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"*MÉLANGE*, HOTCHPOTCH, A BIT OF THIS AND A BIT OF THAT IS *HOW NEWNESS ENTERS THE WORLD*" – SALMAN RUSHDIE'S POSTCOLONIAL USE OF HYBRIDIZED LANGUAGE

Mera joota hai Japani
Yé patloon Inglistani
Sar pé lal topi Rusi-
Phir bhi dil hai Hindustani

O, my shoes are Japanese
These trousers English, if you please
On my head, red Russian hat –
My heart's Indian for all that.
(Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*, 11)

In defining the postcolonial condition, it is necessary to invoke the everlasting dichotomy of the centre and the margin; the privileging norm versus the 'peripheral', the 'marginal', the 'uncanonized'. One of the features of imperialist oppression is its dominance and control over language. A rigorous norm of correct usage is established and imposed, and all other variations are treated as minor, inferior and impure. In consequence, they become marginalized. The status of the English language in India was and is that of such a pure, standard, uncontaminated norm to be followed and mimicked. Gorra claims that for post-Independence India the English language and its literature stand "as one of the structuring institutions – like the army, the civil service, and the capital in New Delhi – that the British left behind and that the current nation-state can never quite discard" (Gorra 193).

In *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and practice in post-colonial literatures* Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin provide basic terminology of the problem and draw a panorama of the present state of affairs. They present and juxtapose two terms 'English' and 'english' in order to dif-

ferentiate between what is proposed as a "standard code, [English] (the language of the erstwhile imperial centre), and the linguistic code, [english], which has been transformed and subverted into several distinctive varieties throughout the world" (Ashcroft et al. 8).

The processes by which the use of the English language in post-colonial circumstances gradually evolve from an external to an internal norm have been diversely termed. Bamiro recalls the processes of 'nativization', 'indigenization', 'relexification' and 'abrogation and appropriation'. In the chapter "Re-placing language: textual strategies in post-colonial writing" in *The Empire Writes Back* two basic processes of grasping the language of the metropolitan centre and adapting it to the context of the colonized discourse are thoroughly examined:

> The first [process], the abrogation or denial of the privilege of 'English', involves a rejection of the metropolitan power over the means of communication. The second, the appropriation and reconstitution of the language of the centre, the process of capturing and remoulding the language to new usages, marks a separation from the site of colonial privilege [...] Abrogation is a refusal to accept the categories of the imperial culture, its aesthetic, its illusory standard of normative or 'correct' usage, and its assumption of a traditional and fixed meaning 'inscribed' in the words. It is a vital moment in the de-colonizing of the language and the writing of 'english', but without the process of appropriation the moment of abrogation may not extend beyond a reversal of the assumptions of privilege, the 'normal', and correct inscription, all of which can be simply taken over and maintained by the new usage. Appropriation is the process by which the language is taken and made to 'bear the burden' of one's own cultural experience, or, as Raja Rao puts it, to 'convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own.' A language is adopted as a tool and utilized in various ways to express widely differing cultural experiences. (cf. Ashcroft et al, pp. 39–77)

According to Homi Bhabha, the postcolonial marginal discourse should not simply "invert the balance of power within an unchanged order of discourse," but "redefine the symbolic process through which the social Imaginary – Nation, Culture, or Community – become 'subjects' of discourse and 'objects' of psychic identification" (Sanga 78).

Rushdie's fiction serves the purpose of redefinition perfectly. His attempt is to achieve a self-reflexive and organic "english" and he succeeds in doing so by decolonizing the English language and challenging its ability to carry the weight of Indian post-colonial experience.

Rushdie articulates contradictions of the postcolonial individual. Like other postcolonial writers he seeks possible ways of expressing his subversion of the stereotypical image of the otherness sustained by the dominating discourse of the centre. Language is an excellent tool. By means of linguistic experiments a writer is able to decolonize the language of the centre and re-inscribe it with various local influences. Rushdie expresses his resistance to the hegemonical dominance of English in *Imaginary Homelands*:

> [...] One of the changes has to do with the attitudes towards the use of English. Many have referred to the argument about the appropriateness of this language to Indian themes. And I hope all of us share the view that we can't simply use the language in the way the British did; that it needs remaking for our own purposes. Those of us who do use English do so in spite of our ambiguity towards it, or perhaps because of that, perhaps because we can find in that linguistic struggle a reflection of other struggles taking place in the real world, struggles between the cultures within ourselves and the influences at work upon our societies. To conquer English may be to complete the process of making ourselves free. (*IH*, 17)[1]

In 1997 in special fiction issue of *The New Yorker*, in an introductory article "Damme, This Is the Oriental Scene For You!", Rushdie foregrounds the unique linguistic heterogeneity that shapes everyday conversations of postliberation India; a country in which 18 vernacular languages combine with English to produce what the writer terms a „polymorphous" or „multiform" mélange of competing languages and regional dialects.

> What seems to me to be happening is that those peoples who were once colonized by the language are now rapidly remaking it, domesticating it, becoming more and more relaxed about the way they use it – assisted by the English language's enormous flexibility and size, they are carving out large territories for themselves within its frontiers. (*IH*, 64)

Rustom Bharucha in his article devoted entirely to the idiosyncrasies of Rushdie's language gives exceptionally accurate and successful metaphor for that phenomenon:

> Rushdie's language [...] is a colossus choked with words, Angrezi for most part [...] but Angrezi in a very unusual way. It is almost as if the Queen's English has been 'chutnified', fried in sizzling ghee, and dipped in curry. [...] (Bharucha 160)

Dissanayake holds that in his attempts to decolonize the English language in his writings Rushdie's aim is to create a new discourse, independent of the colonial legacy: "[...] his experimentations with the art of narrative and the use of language are closely linked to his preoccupation with initiating a fresh discourse which is free of the imperatives of the colonial legacy" (Dissanayake 241). Such an attempt seems beyond the bounds of possibility as the colonial experience (to put it mildly, as one can also talk of the colonial trauma, oppression, burden etc.) is inextricably linked with the language that was created during the process. It is the English language that is bent in the direction of contamination, hybridity and mongrelization of the British model.

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[1] For the purpose of the paper Salman Rushdie's novels and collection of essays I will refer to will be marked as follows: *Midnight's Children* – *MC*; *Imaginary Homelands* – *IH*; *The Satanic Verses* – *SV*; *Shame* – *S*; *The Moor's Last Sigh* – *MLS*; *East, West* – *EW*; *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* – *GBHF*; *The Vintage Book of Indian Writing* – *VBIW*.

Comments on Rushdie's inspirations should not neglect the significant influence of G. V. Desani's *All About H. Hatterr*, published in 1947. Rushdie, referring to the novel's impact on his own mode of writing, admitted that "he learned a trick or two from Desani's 'dazzling, puzzling, leaping prose [which] is the first genuine effort to go beyond the Englishness of the English language'" (VBIW, xviii).

Among many linguistic devices employed by Rushdie one can observe the use of original Indian words, phrases and names borrowed from a variety of local languages, the use of compounds and non-standard Indian syntax. Consider the following fragment from *The Satanic Verses*:

> *Is there a God*, and that glass which had been running round like a mouse or so just stopped dead, middle of table, not a twitch, completely phutt, kaput. So, then, okay, I said, if you won't answer that try this one instead, and I came right out with it, *Is there a Devil.* After that the glass – baprebap! – began to shake – catch your ears! – slowslow at first, then faster-faster, like a jelly, until it jumped! – ai-hai! – up from the table, into the air, fell down on its side, and – o-ho! – into a thousand and one pieces, smashed. Believe don't believe, Babasaheb Mhatre told his charge, but thenandthere I learned my lesson: don't meddle, Mhatre, in what you do not comprehend. (*SV*, 21)

In the quoted fragment one can encounter several typical devices of Rushdie's language. Words and phrases from Hindi like *phutt*, (rhyming with words in German like *kaput* implying that something has ceased. [...] "Phutt" originally suggested the sound of a candle-flame going out, but it can also mean "Gone!"[2]), *bapre bap* ("Oh, father!"; a common expression of wonder or anxiety; a common exclamatory Hindi phrase, literally meaning "father of father," but used to express a sense of amazement and wonder, among many other feelings), *ai-hai* (hai-hai, Hindi, a cry of grief; an interjectory lament; 'alas', as on receiving bad news) are intermingled in the text and are provided no English translation or explanation. The fluidity of the text and the everyday rhythm of Indian English is emphasized by the use of compounds or run-on-words – *slowslow*, *thenandthere* and repetitions *faster-faster*, *believe don't believe*, as well as onomatopoeic exclamations *o-ho!*

Let us provide more examples taken from Rushdie's novels. Consider the intrusion in the text of the novels of original Indian words, borrowed from Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati or other local languages:

> 'Bring me to River Ganges and I will jump in double-quick. *Hai Ram!*' (*MLS*, 27)
> 'They lost their guts,' Gibreel whispered. 'No can do. Now what is left for our Tavleen bibi? Zero. Story funtoosh." (funtoosh – done (Hindi); bibi usually wife, but here, woman (Hindi)) (*SV*, 81)

[2] Explanations of Hindi words and phrases come from http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/anglophone/satanic_verses/.

[...] because no sooner had the hullabaloo about their love affair died down than, [...] (*MLS*, 106)

'Look,' I said, 'here is a priest, and close family members are present, and you are cho chweetly giving me away.' (*MLS*, 100)

'All these dogs to look after, Nussie sister,' Lila Sabarmati complains, 'I hate dogs, completely. And my little choochie cat, *cho chweet* she is I swear, terrified absolutely!' (*MC*, 99)

'The late Mr Elphistone, she said, her voice unsteady, 'had a weakness for chhi-chhi women. But he did me the politeness of keeping his nautch-girl infatuations to himself' (*MLS*, 98)

'God, what a stroke of luck, for Pete's sake,' she cried. 'I mean today it was the love scene, chhi chhi, I was just dying inside, thinking how to go near to that fatmouth with his breath of rotting cockroach dung.' (*SV*, 13)

The fact that the phrases occur in the text with no literal translation provided, as the narrator assumes the reader will know the meaning of the words, is given by Sanga two possible explanations. First, the critic argues, as the words concern an Indian character and experience, Rushdie is just trying to provide the proper context. The latter explanation, however, assumes that "the translation of the term [...] from an Indian script and an Indian context into English is Rushdie's way of bringing the two languages together; however, in the same move, by not providing a translation, Rushdie is clearly positing a sense of ambivalence associated with the term. Thus, not explaining or defining the foreign term in English becomes a form of resistance to a dominant discourse" (Sanga 64). By means of re-inscribing the English language with various Indian influences, that is by appropriating and transforming it, Rushdie's fiction serves subversively to open up a complex area of postcolonial resistance to both colonial cultural and political ideologies, and to the dominant ideologies constructed and perpetuated in the Indian subcontinent.

Sanga provides an extremely interesting example of Rushdie's use of English words, or combinations of English words, whose meaning is totally different in Hindi. In the opening scene of *The Satanic Verses* Gibreel and Saladin are falling from the sky while the former notices his ex-lover from Bombay, Rekhta Merchant, zooming by on a flying carpet. As the woman is "strictly for Gibreel's eyes", Saladin Chamcha is not in a position to see her. Gibreel, describing to his companion whom he has just seen and trying to convince him it was a real experience, uses the phrase: "suchmuch thing". At first glance one thinks that he deliberately uses two English words glued together and that the meaning of both is combined in an absurd and seemingly meaningless phrase. The word has a meaning in Hindi, however, and it stands for "real" or "truthful." According to Sanga, Rushdie's purpose in doing so is "not only to use an idiosyncratically

Indian idiom in the conversation but also to point out the level of multi-contextual diction present in his narrative" (Sanga 65).

The original Hindi terms of abuse are frequently quoted:

> [...] and now Tai Bibi leaning out of a window shouts, 'Hey, bhaenchud! Hey, little sister-sleeper, where you running? What's true is true is true...! (Tai Bibi, the whore of whores from *MC*, 320)
> 'The bastards are leaving us to rot,' screamed man Singh, and the hostages joined in with a will. 'Hijras! Chootias! Shits!' (*SV*, 80)

Jaina C. Sanga presents another example of the linguistic intermingling, so characteristic for Rushdie's writing. In *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* several of the characters and places are given names originating in Hindi and Urdu words.

> For example, Batcheat is from "baat-cheet" which means "chit-chat"; Bat-Mat-Karo means "Do-Not-Speak"; Bezaban means "Without-a-Tongue"; Kahani means "story"; Chup means "quiet"; Khamosh means "silent"; and Khattam-Shud means "completely finished." Interestingly, in *Haroun*, the names of the characters are used allegorically, and they correspond with the meaning of their Hindi usage. (Sanga 31)

Consider the example of games with names originating in Indian languages in *The Satanic Verses*:

> *Spoono*. Like Zeenat Vakil, Gibreel had reacted with mirth to Saladin's abbreviated name. 'Bhai, wow. I'm tickled, truly. Tickled pink. So if you are an English *chamcha* these days, let it be. Mr Salwy Spoin. It will be our little joke.' Gibreel Farishta had a way of failing to notice when he made people angry. *Spoon, Spoono, my old Chamch*: Saladin hated them all. But could do nothing. Except hate. (*SV*, 83)

Brians provides explanation of one of the protagonists of *The Satanic Verses*, Mr Saladin Chamcha's origin of name: "born Salahuddin Chamcha-wala, a voice impersonator, "Chumch," "Spoono" because "chamcha" is Hindi for "spoon", takes the form of a devil. His original name is comical because it combines a heroic first name (Saladin – the great Muslim hero of the Crusades) and the term "spoon-seller." Chamcha also means yes-man: A chamcha is a very humble, everyday object. It is, in fact, a spoon. The word is Urdu; and it also has a second meaning. Colloquially a chamcha is a person who sucks up to powerful people, a yes-man, a sycophant. The British Empire would not have lasted a week without such collaborators among its colonized peoples. You could say that the Raj grew fat by being spoon-fed. Feroza Jussawalla claims that the name echoes a Bombay street slang insult – "salah chamcha" – "bastard homosexual" (Brians 8).

Saleem Sinai, the narrator of *Midnight's Children* also throws light on the meaning of his name:

> *Sinai* contains Ibn Sina, master magician, Sufi adept; and also Sin the moon, the ancient god of Hadhramaut, with his own mode of connection, his powers of action-at-a-distance upon the tides of the world. But Sin is also the letter S, as sinuous as a snake; serpents lie coiled within the name. And there is also the accident of transliteration – Sinai, when in Roman script, though not in Nastaliq, is also the name of the place-of-relation, of put-off-thy-shoes . . . but when all is said and done; when Ibn Sina is forgotten and the moon has set; when snakes lie hidden and revelations end, it is the name of the desert – of barrenness, infertility, dust; the name of the end. (*MC*, 364–365)

It seems necessary to refer at this point to the famous quotation from the novel reiterating the significance of names:

> Our names contain our fates; living as we do in a place where names have not required the meaninglessness of the West, and are still more than mere sounds, we are also victims of our titles. (*MC*, 304)

According to Agnes Scott Langeland the names of the characters in Rushdie's novels, that are often drawn from Muslim and Hindu sacred myths or from renowned personages or places in the past of the East, "assist an enculturation process in the West, while reasserting cultural pride for Eastern readers" (Langeland 20). By incorporating those glorious historical personae and events into his novels Rushdie acquaints Western readers with the history of the East and consequently conveys the picture that remains in contrast to the stereotypical one created by the Western media and arouses some awareness of the question. Sanga accentuates the fact that by bending the English language to his will in order to make it carry the weight of Indian socio-cultural experience Rushdie "blatantly privileges the native reader. The writing is nuanced by untranslated words and idioms, and culture specific concepts that force a rethinking of language itself" (Sanga 4).

To imitate the natural rhythm of Indian street vernacular a non standard syntax and repetitions (often rhyming) are used:

> 'believe me don't believe me' (*SV*, 21)
> 'hate me don't hate me' (*MLS*, 23)
> 'Your art-shart, Francisco, it will blindofy me with ugliness.' (*MLS*, 16)
> 'And, daughter mine, just look what-what items are missing!' (*MLS*, 10)
> 'Miss Pimple Billimoria, the latest chilli-and-spices bombshell – *she's no flibberti-gibberti mamzell, but a whir-stir-get-lost-sir bundla dynamite.*' (*SV*, 12)

The typical speech pattern of Bombay slang, ending verbs with 'fy' is reflected in the language of Aurora da Gama in *The Moor's Last Sigh*:

> Speaking for myself, however, I tubbofy, I scrubbofy, I brush, I groom, I fill-o the room with fine perfume, and that is why, as all can see, I'm just as sweet as I can be. (*MLS*, 90)

Another significant linguistic device employed by the writer in an attempt to decolonize the English language is the use of run-on words – unpunctuated words strung together – which, to some extent, emphasizes the fluidity of the narrative:

> when she gives a sort of jerk and swings round to stare at me as I bicycle roundandroundandroundandroundandroundand... (*MC*, 186)
>
> but thenandthere I learned my lesson... (*SV*, 21)
>
> 'Outside world isn't dirtyfilthy enough, eh, eh?' (*MLS*, 9)

Cundy observes that the flexibility of English enables Rushdie to convey "both the rhythm and sense of many different Indian dialects without needing to employ any or all of them" (Cundy 7). An excellent example is Naseem Aziz's recurrent phrase 'whatsitsname' in *Midnight's Children*:

> 'Very well. You ask me, whatsitsname, for silence. So not one word, whatsitsname, will pass my lips from now on.' (*MC*, 53)
> 'Do you wonder, whatsitsname, that the little one calls herself Emerald? In English, whatsitsname? That man will ruin my children for me. Put less cumin in that, whatsitsname, you should pay more attention to your cooking and less to minding other people's business.' (*MC*, 42)

Brennan demonstrates that by means of run-on-words in *Shame* Rushdie parodies the style of sacred texts:

> In many superficial ways, *Shame* parodies the style of sacred texts in general. It is riddled with portentous capitalizations ('Rim of Things'), elliptical utterances and absurdly elaborate number symbolism. [...] The details of style sometimes suggest the *Quran* specifically. For example, the novel's run-on-words ('wentwithoutsaying', 'whichwhichwhich', 'nothing-that-you-will-be-unwilling-to-do') probably mimic the practice of Arabic calligraphers, who often connected adjacent letters when copying the Arabic in order to create a pleasing visual effect from the continuously patterned line. (Brennan 124)

Langeland argues, however, that this particular feature of Rushdie's language should not be interpreted as a deliberate parody of the Qu'ran as it rather foregrounds its Indian English usage as running words together is a feature of Hindi and Urdu speech (cf. Langeland 20).

Commenting on Rushdie's exuberant style and his successful attempts at decolonizing the standard English, one should take into consideration the differentiation of the characters' language. The diction of particular characters, their choice of vocabulary and register, perfectly suit their narrative voices. The novels situate themselves in the midst of the heterogeneous discourses. It is from the space of hybridity, of multiplicity, that many of the characters speak. Consider the following examples:

'In this God-fearing Christian house, British still is best, madder-moyselle [...] If you have ambitions in our boy's direction, then please to mindofy your mouth. You want dark or white meat? Speak up. Glass of imported Dão wine, nice cold? You can have. Pudding-shudding? Why not. These are Christmas topics, frawline. You want stuffing?' (Great grandmother Epifania from *MLS*)

'No formality, Comrade,' said the interpreter. 'No honorifics! A simple Vladimir Ilyich will suffice!'
'Vladimir Ilyich opines that this is not adaptation but satirical caricature,' the interpreter said: 'it is insult and offence. See, two beards at least are improperly affixed in spite of the admonishing presence of the proletariat. A report will be made at the highest level. Under no circumstances do you have authority to proceed.' (Lenin's interpreter in *MLS*, whose language reflects the absurd newspeak of Indian bureaucracy)

'To be born again,' sang Gibreel Farishta tumbling from the heavens, 'first you have to die. Ho ji! Ho ji! To land upon the bosomy earth, first one needs to fly. Tat-taa! Takathun! How to ever smile again, if first you won't cry? How to win the darling's love, mister, without a sigh? Baba, if you want to get born again...' (Gibreel Farishta in *SV*)

or

'Ohé, Salad baba, it's you, too good. What-ho, old Chumch.' [...] 'Hey, Spoono,' Gibreel yelled, eliciting a second inverted wince, 'Proper London, bhai! Here we come! Those bastards down there won't know what hit them. Meteor of lightning or vengeance of God. Out of thin air, baby. *Dharrraaammm!* Wham, na? What an entrance, yaar. I swear: splat.' (Gibreel Farishta in *SV*)

Uma Parameswaran observes that two of the "most challenging aspects of verisimilitude in language are the problems of conveying the flavour of the idiom and of making clear what language is being spoken by the character at any given time" (Parameswaran 19). Rushdie's ambitious efforts succeed as the "dramatis personae are drawn from a wider range of society and there are subtle shades of class-hierarchies and the distinctions between Mary Pereira's Goanese English and the boys' school language [*MC*] are brought out well (Parameswaran 19).

A vast majority of characters from Rushdie's novels are people of migrant identity and the language they speak is characterized by hybridity and contamination. Their migrant experience can be best described in terms of occupying an in-between place, what Homi Bhabha calls the "interstitial space." Jaina C. Sanga explains Bhabha's understanding of such a condition, that is of course relevant to Rushdie's circumstance as an emigrant writer: "a condition that allows overlapping and displacement of areas of difference, so that from the location of inhabiting both worlds, the writing constantly shifts terrain. Rushdie, therefore, can belong to both worlds yet subscribe to neither, and it is by writing from such border zones that Rushdie authors and questions the unequal relations between peoples, races and languages. In a sense the border is the only reliable, consistent home because he can never settle fully on either side" (Sanga 17).

Characters from Rushdie's novels very often find themselves therefore in new cultural circumstances, and the everyday obstacle they have to confront is the problem of communication. The first group of characters are Indians in unfriendly London (Saladin Chamcha; Gibreel Farishta; Absolutely Mary and Mecir Mixed-Up, the Porter from *East, West Stories* and others). Another group comprises Indians in their native country who speak the imposed English but have managed to subvert it and appropriate it as their own variation of the language (different characters from *Midnight's Children*, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, *The Satanic Verses*, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*).

In *Imaginary Homelands*, commenting on the reception of *The Satanic Verses*, Rushdie observes:

> If *The Satanic Verses* is anything, it is a migrant's eye view of the world. It is written from the very experience of uprooting, disjuncture and metamorphosis (slow or rapid, painful or pleasurable) that is the migrant condition, and from which, I believe, can be derived a metaphor for all humanity. 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. Those who oppose the novel most vociferously today are of the opinion that intermingling with a different culture will inevitably weaken and ruin their own. I am of the opposite opinion. *The Satanic Verses* 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. It is a love-song to our mongreal selves. (*IH*, 394)

Gillian Gane points to the fact that all principal characters from "The Courter" in *East, West Stories* have problems with standard, proper English as used in England which became their new homeland. Throught the story there are recurrent instances of mistakes and miscommunications – "the relationship between writing and speech is troubled, sounds go astray in the mispronunciations of 'non-native' speakers, connections between words and things are disrupted, meaning is lost – and sometimes transformative new meanings are formed from the English thus broken" (Gane 48).

The critic rightly observes that the incorrect use of English is not always disruptive and harmful as this may "serendipitously bring about a new understanding, a new reality" (Gane 48).

> English was hard for Certainly-Mary, and this was a part of what drew damaged old Mixed-Up towards her. The letter p was a particular problem, often turning into an f or a c; when she proceeded through the lobby with a wheeled wicker shopping basket, she would say, 'Going shocking,' and when, on her return, he offered to help lift the basket up the front ghats, she would answer, 'Yes, fleas.' As the elevator lifted her away, she

called through the grille: 'Oé, courter! Thank you, courter. O, yes, certainly.' (In Hindi and Konkani, however, Her p's knew their place).
So: thanks to her unexpected, somehow stomach-churning magic, he was no longer porter, but courter. (*EW*, 176)

'It is like an adventure, baba,' Mary once tried to explain to me. 'It is like going with him to his country, you know? What a place, baap-ré! Beautiful and dangerous and funny and full of fuzzles. For me it is a big-big discovery. What to tell you? I go for the game. It is a wonder.' (*EW*, 195)

Jaina C. Sanga points to yet another variety of English spoken by Rushdie's characters, namely to the language used by the British in India which begins to take on certain Indian idioms and semantics. An excellent example is William Methwold from *Midnight's Children*, the British estate owner who sells Buckingham Villa to Saleem's father, Ahmed Sinai, on the condition that all the English habits and routines be maintained and furniture and pictures remain intact after he leaves.

It seems necessary to observe that in terms of postcolonial discourse the English language has undergone a "double migration". It first traveled to India with the British and then came back to Britain brought by emigrants. The obvious consequence of such migration is the fact that when a language migrates it inevitably picks up and adopts some of the peculiarities of the new culture. Therefore English spoken in India by the British also underwent some transformations. Consider, for instance, the idiosyncratic use of the language by Methwold in *Midnight's Children*:

'My notion,' Mr Methwold explains, staring at the setting sun, 'is to stage my own transfer of assets. Leave behind everything you see? Select suitable persons – such as yourself, Mr Sinai! – hand everything over absolutely intact: in tiptop working order. Look around you: everything's in fine fettle, don't you agree? Tickety-boo, we used to say. Or as you say in Hindustani: Sabkuch ticktock hai. Everything's just fine.' (*MC*, 97)

Methwold's language is an example of the reciprocal process of hybridization of the English language as used by the colonizers. He not only makes use of vocabulary from Hindi and other local languages, but his syntax reflects Indian speech patterns rather than standard variety of the Queen's language.

In *Imaginary Homelands*, in a chapter *Hobson Jobson* devoted to the vocabulary of British India, Rushdie points to the great number of Indian words that entered the English language in the process of intermingling between the languages of the East and the West:

British India had absorbed enough of Indian ways to call their Masonic lodges 'jadoogurs' after the Hindi for a place of sorcery, to cry 'kubberdaur (*khabardaar*) when they meant 'look out', and to 'puckerow' an Indian (catch him) before they started to 'samjao' him – literally, to make him understand something, but, idiomatically, to beat him up. (*IH*, 82)

Salman Rushdie's nativized and acculturated language proves a successful attempt in decolonizing the hegemonical English of the colonizers. This new variety of 'english' – referred to as among others Hinglish, Chutnified English, Masala English – can be best characterized by eclecticism, hybridity, creativity. The diversity and mongrelization of Rushdie's language is best summarized by Gorra: "Rushdie makes English prose an *omnium gatherum* of whatever seems to work, sprinkled with bits of Urdu, eclectic enough even to accommodate cliché, unbound by any grammatical straitjacket. The very structure of the sentence seems to open possibilities, to re-cut the borrowed clothes of English until they've become those of that new Indian language Angrezi. And while the sound of that new name onomatopoeically evokes the anger implicit in having to use a language "marred by the accumulated detritus of it's owner's unrepented past" (*Shame*, 34), it also transforms that bitterness into laughter; the master's tongue appropriated for one's own subversive purposes" (Gorra 193).

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