Chapter III

Neither the One nor the Other: Cultural Hybridity and Linguistic Hybridity

I am a border woman, I grew up between two cultures, the Mexican (with a heavy Indian influence) and the Anglo (as a member of a colonized people in our own territory). I have been straddling that tejas-Mexican border, and others, all my life. It’s not a comfortable territory to live in, this place of contradictions. Hatred, anger and exploitation are the prominent features of this landscape.

(Anzaldúa unpaged preface)

In an age when globalization turns into the overwhelming trend, the condition of “Mélange, hotchpotch, a bit of this and a bit of that” (Rushdie 1991: 394) subsequently becomes an irresistible and ineluctable phenomenon. The phenomenon of hybridity—“neither the One nor the Other but something else besides” (Bhabha 219)—revolves around the disintegration of the rigid, totalized, established, stable, and unitary. Besides, it leads to renovation and newness through recombination and reconstruction. In this chapter, the concept of hybridity and its potentiality will be carefully explored. Cultural hybridity signifies a process in which incongruous and discrepant cultures overlap, contradict, intermix, and reconcile with each other. In the process, something new is able to take shape. Linguistic hybridity highlights the transmutation of language when diverse cultures intermingle with each other. It also stresses diasporic subjects’ ability to appropriate the linguistic rules and codes set by the imperial center. Through the concept of cultural hybridity and linguistic hybridity, the predicaments and lived experiences of diaspora are further clarified.
The preceding chapter, in which the inexplicable but recurrent question, “what kind of idea is he? What kind am I?,” (Rushdie 1988:111) serves as the effective catalyst for further exploration, concentrates on postmodern elements and the diasporic experience poignantly delineated in *The Satanic Verses*. In a nutshell, what *The Satanic Verses* portrays is a world that is, at present, inextricably and interminably on the move as a result of the shifting condition of the entire knowledge system, the advancement of technology, and the widespread, irresistible tendency of globalization. Living in this crumbling world, the contemporary men/women, like characters in the text, are doomed to undergo an inescapable process of identity crisis. Identity crisis accentuates that the unitary, homogeneous, and integrated Identity (with the capitalized I signifying certainty, authority, and totality) proves to be superseded by the concept of the postmodern identity (with the lowercase i) which is an open-ended area composed of capricious, heterogeneous, miscellaneous, and incompatible elements. (Hall 1996: 597-598) As identity evaporates into a war of positions, “the identity of a self becomes more of a field than an essence” (Melucci 64). Then, the borders of identity, rather than identity as “an essential nucleus or a metaphysical continuity” (Melucci 65) becomes a pivotal discursive issue. Accordingly, when the discussion on identity is built in the face of the postmodern uncertainty and mutability, the notion of hybridity, culturally and linguistically, becomes one of the ineluctable and essential components in the theoretical construction of the postmodern identity. In other words, the condition of “Mélange, hotchpotch, a bit of this and a bit of that” (Rushdie 1991: 394) in the age of global circulation is one of the constituents which bring about the disintegration of the originally totalized, stable, and unitary Identity. In the exploration of the postmodern identity, the notion of hybridity becomes a profoundly influential and fundamentally indispensable subject matter which is worthy of our prudent consideration and thorough investigation.

In the previous chapter, the lived experience of diasporic subjects and the impact of the postmodern phenomenon on their identity formation have been widely discussed. Ensuing
from the global mass migration as a result of war, persecution, banishment, impoverishment, slave trade, and many other reasons, the diasporic circumstances witness an inevitable process of displacement, dislocation, uprooting, and frontier crossing. In the process of large-scale migration, diasporic subjects deal not only with physical borderlands but also with psychological borderlands. Straddling between the faraway homeland and the host country, diasporic subjects are destined to wander adrift in the unstable and bewildering borderland. Since two or more cultures are involved in the diasporic experience, a process of hybridization is, invariably and unequivocally, anticipated to characterize life in this borderland. As in The Satanic Verses, the irretrievable condition of border crossing, voluntary or compulsory, indicates that the subsequent cultural mixing makes a tremendous and profound influence on the concept of who I am, where I belong, and what home is. Moreover, the phenomenon of cultural hybridity in the text is the poignant reminder which anytime and anywhere aggravates the insoluble and tormenting dilemma confronted by diasporic subjects. As a widespread phenomenon in the present age of global circulation and rapid communication, hybridization performs the salient and indispensable role in the theoretical construction of diaspora and border crossing.

The phenomenon of hodgepodge in a postmodern world, its relation with the diasporic experience, and its impact on the idea of identity are all critical and crucial elements in examining the states of mind of the protagonists in The Satanic Verses. Rushdie underscores his celebration of hybridity not only through some relevant plots but also through peculiarly idiosyncratic techniques of expression. Specifically speaking, the idea of hybridity will be scrutinized in terms of culture as well as language. The first part of this chapter is to concentrate on cultural hybridity, the impact of border position on migrants’ identity formation, and Rushdie’s representation in the text. The second part of this chapter will be concerned with linguistic hybridity, the effect of linguistic alteration and appropriation on the postcolonial subjects, and Rushdie’s representation in the text.
Cultural Hybridity: Neither the One nor the Other

As “globalization” becomes the defining and overwhelming terminology of the present day, the transnational frontier crossing necessarily gives rise to interaction, intermingling, and interlocution among diverse nations and disparate cultures. In the process, the phenomenon of cultural hybridity is bound to be a straightforward and inevitable product of transnational communication and global circulation. That is to say, separate, contradictory, and even irrelevant cultures are, deliberately or accidentally, yoked together and result in a radical and material change. Thus, something brand-new, unparalleled, and distinctive is, in the process, beginning to take shape. As Aileen Moreton-Robinson expounds in the essay, “I Still Call Australia Home,” hybridity is closely related to the diasporic condition in which bodies as well as communities move across multitudinous locations, and in the meantime conventions of the distant homeland are incompatible with cultural codes of the new country (Moreton-Robinson 28). Furthermore, Jaina C. Sanga provides a detailed, exquisite, and clear-cut exposition of the concept of hybridity in *Salman Rushdie’s Postcolonial Metaphors*:

Defined most simply, hybridity is the mixture produced when two or more elements are fused together. . . . In terms of culture and contemporary representations of reality, hybridity involves the mélange of an incongruous array of genders, classes, nationalities, religions, and ethnicities. It implies a syncretic view of the world in which the notion of fixity or essentiality of identity is continually contested. The concept of hybridity dismantles the sense of anything being “pure” or “essential,” and stresses instead, the notion of heterogeneity, difference, an inevitable hodgepodge. (75-76)

In terms of Sanga’s point of view, with discordant elements synthesized, hybridity embraces ideas such as heterogeneity, instability, and multiplicity which are celebrated in the postmodern consciousness. Cultural hybridity per se does not suggest the wiping out or the ruthless erasure of any established and long-standing traditions. On the contrary, it
underlines an ongoing process in which indigenous cultures unremittingly and ineluctably mingle with disparate foreign traditions, histories, and cultures. In other words, cultural hybridity—an obscure, mutable, and indeterminate condition of hodgepodge—has a profound effect on foreign and indigenous, colonizing and colonized, dominant and subordinate cultures. As the “co-option of the tradition by other traditions,” (Sanga 77) cultural hybridity represents an open-ended, kaleidoscopic, and contingent stage on which a show of contradiction, intermixture, and reconciliation between incongruous elements is going on.

After elucidating the general condition of cultural hybridity, literary critics ruminate on its potential and the inspiration which the condition of cultural hybridity gives to the postcolonial study and diasporic discourse. As for those critics, the blockbusting potentiality of cultural hybridity is regarded as a discursive antidote to the predicament of diasporic uprooting and postcolonial oppression. For instance, Moreton-Robinson, when probing into metaphors of migration and also the relation between cultural hybridity and diaspora, contends that “in this hybridity lies possibilities for counter-hegemonic discourses” (Moreton-Robinson 28). Also accentuating the insurgent potential of cultural hybridity, Pnina Werbner argues that the notion of cultural hybridity “looked to sites of resistance and exclusion” (Werbner 2). In a word, the resistant power of cultural hybridity echoes with the postmodern consciousness in that cultural hybridity interrogates, criticizes, and unravels the consolidated and authoritative center. Likewise, cultural hybridity has the potential to crumble the ineradicable and impregnable binary thinking which is deeply entrenched in Western epistemology. It manifests that binary opposition, which is concerned with an either-or situation, unavoidably ossifies the traditional way of thinking and restricts Western epistemology. In order to transcend the ingrained duality, cultural hybridity places much emphasis on a neither-nor situation in which the obscurity, opacity, and indeterminacy of boundaries are celebrated as a remedy to break the deadlock between the one and the other.
Hence, with the process of “deterritorialization/ reterritorialization”1 and the subsequent mongrelization, newness is able to find access to the world.

When it comes to cultural hybridity, Homi Bhabha’s viewpoints bring forth the further re-examination of relations between the colonizer and the colonized, between migrants and the host country in the face of border crossing. Regarding border lives2 as the art of the present and as “the root metaphor,” (Friedman 78) Bhabha ponders on the sense of disorientation, the disturbing state of mind, and the tumultuous cultural atmosphere produced by global circulation and trans-territorial movement. His ideas, such as liminality, third space, and cultural difference, are by no means negligible in the discussion on diasporic displacement and postcolonial aporia of the present day. To begin with, Bhabha makes an attempt to reinterpret and re-evaluate cultural difference as opposed to cultural diversity. He observes that cultural diversity, at the heart of Western humanism and liberal relativism, obliquely inserts “a [seemingly transparent] norm given by the host society or dominant culture” (Rutherford 1990 208)3 into value systems and ideologies of society as a whole. On the surface, an atmosphere of tolerance, reconciliation, and harmony is fabricated in society although the dominated is still imperceptibly located within the dominant’s grid. In order to bring to light the conspiracy of cultural diversity, Bhabha conceives of the idea of cultural difference, the nucleus of which lies in an insistence that different cultural practices

1 The term, “deterritorialization/ reterritorialization,” is borrowed from Deleuze. Deterritorialization, a concept developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, refers to the repudiation, elimination, and undoing of what has already been established. Applied to cultures, deterritorialization signifies that the specific cultural codes of a place transcend the territorial boundaries in a world that is unmoored, mutable, and unsteady. Reterritorialization, ensuing from deterritorialization, modifies the intra-national and extra-national cartography. The seamlessly connected process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization ceaselessly dismantles and reshapes the configures of the world.

2 With reference to the concept of border, Gloria Anzaldúa provides a detailed and exquisite elucidation in Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza. She observes that “A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitant” (25). Life in the borderlands, or border lives, is an inexorable and irrevocable condition which people must face up to in the contemporary world.

3 In “The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha,” the principal and prominent arguments of Homi Bhabha are plainly and thoroughly expanded by means of the interlocution between Homi Bhabha and Jonathan Rutherford. This interview is definitely a handy help in reading Homi Bhabha, who is notorious for his distinctive writing style as well as the intricate, obscure words and expressions.
and discrepant social norms irrevocably “set up among and between themselves an incommensurability” (Rutherford 1990: 209). As Bhabha makes clear in The Location of Culture,

The difference between disjunctive sites and representations of social life have to be articulated without surmounting the incommensurable meanings and judgments that are produced within the process of transcultural negotiation.

(162)

The incommensurability between disparate cultures represents that the inconsistency and incoherence of cultures cannot be recklessly and indiscreetly accommodated within a certain cultural space and time. Consequently, the assumed and imposed hierarchy between cultures proves to be artificial and fallacious.

Bhabha’s taking account of incommensurability between disparate cultures is inspired by Walter Benjamin’s reflection on the task of translation4. Then, he extends the linguistic translation to explain the contemporary phenomenon of cultural translation. Bhabha asserts that in the course of cultural communication, translation is bound to take place. The articulation of translation de-canonizes the original, decompose the consolidated, and “desacralizes the transparent assumptions of cultural supremacy”5 (Bhabha 228). With Walter Benjamin’s idea of translation, Bhabha further explains that there is an untranslatability existing between distinct cultures due to the phenomenon of “foreignness of languages” (Bhabha 163). In order to clarify the incommensurability among cultures, he

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4 Benjamin in “The Task of the Translator” expounds the nature of translation. He contends that the original text as well as the translation is equally like a fragment of an amphora, or a fraction of a greater language. Neither segment has the capacity to represent the authentic, the transcendental, and the complete. The juxtaposition of those fragments can never constitute a totality. In the same way, the pivot of translation never lies in an attempt to make the translation nestle up to the original. Instead, the translation, taking the original as the prerequisite basis, should inaugurate a life of its own. Thus, the age-old hierarchy between the original text and the translation is demolished.

5 In “The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha,” Bhabha straightforwardly expresses the influence of Benjamin’s translation on his concept of cultural translation, especially with reference to the insurgent and subversive power of translation. In terms of Bhabha’s perspective, translation undermines the authority of the original in that “[the original] can be simulated, copied, transferred, transformed, made into a simulacrum and so on” (Rutherford 1990: 210).
“foregrounds the ‘foreignness’ of cultural translation” (Bhabha 227). As he unequivocally indicates,

The “foreignness” of language is the nucleus of the untranslatable that goes beyond the transferral of subject matter between cultural texts or practices. The transfer of meaning can never be total between systems of meaning, or within them, for “the language of translation envelops its content like a royal robe with amble folds. . . [it] signifies a more exalted language than its own and thus remains unsuited to its content, overpowering and alien. (Bhabha 163)

Bolstering the argument about the incommensurability between diverse cultures, the “foreignness of languages” as well as the resulting cultural untranslatability implies the possibilities to demolish the artificial, imposed, and presumed hierarchy between cultures. Furthermore, the phenomenon of “foreignness of languages” (Bhabha 163) echoes the controversy in the Muslim world over the blasphemous publishing of The Satanic Verses. Owing to “foreignness of languages,” (Bhabha 163) cultural untranslatability is the inevitable phenomenon and conflict among diverse cultures is predictable. In spite of the life-threatening fatwa and the accusation of blasphemy, Rushdie still endeavors to show that conflict among disparate cultures can be a source of newness. The unique Indian culture is brought by diasporic subjects to London, to an urban space whose characteristics are entirely opposite to theirs. The contradiction of different cultures leads to newness, and consequently the intrusion of Indian culture makes London a much richer and better society. In this sense, Rushdie reverses the negative implication in conflict and accentuates its constructive features.

With the concept of cultural incommensurability and untranslatability serving as the theoretical groundwork, Bhabha thereupon speculates about his most distinguished and
remarkable views on the notion of hybridity, the third space, and the liminal space⁶.

Cultural hybridity signifies an ambiguous, ambivalent, and indeterminate space “which enables other positions to emerge” (Rutherford 1990: 211). Bhabha argues that in this hyphenated, liminal, and hybrid space, nothing is definitely and absolutely stable, invariable, and determinate. On the contrary, myriads of incompatible, contending, and diversified elements are ceaselessly interlocking with each other. As “an area of tension that is created by the splitting of different aspects within different cultures,” (Sanga 81) cultural hybridity repudiates the stiff binary opposition. Besides, it accentuates the significance of cultural incommensurability “as the basis of cultural identification” (Bhabha 219). It transcends the inflexibility, stubbornness, and impenetrability of an either-or situation and draws our attention to a third space⁷, or “something else besides” (Bhabha 219). The liminal third space is a passage of transition, betwixt and between, neither here nor there.

The third space, which is characterized by ambiguity, openness, and indeterminacy, is regarded by Bhabha as a form of counter-hegemony in that as a space of intervention, the liminal, interstitial, and intermediary zone “opens up the possibilities of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (Bhabha 4). In other words, the interstitial cultural space invites inconsistency, discontinuity, and heterogeneity without presuming an accepted and unchallenged hierarchy. As Robert Young indicates when summarizing Bhabha’s cultural politics of hybridity,

For Bhabha, hybridity becomes the moment in which the discourse of colonial

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⁶ From Homi Bhabha’s perspective, the third space, or the liminal space, opens up possibilities of cultural hybridization. Referring to a condition that is “neither the One nor the Other but something else besides, in-between,” (Bhabha 219) the concept of the third space overthrows the “primordial unity or fixity” (Bhabha 37) of culture.

⁷ Taking Henri Lefebvre’s concept as a starting point, Edward W. Soja also makes a thorough exploration of Thirdspace. When highlighting the trialectics of spatiality, he deems that the Thirdspace is “both a space that is distinguishable from other spaces (physical and mental, or First and Second) and a transcending composite of all spaces (Thirdspace as Aleph)” (Soja 62). The purpose of bringing up the notion of Thirdspace is to censure “the rigid object-subject binarism” (Soja 62) and to underscore other alternatives. In comparison with Soja’s and Lefebvre’s spatially constructed ideas of Thirdspace, Bhabha’s concept of the third space is a relatively metaphorical and “ungrounded literary trope” (Soja 141).
authority loses its univocal grip on meaning and finds itself open to the trace of
the language of the other. . . hybridity begins to become the form of cultural
difference itself, the jarrings of a differentiated culture whose “hybrid
counter-energies”, in Said’s phrase, challenging the centred, dominant cultural
norms with their unsettling perplexities generated out of their “disjunctive,
liminal space”. (22-23)

In other words, lurking in liminal, interstitial, and hyphenated cultural borderlands is the
transgressive and subversive power of cultural hybridity, which is capable of disintegrating
the whole, unraveling the knitted, criticizing the taken-for-granted, and then bringing in the
new.

Adequate to interpret the diasporic experience, Bhabha’s notion of cultural hybridity
indicates that diasporic subjects, in the course of transnational migration, are forced to face
up to an awkward in-between situation in which they belong to neither here nor there.
However, the liminal space of intervention also represents a space of resistance, implosion,
and negotiation, which offers diasporic subjects boundless alternatives and possibilities. In
*The Satanic Verses*, Rushdie apparently demonstrates his endorsement of a neither-nor
situation when he delineates the mental dilemma and cultural predicament of diaspora.
Everywhere in the text, he never gloss over his celebration of cultural hybridity, for it is his
belief that the border crossing of cultural hybridity, along with the potentiality of liminality, is
the determining gesture that articulates newness.

**Cultural Hybridity in *The Satanic Verses***

In *The Satanic Verses*, which mainly deals with the Indian-Pakistani diasporic
experience in Britain, Rushdie intends to undermine the tenacious, long-standing, and
dominant binary opposition in Western epistemology by juxtaposing hybrid elements.
Through the repudiation of an either-or situation and the endorsement of a neither-nor
situation, Rushdie spares no efforts to celebrate cultural hybridity which offers boundless possibilities to the world. In *Imaginary Homelands*, Rushdie expresses the quintessential interpretation of *The Satanic Verses*:

*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)

That is to say, central to *The Satanic Verses* is the problem of hybridization and reconciliation among different cultures. Giving prominence to these hybrid moments, Rushdie spurs readers to confront the subversive power of hybridity. This section delves into hybrid moments in *The Satanic Verses* in two aspects: Rushdie’s celebration of cultural hybridity and the hyphenated identity of diasporic subjects.

As Rushdie outspokenly confesses in *The Imaginary Homelands*, William Blake’s *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* makes a potent influence on the shape of *The Satanic Verses* (Rushdie 1991: 403). Hence, an attempt to collapse the long-standing hierarchy, orthodoxy, and duality in the existing epistemology is anticipated throughout the text. At the outset of the novel, Rushdie exquisitely demonstrates his denial of rigorous dualism as well as his fondness for hybridity by means of amusing but oblique wordplays: “...but for whatever reason, the two men, Gibreelsaladin Farishtachamcha, condemned to this endless but also

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8 As the forerunner of Romanticism, Blake takes a positive attitude toward the concept of hell. In terms of Blake’s viewpoint, hell is a place of resistance and revolution, rather than a place of punishment and suffering. In comparison with the authoritative heaven, hell is a place where the overthrowing of institutional, regulated, and conventional orthodoxy takes place.
ending *angelic devilish* fall, did not become aware of the moment at which the processes of their transmutation began” (Rushdie 1988: 5 my italics). When they tumble from the ethereal sky, Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha come through an “angelic devilish fall” (Rushdie 1988: 5)—a fall signifying not only the deterritorialization of originally clear-cut boundaries but also the intermingling of discrepant, or even antagonistic, elements. After the “angelic devilish fall,” the transmutation of Gibreel and Chamcha into “Gibreelsaladin Farishtachamcha” (Rushdie 1988: 5) tolls the knell of the formerly omnipotent and omnipresent dichotomy and heralds the approaching of an age of intermingling, opacity, and ambiguity. In addition to their becoming one another in the course of the tumbling, the clouds around them respond to Rushdie’s call for hybridity as well:

> while pushing their way out of the white came a succession of cloudforms, ceaselessly metamorphosing, gods into bulls, women into spiders, men into wolves. Hybrid cloud-creatures pressed in upon them, gigantic flowers with human breasts dangling from fleshy stalks, winged cats, centaurs... (6)

Delineated as transitory and metamorphic, the cloud represents a terrain in which the grand project of hybridization is thought of as the quintessential epitome of the postmodern world. Through the “angelic devilish fall” (Rushdie 1988: 5) as well as the symbol of hybrid clouds, Rushdie claims that the polarized extremes are by no means radically incongruous, discrepant, and irrelevant, as perceived in the conventional thinking. On the contrary, they always surreptitiously leak into one another, which blurs the distinct boundary. Rushdie’s celebration of hybridity is, in the process, reinforced and underlined.

Throughout the text, Rushdie underscores the absurdity of dichotomy when undertaking to ascribe distinct, contradicting features to the two protagonists:

> Gibreel. . . has wished to remain, to a large degree, *continuous*—that is, joined to and arising from his past; . . . whereas 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”? And might we then not go on to say that it is this falsity of self that makes possible in Chamcha a worse and deeper falsity—call this “evil” . . . 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.

—But, and again but: this sounds, does it not, dangerously like an intentionalist fallacy? —Such distinctions, resting as they must on an idea of the self as being (ideally) homogeneous, non-hybrid, “pure”, —an utterly fantastic notion!—cannot, must not, suffice. (427)

At the outset, Rushdie brings up the commonplace binary opposition in which Gibreel stands for continuity and Chamcha represents discontinuity. The distinction, however, exists “only to undercut it through the intervention of the hybrid” (Mishra 13). Manifestly, at the moment when Rushdie brings the dual opposition to the fore, it self-deconstructs. In order to bolster his endorsement of hybridity and liminality, Rushdie makes clear that the either-or situation definitely gets us nowhere.

In the denouement of the novel, Rushdie arranges the burning down of the Shaandaar Café and the Brickhall CRC (the community center of Indian diaspora) and this design also highlights the spirits of hybridity. In the course of urban spatial development, the ethnic segregation of urban space progressively and uncontrollably takes shape. As Chris Jenks clarifies in “Watching Your Step,” the cartography of urban spaces “occurs through the obvious devices of local governmental authorities, wards, and parish boundaries, but also in terms of the unofficial, but nevertheless real evolution of places into ‘ghettos’, ‘loops’, ‘downtowns’, ‘West Ends’ and ‘East Ends’ and ‘slums’” (Jenks 27-28). The phenomenon of ethnic ghettoization, for one thing, represents Brickhall⁹ as an ethnically marked area, and for

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⁹ According to Paul Brians’ interpretation, Brickhall is fictional fabrication which implies two Asian neighborhoods in London: Brick Lane and Southhall (54).
another, intensifies the disparity, uniqueness, and incompatibility between different ethnic
groups and cultures. The burning down of the Shaandaar Café and the Brickhall CRC is, in
a sense, anticipated and planned, for these ethnically marked places are not in accord with
Rushdie’s faith in cultural hybridity. By means of their destruction, Rushdie once again
obscures the clear-cut boundary between the one and the other and celebrates the latent
possibilities of cultural hybridity. Moreover, through the burning down of the Shaandaar
Café and the community center, Rushdie implies that the former traumatic diasporic
experience should be transformed into something new, optimistic, and positive. Originally,
the ethnically marked café and the community center are places which first-generation
immigrants resort to. These places in a sense signify the spiritual shelter in which
immigrants are able to cling to the bygone days in the homeland. However, the burning
down of these cultural marked places suggests that sticking to the distant homeland should
not be the life strategy for second-generation immigrants. The traumatic experience should
not be the main source of diaspora, either. The disappearance of ethnically marked places
gives rise to something new in diaspora, a result which is celebrated and highlighted by
Rushdie throughout the text.

In addition to denouncing the orthodox, authoritarian, and dogmatic dualism, Rushdie
also explores the capacity of hybridity and liminality as well. Throughout *The Satanic
Verses*, Rushdie circuitously expresses the latent capability of cultural hybridity by means of
a quintessential question: “How does newness come into the world? How is it born? Of
what fusions, translations, conjoinings is it made?” (Rushdie 1988: 8) In this question, the
narrator drops a hint of the answer: only through the process of “fusion, translations,
conjoinings” (Rushdie 1988: 8) can newness enter the world. That is to say, in the space of
hybridity, liminality, and “thirding-as-Othering” (Soja 60) the initial confidence in

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10 When probing into Lefebvre’s concept of spatiality, Soja provides a definition of “thirding-as-Othering”:
“transforming the categorical and closed logic of either/or to the dialectically open logic of both/and also…”
(60). In a nutshell, “thirding-as-Othering” (60) is a term which cracks open such polarized opposition as
Only within this interstitial and dynamic space of hybridization can newness come into the world. It is a third space which transcends the rigid boundary between the one and the other and which opens up immeasurable possibilities that embrace difference “without an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (Bhabha 4). As “a phoenix-like rise from the ashes,” (Su 22) newness turns out to be the inevitable hinge on which the migrants survive.

In addition to his celebration of cultural hybridity, Rushdie explores the hyphenated identity of diasporic subjects as well. A novel principally dealing with the postmodern aporia and the diasporic predicament, The Satanic Verses “plunges into the cauldron of illegal immigration, racism and anti-racist activism in London” (Van der Veer 100). As Rushdie admits

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... can be derived a metaphor for all humanity. (394)

When delving into the “liminality of migrant experience” (Bhabha 224) in the text, Rushdie is concerned with the hyphenated, indeterminate identity of diasporic subjects, with the confusing diasporic self-positioning ensuing from a process of uprooting, displacement, dislocation, and regrounding. The quintessential specimen who exquisitely embodies the contradiction and hybridization between disparate cultures in the text is unequivocally Chamcha. Through the lifelike and delicate depiction of Chamcha, Rushdie displays transitional and mutable characteristics of the migrant experience, underscoring the incongruity, friction, and reconciliation between the newly grafted identity and the haunting past in the diasporic experience.
Yearning for “that cool Vilayet” full of the crisp promises of pounds sterling” (Rushdie 1988: 37) since adolescence, Chamcha is fed up with filthiness, vulgarity, and disorder of India. He makes up his mind to embrace the idea of Englishness, to stick fast to “that dream-Vilayet of poise and moderation” (Rushdie 1988: 37). As Rushdie portrays in the text,

he [Chamcha] had given his love to this city, London. . . had been creeping up on it, stealthily, with mounting excitement, freezing into a statue when it looked in his direction, dreaming of being the one to possess it and so, in a sense, become it, as when in the game of grandmother’s footsteps the child who touches the one who’s it. . . takes over that cherished identity. (398)

In order to be assimilated into the seemingly sterling and adorable social milieu of London, Chamcha internalizes the British ideology to such an extent that he endeavors to construct a face and a voice that go with the concept of Englishness. Progressively, the project of assimilation and internalization—the project of being “a good and proper Englishman” (Rushdie 1988: 43)—is successful. Consequently, putting on an English identity turns out to be Chamcha’s only aspiration and he has “thought of [the face and the voice] simply as his own” (Rushdie 1988: 33). By the same token, “The mutation of Salahuddin Chamchawala into Saladin Chamcha” (Rushdie 1988: 37) indicates his eagerness to get rid of the shabby Indian self and to slip into the splendid idea of Englishness. He believes that “his encounter with this islet of sensibility” (Rushdie 1988: 398) certainly elicits what is good, outstanding, and serene within him. Chamcha even consolidates the idea of Englishness by marrying Pamela Lovelace, whose voice is “that hearty, rubicund voice of ye old dream-England” (Rushdie 1988: 180). However, the mysterious, inscrutable, and comical air crash above the English Channel blows apart his carefully constructed English identity. Simultaneously, the

11 According to Brian’s exposition, “Vilayet” literally means a foreign country. Here in The Satanic Verses, it refers to Britain (10).
primarily solid and impenetrable distinction between Englishness and Indianness is cracked open. The unimaginable air crash reminds Chamcha that the distance “from Indianness to Englishness” (Rushdie 1988: 41) is, on the surface, an immense distance that prevents people of different cultures from traversing. But in reality, it is also a distance “not very far at all,” (Rushdie 1988: 41) for in this world of transience, uncertainty, and mutability, the phenomenon of hybridity definitely occurs and obscures the distinct boundaries. “[Mingling] with the remnants of the plane, equally fragmented, equally absurd,” (Rushdie 1988: 4) the certainty, stability, homogeneity, and continuity of Englishness and of Indianness go through a process of deconstruction, transmutation, reconstitution, and hybridization.

Chamcha’s metamorphosis into a devilish and goatish figure, along with the succeeding inhumane treatment by the English police and immigration officers, “[gives] rise to the notion that he had fallen out of the sky into some wrongness, some other place, not England or perhaps not-England, some counterfeit zone, rotten borough, altered state” (Rushdie 1988: 132). The decency, elegance, and civilization which Englishness epitomizes, at this moment, burst into pieces. His mutation into a demonized creature and the later happenings in Brickhall all compel him to undergo a process of identity crisis which leads him to a neither-nor situation and which locates him in a space of liminality and hybridity. As Ashley Dawson explains, “Saladin is ushered through this metamorphosis into the double consciousness of the trans-lated” (Dawson 12). Owing to the identity crisis produced by physical metamorphosis, Chamcha becomes “the ‘borderline’ figure of a massive historical displacement—postcolonial migration—that is not only a ‘transitional’ reality, but also a ‘translational’ phenomenon” (Bhabha 224). Straddling between Indianness and Englishness, Chamcha is mired in this passage of contradiction, interaction, and reconciliation. As “a transit lounge,” (Rushdie 1988: 132) this transitional and translational phase implies the liminality of diasporic experience and the indeterminacy of borderline cultures in the process of migration. In the meanwhile, Chamcha’s difficulty in identification stresses that the
complete, homogeneous, and static identity gives place to an identity that is capricious, open-ended, and heterogeneous. The state of indeterminacy and ambiguity is an irretrievable and inescapable aporia in the diasporic experience.

Although at the end of the novel, Chamcha reconciles with his father and with Indianness by recuperating the original name, Salahuddin Chamchawala, it does not suggest the complete eradication and elimination of the formerly entrenched English identity within him. Neither does it represent the overwhelming and sweeping victory of Indianness. On the contrary, the former English identity and the newly grafted Indian identity are involved in a process of interacting, contradicting, and compromising. As Rushdie demonstrates, “[Chamcha’s] old life was about to surge around him [around his new life]” (Rushdie 1988: 535) even though “His old English life, its bizarreness, its evils, now seemed very remote, even irrelevant” (Rushdie 1988: 534). In other words, diasporic subjects embody a condition which articulates the tension, indeterminacy, and incompatibility of diverse cultural histories, old and new, in overlapping territories. Then, what is produced afterwards is a hybrid identity. Employing the symbol of “chimeran graft,” (Rushdie 1988: 406) Rushdie exhibits that the hybrid identity which is delineated as a liminal, interstitial space for performing motley cultural differences indeed provides an inspiration to the diasporic predicament:

There it palpably was, a chimera with roots, firmly planted in and growing vigorously out of a piece of English earth: a tree, he thought, capable of taking the metaphoric place of the one his father had chopped down in a distant garden in another, incompatible world. If such a tree were possible, then, so was he; he, too, could cohere, send down roots, survive. (Rushdie 1988: 406)

As a “chimeran graft” (Rushdie 1988: 406) located in an in-between, hyphenated, and splitting space, diasporic migrants witness the dynamics of this third space which “challenges hegemonic historiography” (Soja 140) and which opens up boundless possibilities. The
vitality of this third space of liminality can be encapsulated in Anzaldúa’s wholehearted and sincere confession: “As a mestiza I have no country, my homeland cast me out; yet all countries are mine” (Anzaldúa 102).

In comparison with Chamcha, Gibreel is eager to “remain, for all his vicissitudes, at bottom an untranslated man,” (Rushdie 1988: 427) and thus is doomed to self-destruction and failure at the end of the novel. Gibreel is, at the beginning of the novel, tormented by the interpenetration of fanciful dreamworld and the grim reality, for he “is unable to embrace hybridity” (Sanga 80). Therefore, he vacillates between the desire to believe and his inability to act. Terrified at the overwhelming phenomenon of indistinctness, uncertainty, and ambiguity, Gibreel strives to maintain the authentic, true, and “untranslated” (Rushdie 1988: 427) self and to demarcate a clear-cut boundary. His pursuit of difference, clarity, and transparency is best illustrated in the attempt to tropicalize London:

Gibreel Farishta floating on his cloud formed the opinion that the moral fuzziness of the English was meteorologically induced. “When the day is not warmer than the night,” he reasoned, “when the light is not brighter than the dark, when the land is not drier than the sea, then clearly a people will lose the power to make distinctions, and commence to see everything . . . as much-the-same, nothing-to-choose, give-or-take. . . For truth is extreme, it is so and not thus, it is him and not her. . . It is, in belief, heated. City,” he cried, and his voice rolled over the metropolis like thunder, “I am going to tropicalize you.” (354)

Unlike the hybrid mutant Chamcha, Gibreel is a nostalgia-ridden figure who ardently struggles to maintain a distinction between East and West and to preserve the original self. The haziness of English weather which blurs the determinate binary opposition reminds Gibreel of the notorious interpenetration and intermingling between dream and reality, a condition which gives rise to his hysterical insanity. Also, the fogginess of English weather revives the old memory of homeland, of heated India. Consequently, Gibreel launches into
a tremendously arduous task of tropicalizing London. The failure of Gibreel is anticipated in that “survival for the migrants depends on making connections between things, realizing that the world is not homogeneous, and believing that they are not ultimately, exclusively, Western or Eastern” (Sanga 81). That is to say, Gibreel turns his back on those elements which ensure the survival and success of diasporic subjects—fluidity, indeterminacy, and hybridity—and therefore his demise reinforces the significance of “[h]ybrid hyphenations” (Bhabha 219) in an age of global circulation and drastic transformation.

Highlighting the hyphenated identity of Chamcha and other hybrid moments in *The Satanic Verses*, Rushdie faithfully expresses his endorsement of a neither-nor situation. He contends that the hybrid space of liminality in which incompatible, heterogeneous, and discrepant elements are perpetually interacting with each other opens up boundless possibilities. This liminal space which undermines all forms of authority shelters diasporic subjects and in this third space, diasporic subjects are able to re-inscribe, reshape, and re-imagine their identity.

**Linguistic Hybridity**: Appropriation and Counterattack

Since the imperial colonization, the earth has witnessed a large-scale process of the transnational migration and cross-cultural contact. Still persisting nowadays, the same process of transmigration becomes a well-known phenomenon of globalization in which the direction of movement flows not only from the colonizer to the colonized but also from the colonized to the colonizer. In the encounter between “the West and the Rest,” not only cross-cultural contact but also linguistic fusion is involved in the process and then both factors transform the physical and psychological cartography. In *The Satanic Verses*,

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12 En-huei Shih’s thesis, “Transgressing the Boundary: The Third Space in Salman Rushdie’s *East, West*” offers me a great inspiration in meditating on the relation between language and identity. This section about the linguistic hybridity owes much to her thesis.

13 This term is borrowed from Stuart Hall’s article, “The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power.” In this article, Hall probes into the constitution of the idea of the West and the Rest.
Rushdie displays his celebration of cultural hybridity which is “one of the emblematic notions of our era” (Kraidy 1). Similarly, he indirectly suggests the inextricable phenomenon of linguistic hybridity in the process of trans-territorial border crossing through wordplays, code-switching, and untranslated words. His playing with English words as well as Indian words draws readers’ attention to the relation between language and identity in the postcolonial aporia and the diasporic predicament. Simply put, language is a primary, indispensable, and immediate medium of expressing one’s cultural identity, especially for diasporic subjects as well as postcolonial ones. The idea of who I am and where I belong can be displayed in the language I speak, for “[e]thnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity—I am my language,” as Anzaldúa argues (Anzaldúa 1990: 207). As Sneja Gunew plainly expounds, languages, with their inflections and rhythms, as much as their overt signification, invariably function to remind one of home in palpable ways. It is the meanings we first encounter in a specific language that structure our later lives psychically and physically and at the same time provide a prophylactic against the universalist claims of other linguistic meaning structures. (42)

Through the wording, diction, and accent in the linguistic expression, one’s identity inescapably and stealthily leaks out. That is to say, language plays an outstanding and remarkable role in the construction of cultural identity: “the interdependence of language and identity—you are the way you speak” (Ashcroft 54). Chamcha in The Satanic Verses, for instance, embodies the close affiliation between language and identity, for at the beginning of the novel he strives to construct a white, elegant, and Standard English voice so as to conform to his identification with Englishness. He makes “an attempt to become ‘more English than the English’” (Ashcroft 4) in this lukewarm and indifferent country of England which is like “a peculiar-tasting smoked fish full of spikes and bones” (Rushdie 1988: 44). Marrying Pamela, whose voice is “that hearty, rubicund voice of ye old dream-England” (Rushdie 1988:
is also part of the grand identifying project. As the foremost and straightforward tool of articulating one’s cultural identity, language should not be overlooked in the study of cultural hyphenation, hybridity, and liminality.

In addition to the close relation between language and cultural identity, the impact of power on the representation of language also fascinates postcolonial critics and becomes one of the key issues in postcolonial discourse. Postcolonial critics exert themselves to delve into the linguistic transformation, interpenetration, fusion, and even abrogation in the course of imperial colonization. In *The Empire Writes Back*, a quintessential work examining the postcolonial aporia as well as its counterattack, the connection between power and language in the course of colonization is thoroughly and explicitly clarified:

One of the main features of imperial oppression is control over language. . . Language becomes the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of “truth”, “order”, and “reality” become established. (7)

To put it simply, language is, more often than not, manipulated by the authorities and hence it is sutured into the imperial power structure and its ideology. Language is a means to make the colonized obediently remain within the colonizer’s grid. Importing its own language into the indigenous colony, the dominant, authoritative, and insolent imperial center establishes its own metropolitan language as standard, supreme, and civilized. In comparison with decent, elegant, and standard English of the imperial center, the indigenous and peripheral language of the colonized is marginalized, debased, and demonized as vulgar, lowbrow, and impure. The person who has the power to dominate language is definitely the one who rules the roost, as the manticore in *The Satanic Verses* believes. In the bizarre Detention Center where Chamcha as well as myriads of postcolonial mutants and chimeran monsters is detained, the manticore candidly expresses the postcolonial predicament: “[The imperial colonizers] describe us, . . . That’s all. They have the power of description, and we
succumb to the pictures they construct” (Rushdie 1988: 168). The power of linguistic description, or representation, to predominate over the colonized conspicuously brings to the fore the relation between language and power.

With the disintegration of the empire and the subsequent collapse of colonial system after the Second World War, the entire world goes through a reorganization, reconstitution, and reconstruction of social order and power structure. The long-standing and unconquerable hierarchy is rethought. Then, dominated, subordinated, and marginalized postcolonial subjects progressively become aware of the possibility to reverse the formerly debased position. Rebelling against the imperial oppression and defilement, postcolonial subjects endeavor to elevate their self-esteem by appropriating the given linguistic rules and diction, or by “seizing the language of the centre and re-placing it in a discourse fully adapted to the colonized place” (Ashcroft 38). In order to throw away the colonial privilege, the distinction “between what is proposed as a standard code, English (the language of the erstwhile imperial center), and the linguistic code, english, which has been transformed and subverted into several distinctive varieties throughout the world” (Ashcroft 8) is regarded as the first strike. Characterizing the situation as a battle between capitalized, dominant English and lowercase “english”, postcolonial critics intend to discover the boundless possibilities and potentialities lurking in “english”. As a guerilla launched by the militia, the uncontrollable usage of “english” (with the lowercase e) from the periphery is the primary medium for postcolonial subjects to resist the intrusion, exploitation, and domination of the imperial center. Then, what follows is a series of linguistic appropriation and transmutation. As Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin expound in *The Empire Writes Back*, 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.” (Rao 1938: vii). Language is adopted as a tool and utilized in various ways to express widely
differing cultural experiences. (38-39)

Through the process of appropriation, the privileged centrality of imperial language is dismantled, shattered, and de-centered. In *The Satanic Verses*, Rushdie makes use of exquisite techniques of expression to demonstrate how postcolonial subjects “[write] back to the centre” (Ashcroft unpaged acknowledgments) in the process of appropriation, including the aesthetics of stammer, untranslated words, and the deliberate transmutation of Standard English. With stammer, untranslated words, and the transmutation of Standard English, Rushdie launches a blasphemous action to contaminate the pure language of English. Moreover, he manifests that in the process of contamination, something new is able to emerge.

Serving as a technique of linguistic appropriation, the stammer in postcolonial writings not only generates a sense of entertainment but also insinuates the underground counterattack launched by the colonized. In postcolonial writings, postcolonial subjects’ stuttering out the imperial language is anticipated to represent their improbable and involuntary acclimatization when the dominant language of the imperial center is imposed on the impotent and vulnerable language of the periphery. Since the correlation between language and identity is though of as self-evident and undoubted, the stammer in postcolonial subjects is emblematic not only of the separation from the site of imperial domination but also of the re-evaluation and reconstruction of their own identity. With confusing and indistinct words stuttered out, postcolonial subjects undermine the authoritarian and overbearing Standard English. That is, these indistinct words underline the power of resistance and subversion from the linguistic space of liminality.

In *The Satanic Verses*, the characterization of S. S. Sisodia, whose name mocks his stuttering, is to suggest the destabilization and inefficacy of the initial privileged English and to illustrate the postcolonial agency in the process of linguistic appropriation. When having a discussion with Alleluia Cone on the problem of English, Sisodia states
The trouble with the Engenglish is that their hiss hiss history happened overseas, so they dodo don’t know what it means.—The secret of a dinner party in London is to outnumber the English. If they’re outnumbered they behave; otherwise, you’re in trouble. (343)

On account of Sisodia’s exaggerated and entertaining stutter, the serious discussion is tinged with an atmosphere of ridiculousness, absurdity, and irony. With the grand history of the imperial West decomposed by the “hiss hiss history” (343) of postcolonial subjects, the imperial power structure camouflaging in the linguistic system is exposed, unsettled, loosened, and reconstituted. The aesthetics of stammer, serving as “a way of destabilizing and deterritorializing meaning structures,” (Gunew 44) betrays the inextricable and irretrievable alienation between postcolonial subjects and the imperial language. Besides, it turns out to be a major tool through which postcolonial subjects disintegrate, remold, and reconstruct the standard version of imperial language. Furthermore, Sisodia’s statement about the trouble with England reminds readers of the history of imperialism. He argues that “The trouble with the Engenglish is that their hiss hiss history happened overseas, so they dodo don’t know what it means” (Rushdie 1988: 343). The emphasis on history happening overseas echoes Williams’s viewpoint in *The Country and the City*. Williams contends that “the rural experience, the working country, had gone” (Williams 299). With the blooming of capitalist mode of production and the flourishing development of globalization, colonies in the Third World are doomed to be suppliers for the Western center, which is the major consumer. Subsequently, the rural experience in Britain will be “a marginal thing” (Williams 299). For instance, the popular afternoon tea is provided by the tea plantation in the colony. In the process of drinking, the sweat and toil of slaves and laborers are obliterated and so does the brutal history of imperialism.

In addition to the stammer, Rushdie also makes use of untranslated words to communicate the exotic atmosphere. In *The Satanic Verses* and many other novels, Rushdie
is skilled in utilizing untranslated Indian words as well as the transmutation of Standard English to challenge the common reading fluency, and to construct an atmosphere of foreignness, exoticness, and bizarreness. Bearing in mind that “words somehow embody the culture from which they derive,” (Ashcroft 52) Rushdie, as a third world writer in the imperial center, intends to distinguish his works from canonical, traditional English novels and to make the sense of Indianness stealthily and clandestinely leak out by using untranslated Indian words. The untranslated words frequently used in The Satanic Verses, such as “bhai”, “yaar”, and “maharaj”, remind readers that it is a novel explicitly distinct from classic, canonical, and orthodox English traditions. Thus, it is by no means consistent with the conventional reading experience. As a technique of cultural marking, untranslated words are utilized to represent the unique and peculiar culture they signify, for they are a kind of “widely used device for conveying the sense of cultural distinctiveness” (Ashcroft 64). Consequently, The Satanic Verses, which is imbued with a sense of foreignness through the usage of untranslated words, represents its own cultural uniqueness and demonstrates “an aesthetic sensation of dissonance between English and whatever is being described or narrated” (Rockwell 598). Furthermore, the usage of untranslated words intensifies Bhabha’s ideas of cultural untranslatability and incommensurability. Due to the “foreignness of languages,” (Bhabha 163) there is an untranslatability, or incommensurability, existing between diverse cultures. Placing much emphasis on cultural differences, incompatibility, and incommensurability, Rushdie uses untranslated words to “signify a

14 Owing to the diversity and multiplicity of Indian languages, the untranslated words that Rushdie uses in The Satanic Verses include Hindi (“yaar”, “Vilayet”, “ayah”, “baprebap”, and etc.), Urdu (“gazal”, “haramzada”, “kurta”, “nawabs”, and etc.), and Arabic (“djellabah”, “Allahu Akbar”, “kahin”, “shareef”, and etc.). Rushdie even uses Latin (“testudo,” “Arabia Odorifera”, “primus inter pares”, and etc.). Utilizing a great many foreign words distinct from Standard English, Rushdie makes the text tinged with an air of exoticness and outlandishness. Besides, it is not difficult to detect that several Indian and Arabic terms (“shareef” into sharif and “maharani” into maharaja) have their counterparts in English in the present day. These words remind us that English in itself is a language which is progressively changing and which is also a product of hybridization (Ashcroft 40).

15 In the article, “The Shape of a Place: Translation and Cultural Marking in South Asian Fictions,” Daisy Rockwell elaborates on the concept of cultural marking: “Cultural marking is a practice of referring to culturally specific items, ideas, or concepts within a text to identify that text as inhabiting a particular culture” (597).
certain cultural experience which they cannot hope to reproduce,” (Ashcroft 53) for there exists an indecipherable, impenetrable, and unbridgeable space of liminality between the source culture and the target culture. In other words, the usage of untranslated words implies “a gap of silence” (Ashcroft 55) which foregrounds and consolidates the alterity of the Other and which hinders the colonial language from traversing. Moreover, untranslated words propel readers, on the one hand, to recognize the language written in the text as “an/Other language” (Ashcroft 64) for the author, and on the other hand to engage with and to deal with that outlandish, alien, and exotic culture in which these untranslated words have meanings. Furthermore, untranslated words undermines the primarily stable, consolidated, and normative imperial language and “overturns ‘concentric’ notions of language which regard ‘Standard’ English as a ‘core’” (Ashcroft 47). Through the intermingling and intersection between untranslated Indian words and Standard English, Rushdie unravels the authoritative, rigid, and inviolable linguistic structure of Standard English. Besides, he exhibits the boundless and inventive potential in the linguistic intersection. In the opening air crash scene in *The Satanic Verses*, for instance, Rushdie makes the hilarious, hysterical, and frenzied Gibreel yell out these words: “Proper London, bhai! Here we come!” (3). The untranslated Indian word, “bhai”, which is inserted into an English sentence vividly heralds the overwhelming advent of Indian-Pakistani immigrants into metropolitan London. Moreover, it also challenges and overthrows the inviolability of Standard English.

In addition to untranslated words, Rushdie uses such writing technique as transmutation of Standard English to indicate not only the cultural distinctiveness but also the instability and hybridity of English words in the text. In a word, the transmutation of Standard English can be divided into two forms: reshaping of original English words and the Indian appropriation of Standard English. Rushdie reshapes, reforms, and reconstitutes Standard English, only to estrange English words from themselves. For instance, the bizarre combination of “angelicdevilish,” (5) “thenagain,” (17) and “thenandthere” (21) flavors
English words with a sense of foreignness and bizarreness. It destabilizes the static structure of the imperial language and compels it to undergo a process of radical transformation. This technique somehow alienates readers from common reading experience, and therefore forces them to ruminate over the connotation behind the omitted space. Then, Rushdie demonstrates that Indian words are capable of appropriating and transforming Standard English into a language that is suited to the occasion. For instance, Rushdie’s combining Indian words with English words, such as “mummyji,” (17) concretely displays the concept of linguistic hybridity. The blending of British “Mummy” and Indian suffix “–ji” represents the encounter between the West and the East and the mutual transformation and interpenetration of different languages in the process of encounter.

Moreover, by means of the misspelling, “vilas,” (13) Rushdie manifests the tendency in India to quaintly and bizarrely twist English words. That is to say, in order to make them suitable for the Indian context, the reshaping, transformation, and appropriation of English words represent the agency of postcolonial subjects and the potential capacity to destabilize, overturn, and challenge the normative, authoritarian, and dominant linguistic system of the imperial center. Making use of such cultural marking techniques as untranslated words and transformation of Standard English, Rushdie exhibits “not a subversion of language alone, but of the entire system of cultural assumptions” (Ashcroft 48).

Celebrating “hybridity, impurity, intermingling,” (Rushdie 1991: 394) Rushdie in The Satanic Verses stresses that through the process of mélange and hodgepodge, the unprecedented, the distinctive, and the new are able to come out. Moreover, the phenomenon of hybridity suggests the breaking down of the established, rigid, and obsolete conventions. In The Satanic Verses, Rushdie highlights the potentiality of hybridity not only through its impact on the cultural identity of diasporic subjects but also through the idiosyncratic representation in linguistic expression. In a nutshell, the resistant power of hybridity, culturally or linguistically, consists in its ability to interrogate, to criticize, and to
unravel the initially consolidated and authoritative center through the intertwining, hyphenating, and intermingling action. Then, in the process, newness comes into the world.