Chapter IV

Literary Third Space

A New Zone of the Novel and An Ambivalent Space of Metafictional parody

The novel is the sole genre that continues to develop, that is as yet uncompleted.

(Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*1 3)

The novel parodies other genres [. . .]; it exposes the conventionality of their forms and language; it squeezes out some genres and incorporates others into its own peculiar structure, reformulating and re-accentuating them. (Bakhtin, *DI* 5).

After debunking the Prospero-Conrad myth of cultural translation, Rushdie once again draws on his interrogation of words as transparent representation apparatus by his novelistic writing. Rushdie often arranges most of his stories within the western familiar social/literary context, for he knows most of his initial audience will be from the West (Parnell 247). He, however, does not blindly follow the literary tradition; on the contrary, he subverts the literary convention by de-canonizing the western literary canons-- he challenges literary realism, which emphasizes the chronological plot sequence and representation of words. Due to his diasporic identity, Rushdie realizes that to be a diasporic writer, one should have a “double

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1 *The Dialogical Imagination*, written by M. M. Bakhtin, here will be abbreviated as *DI* in the following quotations.
perspective” and “stereoscope vision” by which a new culture can be made. He suggests that diasporic writers go beyond the conventional realist writing and then merge diverse cultural materials and phenomena into their texts (IM, 19). Rushdie opens a new epoch of novelistic writing and endows novels with brand new meanings. He enriches the content of the novel, extends its historical meanings and rebels against the present privileged ideologies. Tim Parnell proclaims that Rushdie’s “dialogised” and “plural” novelistic discourse subvert dominant ideologies (216). In East, West, Rushdie founds his short stories on the western literary and historical context while subverting readers’ expectation by metafictional techniques such as intertextuality and parody. In this chapter, I will discuss Rushdie’s writing in terms of Bakhtin’s theory on the novel, and metafictional parody, which indicate the third space in novelistic discourse. Diverse discourses partake in the in-between space where dialogues emerge and voices of authors/narrators are blurred. The western imposed ideology is exposed within the space. The following discussion contains two aspects: a new zone of the novel and an ambivalent space within metafictional parody.

A New Zone of the Novel

In the present time, theorists have posed questions to representation of words. Words are not deemed as transparent meaning-transmitting media any more. They contain multiple layers of overt and covert meanings. As I have mentioned earlier in chapter two, theorists, like Bakhtin, focus on the intimate relation between words and
extra-literary contexts. Bakhtin further proposes the “double-voiced” and “heteroglossic” writings in various forms (Denith 32). An utterance is controlled by other utterances in a dialogic relation, which is passed along in the tradition of discourse (Cheyne and Tarulli). Based on the concept, dialogism is inherent in language itself but suppressed by outer forces such as a censorship (Kristeva 68). Dialogism reveals that language is a site or space where dialogues appear and function; besides, the inter-related connection of discourses is manifested (Denith 34). The insights unfold an ambivalent intertwined relation between words, addressers/addressees, and social contexts. Kristeva elaborates Bakhtin’s theory on the novel and language in her “Word, Dialogue, and Novel,” which points out the dialogic nature of and a third dimension in language/utterance.

In the opening of her essay, Kristeva indicates the status of words in the space of texts. The “status of word” in the text, situated in the social and historical context, is the minimal structural unit. Words are the convergence of social and historical discourses; multiple voices are embedded. By reading and rewriting the preceding literary and cultural texts, writers/readers synthesize the present and the preceding texts to make his text into a new organism. The act transforms the reciprocal relation between words from diachrony into synchrony. The literary word is an “intersection of textual surfaces rather than a point” (Kristeva 65). The linear representation of words/texts is deconstructed. Kristeva notices the synchronic relation, postulating that a word is composed of a dialogue between the writer, the addressee, and the present/earlier cultural context (65). The three points construct a three-dimensioned ambivalent space in which diverse discourses dialogize and no
discourse occupies a prior stance. Kristeva draws on Bakhtin’s concept, renaming the idea as “intertextuality.” She argues, “[A]ny text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of *intertextuality* replaces that of intersubjectivity [ . . . ]” (Kristeva 66). By definition, words are spatialized.

Depending on the ambivalence of the space, the writer is able to inscribe himself and his text into history and vice versa (Kristeva 68). In the process of writing, the writer keeps dialogizing with the anterior texts and the presupposed readers. In order to state clearly one’s own stance, the writer may change and contradict the anterior texts. The conflicts and consensuses occurring among the dialogue make the novel polyphonic. The writer is not the only one member dominating the act of writing so that the presupposed addressee/reader and the extra-literary context are the “distinctiveness of the other,” mellowing the productivity of dialogue. J. Allen Cheyne and Donato Tarulli claims, “[I]t is the struggle with difference and misunderstanding that dialogue and thought are productive and that productivity is not necessarily measured in consensus.” The monologic voice in texts/words is thus denied. Kristeva names the ambivalent condition as “negation as affirmation,” which permits the writer to enter history (Kristeva 69). It shatters the “totalizing vision of univocal discourse” (Morris). Pam Morris construes the concept in Kriteva’s words as “writing reads another’s writing, reads itself and constructs itself through a process of destructive genesis (negative as affirmation).” The idea echoes Bakhtin’s assertion: “The relationship of the author to a language conceived as the common view is not static—it is always found in a state of
movement and oscillation that is more or less alive” (DI 302). The ambivalent and un-static relation is reflected in Bakhtin’s carnival, laughter, and parody.

Kristeva’s intertextuality clearly unveils heteroglossia in the novel. Heteroglossia is “another’s speech in another’s language, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way” (Bakhtin, DI 324). It is “double-voiced” discourse-- the direct intention of the speaking character, and the refracted intention of the author (DI 324). The discourse often performs in forms of authorial speech, narrator speech, inserted genres, and character speech (qtd. in Hawthorn 152) and “sinks its roots deep into a fundamental, socio-linguistic speech diversity and multi-languagedness” (Bakhtin, DI 325-26). The interweaving genres in the novel challenge literary realism, which narrates the stories in a chronological sequence, is loyal to representation of words, and refracts the author-intention. (Kristeva categorizes genres into 0-2 intervals. Among 0-1, such as epic and realism, the genres are monologic because of their insistence on the Truth. The only genre achieving 0-2 level is the carnival, heteroglott and dialogic). Furthermore, the interaction of diverse voices emerges. The stories in East, West manifest the double-voiced discourse. The three sections of the novel show Rushdie’s brilliant novelistic arrangement. The “East” section is narrated in a pseudo-realistic manner. The “West” section applies anti-realistic story-telling manners to challenge canonical writings. And in the “East, West” section, Rushdie integrates the stories with lots of non-literary contexts, enriching the meanings of the stories. Though the three sections have their own attributes, they have something in common: double-voiced discourse and intertextuality.
Most of the stories in this novel are narrated by a narrator. They tell audience about what they have experienced. On the surface, they transmit the story in the form of orality, which seems authentic but questionable. In the early time, orality was highly praised by some philosophers and given much more power than writing. For instance, Plato in his work, *Phaedrus*, confirms the superiority of orality. He argues that writing destroys people’s memories and weakens their minds (Ong 79). Speaking has been regarded as the direct way of conveying one’s opinion and outer reality, for speakers are able to explain their utterances with the audience immediately without distances. Speech is more authentic than writing. By contrast, writing is “unresponsive,” blocking the interaction between speakers and audiences (Ong 79, 96). However, detaching the speaker from its speaking context, writing endows readers/audiences with an even lager interpretative space (Ong 78). Walter J. Ong correlates the idea to Roland Barthes’ “The Death of the Author” and asserts, “One of the most startling paradoxes inherent in writing is its close association with death” (81). Writing includes and excludes preceding literary or oral texts, and deprives of its writer’s direct and explicit interpretation. It, nevertheless, gives the interpretative authority to its readers:

The paradox lies in the fact that the deadness of the text, its removal from the living human lifeworld, its rigid visual fixity, assures its endurance and its potential for being resurrected into limitless living contexts by a potentially infinite number of living readers. (Ong 81)

The ostensible deadness of the text is renewed and enriched by its living readers.

The meaning of the text not only is determined by the writer but cooperates with its
readers. This third space of texts permits the reader to doubt the words of the writer/speaker. The authenticity of the stories told by a narrator is possibly fictionalized. “The Free Radio,” for example, is a typical story-telling story. It is narrated by a teacher sahib, who tells the story in an instructive tongue. His narration is the main voice in the story. Ostensibly, the monologic voice in the story seems authorial and real because of the teacher sahib’s social status. However, his speaking sternly out of the sense of justice still leaves suspicion to his listeners, for there is no evidence to prove what he has said. Bakhtin says, “the speaking person in the novel is always [...] an ideologue, and his words are always ideologemes” (*DI* 333). The speaker cannot cast off his interior hidden ideology; rather, his narration reveals his inherited ideas. It enfeebles the authority and authenticity of his words. Transforming oral speech into literary writing, instead, offers more interpretative possibilities to the reader. Taking Krsiteva’s three-dimensioned space of words/texts into consideration (writer, addressee and social context), the direct word (denotative word) and the object-oriented word (the direct discourse of the characters) are not univocal² (Kristeva 72-3). Thus the representation of the narratives in texts should be put into question.

Besides challenging the authenticity of the narrative, Rushdie mixes different genres and types of words, and glossary in parentheses to create a heteroglossic milieu.

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²Kristeva sorts three categories of words in a narrative accordance with Bakhtin’s notion: the direct words, the object-oriented word, and the ambivalent/carnivalesque word. The first item refers to the denotative word, which expresses directly to its object. It has a referential function. The second item refers to character’s speech in the text which is the writer’s voice in disguise, writer’s oriented. These two items are univocal, monological. The third item refers to the words which are employed by the writers to re-form a new meaning in its original meaning such as parody or carnivalesque words. It contains a trait of ambivalence, fitting into the category of heteroglossia (72-3).
Insertion of journals, newspaper reports, and so forth is the way to disrupt literary realism and monolithic narration (Bakhtin, DI 320); it, in addition, connects the fictional text with the contemporary social context. Bakhtin states his theory on the novel that the novel is a genre in the process of making and it is itself an “anticanonical” affinity (DI, Introduction XXXI). For him, “novelization” is a term shaking the hierarchy of genres and rejecting generic monologue. The novel is an asymmetrical contesting arena where “dramatizes the gap that always exists between what is told and the telling of it, constantly experimenting with social, discursive and narrative asymmetries” (Bakhtin, DI XXVIII, emphasis added). The novel is a place where different voices conflict and concede; it seeks to “shape” its own languages, and “displays” the “variety” and “immediacy” of speech diversity (Bakhtin, DI XXIX). The novel is an assemblage of social, historical, and literary discourse, which epitomizes and hybridizes diverse phenomena:

The novel can include, ingest, devour other genres and still retain its status as a novel, but other genres cannot include novelistic elements without impairing their own identity as epics, odes or any other fixed genre. (Bakhtin, DI Introduction XXXII)

The novel unfolds the tendencies of new world in the making and looks forward to “the future development of literature as a whole” (Bakhtin DI 7). It is a “new zone” which contacts the present in all its “openedness” and “inconclusiveness” (Bakhtin, DI 11, 7).

It, moreover, has a predicting power. Bakhtin asserts, “the novel might

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3 Bakhtin elaborates a “new zone” in the later pages. He argues that the participation of readers and authors in creating the meaning of the text forms the “new zone,” which is “a
wish to prophesize facts, to predict and influence the real future, the future of the
author and his readers” (Bakhtin, DI 31). Owing to the novel’s characteristic of
“eternal rethinking” and “re-evaluating,” the contemplation and justification of the
past are transferred to the future” (Bakhtin, DI 31). The novel bridges the present
and the future within the new zone, in which dialogue/heteroglossia between the
present and past, readers and writers, preceding and present-day texts come into sight.

In East, West, we can see a dialogue between texts and synthesis of literary and
contemporary social context. Through the stories, glossaries in parentheses often
appear among the texts. Most of their functions are to explain what happens earlier;
some of them represent another voice of the writer. Both of the usages make a
dialogue between lines possible. In chapter two, the glossary after foreign words has
explanatory function; it juxtaposes the East/West cultures together. As a result,
explanatory parentheses make a dialogue between two cultures present. In “Good
Advice is Rarer than Rubies,” when the advice wallah yells at Miss Rehana, “What
goes of my father’s if you are?” the explanatory parenthesis goes after the sentence.
It goes, “(Meaning, what was it to him)” (12). The method is one of the ways in
postcolonial writing, by which the two cultures meet and converse within the
linguistic zone. Furthermore, in “The Prophet Hair,” the author intrudes into the
narration and adds additional explanations after the characters’ actions. For example,
when Huma ventures to visit Sheikh Sin, The Thief of Thieves, with candlelight, she
feels nervous because of the faint light and disappearance of the old lady who leads

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zone of maximally close contact between the represented object and contemporary reality in
all its inconclusiveness—and consequently a similarly close contact between the object and the
future.” The elaboration confirms the prediction of the novel (DI 30-1).
her way in the dark. The author unfolds the narrator’s nervousness in the parenthesis-- “(because she could no longer see the old lady)” (38). The same authorial intrusion appears in Huma’s confrontation with his father. As the text presents, “Huma now lost her composure, challenged her father openly and announced (with that same independence of spirit which he had encouraged in her) […]” (48). In addition, in “Yorick,” the writer employs a number of parenthetic explanation/addition to replenish the previous statement. At the beginning of the story, the narrator tells readers about the nature of inscription, the strong vellum, on which people rely to immortalize and gain fame for themselves. The narrator clearly lists the form of existence of the vellum in a parenthesis. He says, “[. . .] its habitations being shelves, wooden or not wooden, some dusty, others maintained in excellent order; [. . .] the most secret pockets of courting lovers, shops, files, attics […]” (63). With the explanatory parenthesis, readers are informed of more possibilities of writing forms. Later, the same usage is visible in depicting the weather circumstances (71), teasing and addressing the reader about the fictionality of the story (72, 80-1), prediction the following plot (74), the act of Queen Gentrude, Ophelia, and the King (76,77) and so forth. From the instances above we know that the narrator tries to converse with his readers by keeping interrupting the readerly complacency and foregrounding the story as an artifact. The dialogue/heteroglossia occurs between the writer, the reader, and the context—the third space of words/texts. The monologue cannot stand firmly in its place.

In addition to explanatory parentheses, Rushdie employs italics of words and punctuation marks to create multiple voices in his texts. In “Yorick,” Rushdie
employs a lot of punctuation marks to disrupt readerly complacency such as “O, **********!” to begin the purpose of the story (71), and “……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/……/…...
and evaluative functions. By reading the novel, readers will see integration of global cultures and foresee the future in the process. In *East, West*, Rushdie draws on novelization to create a new zone in the novel and then to rethink the contemporary social condition.

Rushdie integrates a lot of cultural materials, low/high cultures and literary/social texts, into the stories. The novelistic device makes his novel a genre *in the making*, by which readers and writers are able to re-evaluate the present condition. Insertion of popular cultural symbols such as famous Hollywood movies in the stories is one of the ways to mingle social and literary contexts together in *East, West*. Readers often find the plots and names of the well-known movies weaving in the stories. For example, the ruby slippers in *The Wizard of Oz*, and Chekov and Zulu in *Star Trek* take popular cultural materials as the backgrounds of the stories. By setting the story in the reader’s familiar context, Rushdie criticizes the present world. In “At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers,” readers are led to the real auction market, where people are bidding for the ruby slippers (the emblem of freedom and homecoming in *The Wizard of Oz*), by the narrator. However, the auction of the slippers does not bring any hope and peace to people; instead, it displays shallowness, violence, and materiality of the contemporary world. The narrator depicts the imaginary magic of the slippers. He tells readers:

We revere the ruby slippers because we believe they can make us invulnerable to witches (and there are so many sorcerers pursuing us nowadays); because of their powers of reverse metamorphosis, their affirmation of a lost state of normalcy in which we have almost ceased to
believe and to which the slippers promise us we can return; and because
they shine like the footwear of the gods. (92)

Within the world losing normalcy, people attempt to retrieve the serene and peaceful
past. However, in the auction market, we only witness a series of human viciousness
and injustice. Celebrities with luxurious dressings such as movie stars (88), exiles
and migrants (90), the narrow religious doctrines and violence of religious
fundamentalists (92), the orphans who dream about reunion of their deceased parents
(93) are images of decadence. What is presented in front of the readers reflects the
chaotic and material world. However, what is most ironic is that the slippers do not
have such magic power. All dreams of the bidders, inclusive of the narrator’s, are
destined to be just fantasies. Through the auction of the ruby slippers, the writer
exposes to readers a material, grievous, unjust, and violent world. Rushdie
employs the new zone of the novel to integrate literary and social texts and gives
writers/readers a perspective to criticize and evaluate the current world.

Taking Star Trek as the background in “Chekov and Zulu,” Rushdie mourns for
the destined separation of the two old friends and criticizes the political situation.
Rushdie once revealed his concern about the interior separation in India. He says,
“India is increasingly defined as Hindu India, and Sikh and Muslim fundamentalism
grows ever fiercer and entrenched in response” (IM 33). The members in Star Trek
are from various races and get along with each other peacefully. However, the peace
cannot be realized in the present world. Chekov and Zulu are asked to be “intrepid
diplomats” under the surveillance of Indian government in Britain. Though they
work for the same government, they have opposite political opinions because of their
racial identities. The discrepancy makes their separation inevitable. In the text, Rushdie extracts a paragraph in *Star Trek* to describe the migrant’s dilemma in the host country (159-60):

Chekov’s memorandum, classified top-secret, eyes-only, and addressed to “JTK” (James T. Kirk):

My strong recommendation is that Operation Startrek be aborted. To send a Federation employee of Klingon origin unarmed into a Klingon cell of spy is the crudest form of loyalty test. The operative in question has never shown ideological deviation of any sort and deserves better, even in the present climate of mayhem, hysteria and fear. If he fails to persuade the Klingons of his bona fides he can expect to be treated with extreme prejudice. These are not hostage takers.

The entire undertaking is misconceived. The locally settled Klingon population is not the central problem. Even should we succeed, such intelligence as can be gleaned about more important principles back home will no doubt be of dubious accuracy and limited value. We should advise Star Fleet Headquarters to engage urgently with the grievances and aspirations of the Klingon people. Unless these are dealt with fair and square there cannot be a lasting peace.

(159-60)

The passage above depicts settlers, such as Sikhs, as suspected of their disloyalty to the country within India. They are treated as dangerous members in the country. Nevertheless, as Chekov suggests in *Star Trek*, the authority concerns should be
square and fair to different races and to gain peace among the country but the recommendation is not accepted (160). Finally, the story ends up with *Star Trek* scenario. Chekov and Zulu on the spaceship sit hand in hand to face the approaching crisis: “Chekov took Zulu’s hand and held it firmly, victoriously, as the speeding balls of deadly light approached” (171). Ironically, their reunion is fulfilled only in the movie, which strongly indicates the impossible reunion of the two fellows. By hybridizing popular culture and contemporary political context, Rushdie successfully presents and criticizes the politics of the present day and looks forward to the peaceful future in his novel. His utilizing of diverse materials (a new zone of the novel) enlarges the limit of the novel, propelling the conversation between social and literary discourse, foreseeing and rethinking the present-day condition.

**An Ambivalent Space in Metafictional Parody**

In addition to a new zone of the novel, metafiction also offers writers a third space to comment on/converse with fiction and reality. Metafiction is coined by William H. Gass, a famous American writer and critic. The majority of anti-novels are sorted into this category. However, it is hard to be defined and is not a new term (Ommundsen 14). However, Patricia Waugh gives a widely-accepted definition of metafiction. As she demonstrates,

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4 In Wenche Ommundsen’s arguments, the idea of “meta” does not appear in literature only but in different disciplines. Besides, other similar novelistic writings with double-consciousness (literature object and metaliterature) are named metafiction such as surfiction, antifiction, fabulation, neo-baroque and so forth. Thus metafiction cannot be defined easily (14).
**Metafiction** is a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. [. . .] such writings not only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text. (Waugh 2)

Metafiction self-consciously acknowledges itself as a man-made artifact, a fabricated product. It interrogates the representation of words and explores the linkage between “the world of the fiction” and “the world outside the fiction” (Waugh 3).

Since our knowledge about the world is mediated through language transmission, literary fiction becomes a channel to uncover “the construction of ‘reality’ itself” (Ommundsen 4). “Structural incoherence” and “an end without closure” are two common techniques in metafictional writing to reveal the constructed nature of writing itself (Ommundsen 9; Waugh 22). Besides, metaphor, irony and parody are the main textual strategies in metafiction to make readers aware of more levels of meanings (Ommundsen 4-5). Furthermore, through the interruption of a narrator or an author among the text, a narrator/an author puts forward his “preoccupation with the process of fiction-writing” (Ommundsen 7). Such an author’s/narrator’s intrusion lays bare the fabricated nature of fiction and readers’ complicity with the illusion making (Ommundsen 9). Through self-consciousness and self-reflexiveness, metafiction recognizes itself as a product of construction. Self-consciousness of metafiction breaks the illusion of full representation (mimesis) in literary realism; instead, it interrogates the process of writing by combining fiction
and a “theory of fiction within a fictional text,” which effaces the distinction between fiction and “writing about fiction” (Ommundsen 16). Via its in-built self-consciousness (self-referentiality), the writer and critic coexist in the same “Literatureland.” It is “the place where texts and acts of interpretation constitute the world of experience which the novelist, knowingly or unknowingly, represents” (Currie 3). Within the Literatureland, the third space, Mark Curries points out the dialectic relation of the writer and critic. As he suggests, “[T]he writer/ critic is thus a dialectic figure, embodying both the production and reception of fiction in the roles of authors and readers in a way that is paradigmatic for metafiction” (Curries 3). Metafiction self-consciously knows its fabricated nature. Combining the critic/writer within a text, metafiction blurs the line between writing and critique and foregrounds the constructed nature of all writing. In addition, another characteristic of metafiction is self-reflexiveness, which is also a significant element in metafiction. It “means not only fiction about fiction but fiction about fictional systems, processes of mediation and representation in the text and elsewhere” (Ommundsen 18). It is a vehicle of knowing the fabricated nature and operation of representation system in the world (Ommundsen 19).

In order to lay bare the obsolete literary convention, metafiction is at first set in the conventional literary frame. Literary frames are inherent in all fiction. They

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5 There are two kinds of reflexive curves discussed in Wenche Ommundsen’s *Metafiction*. One of the reflexive modes is mentioned by Michael Boy; the other is mentioned by Robert Siege. The former is the “denotative arrow turned back to the signifier, referring to not the extratextual object but the signifying process itself.” The latter is a denotative arrow which “after turning around itself, [it] continues on its way toward a signified outside the text.” In the text, Ommundsen chooses Seigle’s reflective curve to illustrate metafiction, for it has less limit than Boyd’s. It refers not only meanings in texts but phenomenon outside texts. The whole presentation system is questioned (Ommundsen 18-9).
will become visible by being explicitly exposed in metafiction (Waugh 30). As Waugh says, “[S]howing the function of literary conventions is to show what happens when they malfunction. Parody and inversion are two strategies which operate as frame-breaks” (Waugh 31). There are two modes of frame-breaks in fiction by author’s intrusion: minor and major frame-breaks. The minor frame-break affirms (reinforces) the continuity of the established frame which connects the real and fictional world. On the contrary, the major frame-break destabilizes the fabricated frame, unfolding its fictional nature. Metafiction employs the major frame-break to question the nature of fiction writing. By intrusion of a narrator/an author, metafiction lays bare the “ontological distinctiveness of the real and the fictional world” to break the illusion of reality in the text (Waugh 32). By means of juxtaposing both the convention and the forming process of convention itself, metafiction “reintroduces the literary system of previously outworn modes and exposes the present exhausted forms often unrecognized as such [into the fiction]” (Waugh 44). The aim of metafiction is to *problematize* but not to destroy the fictional nature of conventional frames and reality while it still employs the reader’s familiar literary frames as its basic context (Waugh 40). For a long time, avant-garde arts have been blamed for their being unreadable, which renders them hard to gain resonance from audience. However, metafiction draws on a paradoxical attitude toward both old and innovative literary devices, which coexist in a text. Within this ambivalent space, writer-reader-context dialogues emerge. Using familiar literary frames as the background, metafiction permits readers to understand and criticize literature itself at the same time. Parody is one of the often
appropriated literary genres to lay bare and subvert conventional literary frames and fixed ideologies.

Parody is similar to metafiction in some aspects: they both mingle “creation with critique within one text.” The device makes parody and metafiction criticize and expose conventional literary frames/original texts. They self-consciously deem themselves as parody or metafiction (double-coded discourse) and “no transhistorical definitions and forms can express its function” (Yang 108-9). Like metafiction, parody has no fixed definitions, which makes metafiction an ambivalent genre.

According to Margaret A. Rose’s detailed illustration of the history of parody, we are informed that parody has existed in ancient Greek literature in the 4th century B.C. It comically imitates and transforms epic verses and tragedies, which brings comic effects (280). With the evolution of the genre, parody is often reduced to travesty and burlesque, in which people only notice the comic function/laughter (Rose 10). Intertextuality and self-reflexivity in parody are ignored. Rose argues that parody, “which is either comic or metafictioanl,” does not have to ridicule the text it parodies (47). By imitating and transforming the original text, parody “renews” and “re-functions” the worn-out literary convention (Rose 29). Totally speaking, parody does not have a definite purpose. Ridiculing, criticizing or re-functioning its target text makes parody ambivalent and double-voiced (Yang 113,121). Relying on its original text, parody is able to achieve its aim to ridicule or criticize its target text in distance. Waugh claims that parody is regarded as a positive literary change, for “by undermining an earlier set of fictional conventions which have become automatized, the parodist clears a path for a new, more perceptible set” (Yang 64). Parody is a
“double-edged” genre, which is either destructive, critical evaluative or possibly creative (Yang 64). Its ambivalence between original and parodied texts permits writers/readers a third space to problematize the original without completely casting it off. Moreover, parody is not necessary to be ridicule only. Linda Hutcheon refutes the necessary ridicule of parody. As she argues,

Parody, then, in its ironic “trans-contextualization” and inversion, is repetition with difference. A critical distance is implied between the background text being parodied and the new incorporating work, a distance usually signaled by irony [. . .] The pleasure of parody’s irony comes not from humor in particular but from the degree of engagement of the reader in the intertextual “bouncing” [. . .] between complicity and distance. (Hutcheon 118)

Che-ming Philip Yang explains that the definition and signification of parody needs the incorporation of its “practitioner” and “interpreters.” The definition will also change with the discursive formation in different time (Yang 118). In the postmodern era, parody is defined as “metafiction/intertexual + comic/humorous” (Rose 280). The definition echoes Waugh’s definition of parody. Waugh and Rose both agree with “double-voiced/edged” discourse, intertextuality and no transhistorical definition of parody.

Parody lays bare and defamiliarizes worn-out literary devices to release new and more authentic forms by “reusing” and “revitalizing” the habitualized stylistic devices (Rose 110-11; Waugh 65). Waugh goes further to elaborate the connection between parody and social context. As she asserts,
Metafictional parody reveals how a particular set of contents was expressed in a particular set of conventions recognized as “literature” by its readers, and it considers what relevance these may still have for readers situated at a different point in history. It exploits the indeterminacy of the text, forcing the reader to revise his or her rigid preconceptions based on literary and social conventions, by playing off contemporary and earlier paradigms against each other and thus defeating the reader’s expectations about both of them. (Waugh 67)

Language transmits meanings of the world; through fiction the world is also transmitted by words to readers. The shift in literature also reflects the shift in the society. The dislocation of the past and present texts shows that “the possible rearrangement of the original text or genre reveals the potential rearrangements of the present one” (Waugh 69). Literary parody distances, complicates, and refracts authorial intentions from his time, which allows it to revalue the restricted convention (Bakhtin 309). The ambivalence and double-voiced discourse of metafictional parody plunges the present and the past together. It has the potential to re-evaluate, reflect, influence and predict the real future. It is open to variants of time and diverse discourses, undermining the rigid generic hierarchy. The traits of metafictional parody mentioned above fit into Bakhtin’s new zone of “novelization.”

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6 Bakhtin in _DI_ points out that parody is a specific genre with double voices. He claims, “double-voiced discourse is always internally dialogized. […] parodic discourse, the refracting discourse of a narrator […] all these discourses are double-voiced and internally dialogized” (324).
It helps readers clearly perceive the obsolete convention and challenge the worn-out convention without casting off the historical/literary context readers desire.

In the following, I will analyze metafictional parody in “Yorick” and “Christopher Columbus and Queen Isabella Consummate Their Relationship” in the “West” section. Metafictional parody is one of their common characteristics. The two stories take an advantage of parody to lay bare the fictional nature of history and writing. “Yorick” in the beginning of the story lays bare the fictionality of writing and then parodies the western dramatic canon, Hamlet. As I have mentioned earlier in this chapter, Rushdies displays heteroglossia/dialogue in “Yorick” by inserting explanatory parentheses and punctuation marks among the story. Furthermore, the narrator uncovers fictionality of writing by metafictional techniques. Throughout the story, readers can find the novel a self-conscious writing. At the opening, the narrator directly remarks to readers what he is going to tell is “itself the tale of a piece of vellum,—both the tale of the vellum itself and the tale inscribed thereupon” (64). The story inscribed on the vellum does not represent the whole truth; it is one of the scraps of truth. Representation of words in texts no longer transmits the whole truth; even the publicly recognized history is a product of man-made fiction which is written in accordance with a writer’s or an authority’s profit (64). Rejecting the truth being presented in a monologic voice or purpose, the narrator proclaims diverse versions to coexist because none of the versions can represent the ultimate truth. He concludes in the story,

In this it’s true my history differs from Master CHACKPAW’s, and

ruins at least one great soliloquy. I offer no defence, but this: that
these matters are shrouded in antiquity, and there’s no certainty in them; so let the versions of the story coexist, for there’s no need to choose. (81, emphasis added).

As a result of his recognizing the fictionality of writing, the narrator tells another fabricated version of *Hamlet*. The version reverses William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*--Prince Hamlet in the narrator’s version becomes the murderer of his own father and Ophelia.

“Yorick” is set in readers’ familiar literary context. By foregrounding the obsolete literary device, Rushdie subverts the literary canon as well as re-evaluates the nature of history/writing itself. The technique corresponds with Robert Siege’s reflexive curve, which refers not only to meanings in texts but also to the phenomenon outside texts. The whole representation systems, social and literary systems, are questioned (Ommundsen 18-9). Both the literary canon and history are interrogated.

The author’s intrusions often come into sight among the story. They often remind readers of the fictionality of story-writing. The narrator addresses directly the reader, on one hand, to reinforce the authenticity of what he has told (76), and, on the other hand, to lay bare its fictionality. The narrator announces, “[W]e would be rash to treat our Reader […] as if he were a fool” (72). After his delicate illustration of the prince’s evil doings, the narrator mocks the reader, who is obsessed with the process of fictional reading. He remarks,

—So, Readers, my congratulations. Your fancy, from which all these dark suppositions have issued (for I began this passage by swearing
myself to silence), is proved by them more fertile & convincing than my own. (78).

The passage clearly foregrounds the complicity of meaning-making by writers and readers. The fictioanlity of writing has been internalized into readers’ reading process. Without laying bare its device, readers can hardly perceive its fictionality. Generally, authors of novelistic writing are unaware of their writing as a fabricating process. It is not a truth-representing process. By means of self-conscious writing, the writer successfully displays the fabricated nature of writing and then questions the convention.

Besides unfolding the fictionality of writing itself, the story also parodies *The Wizard of Oz* to criticize the contemporary chaotic society. Metafictional parody is also a significant device in “Yorick.” Rushdie radically reverses the characters in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* to interrogate and parody the representation system again. Ophelia and Prince Hamlet in “Yorick” are contradictory to Shakespeare’s. Ophelia here is parodied as the wife of Yorick, the jester, and with grotesque features: “the rottenest –smelling” of her breath. As the narrator depicts, “It is Ophelia breath. The rottenest-smelling exhalation in the State of Denmark; a tepid stench of rats’ livers, toads’ piss, […] and all the Beelzebubbling pickle-vats of Hell!”(66). In addition, Prince Hamlet here is not a deep-thinking and gentle prince rather a “spoiled” and “sleepless” naughty child (68). Bakhtin in *Rabelais and His World* states, “It [the grotesque body] is point of transition in a life eternally renewed, the inexhaustible vessel of death and conception” (318); such a body has no limit and cannot be totally defined (315). Because Ophelia and Hamlet are parodied as
grotesque bodies, laughter and carnival are brought into the text. The carnivalesque milieu subverts the literary canon, mixing official and unofficial voices together. The literary boundary is transgressed. What is more, it revitalizes the old literary convention.

Prince Hamlet, who becomes the planner of murdering his father because of his hatred for his father, is another example. After rescuing her mother from the threat of Horwendillo, his father, Hamlet is harshly punished by his father. The confrontation plants the seed of patricide: “A curious sort of thrashing, for it beats something into the prince’s hide, -- where as the nature of most punishment is to beat an evil out [. . .] dark dreams of revenge” (76). The prince takes his revenge by exploiting Yorick, the jester. Cheating Yorick about a lie of Ophelia’s extra-marital affair with the King, Prince Hamlet encourages the jester to drop venomous liquid into the king’s ear. However, because of being misunderstood by the jester, Ophelia goes insane and drowns herself (79-80). Shakespeare’s Hamlet here is totally reversed and parodied. Instead of giving up the literary convention, Rushdie uses the ambivalent zone between the original and the parodied texts as a springboard to problematize the nature of writing/history itself.

The same writing device is also applied to “Christopher Columbus and Queen Isabella of Spain Consume Their Relationship.” The story, like “Yorick,” uses punctuation marks or italics to display multiple voices and arranges the story within readers’ familiar context. This story takes Spanish colonial past as its background. It parodies the two western famous persons, Christopher Columbus and Queen Isabella of Spain. Rushdie brilliantly combines the two figures together,
fictionalizing their passionate relation to sketch the in-disparate relation between
colonization and exploration of new continents. In order to fulfill his dream of
discovering the unknown earth, Columbus needs patrons to support him. Queen
Isabella is the person who can give him the strongest support. Columbus thinks,
“[T]he search for money and patronage is not so different from the quest for love”
(112). He links his ambition of sea exploration with his love to the Queen, which
predicts the future union of both the marine and continental regimes. However, his
love is unrequited at first, for the queen is an “omnipotent” queen with overwhelming
power to the earth. However, she is not content with what she has had. She is “full
of discontents” and “No conquest satisfies her, no peak of ecstasy is high enough”
(114). She is never content with the Known. She can only be satisfied by the
Unknown (116). Finally, she realizes,

Columbus in this bitter dream makes Isabella see the truth at last, makes
her accept that her need for him is great as his for her. […] She must
must must give him the money, the ships, anything, and he must
must must carry her flag and her favour beyond the end of the end of the
earth, into exaltation and immortality, linking her to him for ever with
bonds far harder to dissolve than those of any mortal love, the harsh and
deifying ties of history. (116-17)

Not until she realizes what she desires does she begin to know the importance of
Columbus. Colonization and exploration of new continents are perfectly allied by
their love. By parodying the once seemingly sacred western history, Rushdie
successfully lays bare the real phase of human ambition and invasion of colonization.
In this chapter, I have discussed a new zone of the novel and the paradoxical space in metafictional parody in *East, West*. I extend the status of words from a convergent point to an intersectional site of diverse discourses. Words are spatialized. The space is constructed from three points: the writer/addresser, the reader/addresser, and the social context. Within the three dimensional spaces, dialogue and heteroglossia emerge. Literary words contain multiple layers of meanings. Since literary words are intersection of diverse discourses, the literary text is composed of diverse voices. They both challenge monological interpretation. Spatialization of a word “novelization,” which regards the novel as a genre *in the making*, make the novel an open system. The novel embraces the present and the past and has the predicting power for the future. The novel shatters the traditional literary hierarchy and permits readers to rethink and re-evaluate the present situation in the new zone of the novel. In *East, West*, several stories are syntheses of social and literary material, opening a threshold for readers to criticize the present social condition and to predict the future. Of course, heteroglossia and dialogues are shown in the use of explanatory parentheses, punctuation marks, and italic sentences. These special literary devices enrich the traditional representation of words. They demonstrate pluralistic voices coexisting within a text. Besides a new zone of the novel, metafictional parody also provides an ambivalent space to writers and readers. In order to foreground the worn-out literary device or ideology, metafictional parody employs the old literary frame as its background and at the same time criticizes the frame within the same text. Both the original/parodied text and the parody coexist (the paradoxical space), which gives much more power to debunk and criticize the old
convention. By parodying the popular movies or the western literary canon and history, Rushdie successfully challenges the old conventional device or ideology and offers multi-layered facts and critiques of the world to readers.