THE SATANIC VERSES: A SEMANTIC KALEIDOSCOPE
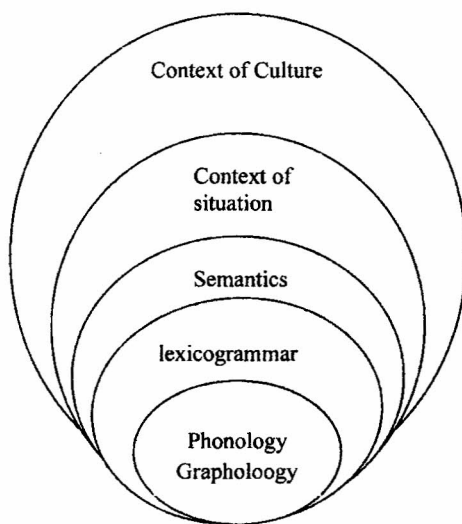
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This research draws upon M.A.K Haliday's Systemic Functional Grammar to investigate the status of blasphemy with regard to the Islamic context in Salman Rushde's novel *The Satanic Verses*. In employing Systemic Functional Grammar, the study favours transitivity and interpersonal analysis at the level of lexicogrammar. Transitivity and Interpersonal analyses are deployed to highlight the complex of relations involved in the characters portrayed in the novel.

This analysis pays close attention to both character and event in order to show that a narrative like, Rushdie's is a kaleidoscope in which a number of possibilities are brought together by varying meaning connections reflected at various levels of the grammar. In using the Hallidayan semiotic model, I enter the lexicogrammatical level in order to realize the semantics of a few selected extracts from the novel. At the lexicogrammatical level, the focus of interest is the clause. The clause is viewed as a unit, which has three different structures: the textual, the interpersonal and the experiential, each expressing a different semantic component—these components are mapped on to one another to produce a single wording.

The Muslim outcry against *The Satanic Verses* stemmed from their conviction that the author of the novel had distorted the beliefs and practices enshrined in the Quran. However, I believe that the controversy that ensued and the hurt expressed by those who have read the novel may have partly risen from the misconception of the aesthetic conventions deployed by the writer. This analysis shows the wealth of information that surface when the text is subjected to a lexicogrammatical analysis. In the exploration of the projected episodes, the evaluation will show that the novel is a semantic kaleidoscope, which offers a number of angles of interpretation that the Islamic world can make use of, to their advantage. This exploration aims to focus on some of the strengths of the novel, which those who oppose the work have opted to look upon as weaknesses.

Model

Halliday's Semiotic

of Language

Context of Culture

Context of situation

Semantics

lexicogrammar

Phonology Grapholoogy