, hiding behind masks and voices, in order to be able to "find" the self he sought when he came to England as a teen. Thus, though his successful acting career suggests that Saladin's translation of identity appears to have been successful, Zeeny points out that exactly the opposite is true. The fact that he has had to remain invisible behind radio dials only confirms that England has not accepted him, and is not prepared to accept him unless he is "disembodied".

In conclusion, the foundations upon which Saladin has built his transformed personality–his marriage, his reconstructed image and voice, and his career–are

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them. The last laugh, it appears, is had by the oppressed at the oppressor's expense–literally.

crumbling beneath him. His marriage to Pamela, which is in effect his marriage to Britannia, is failing. His transformed voice, representative of his transformed personality, is slipping back into the cadences of its past, and his acting career is revealed as a clear indicator that British society is as reluctant to accept him now as it had been his first day at boarding school. Thus, through each of these areas, Rushdie clearly reveals that Saladin's attempt to transform himself into an Englishman by tenaciously penetrating and embodying English culture, does not produce an authentic identity or guarantee that the culture will itself ingest foreignness.

Having established that Saladin's first attempt at translation is failing and that it is has created a "false" identity, it now becomes pertinent to ask why does his effort fail? Why is his translation essentially a bad one that creates a life Saladin cannot, for much longer, sustain? Steiner, answering this question in terms of a translation of a text, states:

> Translation fails where it does not compensate, where there is no restoration of radical equity. The translator has grasped and/or appropriated less than is there. He traduces through diminution. Or he has chosen to embody and restate fully only one or another aspect of the original, fragmenting, distorting its vital coherence according to his own needs or myopia. Or he has 'betrayed upward', transfiguring the source into something greater than itself. In each case, the imbalance . . . remains unrighted. The translation outweighs the original or is outweighted by it (AB 396, 397).

Saladin, in transforming his identity, is guilty of traducing "through diminution" to the extreme. Not only does he not appropriate into the English translation of himself less than is in the original Indian "text", he rewrites the text to such an extent that the original is altered beyond recognition. In the new English version, only trace elements of the original Indian text can be found. The result is a gross imbalance between the English and Indian narratives which both make up his identity. The English translation outweighs the original. Further, his resistance to Zeeny's urgings to "come home", to

right the imbalance, suggest that he has no intention of compensating or restoring "radical equity" between the two conflicting worlds within himself.

Thus, reasoning from a standpoint of translation theory, his attempt to translate himself into English fails primarily because he refuses to compensate for the imbalance created when he translated himself "into" English. He has "leaned toward" England, confronted its foreignness aggressively, consumed it and embodied it. He becomes heavy-laden with the spoils of his conquest–an English education, an English accent, an English wife, and English money, but he remains, wilfully, off-balance, refusing to acknowledge the submerged Indian text which is now manifesting itself and beginning to translate him.

The text's most anguished depiction of Saladin's refusal to engage in reconciliation and his final break with India occur in the scenes portraying his confrontation with his father. He has come to India, as mentioned earlier, to act with the Prospero Players but also, and more importantly, to re-establish some kind of relationship with his father. However, within minutes of being back in his father's house, the two find themselves in a bitter argument over Changez' relationships with his second wife and his servant, Kasturba. Old hurts resurface, and in a fit of rage, Saladin orders his father to chop down his "birth tree" in the garden, sell the wood and send him the cash.

The birth tree, Saladin had explained to Zeeny, is thought to house one's soul. It is also a "financial investment of a sort". The mature tree, planted for a child at birth, can be cut down by the adult and sold for cash to pay for a special occasion or to give him/her a start in life. Though trumpeting the unsentimentality of this notion, Saladin clearly <u>is</u> affected by the sentimentality of seeing his tree in the garden. He trembles when he first notices it and hides his emotion "behind the neutrality of facts" about its traditions (SV 65). It is, quite evidently, a symbol of the self he has denied for twenty-five years, a symbol of his own being rooted firmly in the past and, more specifically, in the garden of his childhood home. Consequently, when he orders the tree to be cut down, not for a special occasion and certainly not out of financial need,

he symbolically orders his father to cut himself off from his roots, his childhood, and India once and for all.

Significantly, on his last afternoon in the country he receives a package from his father containing a small piece of the tree's wood and the money from its sale–not rupees but sterling. The event signifies that Saladin's soul, thought to be housed in the tree, has been sold for sterling. He has "translated" the last tangible evidence of his rootedness in India into an empty symbol of his English life. The money signifies nothing; it is not to be used to fulfil a need or given in exchange for a meaningful object or event. So, Saladin has traded his soul for emptiness and cut himself off completely and irrevocably from his past.

Saladin' first translation attempt has, then, endeavored to destroy the original text. He moves through the stages of trust, penetration and embodiment of the foreign "other" which, when he begins, is England. But instead of creating an identity marked by "radical equity" between the two worlds which his life has encompassed, he seeks to step cleanly into one and rub out all traces of the other. Yet, the break between worlds is never clean (AB 300). (And here is where speaking of translating "from" one thing "to" another is misleading.) The residue of one language lingers in the other and clearly, the residue of India remains within Saladin and is beginning to bubble to the surface. His English facade will be exploded in the fall from the Bostan, however, and the ensuing transformation of his identity will incorporate the residue, reconciling the various selves he has constructed and discarded over the years to create a patchwork self, but an authentic self. The next part of this chapter's discussion will concern itself with the emergence of Saladin's "other" during the fall and its translating effect on his identity.

After his confrontation with his father and the end of his acting tour, Saladin leaves India, returning to England on the Air India 747 Bostan determined to cling to his disintegrating English life. The jet is hijacked, exploded, and it sends Saladin and Gibreel tumbling 30,000 feet into the English Channel. The novel opens with this "fall", its first lines expressing the recurring theme of the novel, "'To be born again, . . .

first you have to die'" (SV 3).

In the scenes that follow, the paradoxical nature of this proverb foreshadows the transformation Saladin will undergo. The crumbling English identity to which he desperately clings (even falling he keeps his suit primly buttoned and bowler firmly on his head) will have to perish if a new and authentic Saladin is to be born. The transmuting fall will be the crisis which wills the death of his English identity and gives birth to the "other" within him.

Not surprisingly then, Rushdie has saturated these opening pages with images of birth and death. He describes the pyrotechnics of the explosion as a "big bang, followed by falling stars. A universal beginning, a miniature echo of the birth of time . . ." (SV 4). References to places which literally or symbolically engender life, abound. He includes the Himalayas and Everest (symbols for the source of life-giving waters and dwelling place of the creator and sustainer, Shiva (Morgan 61, 115)), birth canals, and seed-pods releasing spores. Saladin is decribed as "going down head first, in the recommended position for babies entering the birth canal". Endless births and metamorphoses are taking place around Gibreel and Saladin: ". . . cloudforms, ceaselessly [metamorphosize], gods into bulls, women into spiders, men into wolves" and "hybrid cloud creatures" press in around them. In short, the sky is the place of change, and it is the place where Saladin's rebirth and metamorphosis into an authentically translated man can and will begin (SV 5).

In the moments preceding the actual crisis when Saladin is possessed by the will to end his false existence and begin again authentically, the narrator raises a series of questions about the fundamental nature of birth. These are, essentially, questions about the nature of translation, and they establish the framework from which to view the transformations that follow. The four questions he asks are: 1)"How does newness come into the world? How is it born?" 2) "Of what fusions, translations, conjoinings is it made?" 3) How does it survive, . . . What compromises, . . . must it make . . .?" 4) Is birth always a fall?" (SV 8).

The entire novel provides answers to these questions in myriad forms. But

upon close examination, the answers can be found within the first few pages of the book.

"How does newness come into the world? How is it born?" The answer can be summed up as being: by the sheer power of the will that acts on belief in the potential of transformation. It is Saladin himself who provides this answer. Bursting out of the clouds over the English Channel and hanging on to Gibreel's legs, he is "gripped by a force so implacable that he [understands] it [is] impossible for him to die". He knows in this moment of crisis that the force overtaking him is, simply, "the will to live, unadulterated, irresistible, pure, . . ." (SV 8, 9). Not only does it infuse him with new life, its power extends its "dominion" to Gibreel to whom Saladin is joined. Commanding Gibreel to fly and sing, the will slows their descent, facilitating a soft landing in the Channel–itself a baptism into their new, transmuted lives.

Translations, transformations, new lives are born, therefore, out of unwavering belief that newness is possible. (Saladin understands it is impossible for him to die. The corollary is that he believes without question that he will live.) Secondly, one actually gives birth to the newness by willing it into existence. As the discussion in Chapter Two indicated, the imagination that first believes in newness engenders nothing until it is infused with the life of the will.

The second question, "Of what fusions, translations, conjoinings is it made?", finds its answer in the image of Gibreel and Saladin conjoined in their descent from the Bostan. As Rushdie asserts in his essay "In Good Faith", newness is made by the fusion of worlds and beings thought to be foreign to each other ("Good Faith" 394). Gibreel and Saladin represent multiple opposites: the sacred and the profane, the Indian and the Anglophile, the angel and the devil, the colonized and the colonizer (Suleri 612), the self and its other. "[E]mbracing head-to-tail" and "tumbling end over end", the two opposing beings fuse (SV 6). Saladin explains that when joined to Gibreel, he has "acquired the quality of cloudiness, becoming metamorphic, hybrid, as if he were growing into the person whose head nested now between his legs . . ." (SV 7). The distinctions between them, like contrasting colors on the surface of a child's

spinning top, appear to blur as they whirl end-over-end until there is no longer any contrast between the two. "[T]here was a fluidity, an indistinctness, at the edges of them,. .", the narrator notes (SV 8). They have become one being, a fusion of opposites, and the will of the one commands the actions of the other. In one sense, therefore, one entity, created by the fusion of antagonists, is reborn into the English Channel. Newness comes into Saladin and Gibreel's world by their fusion, their conjoining, which is a conjoining of opposites. They illustrate graphically Rushdie's apology for The Satanic Verses.

The third question, "How does it survive, extreme and dangerous as it is . . . ?", finds its answer again in Saladin who is, in the end, the only survivor of the Bostan (his will alone gives birth to life) and the only survivor of the novel. How does he survive the fall?: by embracing his other, Gibreel, and by surrendering to the "other" that wills death to "that half-reconstructed affair of mimicry and voices" which was his English self. He welcomes translation, transformation, hybridity. Instead of rejecting Gibreel and the will to live which informs him "that it wanted nothing to do with his [old] pathetic personality", he embraces them both. Unlike Gibreel, who protects at all costs the purity of his being and seeks to confine it within a water-tight definition, Saladin opens himself up to change and compromise in these earliest scenes, understanding that in the ambiguity of translation, in its flexibility and looseness of meaning is its coherence (AB 203). From the beginning, therefore, he illustrates again, Rushdie's assertion that newness comes into the world and survives there by being open to transformation and new influences.

Finally, the answer to the fourth question concerning the nature of birth-by-transformation–"Is birth always a fall?"–reveals itself in the narrator's explanation of Saladin and Gibreel's fall. Addressing the reader as the two plummet through the cloud tunnel, the narrator asks, "Notice anything unusual? Just two brown men, falling hard, nothing so new about that, you may think; climbed too high, got above themselves, flew too close to the sun, is that it? That's not it" (SV 5). Alluding to the story of Daedalus and Icarus as well as to the fall of Satan stories within the Christian

and Islamic traditions (and no doubt countless others), he anticipates the reader's assumption that in this fall scene, just as in the others the reader is familiar with, the fall is a result of hubris, willful disobedience, or vanity and is to be understood as tragic. But, he quickly informs the reader, to make such an assumption is wrong. "That's not it." This fall does not work that way. This is a postmodern version of the fall which subverts the old, authoritative cultural and religious narratives dominating the reader's thinking. Thus, in this creation and fall story, birth is not a fall, the angel is not the survivor, and the devil is the hero. The "fall" is the occasion for newness to be born, the angelic character is will-less and therefore powerless, and the satanic character is the empowered figure. It is the devil who possesses a will fierce enough and a vision imaginative enough to overthrow an old and stagnant life and will into existence a new one.

Rushdie's applause for the devil's mentality which doubts, questions authority, and launches a wilful rebellion if need be, surfaces more emphatically later in the novel, when his voice thinly disguised as the narrator's states,

> [a]ngels are easily pacified; turn them into instruments and they'll play your harpy tune. Human beings are tougher nuts, can doubt anything, even the evidence of their own eyes. . . . angels, they don't have much in the way of a will. To will is to disagree; not to submit; to dissent (SV 93).

It is the mentality of the devil, not the angels, that can bring newness into the world by envisioning a freshness and a freedom outside the confining, decaying walls of tradition. And only the devil-minded possess a will strong enough to give birth to the vision. Is birth always a fall? Quite clearly, the answer is "no."

This heroic devil and the subsequent inversions his enthronement makes (i.e. hell becomes heaven, good becomes evil, disobedience becomes a virtue) finds precedence in Blake's The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. Rushdie has borrowed its inversion of traditional categories of good and evil to answer questions about the birth of newness and its nature ("Good Faith" 403). As Sir Geoffrey Keynes explains in

his commentary on Blake's text, the theme that the creative energies of a rebellious devil are superior to those of a "conventional and conservative Angel" dominates Blake's text. The active will and imaginative vision of the devil enable individuals to bring about personal and social liberation from stagnant and oppressive ideologies. Clearly, Saladin's internal rebellion against his confining English facade is meant to be seen as a personal liberation from the confining fictions of his Englishness and the fiction of Englishness itself.

Newness comes into the world, therefore, through the creative, rebellious power of the will which the devil has come to symbolize. And though the "fall story" in The Satanic Verses may be couched in terms that appear to be conventional, it certainly is not. The fall and devilish rebellion spurred on by the implacable force of Saladin's will are not tragic. They are redemptive events, possessing transformative, renewing, and life-giving powers.

Having answered these four questions about the birth of newness and its nature, it is now necessary to turn to the actual "birth" in these opening pages of Saladin's new self. The "birth" takes place in the critical moment when Saladin finds himself gripped by the "implacable" will to live, and it marks the beginning of his second and authentic translation of identity and his movement through the first two phases of its motion–trust and aggression–as well as his entering into the third stage of incorporation. He describes the event as follows:

> [W]hat had taken him over was the will to live, unadulterated, irresistible, pure, and the first thing it did was to inform him that it wanted nothing to do with his pathetic personality, that half-reconstructed affair of mimcry and voices, it intended to bypass all that, and he found himself surrendering to it, yes, go on, as if he were a bystander in his own mind, in his own body, because it began in the very centre of his body and spread outwards, turning his blood to iron, changing his flesh to steel, except that it also felt like a fist that enveloped him from outside, holding him in a way that was both

unbearably tight and intolerably gentle; until finally it had conquered him totally . . . (SV 9).

The passage describes the birth of a new translation which must begin with a moment of trust in the potential transfer of meaning from one world to the next. Saladin's "yes, go on," is an affirmation of trust. He surrenders to the possibility that this new thing invading him can offer a more authentic existence than his current identity.

The significance of his "yes" to translation here is heightened when contrasted with the firm "no" he gave to Zeeny when she urged the same translation in India. She also had been tempting him to give up his English life of "paltry fictions", but he had rejected all her reclamation efforts. He envisioned the self awaiting him on the other side of his present existence as merely a "dead self, a shadow, a ghost" of the past, and he had no desire to resurrect the dead (SV 58). Finding himself falling toward the English Channel, he still has no evidence that this new life and new self can offer anything meaningful, but this time he trusts that there is something there worth the risk of casting off his "pathetic personality".

The moment of trust must be followed by an active, aggressive penetration of the foreign text. Certainly, the force translating Saladin penetrates his entire being and does so violently. It begins "in the very centre of his body and spread[s] outwards, turning his blood to iron, changing his flesh to steel, . . ." (SV 9). His will to live authentically invades and permeates that which is foreign to it, his English self, and begins transforming it, literally. It changes blood to iron, flesh to steel, transfiguring his being until it has "conquered him totally". A new Saladin has been born.

In the dialectic of embodiment, the translator has been translated. The penetrating force acts on him "as if he were a bystander" in his own body. Having submerged the "other" text and ignored its whispered warnings, he finds he has on his hands a full-scale revolt. The explosion of the jet has blown apart the prison doors of his English facade and the "other" self that has been silenced behind them is released. It floods into his being, permeating it with a vital, translating force, consuming and

translating him.

Saladin, the translator who rendered his Indian text into English, now finds himself penetrated by and embodying that which is "other" to his English self and which wills its destruction. A second translation of identity has begun and Saladin allows himself to be caught up in its motion. The next chapter will focus on the nature of this "other" which has invaded Saladin and which transforms him into a goat. A multi-dimensional representation of liberation and salvation, the goat image will further illustrate the nature of translation and the process of Saladin's transformation of identity.

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Chapter Four

THE GOATMAN: CONFRONTING THE "OTHER"

The last chapter proposed that Saladin moves initially through a false, because incomplete, translation of identity in which he attempts to transform himself into an English self with all the otiose trappings of the role. With the "fall" from the Bostan, however, he begins a second translation cycle which will be an authentic, because complete, translation of identity. The process will result in Saladin's re-valuation and re-adoption of the the "original texts" which he has discarded in England.

Already, as the last chapter demonstrated, he has moved through the first two stages of trust and penetration and has now embodied his "other"–the self that rejects his English self and strives to construct an authentic identity. He remains within this phase for a large portion of the novel; this chapter will deal specifically with the embodiment of his otherness, symbolized by his transformation into a goat.

The embodiment stage requires the translator to incorporate the foreign text into the "native semantic field" within his mind and reincarnate it in a new language. As a model for Saladin's transformation of identity, this stage mandates that Saladin incorporate that which is foreign to him into his present identity, as in fact he does. Undergoing a process of metamorphosis whereby he becomes a goat, he embodies that which is completely other to him, and his English self is transformed by its presence. The changes this "other" brings upon Saladin's identity are manifold. Four ways in which the image of the goat represents these changes will be addressed in this chapter.

First, Saladin's transformation into a goat, by forcing him to confront and accept his "other", becomes a symbol and a means of liberation from his English cocoon. Rejected by the established upper classes and authorities in London, the "Goatman" is cast into the midst of his "own people" and forced to re-enter the struggle of defining himself as an Indian in England.

Second, Saldin's transformation into a satyr indicates a Dionysian element in

his experience of translation, and indeed, the Dionysian aspects of his goathood liberate him from the constricting world of his upper-class English self and provide yet another amplification of the theme "To be born again, . . . first you have to die". Further, a Dionysian cult develops around the image of the "Goatman" that comes to London citizens in their dreams.

Third, Saladin's goatishness suggests the goat-demons of the Old Testament and the scapegoat sent into the wilderness as part of the Day of Atonement ceremony. Saladin in fact becomes a scapegoat for the London community he inhabits, but more importantly, he becomes a scapegoat in that the moment in which he takes his "sins" upon his head, he also redeems himself. By embodying the paradox of being both a sinful creature and a redeemer, of being both self and that which is completely other to it, the scapegoat, Saladin, becomes an image of translation. René Girard's book, The Scapegoat, will be used to define the scapegoat mechanism that operates within the novel.

Fourth, the goat perhaps most obviously reveals Saladin to be an incarnation of the devil. But he is a revolutionary devil possessing creative, transformative energies like the Blakean devil of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, who, as Chapter Three established, Rushdie has drawn upon to create Saladin's "demonic" nature.

Saladin's transformation into a goat, beginning immediately after his fall from the Bostan forces him to come to terms quite quickly with the fact that he is becoming something completely foreign to himself and to those who had populated his English world. Understandably, the metamorphosis produces an internal crisis which victimization at the hands of the immigration officers only heightens. The full impact of his change begins to dawn on him when he hears them sneer, "'Animal, . . . Can't expect animals to observe civilized standards,'" looks down and finds that even his "natural processes" have become "goatish" and he is surrounded by his own excrement (SV 159).

> The humiliation of it! He was–had gone to some lengths to become–a sophisticated man! Such degradations might be all very well for riff-raff

from villages in Sylhet or the bicycle-repair shops of Gujranwala, but he was cut from different cloth! (SV 159).

The passage illustrates Saladin's first sense of the contrast between the being he is and the being he was, or thought he was. Over the last twenty-five years, he has worked to translate himself out of the crudity he clearly associates with India, only to find that he has suddenly become a rather foul, repulsive beast. The "natural man" is transmitting itself outside his skin, stripping away his upper-class veneer and significantly, Saladin attributes the beastliness to a manifestation of his nature 1. He admits:

> We strive for the heights but our natures betray us; clowns in search of crowns. The bitterness overcame him. Once I was lighter, happier, warm. Now the black water is in my veins (SV 170).

His transformation into a goat forces a dramatic revelation through which Saladin sees the manifestation of an aspect of his nature that he had thought concealed for good. The crisis of metamorphosis forces him into a state where he is himself but not himself. Becoming something shocking and repulsive even to himself, he has come upon the terrifying moment when one sees one's other. It is the moment of becoming alien to oneself 2.

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1 Timothy Brennan, in Salman Rushdie and the Third World: Myths of the Nation, offers an interpretation of the goat image which illuminates Rushdie's obvious political and social concerns in the novel. He explains that Rushdie's portrayal of Saladin as a goat is a scathing attack on the brutal racism of the immigration authorities in England. Because Saladin is "'of the tinted persuasion'", he is, in the eyes of the authorities who arrest him, fair game for all of the racial slurs "levelled at the 'black beasts' in their midst: they are brutish, oversexed, unclean, . . ." (156).

2 As M. Keith Booker points out in "Beauty and the Beast: Dualism as Despotism in the Fiction of Salman Rushdie," Rushdie has borrowed the idea of Saladin's transformation from Apuleius' The Golden Ass, in which Lucius undergoes a

This sense of alienation provokes an intense exercise in self-reflection as he attempts to explain to himself the inexplicable transformation which has taken place. Further, it gives rise to questions of sin, virtue, punishment and desert. Paul Ricoeur in The Symbolism of Evil describes this very human reaction in terms of the confessional language of a believer who has experienced sin and in response creates a language of interrogation:

> [T]he experience of which the believer makes avowal in the confession of sins creates a language for itself by its very strangeness; the experience of being oneself but alienated from oneself gets transcribed immediately on the plane of language in the mode of interrogation. Sin, as alienation from oneself, is an experience even more astonishing, disconcerting, and scandalous, perhaps, than the spectacle of nature, and for this reason it is the richest source of interrogative thought. In the oldest Babylonian psalters the believer asks: "How long, O Lord? What god have I sinned against? What sin have I committed?" Sin

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metamorphosis into an ass and, like Saladin, suffers abuse and adversity and is later changed back into a human (980). He also notes that Bakhtin, in The Dialogic Imagination, discusses the use of metamorphosis as a "shorthand" in folklore for describing pivotal moments in a person's life (980, 981). Bakhtin writes,

> [m]etamorphosis serves as the basis for a method of portraying the whole of an individual's life in its more important moments of crisis: for showing how an individual becomes other than what he was. . . . There is no evolution in the strict sense of the word; what we get, rather, is crisis and rebirth" (Bakhtin 115).

Saladin is at such a moment of crisis. With the fall from the Bostan, his will has seized and invaded him, bringing about instantaneously his mutation that puts to death his old self. Reborn is a dark, fierce will for an authentic identity which is "other than what he was"; it has come upon him more by "revolution than evolution" (SV 418).

makes me incomprehensible to myself: God is hidden; the course of things no longer has meaning. . . . Sin is perhaps the most important of the occasions for questioning (8).

Likewise, Saladin's alienation from himself leads him to surmise,

I am the incarnation of evil, he thought. He had to face it. However it had happened, it could not be denied. I am no longer myself, or not only. I am the embodiment of wrong, of what-we-hate, of sin (SV 256).

For if sin is, as Ricoeur suggests, alienation from oneself, then Saladin has "sinned" in the act of alienating himself from the self (or selves) he discarded in India. He finds that he now incarnates this alienated self, this sin.

The "sinful" state which Saladin now inhabits prompts self-examination and questioning. His confrontation with the "other" prompts him to create a language of interrogation. The transformation it brings "gets transcribed immediately on the plane of language" as he tries to cope with and give expression to the transformation of his world. He asks,

Why? Why me?

What evil had he done–what vile thing could he, would he do?

For what was he–he couldn't avoid the notion–being punished?

And, come to that, by whom? (SV 256).

The language of interrogation develops out of the search for comprehensibility and the need to find expression for the changes, to make verbal sense out of nonsense. Consequently, he engages in a frantic investigation, a careful questioning and examination of every minutia of motive and action, in hopes of discovering a reason for the dilemma and making sense of it. Inheriting a sense that a personal or communal crisis is divine retribution for something "sinful" one has done knowingly or unknowingly, he embarks on an elaborate attempt at self-vindication.

Had he not pursued his own idea of the good, sought to become that which he most admired, dedicated himself with a will bordering on obsession to the conquest of Englishness? Had he not worked hard,

> avoided trouble, striven to become new? Assiduity, fastidiousness, moderation, restaint, self-reliance, probity, family life: what did these add up to if not a moral code?. . . Could it be, in this inverted age, that he was being victimized by–the fates, he agreed with himself to call the persecuting agency–precisely because of his pursuit of 'the good'? (SV 256-57).

No doubt the final question is rhetorical. In fact, the obviousness of its answer makes his attempt at self-justification comical. Of course his obsessive pursuit of a 'good' which denies his true self and smacks of constraint and unimaginativeness is his "sin." And in the "inverted" postmodern world Rushdie has created, this fictional English self characterized by blind allegiance to tradition and orthodoxy, is certainly a likely candidate for divine retribution 3. By whom is he being punished? By the "god" of authorship, thinly disguised as a satanic narrator, who utilizes the folkloric concept of metamorphosis to portray his character facing his other (Booker 980).

Steiner, in After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation, points out that a sense of alienation is essential to the process of shaping the identity of texts in translation. He writes:

> To experience difference, to feel the characteristic resistance and 'materiality' of that which differs, is to re-experience identity. One's own space is mapped by what lies outside; it derives coherence, tactile

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3 Rushdie, obviously familiar with the writings of Nietzsche, appears, as the author and therefore agent of divine retribution, to have adopted Neitzsche's contempt for the virtues of his time. In Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche asserts that the "man of tomorrow" must find himself in opposition to the "ideal of the day", and that the "taste and virtue of the time weaken and thin out the will" (Neitzsche 444, 445). The "god" of The Satanic Verses is of a like mind. Saladin's aspiration to the virtues of his time is contemptible in the deity's eyes and worthy of retribution; he is "saved" only through his "fall".

configuration, from the pressure of the external. 'Otherness,' particularly when it has the wealth and penetration of language, compels 'presentness' to stand clear.

Working at the point of maximal exposure to embodied difference, the translator is forced to realize, to make visible, the perimeters, either spacious or confined, of his own tongue, of his own culture, of his own reserves of sensibility and intellect (AB 362-363).

Saladin, as a goat, exists (quite literally) in the state of maximal exposure to the otherness that is foreign to his Englishness. But as Steiner asserts, the otherness of Saladin's goatishness is crucial to his translation of identity. It allows him to question and redefine who he was and who he is becoming. Thus, the "humiliation" of goathood, whether divinely inspired retribution or a cruel prank played by an unknown "persecuting agency", facilitates renewal. In The Flutes of Dionysus, Robert Stock, attempting to justify the "persecuting agency", Yahweh, that allows Job to suffer, explains:

> The divine epiphany is transporting, terrifying, but it remains for Job himself to respond and be transformed. His humiliation ("I abhor myself") proceeds from self-understanding and paves the way for renewal; it is thus the pre-condition for growth (66).

Likewise, it remains for Saladin himself to respond to his otherness and be transformed.

Submission to the "other" means burying the world of his past, and Saladin quickly discovers his status as a goat leaves him no choice but to discard it. He returns to London to find he has become an outcast in the upper-class society he formerly inhabited, he has lost his wife to a college chum, and he has lost his job because he is, his producer informs him, "too damn racial" to ensure The Aliens Show's success (SV 265). All of these things lead him to ask,

> Why did rebirth, the second chance granted to Gibreel Farishta and himself, feel so much, in his case, like a perpetual ending? He had been

> reborn into the knowledge of death; and the inescapability of change, of things-never-the-same, of no-way-back, made him afraid. When you lose the past you're naked in front of contemptuous Azreel, the death angel (SV 260).

Becoming a goat forces him out of his place of privilege and shoves him into the midst of a community in London from whom he has spent a lifetime disassociating himself. Born into the knowledge of death, he finds that the cradle of his rebirth is the Shaandaar Café, a cramped Indian restaurant in a poor London burrough operated by "his people", fellow Indian immigrants. As Muhammad Sufyan, owner of the café says, "'Where else would you go to heal your disfigurements and recover your normal health? Where else but here, with us, among your own people, your own kind?'" (SV 253). Indeed, his "own kind" nurture Saladin's reborn self and begin to ween his identity away from established London society, and they encourage his re-association with India by allowing him to re-inhabit it and re-ingest it under their roof.

The Shaandaar Cafe houses an immigrant family whose various members struggle to define themselves as Indians in England. Symbolically, it "houses" their struggle; hence when Saladin moves in, he re-inhabits the struggle to define himself in England. "Born" (or borne) into England the first time as an adolescent, he fought to define himself in entirely English terms. "Born" into England a second time, he eats Indian food, lives in an Indian home, learns of the immigrant struggle, and thus, gradually re-inhabits the plight of his "own people" and moves toward becoming one of them again.

His very presence under the roof of the Shaandaar he owes to the kindness of another one of "his kind"–his college chum, Jumpy Joshi who comes to Saladin's rescue and defense, convincing the Sufyans to allow him to live in the attic free of charge. Jumpi opens the door to "India" for Saladin and to the journey of redefining his identity in terms of it.

The residents of the "Shaandaar B and B" meet Saladin's monstrosity with admiration and curiosity rather than with the brutality it had provoked from the

"natives" in London, and through the gifts of each member of the household, he moves toward the moment when he will accept his "other" and release his English self.

Mrs. Sufyan nourishes him on her Indian delicacies. Saladin's initial rejection of the "filthy foreign food" indicates that he regards the food as a polluting influence. It represents a foreign world, specifically India, which he has labored to purge from his system. Consequently, the moment when he finally accepts the food signifies a crucial moment in which he symbolically re-ingests India. It becomes a sacramental intake of foreign-ness through which he incorporates India into his being.

Further, from his attic room, he appropriates through understanding the struggle of fellow immigrants less privileged than he. Mishal and Anahita, take him into their confidence and reveal to him tales of the "mythological battlefield" outside his window on which "his own people," and London's other minorities fight racial and political wars.

> From [Mishal] Chamcha learned the fable of the new Kurus and Pandavas, the white racists and black 'self-help' or vigilante posses . . . . under the railway bridge, the National Front used to do battle with the fearless radicals of the Socialist Workers Party . . ." (SV 283).

In the midst of his own people, then, he allows himself for the first time to be educated about the plight of fellow Indians and minorities. The world he has hidden from by living behind the walls of his Notting Hill mansion (itself a exile within exile, a place of privilege in a burrow snubbed by proper London) comes into full view. Ironically, at the Shaandaar, he is freed from this exile and liberated among an exiled people.

The culminating point of his stay which illustrates his full and final acceptance of his "other" is his response to a conversaton with Muhammad Sufyan about theories of metamorphosis. Muhammad, the café owner, tries to comfort Saladin his first night there by digging through texts of Ovid, Lucretius, Darwin and Lamarck hoping to find the cause of his sudden transformation (SV 251). Narrowing the options to two theories of metamorphosis, Lucretius' and Ovid's, he presents Saladin with their

different answers to the "'[q]uestion of mutability of the essence of self, . . ." (SV 276). Lucretius' theory, he tells Saladin, states:

> 'Whatever by its changing goes out of its frontiers,'–that is, bursts its banks,–or maybe, breaks out of its limitations,–so to speak, disregards its own rules, but that is too free, . . . 'that thing,' at any rate Lucretius holds, 'by doing so brings immediate death to its old self' (SV 276).

Ovid, on the other hand, postulates that although the outward form may vary, the soul stays the same. It is immutable. These two options prompt Saladin, in a transitional moment of self-understanding, to conclude:

> He chose Lucretius over Ovid. The inconstant soul, the mutability of everything, das Ich, every last speck. A being going through life can become so other to himself as to <u>be another</u>, discrete, severed from history. . . . life just happens to you: like an accident. No: it happens to you as a result of your condition. Not choice, but–at best–process, and, at worst, shocking, total change. Newness: he had sought a different kind, but this was what he got.
>
> Bitterness, too, and hatred, all these coarse things. He would enter into his new self; he would be what he had become: loud, stenchy, hideous, outsize, grotesque, inhuman, powerful. . . . <u>I am</u>, he accepted, <u>*that I am*</u> (SV 288-289).

In choosing Lucretius, he has chosen to believe that "some demonic and irreversible mutation is taking place in [his] inmost depths, . . ." (SV 277). In other words, he has chosen to believe that newness is manifesting itself and creating an original self, a hybrid, something neither English nor Indian. He calls the force "demonic", but of course in <u>The Satanic Verses</u> that which is "demonic" is to be considered "daemonic"–an apparently supernatural force that inspires, a "good genius" (Chambers 324). It has taken possession of Saladin and willed a revolution within him. Its first act in creating a new identity has been transforming him into a goat. Significantly, he yields to it's work in him, submitting to the humiliation of becoming his "other." That which is

hideous and foreign to him he nevertheless embraces as his own and in so doing, he breaks out of the limitations of his old self.

In sum, Rushdie uses Saladin's metamorphosis to illustrate again the theme "To be born again, first you have to die" and to dramatize the translation of character identity. Saladin asks "Why does rebirth feel so much like a perpetual ending?" Rushdie answers, because it must. The death of Saladin's old English self, a process which begins with his "fall" from the Bostan, paves the way for the rebirth of Salahuddin. But first the "dark" being he has white-washed with English sophistication must be embraced. Doing so, he becomes his "other" and is cast into the immigrant world. There, he re-inhabits the struggle of being an Indian in England, and this time allows himself to accept his status as an alien. Saying "yes" to his other, he is subsequently able to say eventually to his English wife, colleague, producer, and friend, "The hell with you all" (SV 274).

The goat image, in addition to allowing Rushdie to portray Saladin's confrontation with his "other", reveals the liberating aspect of his transformation by symbolically associating him with Dionysus, the god of liberation. Saladin's English self is marked by "[a]ssiduity, fastidiousness, moderation, restraint, self-reliance, probity, family life" (SV 257). The metamorphosis that causes him to burst out of this constricting life modulated by temperance and tradition is therefore, one that is characteristically Dionysian. As the frenzied maenads associated with the cult of Dionysus symbolize, the ecstasy the god provokes liberates Bacchants from the "conventions of daily life" (Ox. Cl. Dict. 528) and the epiphany of the god opens "the depths of reality" allowing "the elemental forms of everything that is creative, everything that is destructive" to emerge (Otto 95). In form and spirit, therefore, his transformation is characteristically Dionysian.

The "Goatman" Saladin becomes and Dionysus share fundamental identifying characteristics. The connection between Dionysus and goats has been well established. Tragedy, the very term coming from the Greek word tragodoi meaning a chorus impersonating goats, dancing around a sacrificed goat or dancing for a goat

prize, has its origins in rustic dramas associated with the cult of Dionysus (Harvey 434). Greek mythology also indicates that Dionysus often assumed the form of a goat (Otto 168). Further, though the god is best known as a god of fertility, he is often associated with death and the underworld. Dionysiac myths often decorate Greek sarcophagi (Ox. Cl. Dict. 289), and Heraclites referred to Dionysus as synonymous with Hades: "'Hades and Dionysus, for whom they go mad and rage, are one and the same'", he writes (Otto 116). Additionally, Dionysus is described as the god "twice-born." He was rescued by his father, Zeus, while his mortal mother, Semele, burned in the "holocaust of the lightning of her heavenly bridegroom" (Otto 65). Zeus then sewed the young Dionysus into his thigh and when the time had come, he brought his son into the world (Otto 65).

The similarities between Saladin and Dionysus are clear. Both take the form of a goat. Both are believed to be associated with or coming from Hell. Both are "twice-born." But the most striking similarities, and those most important to a discussion of translation, are those concerning their essence.

The essence of Dionysus is liberation and transformation. As Walter Otto states in Dionysus Myth and Cult, "Dionysus is, after all, given the highly significant name of 'liberator' . . . (97). When the god comes among his followers,

> [e]verything has been transformed. . . . the innocent picture of a well-ordered routine world has been shattered by [his] coming, ... Everything that has been locked up is released. The alien and hostile unite in miraculous harmony. Age-old laws have suddenly lost their power, and even the dimensions of time and space are no longer valid (Otto 95-96).

The transformation Dionysus brings has unmistakable similarities to Saladin's transformation. His metamorphosis shatters the harmony, the order, the natural laws of his world. A man becomes a goat. The internal self which has been locked up is released into the external world causing the self to "[go] out of its frontiers, . . . burst its banks, . . ." and bring immediate death to the old self (SV 276). On Saladin's

prelapsarian flight to India, he had dreamed of man wearing a glass skin. The dream man quite obviously represents Saladin trapped inside the prison of a delicate English veneer (SV 34). His susbsequent Dionysian transformation after his return flight liberates him from the " . . . prison of his skin" and an existence characterized by Apollonian qualities: moderation, reason, and the highest standard of civilization (Ox. Cl. Dict. 68).

Further, the liberation that comes with the madness of Dionysus takes man back to primal origins and unites celebrants once again with nature (Otto 179). Similarly, the liberation of Saladin from the prison of his English veneer takes him back to his "primal origins", so to speak, and reunites him with the "natural elements" from which he came. In a goat's skin, he returns to the people and culture of his origin at the Shaandaar Cafe.

Describing the revolutionary liberation that occurs when the self is radically redefined, Arthur Evans, author of The God of Ecstasy: Sex Roles and the Madness of Dionysus, writes:

> To break through the old self and to open up to the contingency and vulnerability of real growth, to take a decisive step into the risky formlessness of the re-creation of self–such is a process of revolutionary ecstasy: revolutionary, because transcending every external authority's definition; ecstatic, because transcending ourselves (192).

Evans describes precisely the liberation Saladin's goathood brings about. Through his transformation, Saladin is forced to step into "the risky formlessness of the re-creation of self", and in so doing, he participates in an ecstatic liberation from the confines of his old identity. The transformation defies the "authority" of conventional notions of otherness and "transcends" the limitations of his English identity.

The essence of Dionysus is also confrontation. Otto describes this quality when discussing the use of a ceremonial mask in the rites of Dionysus. Unlike most representations of gods on vases, his face is not in profile. Instead, it peers out directly toward the viewer. He explains:

> Dionysus was presented in the mask because he was known as the god of confrontation. It is the god of the most immediate presence who looks at us so penetratingly from the vase painting. Because it is his nature to appear suddenly and with overwhelming might before mankind, the mask serves as his symbol and his incarnation. . . . it acts as the strongest symbol of his presence. . . . here there is nothing but encounter, from which there is no withdrawal–an immovable, spell-binding antipode (90).

His explanation implies that the mask confronts worshippers with the "other". Unable to escape from its presence, celebrants are forced to encounter a being who reveals a world alien to their conventional, "normal" one. Otto adds in his conclusion, "The wearer of the mask is seized by the sublimity and dignity of those who are no more. He is himself and yet someone else" (210).

The confrontational nature of Dionysus mirrors Saladin's confrontation with his "other". Like the Bacchant, Saladin has been possessed by an inexplicable force during "the fall" which shows him the impotence his "half-reconstructed affair of mimicry and voices" (SV 9). He finds he is himself yet something ". . . so other to himself as to <u>be another</u>, . . ." (SV 288). Playing the role of both god and worshipper, he "encounters" a being (by becoming that being) who reveals to him a world alien to his English sensibilities.

The third essence of Dionysus is that of paradox and duality. He is both the "'god of many joys', . . . the 'bestower of riches,'. . . the 'benefactor'" and yet also "'render of men,'. . . 'the eater of raw flesh,'. . . 'who delights in the sword and bloodshed'" (Otto 113). Though his festivals celebrate fertility and life, they are the origin of the tragic drama which through spectacle reveals the horror of the gods who blind men and drive them toward their destruction (Harvey 434). In other words, he is both good and evil, both savior and destroyer. His connection with both fertility and death rituals further demonstates his dual nature (Otto 115-8). How could one god be both? Otto explains that Dionysus is the god who has hit upon a "cosmic

enigma–the mystery of life which is self-generating, self-creating" (Otto 136). Dionysus symbolizes the paradoxical moment of "madness" when any new creation springs to life, and ". . . death and life meet in an embrace. . . . as life engenders itself anew, the wall which separates it from death is momentarily destroyed" (Otto 136-7). The process is one inherent to any creative act. Chaos dies to order. A seed dies to a flower. Otto elaborates further on this theme stating,

> everything alive, which seethes and glows, resolves the schism between itself and its opposite and has already absorbed this spirit in its desire. Thus all earthly powers are united in the god: the generating, nourishing, intoxicating rapture; the life-giving inexhaustibility; and the tearing pain, the deathly pallor, the speechless night of having been (140-1).

Dionysus is the god who has hit upon the "cosmic enigma" which Rushdie has chosen as his theme–"To be born again, first you have to die", and Saladin is The Satanic Verses' character who participates in this mystery by undergoing a Dionysian-like transformation. The god translates death into life; Saladin, by doing the same, becomes a translated man 4.

The Dionysian spirit which characterizes Saladin's metamorphosis infects the members of London's oppressed classes, and within their ranks there grows a

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4 Brennan, in Salman Rushdie and the Third World: Myths of the Nation, points out, importantly, that the figure of the goat is significant to understanding Saladin as a character portraying the victims of racial abuse in that it suggests he is a tragic figure. As mentioned in the text, the word tragedy comes from tragodoi "meaning probably a chorus who personated goats, or danced either for a goat (tragos) as prize or around a sacrificed goat" (Harvey 434). Indeed, there can be little doubt that Rushdie wishes to portray the mistreatment he suffers as tragic, but in terms of a discussion of character, Saladin is undoubtably the comic figure of The Satanic Verses, in all senses of the word.

Dionysian-like cult which "worships" the "Goatman". Though the practices of the "cult" are viewed by the oppressors, the police and white upper-classes, as "devil-worship", the movement has peculiarly Dionysian elements.

First, the Goatman appears in people's sleep, but becomes such a disturbing part of London's collective experience that ". . . everyone, black brown white, [has] started thinking of the dream-figure as real, as a being who [has] crossed the frontier, evading the normal controls, and [is] now roaming loose about the city" (SV 288). Manifesting himself in a similarly engimatic way, Dionysus, represented in the mask was both present and absent, real and unreal. For the mask

> has no reverse side–'Spirits have no back,'. . . It is the symbol and the manifestation of that which is simultaneously there and not there: that which is excruciatingly near, that which is completely absent–both in one reality (Otto 91).

Like Dionysus, the dream-goat is both present and absent. He exists in the dark, uncontrollable, nocturnal world of dreams but not in the daylight of the "real" world. Nonetheless, his presence is felt there; he has crossed the frontier between sleep and wakefulness. Like the epiphany of a god, he has broken free of "normal controls" and manifested himself mysteriously in the midst of London.

Second, the Goatman becomes a symbol of liberation from the oppression of the middle and upper-class whites for those whom Hal Valance described as of the "tinted persuasion" (SV 286). In response to the Goatman, "[N]octurnal browns-and-blacks found themselves cheering,. . . . he was a defiance and a warning" (SV 286). Mishal elaborates, saying "'It's an image white society has rejected for so long that we can really take it, . . . reclaim it and make it our own'" (SV 287). Like Dionysus, he becomes a symbol of deliverance from the oppression of white society. With the god's coming "All tradition, all order must be shattered" (Otto 78). The Goatman instills in the community the same hope for an end to oppression inflicted by classes legitimized by tradition.

Further, the anticipation of liberation provokes the Goatman's followers into a

maddened capitalistic and political frenzy. Asian shops begin to stock buttons, T-shirts, patches, and badges depicting him. "The symbol of the Goatman, his fist raised in might, began to crop up on banners at political demonstrations, . . . ;" (SV 286). "The kids in the Street started wearing rubber devil-horns on their heads . . . " (SV 286). These tangible manifestations parallel those of Dionysian celebrations. The racial minorities of London, like the worshippers of Dionysus, wear masks and horns in imitation of the "god" they have chosen as a symbol of liberation (Otto 88, 134). Further, the political banners crowned with the image of the Goatman imitate the thyrsus used in the rites of Dionysus to herald his coming and portray his presence among followers (Otto 96).

Finally, the dream-devil is, like Dionysus, a figure of paradox signifying both liberation and destruction. The narrator of The Satanic Verses explains:

> While non-tint neo-Georgians dreamed of a sulphurous enemy crushing their perfectly restored residences beneath his smoking heel, nocturnal browns-and-blacks found themselves cheering, in their sleep, this what-else-after-all-but-black-man, maybe a little twisted up by fate class race history [sic], all that, but getting off his behind, bad and mad, to kick a little ass (SV 286).

Thus, those who must, at all costs, protect order, authority, and stability, fear the power of this image to destroy their world. For those who have everything to gain from the fall of the old order, the Goatman is a powerful figure of liberation.

Dionysus and the devilish Goatman. Perhaps they are one and the same figure, as Walter Otto suggests (116). Certainly they are one and the same in spirit as portrayed in The Satanic Verses.

Saladin's metamorphosis into a goat expresses the changes made in his identity not only by suggesting that he has become "other", and a Dionysian "other", but that he has also become a scapegoat.

The biblical source for the scapegoat is found in Leviticus 16: 20-22. In conjunction with the rites for the Day of Atonement, a live goat was to be brought

forward where the priest would lay his hands on the goat's head transferring onto it "all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites–all their sins . . ." Then the goat would be sent out into the desert by a "man appointed for the task. The goat will carry on itself all [the Israelites] sins to a solitary place; and the man shall release it into the desert" (Holy Bible). Interestingly, as Stock explains in The Flutes of Dionysus,

> [w]hat the AV [Authorized Version] translates as "scapegoat" is "Azazel," a place-name connected with an evil spirit fond of the desert, into whose wilderness haunt a goat is posted as part of a communal exorcism; Azazel was possibly tangled up with worship of Dionysus. . . ." (60).

The Israelites demonized all "primordial, pagan nature gods" and certainly Dionysus fits this category. Further, the desert was frequently referred to as the place where "goat-demons" live and to whom "blasphemous sacrifices are made" by "faithless priests" (see Leviticus 17:7 and Deuteronomy 32:17). The goat-demons inhabited "the wilderness" and also "the man-made wastes of disused Babylon . . ." (Stock 60).

The implications of this for understanding Saladin's position as a goat are two-fold. First, Saladin can be seen as a goat-demon banished to the wilderness. Azazel, a primordial pagan nature god, was a forbidden god in the Israelite community. Immigration of his cult and his presence within the community was guarded against at all costs. Consequently, as Stock suggests, the pagan nature god was demonized (that is, reduced to a strictly evil nature) and banished to the desert regions (60).

Similarly, England violently resists Saladin's migration into the country. The immigration officers physically and verbally abuse him and recognized classes and authorities in "proper" London do not tolerate his presence. He is "demonized." Classified as an undesirable by the immigration officers, the administrators of the detention center redefine him as "evil". An asylum-mate explains, "'[t]hey describe us,'. . .'That's all. They have the power of description, and we succumb to the pictures they construct" (SV 168). Transformed by a hostile community into a demon, he has become the "embodiment of wrong, of what-we-hate, of sin" (SV 256). And therefore,

Saladin the goat-demon is exiled into the wilderness, "the man-made wastes of disused Babylon," which are, of course, the slums of "Babylondon", a term Rushdie frequently uses for London. Banished to the wastelands of the city by its "respectable" classes, he inhabits the land of the exiled immigrant. It is, naturally, the place where the Sufyans live. His demonization translates him out of the realms of upper-class London and places him squarely in the midst of the outcasts and undesirables.

The second implication of the Hebrew goat-image is that Saladin becomes a scapegoat who brings about his own "redemption", and around and upon him operate the "scapegoat mechanism" described in René Girard's book, The Scapegoat. Girard explains that in moments of societal crisis when order is disrupted and chaos levels out distinctions and structures within a culture, a scapegoat mechanism begins to operate. Members of the community begin looking for an agent upon whom they can pin the blame for the turmoil.

The scapegoat mechanism has four elements: 1) a social and cultural crisis with loss of distinction between class, race, authority 2) crimes that disrupt society and that are attributed to the scapegoat, 3) a victim (a scapegoat) who has the marks of a victim, and 4) actual violence done to the scapegoat to purge the community of the disruptive influence (Girard 12-24).

Girard goes on to compile a profile of a scapegoat. He is usually an outsider in the community, and his origin is ambiguous or unknown. He is a marginal figure; either poor and/or a member of a cultural, religious, or racial minority or he is an exclusive and privileged insider, one of the elite (17-18). Also, he is often physically abnormal, and in the eyes of the persecutor, ". . . physical monstrosity cannot be separated from moral monstrosity. The stereotypes merge, . . . to form the mythological monsters" (18, 34). Furthermore, he is a paradoxical figure. The community imagines him as the cause of all destruction and chaos, and yet his victimization is the only means of restoring order. By violence done to the scapegoat, peace will return. Girard describes it this way:

There is only one person responsible for everything, one who is

absolutely responsible, and he will be responsible for the cure because he is already responsible for the sickness (43).

Girard makes the point that the scapegoat does not cure illness or any other natural crisis that may affect a community. But he gives the impression of ending the crisis ". . . by eliminating all the interpersonal repercussions in the concentration of all evildoing in the person of one victim" (43). Therefore, Girard explains, the scapegoat only works when the crisis has shattered interpersonal relationships (43).

In cultures where myths of gods have become dualistic, one god purely good and the other purely evil, the first three elements of the scapegoat mechanism are attributed to the evil god. The fourth, actually doing violence to the source of evil, is reserved for the hero, the good god (Girard 81-82). The "gods" involved in the plot of The Satanic Verses (Saladin/Satan and Gibreel/Gabriel) are constructs of a society which has created a god purely good and a god purely evil. Of course, Rushdie satirizes this rigid dualism throughout the book, but it is important to note that it is the condition from which he works and which is the backdrop for the scapegoat mechanism that operates within the narrative world.

The scapegoat mechanism operating around and upon Saladin allows him to become his own scapegoat, bringing about his own "redemption" by purging himself of the "sin" of alienation from himself 5. As an image that reveals the paradox surrounding his change and renewal, death and rebirth, it becomes an image of translation.

Saladin has been living with the Sufyan family within which a crisis, symptomatic of those which trigger the scapegoat mechanism, has evolved. Hind,

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5 Saladin also becomes a scapegoat for Hind Sufyan and the London police department, each trying desperately to resolve a crisis in their midst. A more detailed discussion of how the scapegoat mechanism operates in these two instances and how it relates to the overall theme of translation can be found in the appendix to this chapter.

having lost her identity and authority within the family in the process of migrating years ago to London, feels her world collapsing. The predictability of circumstances and certainty of place she felt in India has been destroyed. In short, the ordering principles of her world have been dissolved. The crisis reaches a fever pitch when she finds out Mishal and Hanif have been having an affair, and she is looking for a scapegoat. She finds one in Saladin, a marginal outsider who is physically (and therefore morally) disfigured, and whom she now blames for the crisis. All the elements of the scapegoat mechanism are present therefore, except one. Violence still remains to be done to the scapegoat. Hind begs her husband to banish the goat to the "wilderness"–she wants Saladin evicted–but in fact, Saladin has already decided to leave. In the middle of the family crisis, he thunders down from the attic in a cloud of sulphurous smoke and announces, "'I am considering action,'. . . 'There is a person I wish to find'" (SV 291). Having learned that Gibreel is in town making a come-back and denying that he was on the Bostan, Saladin decides to track him down. While Saladin has suffered pathetically, Gibreel has become London's darling. The injustice of it leaves Saladin "looking for someone to blame. He, too, dream[s]; and in his dreams, a shape, a face, [is] floating closer, ghostly still, . . ." (SV 289). It is Gibreel's.

That night, bedding down in the basement of the Club Hot Wax, he fixes his thoughts on revenge and on the one face–Gibreel's–focused in his mind's eye. "Mister Perfecto, portrayer of gods, ... Who should the Devil blame but the Archangel, Gibreel?" (SV 294). In the moment when pure hate is concentrated on this face, Saladin experiences a painful and violent reverse transformation. He is "humanized–is there any option but to conclude?–by the fearsome concentration of his hate" (SV 294).

As established earlier, in dualistic myths where one god is purely evil and the other purely good, the good god performs the act of violence on the scapegoat. In a curious sense, the good god, "Mr. Perfecto" does indeed bring a violent and painful death to the goat, Saladin. The face of "Mister Perfecto" imagined powerfully in Saladin's mind's eye, summons the transforming fierceness of hate and performs a

reverse transformation which ends the monster's physical dominion over Saladin.

There is another way of reading the scene, however. Rushdie has created a fictional world that inverts and fuses the categories of good and evil. It is clear that although Saladin has become an avatar of the devil, he is no more "evil" than when he was human. In fact, he is described as ". . . the most limp and passive of– . . . satyrs." (SV 244). This devil is not evil. Therefore, it could be concluded that in a similar but opposite inversion, the "evil" goat-monster (who is not evil) is put to death by the "hero" hate (which is not heroic). In other words, because hate brings about the death of the monster, it can be personified and used to play the role of the good god in the scapegoat model. Understood this way, human hate–aggressive and rebellious--becomes transforming and regenerating but also capable of calculated destruction (as Saladin's revenge on Gibreel demonstrates) while caricatured evil reveals itself to be passive and ineffectual.

This scene merits a few words concerning the nature of good and evil which is so obviously a preoccupation within The Satanic Verses. The morning after Saladin's transformation, his eyes "still glowed pale and red" (SV 294). He has become human, but something truly demonic now possesses him. Rushdie later reveals it to be the wilful destruction of Gibreel. His eyes, windows to the soul, reveal its hellishness. The point Rushdie seems to making is that the demons in the world are not goatmen with horns and hooves but individuals with their own capacity for evil. Rushdie's harsh satirization of characters within the novel who rely on the existence of angels, devils or witches to explain away their own inadequacies or to sanctify the pursuit of the their own desires confirms this observation. Examples are Hind Sufyan, Gibreel's fan John Maslama, the Police Inspector, Mahound and the Imam. Further, the two characters who actually become an angel and a devil, Gibreel and Saladin respectively, are nothing of the kind. Though Saladin becomes the avatar of the devil, he is not evil. In fact, he becomes a comic figure simply because of the distance between his fearsome appearance and his deferential nature. Similarly, though Gibreel appears to be an angel, he is in reality the worst of philanderers and

diabolically jealous. Hardly comic. In fact, he elicits real fear because of his unfeeling cruelty toward women.

The point is clear. Human beings, not demons or angels, are responsible for whatever evil and good comes into the world. Thus Saladin can only be truly demonic when he is fully human. Only then can he set out to "scrawl his name in Gibreel's flesh: Saladin woz ear" (SV 433).

Perhaps the most significant point to be derived from understanding Saladin as a scapegoat, however, is that as such, he becomes an image of translation. Girard describes the scapegoat as having a paradoxical nature. He is the cause of turmoil and the means by which order can be restored. The Old Testament description of the scapegoat in Leviticus 16:21-22 suggests that the goat is sinful, but is also the agent who purges the community of its sins. The goat becomes sin (literally sin-full) and yet by being released into the wilderness, becomes atonement for sins. Likewise, in the moment when Saladin becomes hate-full, he is purged of the sin of his alienation from himself. He is literally re-formed and resurrected. After his transformation, he remarks:

> 'Me? I think I'll come back to life.' . . . he was whole again, . . .
> Resurrection it was, then; roll back that boulder from the cave's dark mouth, and to hell with legal problems (SV 401).

Rebirth happens, Rushdie shows through the scapegoat image, at the moment of death. Saladin's moment of sin becomes the moment of resurrection. The goat vanishes forever into the desert outside the text.

Finally, the image of the hooved and horned goatman breathing clouds of sulphur suggests perhaps most obviously for the majority of readers the image of the devil. It goes without saying that Saladin is the "satanic" figure in the novel and his repeated assertion that he fears he has become the embodiment of "something one must call bad", further confirms that he is, quite clearly, being portrayed as an avatar of "Shaitan" (SV 276). But again, in this postmodern fiction which seeks to subvert the orthodox categories, the devil must be understood as a creative, liberating, and

transformative figure. As Chapter Three established, the Blakean devil in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell serves as Rushdie's model ("Good Faith" 403). The similarities between Saladin and the Blakean devil illustrate that both are figures of revolution and liberation.

Like Blake's devil who rebels against the conservative and conventional role the angels unquestioningly assume, Saladin wills a transformation that frees him from a confining English identity marked by orthodoxy and obedience to tradition. Further, Blake's devil, Sir Geoffrey Keynes explains, symbolizes the creative imagination and rebellious will that Blake felt would liberate man from tyrannical ideologies and political powers. The demonic (perhaps better named, daemonic) imagination coupled with will was, for Blake (and is for Rushdie), truly revolutionary. Likewise, Saladin's imaginative powers and rebellious will liberate him from the tyranny of his English facade. Further, the figure of the Goatman becomes, literally, a symbol of revolution for the oppressed minorites of London. He appears at their rallies and in the streets on t-shirts, buttons and other political paraphernalia. Conversely, for the white, conservative establishment in London who are the bastions of tradition (The Satanic Verses' equivalent of Blake's Angel), the Goatman, because he threatens revolution, is a figure to be feared and crushed. In sum, understanding the figure of the goat as suggestive of the Blakean devil provides one more way of understanding Saladin as the character Rushdie creates in order to express his own convictions about the creative vision and liberating energy that can revolutionize rigid and narrow certainties and allow one to become a translated man.

To conclude, then, the image of the goat facilitates four ways of understanding a recurring theme: "To be born again, first you have to die." The "otherness" of Saladin's goat-hood brings death to his understanding of himself as a refined Englishman and to the various components of his English world (wife, friend, job, producer), and yet, it brings life to a new understanding of himself. The Dionysian aspects of his goat-hood, likewise, liberate him from the confines of his upper-class English life. The goat, understood as a scapegoat, elaborates further the paradox that

exists when the moment of death becomes the moment of resurrection. Finally, the goat, as an image representative of the Blakean devil, yet again reinforces the image as one of liberating power and creative energies capable of engendering new worlds. Each is an image of translation. The next chapter will discuss the completion of its process in Saladin and his emergence as translated man.

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Appendix

THE SCAPEGOAT MECHANISM AND FAILED TRANSLATIONS

As the last chapter discussed, the welcome Saladin receives at the Shaandaar Café allows him to nurture his newborn self, re-inhabit the struggle of being Indian, and ultimately embrace his otherness. But one character within the household does not welcome his presence: Muhammad Sufyan's wife, Hind. As Chapter Four suggested, she is herself a victim of a bad translation. Forced to move from India to England because of her husband's intellectual pursuits, she experiences a crisis of identity and a breakdown in the social order within her family. The "devil-city," London, corrupts her daughters and baffles her with a culture she cannot understand and cannot predict. It is a ". . . land of phantom imps, . . .", a "devil-island" (SV 250). Further, the move has produced a melancholy in her husband that she is powerless to dispel. But worst of all,

> there was not one new thing about her complaints, this is how it was for women like her, so now she was no longer just one, just herself, . . . she had sunk into the anonymity, the characterless plurality, of being merely one-of-the-women-like-her" (SV 250).

The crisis which generates a scapegoat mechanism has clearly developed in Hind's world. Her authority and place within her family and England's culture has been eroded. She has no distinction of identity within either. Interpersonal relationships have broken down–her girls, her husband, and London ignore her voice. Unable to explain any of it, she first attributes the alterations caused by the migration to witchcraft (SV 248). Girard notes that often the crisis which triggers the scapegoat mechanism causes the community to seek a supernatural explanation for the crisis (52).

Yet when the crisis rises to a fever pitch, the night Mishal and Hanif decide to move out, she is looking for someone to blame, and it is not surprising that her victim is Saladin. As Chapter Four noted briefly, he is an outsider, a disfigured monster (and

thereby morally "disfigured", ie. evil), and marginal to humanity to say the least. She attributes to him the crime of disrupting the social order within the family and therefore creating the chaos at hand. If only he were gone, things would be normal. The narrator reveals:

> [Hind] understood the price one pays for harbouring the Prince of Darkness under one's roof. She begged her husband to see reason, to realize that his good-hearted generosity had brought them into this hell, and that if only that devil, Chamcha, could be removed from the premises, then maybe they could become once again the happy and industrious family of old (SV 290).

Of course, the family is not happy or industrious before Saladin's arrival, and the event that precipitates the evening's crisis (Mishal's affair with Hanif) occured long before Saladin moved in. But, in the figure of the devil, she can concentrate all "evildoing" in one person. The crisis becomes his fault.

The Goatman becomes a symbolic scapegoat for the London police as well. Baffled by the horrific, truly demonic serial crimes of the "Granny Ripper" and seething racial tensions, they begin to suspect the Asian and black population of witchcraft. When the face of the Goatman begins to appear on buttons, t-shirts, badges, and political posters, "[p]olice community relations officers pointed to the 'growing devil-cult among young blacks and Asians' as a 'deplorable tendency'" (SV 286). Similarly, the night of race riots in Brickhall Fields, the chief police inspector asks in reference to the Club Hot Wax meltdown "'Is there not something witchy about [the wax figures]?--Have black arts been practised here?" (SV 455). Again, witchcraft is employed as a possible explanation for the crisis while the serial killings continue. The two crises fuse, and one victim is chosen for them both. Uhuru Simba, a radical black activist and leader of racial protests, is arrested as a suspect in the Granny Ripper case. He dies, "accidentally", in jail. The Goatman, as discussed, is "only" a dream figure and the police need a real scapegoat. Consequently, they replace the symbolic scapegoat with a real one, another "black" man who is a marginal figure and who touts liberation

in the spirit of the Goatman.

How do the Hind and London Police scapegoat scenarios fit into a discussion of translation? Their connection to Saladin's transformation into a goat is obvious. But more importantly, they both illustrate the crises that erupt from a failed translation. Hind states explicitly that everything of value to her had been lost in the translation between cultures. In the wake of their collapse, she seeks a scapegoat, something that will explain chaos and restore order. The London community suffers another failed translation. There, the schism between white and black (or brown) fails to be bridged and is widened by a crisis unrelated to it. The ensuing confusion leaves everyone looking for someone to blame. Thus, both of these episodes allow Rushdie to augment the theme of translation by powerfully depicting its dangers.

Chapter Five

SALAHUDDIN: A CYCLE COMPLETE, A CIRCLE UNBROKEN

The first three stages of George Steiner's translation model have illustrated in previous chapters the transformation of Saladin's identity as he attempts to construct an English persona, discovers it to be incomplete, and through the "fall" is reborn and begins the journey of reconstructing his self-understanding. The final stage of his transformation, that which Steiner labels "restitution", remains to be discussed.

This last stage authenticates the entire translation endeavor and its absence renders it incomplete and false. Steiner asserts that "the hermeneutic motion is dangerously incomplete, that it is dangerous because it is incomplete, if it lacks its fourth stage . . ." (AB 300). The danger lies in the imbalance that exists prior to this final stage. The translator has cognitively leaned toward the foreign text and returned "home" to the native semantic field "having caused disequilibrium throughout the system . . ." by extracting from "'the other'" semantic field and injecting it into his native one (AB 300). Consequently, the final stage must restore equilibrium to the system if the translation is to be considered complete and ethically sound. Steiner explains that "[t]he enactment of reciprocity in order to restore balance is the crux of the métier and morals of translation. . . . A translator is accountable to the diachronic and synchronic mobility and conservation of the energies of meaning. A translation is, . . . an act of double-entry; both formally and morally the books must balance" (AB 300-3).

The final stage in Saladin's translation of identity must therefore be understood as a stage in which he strikes a balance between the self he has become and the self (or selves) which he discarded in India. He has "leaned toward" England, extracted its culture and incorporated it into himself. Through the "fall" which forced him to inhabit bodily his "other" and re-enter the struggle of self-definition, he has begun metaphorically to return to India. But three individuals remain with whom Saladin must engage in mediated exchange in order to make the "books balance"

economically and ethically.

The three individuals are Gibreel, his father, and himself. Revenge for Gibreel still glows red in his eyes, he remains estranged from his father in India, and he clings to the remnants of his English identity as his attempt to resume that life under Pamela's roof indicates.

Back in his human body and back in his house on Notting Hill, Saladin has come home to what is, metaphorically, his "native semantic field" believing that life as it was before his metamorphosis will continue. However, damage has been done during the translation that has not been accounted for. Saladin suffered betrayal at the hands of Gibreel during his encounter with his "hated Other" at Rosa Diamond's and the act remains as an enigmatic residue in his conciousness that refuses to be ignored. The betrayal has gone unavenged and so, in regard to Gibreel, Saladin remains off-balance. Finally acknowledging the disequilibrium and the need for balance to be restored, Saladin observes,

> that he had been living in a state of phoney peace, that the change in him was irreversible. A new, dark world had opened up for him (or: within him) when he fell from the sky: no matter how assiduously he attempted to recreate his old existence, this was, he now saw, a fact that could not be unmade (SV 418-419).

As events unfold, the novel reveals that Saladin seeks to restore balance by repaying betrayal with betrayal. The episodes depicting the birth, enactment, and conclusion of Saladin's deliberate destruction of Gibreel, open with the statement, "What follows is a tragedy.–Or, at the least the echo of tragedy, the full-blooded original being unavailable to modern men and women, so it's said . . ." 1. Yet, "[t]he

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1 Presumably, Rushdie's narrator is referring to George Steiner's assertion in The Death of Tragedy that the present age is essentially romantic in that it no longer believes in the finality of evil (131-136). The dramas of the era lack the "innate tortures of that deep despair which is remorse without the fear of hell" (132). The

question that's asked here remains as large as ever it was: which is, the nature of evil, how it's born, why it grows, how it takes unilateral possession of a many-sided human soul" (SV 424).

The question of evil in tragedy within The Satanic Verses remains unanswered, however, only if one attempts to answer it in terms of a conventional explanation of morality. Another explanation exists. The tragedy is engendered by Saladin's desire to reciprocate the violence done to him by Gibreel, and the evil that motivates his actions is continually personified as an external, demonic force which has taken possession of him and which seems to have a life and an energy of its own (SV 540). Therefore, the tragedy must be analyzed not in terms of conventional morality but in terms of reciprocal violence that at least appears to be out of man's control, and, in fact, controls him. René Girard provides an interpretation of tragedy in these terms in his book, Violence and the Sacred.

Girard seeks to explain human violence in terms of the sacred–the sacred being any force which appears to be outside the control of man and which dominates him despite his efforts to control it (31). The language of tragedies, Girard argues, is the language of the sacred, and the dramas portray the dynamics of the sacrificial crisis which breeds violence. These tragedies which enact "fictitiously" real sacrificial crises, contain the following characteristics:

1) a sacrificial crisis in which the distinctions between individuals, classes, and any other ordering principle in a society are blurred or destroyed by a crisis (ie., flood, war, famine, disease).

2) violence which is reciprocal and which follows the disintegration of distinguishing, ordering, principles.

3) further obscuring of any ordering, differentiating characteristics or principles

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Satanic Verses, a novel in which there is, in the end, a "small redeeming victory for love"(SV 468) and in which there can be remorse without the fear of hell must be, by Steiner's definition, romantic and not ultimately tragic, hence the narrator's remark.

due to the violence which creates more chaos.

4) mimetic rivals: opponents in the struggle who come to take on characteristics of each other due to the disintegration of differences between them.

5) a purging act of violence which restores balance, order, and harmony to the community.

6) an absence of justice: violence must be expended and its reciprocal nature ensures that its choice of victims will be, more often than not, arbitrary rather than deserving of punishment.

7) a sense of Fate, Fortune or Destiny formulated by the participants in the crisis to explain the capricious, arbitrary nature of violence's choice of victims.

Each of these characteristics need to be elaborated briefly. First, the condition of a sacrificial crisis destroys the "regulated system of distinctions" by which individuals "establish their 'identity' and their mutual relationships". Confusion of identity (as in Euripides' The Bacchae) reigns; men are mistaken for beasts, sexes become indistinguishable, gods look like men and men look like gods (Girard 44, 49, 126-128).

This sacrificial crisis which is, in effect, a collapse of cultural order precipitates violence. In tragedy, this violence revolves around "symmetrical elements" such as father and son, brother and brother, mother and son (Girard 44). Further, any act of violence is reciprocal. Violence begets more violence, warring opposites exchange verbal or physical blows alternatively, and so consequently, Girard describes the violence ensuing from a sacrificial crisis as mimetic. He argues:

> The more a tragic conflict is prolonged, the more likely it is to culminate in a violent mimesis; . . . . It is the act of reprisal, the repetition of imitative acts of violence, that characterizes tragic plotting (Girard 47).

Further, as the conflict between the warring opposites is prolonged, "the resemblance between the combatants grows ever stronger until each presents a mirror image of the other" (Girard 47). Thus, the lack of differentiation caused by a crisis can lead to violence which obscures any remaining distinction between rivals and leads to more

violence. Hence, he can speak of the combatants as being mimetic rivals.

Twins or even look-alike siblings, Girard suggests, offer a model of the "symmetrical conflict and identity crisis that characterize the sacrificial crisis" (63). In the case of identical twins, the doubles are indeed a mirror image of each other. Means of differentiating between the two individuals have been erased. Physical distinctions, even age, cannot be relied upon to tell one from the other, making questions of inheritance, birth rights, and succession unanswerable. Conflict is sure to develop as a result (63).

The same problem may arise with rival siblings. Girard notes mythological, historical and literary examples which corroborate this observation: "Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau, Eteocles and Polyneices, Romulus and Remus, Richard the Lion-Hearted and John Lackland" (61). Explaining this phenomenon, he states:

> brothers are simultaneously drawn together and driven apart by something they both ardently desire and which they will or cannot share–a throne, a woman or, in more general terms, a paternal heritage (63).

Here Girard hints at a point he later elaborates: violence is always linked with desire. "Desire clings to violence and stalks it like a shadow because violence is the signifier of the cherished being, . . ." (151). However, the conflict between rivals over the object,

> does not arise because of the fortuitous convergence of two desires on a single object; rather, the subject desires the object because the rival desires it. In desiring an object the rival alerts the subject to the desirability of the object (145).

Esau, for example, was alerted to the desirability of his inheritance only by Jacob's desire for it. Conflict followed.

Fifth, when violence finally expends itself on a victim, harmony and order are restored to the community in crisis. However, the choice of victims is arbitrary. Tragedy operates symmetrically as a system of reciprocal violence and justice is not a

factor involved. Girard states succinctly: "Tragedy is the balancing of the scale, not of justice but of violence" (45). Its reciprocity is inevitable, and hence it will expend itself on the most available victim, creating the illusion that there is no rhyme or reason to victory or victimization. The unsettling sense of injustice that is a result of reciprocal violence makes tragedy "tragic". "Inexplicably", it seems, bad things happen to noble men and women.

Consequently, the notion of Fate or Destiny arises. Fate or Destiny grants victory or inflicts destruction arbitrarily. In Greek tragedy, this notion is described as "kudos", or "semidivine prestige" gained through military victory and bestowed by the gods, but only temporarily (Girard 152). The "gods" are, Girard implies, only man's personification of violence's reciprocal nature which ensures that "the roles of dominating and dominated are constantly reversed" (152-153). Thus, Girard redefines the Aristotelian notion of "peripetia" or reversal of fortune as simply a moment when violence (understood to be bad fortune) comes upon the tragic hero.

Girard summarizes the matter by concluding that tragedy has little to do with "[a] static Manichaean confrontation of 'good guys' and 'bad guys,'. . ." (150). It is concerned primarily with "revolving oppositions" engaged in reciprocal violence.

Each of these seven elements emerge in the "tragedy" within The Satanic Verses. First, a sacrificial crisis develops after Saladin is re-humanized and re-enters London. He discovers that things are out of their proper order. After working for twenty-five years to woo the city, he finds he is still on its doorstep while Gibreel, his "hated Other" has been welcomed in with open arms. The acclaim surrounding his come-back night reveals his favored status. Saladin reflects bitterly:

> Gibreel, London's conqueror, can see no value in the world now falling at his feet!–why the bastard always sneered at the place, . . . O God, the cruelty of it, that he, Saladin, whose goal and crusade it was to make this town his own, should have to see it kneeling before his contemptuous rival! (SV 426).

Gibreel has gained everything Saladin lost in the city: the love of a pale and cool

English woman, the attention of his former agent, and the adoration of London. Twentieth-century kudos has fallen, unjustly, into Gibreel's hands. The injustice prompts Saladin to violence which he decides to enact through Gibreel's most prized "object": his lover Allie.

She is the "possession" Gibreel defends violently and his his violence marks her as something to be desired. Indeed, Saladin finds her desirable, but not simply because he finds her attractive but because she is desired by the enemy. "[T]he subject desires the object because the rival desires it" (Girard 145). Thus, the desired and desirable possession of the enemy becomes the object through which the rivals will do battle. He understands that it is through Allie that "his hated Other might most swiftly be unmade" (SV 429).

Second, Saladin and Gibreel are mimetic rivals who become what Girard calls "monstrous doubles". They are are twins, both re-born out of the same "mother" aircraft at the same time when it exploded over the English Channel. Yet they are rivals: light against dark, sacred against profane, Gibreel against Shaitan, India-lover against Anglophile, colonized against colonizer (Suleri 612). Though drawn to each other by the magnetism of their opposition, they remain fiercely at war with each other.

Their paradoxical attraction and opposition to one another is maintained throughout the novel. In the opening scenes of the novel, Saladin, seeing Gibreel swimming across the sky towards him wants to shout "'Keep away, get away from me,' . . ." But instead, he "opened his arms and Farishta swam into them until they were embracing head-to-tail, . . . tumbling end over end, . . ." (SV 6). Similarly, the narrator suggests later in the novel, "For are they not conjoined opposites, these two, each man the other's shadow?" (SV 426). Gibreel himself, when the "face of the adversary [Saladin] hung before him" calls out to him inwardly "My other, my love . . ." (SV 353).

Further, each appears to the other as visions of what Girard would term the "montrous double" (163). These visions, he explains, are the hallucinatory

phenomenon created "at the height of the [sacrificial] crisis by unrecognized reciprocity" or encountered whenever "an 'I' and 'Other' [are] caught up in a constant interchange of differences" (164). Images of the "other" appear to the individual and seem to be both external and internal to him, one of the images being himself and the other not himself. Girard explains:

> The subject watches the monstrosity that takes shape within him and outside him simultaneously. In his efforts to explain what is happening to him, he attributes the origin of the apparition to some exterior cause. . . . The subject feels that the most intimate regions of his being have been invaded by a supernatural creature who also beseiges him without. . . . How can one defend oneself against against an enemy who blithely ignores all barriers between inside and outside? (165).

The experience of "seeing" the monstrous double is akin to being possessed by an external, antagonistic force.

At the height of Saladin's most chilling moment of concentrated hate, the night in the Club Hot Wax, the apparition of Gibreel's face which has been vague and illusory suddenly becomes clear and external to him, superimposed onto the faces of the wax figures. He experiences a vision of his "monstrous double" which in a sense consumes him in a moment of transformative violence. Likewise, Gibreel is described in various episodes as being a puppet besieged by his adversary, drawn like a magnet ever closer toward their final embrace (SV 457). The face of Chamcha appears before him clearly the night of the Brickhall fire, and at the height of his delirium, he experiences a "revelation" in which he understands that the adversary has not merely "adopted Chamcha's features as a disguise;"–the adversary is Chamcha, his most trusted friend (SV 463). The mimetic rivals, "I" and "Other", are caught up in a constant interchange of differences and, as a result, find themselves driven by visions of their monstrous double.

It is also important to note that Girard begins his discussion of the "monstrous double" by re-interpreting Empedocles' description of the birth of monsters. He

suggests that mythological monsters are created through "the alteration of two fundamental impulses, Love and Hate" (163). The passage he cites is the following:

> '58. The dismembered limbs, subservient to the will of Hate, wander about separately, yearning to unite.
>
> 59. But as soon as a god draws closer in harmony to another god, the limbs begin to link up at random, and they all rush together;
>
> 60. We find creatures with revolving legs and countless hands.
>
> 61. Others are born with two faces, two torsos; there are cows with human heads and men with the heads of cows; and hermaphrodites, whose sex is shrouded in mystery' (163).

The similarity between Empedocles' description and The Satanic Verses' opening scene when Saladin and Gibreel are "born" is striking. Gibreel and Saladin, at their re-creation, are co-joined in the sky tumbling end over end while "a succession of cloudforms, ceaselessly metamorphosing, gods into bulls, women into spiders, men into wolves" speed past them (SV 6). Moreover, their relationship is characterized by the same ambiguous mixture of attraction and repulsion that Empedocles' passage describes and which keeps them forever rivals.

Third, the violence that occurs between these mimetic rivals is, as Girard describes, both reciprocal and mimetic. Saladin suffers betrayal at the hands of Gibreel at Rosa Diamond's house when he refuses to acknowledge to the immigration officers that he knows Saladin. "'It was his treason at Rosa Diamond's house; his silence, nothing more'" coupled with his lie that he was never on the Bostan and was not, therefore, a co-survivor of a 30,000 foot plummet (SV 427). To reciprocate, he returns Gibreel's betrayal by winning his confidence and subsequently using that confidence to cause his eventual destruction through the "satanic verses" he recites over the telephone. Saladin muses, "Once he betrayed my trust; now let him, for a time, have confidence in me" (SV 432).

Though Saladin never does bodily violence to Gibreel, Rushdie employs

graphic language of violence, manipulation and destruction to describe Saladin's acts. His plan is a "campaign" (SV 436). He is described as a "tyro puppeteer" pulling the strings of Gibreel, who is the "puppet" (SV 445, 460). He goes to Scotland with Allie in order "to vandalize. To scrawl his name in Gibreel's flesh: Saladin woz ear" (SV 433). When Gibreel begins to reveal more and more of himself to Saladin, Saladin remarks

> it wouldn't take much, now, to push him over the edge [of sanity]. It seems I turned out to be a confidence man, too,. . . The art of the assassin is to draw the victim close; makes him easier to knife (SV 440).

His acts, therefore, are undoubtably meant to be understood as cold and calculated violence, acts of reciprocal betrayal committed against his mimetic rival.

Fourth, the tragedy of Gibreel's destruction gains its power from the great injustice of it. As pointed out above, Girard asserts that the reciprocal nature of violence defines tragedy, and its arbitrary nature lends the drama a sense of injustice. The violence comes upon its victims regardless of their class, standing, or character. Such is the case with Gibreel. In no sense is the reader led to believe that Gibreel deserves to be destroyed. Consequently, the reader of The Satanic Verses, despite Gibreel's failings, sympathizes with him particularly in the moments of his acute dereliction and final destruction. He does not "deserve" his fate. He is a man whose individuality the world has refused to recognize. It has been reluctant to see him as anything other than a meteoric film star, an angelic image of celluloid perfection. The one man he relies on for help and whom he believes is his "truest friend" only draws him near in order to slay him. He becomes "the unwitting, innocent agent of Chamcha's revenge . . ." (SV 437). Further, Rushdie has gone to considerable lengths to make it perfectly clear that Saladin's machinations are cruel, predatory, and in the fullest sense of the word, evil. The jaunty comic strain of the novel takes a chilling turn during this "tragedy". The clownish, innocuous, goat-man of previous chapters becomes a human being wilfully setting out to destroy another human being. Here Rushdie most forcefully exposes the silliness of man's caricatures of angels and devils

that arise when he makes them powers or beings external to himself, by contrasting it with the frighteningly brutal violence of real human evil. In other words, there is nothing to suggest that Gibreel meets his end because he is "bad" and deserved it or that Saladin emerges victorious from their final embrace because he is "good". The tragic ending has a disquietingly unethical element about it. This unsettling element is the lack of justice which is inherent in the cycle of reciprocal violence that Girard describes.

It is also important to note that within this narrative sequence, Rushdie interweaves two stories which also portray the escalating and destructive nature of unchecked violence: the story of the outbreak of violence and rioting in Brickhall which erupts the night Gibreel and Saladin meet in the fire at the Shaandaar Café, and the story of Pamela and Jumpy's murder. These sub-plots, threaded through the story narrating Saladin's destruction of Gibreel, amplify its theme of intensifying, reciprocal violence revealing that it can annihilate not only individuals, but also entire communities.

Fifth, the tragedy contains a moment in which violence takes a final turn, purges the demons of revenge, and restores harmony--or so Saladin is led to believe. The moment occurs when Saladin and Gibreel meet at the fire in the Shaandaar. Coming together in what appears to be their final confrontation, Saladin lying helpless on the floor of the cafe realizes that he is facing "three deaths–by fire, by 'natural causes' [a heart attack], and by Gibreel . . ." (SV 467). Standing over him is Gibreel confronting him with the fact that he now knows Saladin made the obscene telephone calls which have driven him to his present state. "'Why'd you do it? . . . Damnfool thing to do. People, eh Spoono? Crazy bastards, that's all'" he remarks (SV 467).

Girard suggests that in tragedy, after the hero suffers a reversal of fortune (which is the result of violence), violence is denied its reciprocity. No further act of violence ensues. Likewise, in this moment of reversal in which the victimizer suddenly finds himself at the mercy of his victim, violence is not met with a

subsequent act of violence but with mercy. It is denied its reciprocity. Begging for Gibreel's forgiveness (the asking itself a recognition of fault), he finds it granted.

> Gibreel lets fall his trumpet; stoops; frees Saladin from the prison of the fallen beam; and lifts him in his arms. . . . Gibreel Farishta begins softly to exhale, a long continuous exhalation of extraordinary duration, . . . it slices through the smoke and fire like a knife;–Saladin Chamcha, . . . seems to see–but will ever afterwards be unsure if it was truly so–the fire parting before them like the red sea it has become, and the smoke dividing also, like a curtain or a veil; until there lies before them a clear pathway to the door;–whereupon Gibreel Farishta steps quickly forward, bearing Saladin along the path of forgiveness. . .; so that on a night when the city is at war, a night heavy with enmity and rage, there is this small redeeming victory for love (SV 468).

In this moment when Gibreel returns Saladin's violence with a supreme act of forgiveness, bearing his enemy literally to salvation in his arms, it appears that the tragedy has run its course and the pendulum motion of reciprocal violence has stopped. Yet, in the novel, the violence continues.

Months after the fire, Gibreel, Saladin hears by word of mouth, is "'hell-bent on a suicide course'" and is creating a career that is becoming increasingly controversial (SV 538-539). Thus, Saladin is forced to remark that he has assumed "naively . . . that the events of the Brickhall fire, . . . had in some way cleansed them both, had driven those devils out into the consuming flames; that, . . . love had shown it could exert a humanizing power . . ." (SV 540).

The violence, it seems, is continuing. Girard offers an explanation. He remarks that "when a [mimetic] rivalry becomes so intense that it destroys or disperses all its objects, it turns upon itself" (152). Gibreel has dispersed all the objects (and therefore potential victims) of his rivalry–Allie and Saladin; he has ended his relationship with the former and forgiven the latter. The violence, therefore, turns inward and it appears to all those around him, that he is literally doing violence to

himself, propelling himself deliberately along a suicide course. Tragically, the final violent blow that is needed to reciprocate Saladin's act of violence toward Gibreel falls unjustly upon Gibreel rather than on Saladin. As Girard notes, tragedy has little to do with "[a] static Manichaean confrontation of 'good guys' and 'bad guys', . . ."; it is a matter of reciprocal violence (150).

Thus, when Saladin is confronted by Gibreel at the end of the novel, he is forced to recognize the injustice of Gibreel's demise. Assuming that Gibreel has come to the house to murder him, he admits that "he [is] going to die for his satanic verses, but he [cannot] find it in himself to call the death-sentence unjust" (SV 546). Consequently, when the death-sentence falls on Gibreel rather than himself, Saladin expresses wonder about the inexplicable, arbitrary nature of fortune. In the very last lines of the book, he marvels that "in spite of all his wrong-doing, weakness, guilt–in spite of his humanity–he was getting another chance. There was no accounting for one's good fortune, that was plain" (SV 547).

In conclusion, Girard's explanation of the nature of tragedy in terms of reciprocal violence, serves as a tool to explain the "tragedy" within The Satanic Verses in which Saladin restores balance with one of the untranslated elements from his past, Gibreel. The disturbingly unethical nature of Saladin's good fortune compared to Gibreel's violent and undeserved end is rendered understandable when viewed in the light of the decidedly unjust, reciprocal nature of violence. He has the "good fortune" to emerge at the end of the novel whole and in harmony with his past, but there is "no accounting" for his success in terms of conventional ideas of virtue and reward or guilt and punishment. He does not deserve another chance any more than Gibreel deserves suicide. Restoring the balance, in this case, is more "economical" than "ethical".

Two figures remain to be dealt with and integrated into Saladin's new world and new identity in this final stage of reconciliation and mediated exchange between the various narratives of his past: his father and himself. The re-interpretation and re-integration of both occur during his return to India in the final chapter of the novel.

The images in these final scenes clearly allude to a return to Paradise or the garden of one's origins in completion of a cycle. Saladin leaves India on an Air India plane named after one of the gardens of Paradise, Bostan; he returns to India on an Air India plane named after the second, twin garden, Gulistan. When he leaves his homeland the first time, he gives up his full Indian name for an Anglicized version. Shortly after he returns to India to nurse his dying father, he re-takes his full name, Salahuddin. The image of his father's mansion alludes strongly to the Christian notion of the Father's mansion in heaven to which believers will return at death, and the "luxuriant garden" in which Salahuddin's birth tree once grew is an image highly suggestive of the Islamic garden of paradise to which all believers return and of the Garden of Eden. Too, Saladin's relationship with Zeeny, severed when he left India with the Propsero Players, is re-established shortly after his return.

However, although these images suggest a return to the symbols and myths of Saladin's origins, he does not return to his father's house as the child or angry man he was on previous occasions there. The symbols of the house, the garden, of Changez no longer hold the same meaning they once did or define him as they have in the past. They have been demythologized, and the final chapter is an account of the process whereby Saladin demythologizes his childhood, family, and notions of India, father and self.

The meaning for the term "demythologize" which will be used in the discussion that follows is the definition given it in Paul Ricoeur's book, The Symbolism of Evil. To explain the meaning Saladin gains by re-interpreting the old "myths" of his past, Ricoeur's idea of the hermeneutic circle, also found in The Symbolism of Evil, will be used.

Ricoeur explains that demythologizing is the "dissolution of the myth as explanation . . ." and through its process one finds the "irreversible gain of truthfulness, intellectual honesty, objectivity" (350-351). After gaining this measure of intellectual honesty, the return to a "primitive naivete" is impossible. "In every way, something has been lost, irremediably lost: immediacy of belief" (351). Yet, "[t]he dissolution of

the myth as explanation is the necessary way to the restoration of the myth as symbol" (350). How is this so? Ricoeur explains:

> [though] we can no longer live the great symbolisms of the sacred in accordance with the original belief in them, we can, . . . aim at a second naivete in and through criticism. In short, it is by interpreting that we can hear again. Thus it is in hermeneutics that the symbol's gift of meaning and the endeavor to understand by deciphering are knotted together. . . .–the knot where the symbol gives and criticism interprets– appears in hermeneutics as a circle. The circle can be stated bluntly: "We must understand in order to believe, but we must believe in order to understand" (351).

Through re-interpreting the symbols and myths of his past, Saladin indeed gains a second naiveté which brings him a tremendous richness and sense of wholeness. He comes to realize that he can stop acting and that a new phase of his life has begun, one in which "the world would be solid and real, . . ." (SV 534).

But before embarking on a detailed discussion of his re-interpretation of family, father, self and India, the connection between Ricoeur's hermeneutic circle and the process of translation needs to be made. In short, they are one and the same. The hermeneutic circle is, in essence, yet another image of the translation process. The statement "We must understand in order to believe; but we must believe in order to understand" contains each step of Steiner's hermeneutic motion of translation.

To believe in order to understand requires a moment of trust, a moment when, in faith, one steps out in the hope of finding understanding in a world that is as yet incomprehensible. To gain critical understanding, the moment of trust must be followed by rigorous and aggressive penetration of the other world through inquiry. Finally, to return to belief after gaining critical understanding requires, in Ricoeur's terms, returning to the old myths and symbols but returning having been changed forever. The old myths will never be understood again with a "primitive naiveté." But new understandings, new interpretations of old myths will spring up in their place,

balancing the critical understanding with a second naiveté that allows the myths to continue to offer meaning as long as one continues to interpret them.

The common denominator linking the hermeneutic circle and the hermeneutic motion of translation is the act of interpretation. Translations are interpretations and all interpretations are translations. As Steiner puts it, "When we read or hear any language-statement from the past, be it Leviticus of last year's best seller, we translate" (AB 28). Thus, the process of interpreting and re-interpreting myths is the process of translation and consequently, movement around the hermeneutic circle looks very much like movement through the stages of translation. To believe, one must trust. To understand, one must aggressively penetrate a "foreign" concept through inquiry. To believe again after understanding, one must cognitively restore the balance between factual truth and metaphorical truth. Consequently, the final stage of Saladin's translation of identity is a matter of his learning to believe again in the symbols and myths of his past but only after being "enlightened", and therefore freed from the burden of his misinterpretations, by the process of demythologization. The first of Saladin's re-interpretations involves rewriting the relationship between himself, Nasreen and Kasturba. He had left India years before engraged and disgusted by Nasreen and Kasturba's practices of husband-sharing, and they had found him an easy target for ridicule. When he returns to India in the final chapter of the novel, however, he finds nothing but warmth and open arms from them. Moved by the affection and support the two women give each other and Changez, he discards the bitter text of his previous encounters with the women and learns to love them and revere their strength.

The second and clearly most significant figure who is "demythologized" and re-interpreted is Saladin's father. Having lost the "primitive naiveté" of his childhood and younger manhood, Saladin no longer regards Changez as his "supreme being" nor does he regard him as the larger-than-life beast who forced him to flee to England. Death throws the harsh light of reality on the old man and strips away all the myths that had surrounded him during Saladin's youth. He becomes, simply, a frail, dying

man. But the light which demythologizes Changez also allows Saladin to re-interpret his father and return to a second, child-like reverence for him. Saladin observes:

> Cancer had stripped Changez Chamchawalla literally to the bone; . . . But it had also stripped him of his faults, of all that had been domineering, tyrannical, and cruel in him, so that the mischevious, loving, brilliant man beneath lay exposed, . . . How hard it was to find one's father just when one had no choice but to say goodbye (SV 524).

Death has given Saladin the "irreversible gain of truthfulness, of intellectual honesty, . . ." that does not deny that his father had been tyrannical, manipulative, and cruel, or that Saladin realized he could not remember spending one happy day with him, or that the old man is dying. But demythologizing gives way to understanding and Saladin learns that "To fall in love with one's father after the long angry decades [is] a serene and beautiful feeling: a renewing and life-giving thing, . . ." (SV 523). The myth who was his father is re-interpreted and therefore re-vitalized through death.

Saladin's re-interpretation of his own persona goes hand in hand with his revelations about his father. Paradoxically, his parent's death becomes the means by which he re-inherits his former identities and integrates them into a new and vital self. Saladin explains that it is as if

> by sucking this new life out of his father he was making room in Changez body for death. . . . [he] felt hourly closer to many old, rejected selves, many alternative Saladins–or rather Salahuddins–which had split off from himself as he made various life choices, . . . (SV 523).

The act of demythologizing Changez in the process of preparing for his death allows Salahuddin to release the Saladin who had tried for so long live in the man's shadow and give up the English self that had denied India. Changez' death brings about the death of the mythologized Saladin(s) that Salahuddin had created over the span of his life, and he realizes what his father had told him years ago: "'I don't explain you any more'" (SV 69). The old, English Saladin who had at one point cursed "Damn you, India, . . . To hell with you, . . ." (SV 35), dies to Salahuddin who harrows hell in order

to find the selves he had discarded there. Finding them proves to be a reunion of lost souls. Thus, when Salahuddin observes in the moment of his father's death that "he is teaching me how to die, . . . He does not avert his eyes, but looks death right in the face" (SV 531), he merely affirms the lesson he has already begun to learn: "To be born again, first you have to die". Looking death in the face allows one to encounter rebirth. To turn away from death is, paradoxically, to turn away from birth. Saladin does not turn away. "If he could look his death in the eye, then I can do it, too" (SV 532).

The truth of this paradox becomes most evident when Saladin experiences a sense of ecstatic liberation after Changez' death and Zeeny's re-entry into his life. He exults,

> this looked like the start of a new phase, in which the world would be solid and real, and in which there was no longer the broad figure of a parent standing between himself and the inevitability of the grave. An orphaned life, like Muhammad's; like everyone's. A life illuminated by a strangely radiant death, which continued to glow, in his mind's eye, like a sort of magic lamp (SV 534).

Death, looked in the eye, reveals itself to be a magic lamp. In the past, Saladin has accused his father of "magic lampism," of holding out promises and never fulfilling them. Now, ironically, through dying Changez fulfills the promise of the magic lamp by becoming it, and in teaching Saladin how to die, grants him freedom and release from the prison of childhood myths about his father, myths about himself, and myths about India. Salahuddin, as he now calls himself, has become an orphan, but orphanhood means liberation and renewal from an oppressive history that proves to be the "most surprising and paradoxical product of his father's terminal illness" (SV 534).

In terms of translation, Saladin discards the English version which denied his other selves a voice and chooses instead a new translation which integrates all the selves of his past. The new text gathers up the discarded bits and pieces of his

identity, and gives each of them a voice in a balanced, integrated, coherent narrative. In short, he has completed the translation cycle and come "home" to himself, to a mongrel self.

To summarize, Saladin's return home and participation in his father's death allows him to return to a "second naiveté" by facilitating the re-interpretation of the myths he had constructed around the symbolic figures and places of his youth. His father is no longer the holder of the magic lamp, nor the maker of his destiny. India is no longer the sickening, hot place of "confusion and superabundance" that the thirteen-year old Saladin despised (SV 37). To his surprise, he finds himself enagaged in political demonstrations against the communal violence in India that threaten to disintegrate the country. The myth of himself no longer exists either. He is neither the injured boy of his youth who longed to be other than Indian nor is he the "paltry fiction" he constructed in England. "His old English life, its bizarreries, its evils, now seemed very remote, . . ." (SV 534). It has yielded its supremacy of place and been hybridized in with all the other selves which came before it. Thus, the "arrows of meaning, of cultural and psychological benefaction" that Steiner uses to describe the equilibrium gained in the final stage of translation now point in both directions–to the past and all the selves Salahuddin left behind and to the future without his father.

It should be cautioned though, that the process of translation is never final or fixed. The novel's postmodern ethic would never allow it to suggest that final, ultimate meaning could be secured. And undoubtedly, any assertion that Salahuddin had at last found his true and final self would raise a number of eyebrows. As M. Keith Booker states, "[O]f course in Rushdie there is no 'true' self, . . ." (982). But there are selves more true than others and without question, the ending of The Satanic Verses makes this clear. Salahuddin speaks of finding a world which has been made "solid and real" through his new-found sense of authentic selfhood. Zeeny, approving of his symbolic change of name from "Saladin" to "Salahuddin" announces, "'Now you can stop acting at last'" (SV 534). Salahuddin, Rushdie makes clear, has indeed found a true self. The emphasis is on the article–he has found a true self, but

not necessarily the one true self. As Steiner explains, "there are no perfections and final stabilities of understanding in any act of discourse . . . " (AB 407). Life, and language, is continually re-interpreted. The sense of closure is only the closure of the hermeneutic circle which, ideally, one never steps out of. The life-giving cycle of belief giving way to understanding and understanding leading to renewed belief is re-creative only as long as one remains within the circle. Thus the notion that identity is final and fixed is, of course, false. It is and will be endlessly translated, and therefore potentially endlessly meaningful.

Salahuddin remains within this circle of translation through Zeeny. Her very entrance into his life marks a cross-roads when one translation ends and a new one begins. She bursts into the room in which Saladin sits precisely at the moment after his father's death when he has taken Changez' brass lamp and rubbed it three times. The renewal of their relationship which begins at that point completes the process of regeneration that was the surprising outcome of Changez' death, but it also inaugurates his re-definition of himself in Bombay. Salahuddin begins re-interpreting himself again through embodying her and following her instructions to immerse himself in India's culture.

After making love to her, an act through which he symbolically embodies India and her spirit of eclecticism, Salahuddin vows to live "perpetually in the first instant of the future" (SV 535). To live there means implicitly trusting that the future has something to offer. Zeeny urges him to act on this trust and move through the subsequent stages of translation. She directs:

> "Try and embrace [Bombay], as it is, not some childhood memory that makes you both nostalgic and sick. Draw it close. The actually existing place [sic]. Make its faults your own. Become its creature; belong" (SV 541).

Her instructions are to penetrate and re-embody Bombay. But significantly, she recognizes that the Bombay he embodies must be demythologized. It cannot be the Bombay of his youth. It must be a Bombay re-interpreted through the eyes of an

adult. In short, she urges him to begin re-writing his identity once more using the "vowels and vocab" of his home-town without resorting to the sticky prose of nostalgia.

Once again, Rushdie makes a female character the force which brings authenticity and closure to Salahuddin's translations. As a doctor in Bombay, she serves as a symbol of his healing of the past in India. Further, her most recent book argues that the "confining myth of authenticity" is a "folkloristic straitjacket". She proposes instead a theory of "historically validated eclectism" insisting that a national culture is a fabulous hodgepodge of borrowed materials from any number of sources (SV 52). Identities, personal or national, according to Zeeny are mongrels, admixtures of who-knows-what from where. Thus she houses the notions of newness-by-fusion and hybridity. Embodying her and following her lead, Salahuddin enters into and remains within the hermeneutic circle which perpetuates translation.

In the last lines of the book, Zeeny takes his arm and leads him away from the "window of his childhood", again, steering him away from nostalgia. Her final command, "'Let's get the hell out of here'", understood as a pun, instructs Saladin to exorcise once and for all the ghosts of his childhood and thereby get "the hell" out of his being. In short, she commands him to change his vision, to leave behind the primitive naiveté which his gaze out his childhood window symbolizes and walk with her, in trust, toward a new vision of himself as the embodiment of Bombay. She invites him, in other words, to a second naiveté. Turning toward her, Salahuddin himself realizes, "If the old [refuses] to die, the new [cannot] be born" (SV 547). The novel ends, therefore, where it began–with a declaration of the theme "To be born again, first you have to die". Salahuddin walks away from the window, for as Rushdie indicates, "[i]t is better, . . . 'to be an adaptable pragmatist, a nomad'" ("Nothing Sacred" 423). It is better to be, in other words, an endlessly translated man.

Only through translation, the ceaseless, energetic, life-giving motion of death and rebirth, of believing and understanding and understanding and believing, can hells be harrowed. The prison houses of stagnation, of misinterpretation, of binding

ideologies and institutions and false self-perceptions can be broken open if subjected to its transformative powers. Only then, in a revolutionary moment, will newness emerge–shining and liberated. The mongrel self will arise as a celebratory figure testifying to the greatness possible when two or more worlds fuse. Saladin (or rather Salahuddin) is Rushdie's testimony to the potential for the mongrel self, the translated man.

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CONCLUSION

The Rushdie affair continues. Within the last month, the newspapers have reported the attack on The Satanic Verses' Italian translator, the murder of the Japanese translator, and the decision to allow the Polish translator to remain anonymous for the sake of safety ("Rushdie Translator"). In the last few weeks, rumor has spread that a fundamentalist terrorist group has arrived in Britain from Iran to carry out the death sentence, Khomeini's fatwa, declared against Rushdie ("Rushdie Hit Squad"). Also within the last few weeks, The Guardian featured an article with leading figures in the affair discussing the possibility, or impossibility, of a solution to the sad, seemingly endless affair ("Life, Death and Deadlock"). To add to the present confusion, the book and its author have themselves been fictionalized. Time (nearly three years have elapsed since it came into our midst), distances (the affair has touched every corner of the globe), opinion (everyone has spoken but the book itself), and availability of the text (it remains banned in several countries and expensive in those which sell it) have inevitably clouded the issues. Rushdie himself has remarked in frustration,

> The Satanic Verses . . . is not . . . the book it has been made out to be, that book containing 'nothing but filth and insults and abuse' . . . There are times when I feel that the origial intentions of The Satanic Verses have been so thoroughly scrambled by events as to be lost for ever. . . . I feel as if I have been concealed behind a false self, as if a shadow has become substance while I have been relegated to the shadows ("Good Faith" 395, 403, 405)

What is the nature of the affair that makes it so perilous and so difficult to put to rest? At bottom, the Rushdie affair is itself a matter of translation. Ironically, the book has created the very crisis of translation depicted within its pages. Its publication brought two worlds speaking different languages together with explosive results: the world of

fiction and the world of a historically situated revealed religion. Rushdie has, in fact, described their coming together as a "clash of languages" and he speaks of the debate between literature and religion as "linguistically based dispute" ("Book Burning" 26; "Nothing Sacred" 420). The world of fiction, Rushdie's world, speaks the language of rigorous skepticism and endless questioning. Its creed declares "uncertainty as the only constant" ("Good Faith" 405). Its faith, to borrow Suleri's phrase, is simply a matter of "fidelity to disbelieving" (607).

The world of fundamentalist Islam speaks the language of unquestioning faith and unwavering certainty in the inimitability of the Qu'ran (which, ironically, is believed to be untranslatable). Its foundation is its absolute confidence in the Arabic text as the word of God. Its faith rests on the irrefutable truth of its revelation to Muhammad. Rushdie's attempt to reveal Islamic "truth" as fiction is an attempt to translate what the Muslim community believes is certain into the language of uncertainty.

What is blasphemous about the attempt? In questioning the validity of revealed religion and attempting to portray its fictional nature, Rushdie has pushed members of the believing community to the extremities of their tolerance of what is "other". The novel's ruthless deconstruction of Islam confronts its radical certainty with radical uncertainty. The text challenges the believer to face that which is completely other to him and to be translated by it. In the asking, the text becomes blasphemous. The scale of the Muslim reaction to the book reveals how powerful and how perilous such asking can be.

But it is criminally irresponsible to ignore the fact that the affair surrounding the novel has also pushed the West to the extemities of its concept of otherness (Suleri 604). It has forced a culture of liberalism and unbelief to confront a culture of conservatism and belief, and it has finally given members of the silenced Muslim community in Britain a reason and an opportunity to speak frankly about the difficulties of living in a culture hostile to their own. The West has been reluctant to

hear them. In fact, the western counter-response to Muslim outrage has often been just as impassioned and unbending as the Islamic response it condemns. Many of Rushdie's defenders have simply resorted to a secular version of religious fundamentalism, zealously touting the banner of liberalism and freedom of expression instead of religious faith. Thus, in many ways the conflict has become a battle "between two kinds of rigidity, two forms of fundamentalism"–religious fundamentalism and liberal fundamentalism (Webster 59). Thus, the novel asks the liberal western reader to face the "other" in its midst–the Muslim believer who struggles to define himself in a western society that is, on the whole, hostile to him.

Is there hope that either side, having been asked by the novel to be translated, will be translated? The hope lies in the universalism of the experience of translation itself. Translation is a metaphor for the experience of uprootedness and the transformations that can come out of it. This sense of uprootedness is, of course, the migrant condition. But it is also the experience of every human. As Timothy Brennan explains, "[T]he 'weightlessness' of the migrant sensibility is universal. . . we are all, in a way, migrants because we have all migrated to earth from our home 'out there'" (151). In light of this, holding on to a sense of "otherness" based on racial or ethnic differences becomes reprehensible. We are all aliens here. We all have imaginary homelands. We all speak the language of the migrant. This is our common heritage, our shared condition. This is the poignant, and deeply religious, message of The Satanic Verses. For texts can be explicitly theological, as is the Qu'ran, or implicitly theological, as is this novel. To quote Brennan again, "The Satanic Verses is . . . a novel whose questions are essentially religious . . . [it] is an immigrant theodicy" (151). If we can understand that we are all immigrants here, perhaps believer and unbeliever can gain some common ground to build upon.

The single, existential question Rushdie began with remains: "How are we to live in the world?" ("Homelands" 18). The challenge he puts to us through The Satanic Verses is to build on our common ground and live there as translated men and

women. It is the challenge expressed in the novel when Ayesha, the butterfly girl, cries out to dying Mirza Saeed, "'Open, . . . Open, . . You've come this far, now do the rest'" (SV 507). Perhaps if we try, the cries of outrage on both sides will subside and we can begin to hear The Satanic Verses' love song to our mongrel selves.

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