

East-West Encounter in Salman Rushdie's Novels

*Sandra
Huisman*

“How stories travel,
what mouths they end up in!”
(Salman Rushdie, *The Moor's Last Sigh* 3)

"Place[s] where worlds collide, and flow in and out of one another, and washofy away" (226). In this way Aurora Zogoiby, a very talented and eccentric artist, explains the peculiarity of her art to her son, Moraes Zogoiby, the male hero of Salman Rushdie's last novel, *The Moor's Last Sigh*. As a matter of fact, the same images may be used to illustrate and explore the author's own writings, trying to infer a flexible cross-cultural pattern and an explicative mapping of his novels capable of reflecting the very peculiar dynamics at work in each single novel as well as their extraordinary stylistic and artistic qualities.

Terms and concepts such as collision, interweaving and, of course, "translation", may indeed be very useful as organizing and explicative tools of Rushdie's "palimpsest-art" (Rushdie, *Moor* 226; Brook-Rose).

His are palimpsest-novels, full of apparently irreconcilable elements, *terrae novae*, "imaginary homelands," worlds of the mind. They are places where different sounds, images and words are "brought together into creative contact" (Brydon 191), producing a new kind of writing and a new concept of mimesis. *Searching for* new and better maps of reality, new maps with which to understand the world and to create a unified, coherent sense of self, nationality or ethnicity, the author, owing to his multiple roots and cross cultural imagination develops multiple connections and interactions between

different styles, genres, codes, images and languages. He blends these elements together into something entirely individual, shaping a kind of writing which stands at the border between Eastern and Western traditions and conventions, where the art of the oriental storyteller is blended with a diversity of postmodern literary techniques such as intertextuality, metafiction, irony, pastiche, fragmentation, multiplicity of voices and digressions. The intermingling of fiction and reality, the playful imagination, the logic of the dreaming mind are all means by which the author tries to undermine referentiality, to destabilize the real, changing our perceptions of how things are and pointing to other possible worlds.

In his novels the author gives voice to the stresses and tensions that characterize the multicultural experience of exile in general and the immigrant experience in Britain in particular, looks back to and tries to reclaim his lost countries Pakistan and India, at the same time interrogating the making of colonial discourse, decolonising and rewriting colonial and postcolonial history, inhabiting the absences, the gaps in the record, the blind spots of the western record. As a consequence of his physical, linguistic and cultural displacement, the *migrant writer* Salman Rushdie writes from an ex-centric perspective and, dealing with regional, national, ethnic and linguistic multiplicities, tensions and divisions, reflects in the novels the struggle between the cultures within himself and the *policultural influences* at work upon our societies.

Like many authors of the so-called new literatures in English (Caribbean, South African, Canadian, Australian, etc.), Rushdie points to the legitimacy of a hybrid, heterogeneous kind of writing. It is a sort of writing that goes beyond any ethnocentric or eurocentric discourse, surprisingly reflecting, in its never-ending *liminary pendolarism*, the multicultural and multilingual tensions inherent in the author's divided, displaced sensibility, and, at a macro level, inherent in our global and sometimes schizophrenic society.

Like many *migrant writers* living in England, "political exiles, first-generation migrants, affluent expatriates whose residence here is frequently temporary, naturalized Britons, and people born here who may never have laid eyes on the subcontinent" (Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands* 17), or many *multicultural writers* living in Europe or elsewhere,¹ who all share the same experience of uprooting and migration from the periphery to the centre (or vice versa) of our global world system, the memory of his lost country (and

technique. They represent a stylization that enables other voices to be assimilated recurring to “the vivid surrealism of... images and the kingfisher brilliance of...colouring and the dynamic acceleration of... brush” (Rushdie, *Moor* 227).

Fragmentation and the dynamic centrifugal movements are counter-balanced by various centripetal strategies and by the author’s ability to *translate* ideas and experiences into new and meaningful images. The *epic form* (Moretti) of each novel reflects the author’s own movement towards linguistic, stylistic, ethnic and cultural multiplicity, and makes possible his *search for* a narrative structure and a narrative form and for “a suitable voice to speak in” (Rushdie, *Grimus* 32). Starting from *Grimus* the author develops a kind of written postmodern orality, where postmodern literary strategies and oral storytelling conventions are fused and confused into something entirely individual.

Multiply-embedded narratives and multiple digressions allow the *contrapuntal juxtaposition of paradoxical dualities*, of different worlds and elements, giving the impression of a world/history/story still in evolution. Whereas the author’s/narrator’s act of writing/telling is a kind of race against time/death and corresponds to the reader’s/listener’s act of reading/listening, the collaboration of the reader/listener is the necessary condition that makes the existence of text and meaning possible.

Unreliable narrators change and deform History in their act of re-writing and re-reading, showing us the tricks employed in the making/unmaking of History/his-story/story.² The fragmentary narration produced by the author’s hyperbolic vision may be perceived as an instantaneous whole only if experienced sequentially, through reading.

Magic realism, surrealism and fabulism, the act of translating ideas into images, become in the author’s hands an instrument for elaborating reality, a tool of analysis, a way of exploring historical, social and political circumstances and of inventing new and meaningful images, images appropriate to an artist. Like the protagonist of *The Free Radio*, in *East, West*, he employs “huge and mad energy” in that “act of conjuring reality ... an act of magnificent faith, out of the hot thin air between his cupped hand and his ear” (Rushdie, *East, West* 32). And using again an image taken from *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, we may say that “The epic-fabulist manner...expressed her [Aurora’s/Rushdie’s] true nature,” “encouraging her [him] to pay attention once again not only to her dreams but to the dream-like wonder of the waking world” (174).

The logic of the dreaming mind, the playful imagination, style/history/protagonists grotesquely metamorphosing, cinematographic metaphors, are all means by which the author — “pitting levity against gravity” (Rushdie, *Satanic Verses* 3) — tries to challenge our perception of how things are and points to other possible worlds/interpretations/points of view.

In a world literature where limits and boundaries are meaningless and literature evolves through *multiple collisions, contaminations and interactions*, the notions of *tradition* and *author* also change. If we consider literature as a kind of “game with complete information” (Lyotard 95) then each invention or movement depends on the ability to connect things that were previously supposed not to be connected, depends on the creativity of each game player, on the ability to let things cross and recross these boundaries, to go beyond these limits and make things *collide*, contaminate, hybridize, fertilize each other. Literary tradition is no longer seen as something rigid and static, but something extremely lively, fluid, metamorphic, colourful and warm. This is what Haroun Khalifa, the male hero of *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, sees on the elusive moon of Kahani, an immense kaleidoscope containing all the stories already told with all their possible variants, including those that have not yet been invented:

He looked into the water and saw that it was made up of a thousand thousand thousand and one different currents, each one a different colour, weaving in and out of one another like a liquid tapestry of breathtaking complexity; [...] these were the Streams of Story, [...] each coloured strand represented and contained a single tale. Different parts of the Ocean contained different sorts of stories, and as all the stories that had ever been told and many that were still in the process of being invented could be found here, the Ocean of the Streams of Story was in fact the biggest library in the universe. And because the stories were held here in fluid form, they retained the ability to change, to become new versions of themselves, to join up with other stories and so become yet other stories; so that unlike a library of books, the Ocean of the Stream of Story was much more than a storeroom of yarns. It was not dead but alive” (72).

Haroun and the Sea of Stories’ cultivation metaphor associates the teller function with that of preserver of the richness, variety and inventiveness of the imagination. The author’s craftsmanship is identified with that of the oral storyteller Rashid Khalifa — named by his rivals “the Ocean of Notions”

or “the Shah of Blah” — a sort of magic *word juggler* who is able to juggle lots of different tales together and keep them going “in a sort of dizzy whirl” (Rushdie, *Haroun* 16). Stories, he says, should be above all fascinating and entertaining. *Midnight's Children's* cooking metaphor or the metaphor of chutneification of history is related to the idea of artistic craftsmanship, to the ability to *blend* different elements together:

“To pickle is to give immortality, after all: fish, vegetables, fruit hang embalmed in spice-and-vinegar; a certain alteration, a slight intensification of taste, is a small matter, surely? The art is to change the flavour in degree, but not in kind; and above all (in my thirty jars and a jar) to give it shape and form — that is to say, meaning. (I have mentioned my fear of absurdity.) One day, perhaps, the world may taste the pickles of history” (461).

In *The Moor's Last Sigh* the pictorial metaphor exemplifies the very peculiar artistic quality of Aurora Zogoiby's painting. “The ideas of impurity, cultural admixture and *mélange*” (303) indeed characterize her painting as well as Rushdie's writing. And, as the hero/narrator/narrated Moraes Zogoiby comments, they “were in fact capable of distortion, and contained a potential for darkness as well as for light” (303). It is impossible not to think of the consequences of Islamic fundamentalism on the author's private and public life. Scraps of memory, fragmentary elements freed from their original ties, become “dancing grain” (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 166) and are refunctionalized in a never-ending encyclopaedic frenzy by the author-bricoleur's act of *literary translation*. The result is, like Aurora's, a kind of “palimpsest art”: “Call it Mooristan” (226), suggests Aurora Zogoiby about her painting,

“Place[s] where an air-man can drown in water, or else grow gills; where a water-creature can get drunk, but also chokeofy, on air. One universe, one dimension, one country, one dream, bumpo'ing into another, or being under, or on top of. Call it Palimpsestine” (226).

Using the cooking metaphor, we could say that different elements leak one into another like flavours when you cook. In the novels the textual stylistic literary pointillisme and fragmentation are counter-balanced by the author's development of contrapuntal and binary

structures and/or axis and by the many summaries and images that accompany each protagonist/event.³

Stripped and suspicious of history, migrants are forced by the loss of their roots, language and social norms (“three of the most important parts of the definition of what it is to be a human being” (278), comments Salman Rushdie in an essay on Günter Grass) “to find new ways of describing himself [themselves], new ways of being human” (278).

Searching for a narrative structure and a narrative form, in each of his novels the author develops a style and a structure that somehow reflects *en abîme* its content.

Grimus, published in 1975, is the author’s first attempt to create a truly hybrid novel. Flapping Eagle is the prototype of the exiled, like the “man rehearsing voices on a cliff top: high whining voices, low gravelly voices, subtle insinuating voices, raucous strident voices, voices honeyed with pain, voices glinting with laughter, the voices of the birds and the fishes” (32), “looking for a suitable voice to speak in” (32).

His quest, his mountain-climbing symbolizes the author’s own movement towards cultural and linguistic plurality and is clearly a metaphor for the migrant’s social climbing. Flapping Eagle may indeed be considered the hero of a nascent study of migrant identity (see Cundy) and his voyage of discovery, both literal and figurative, is a metaphor for the problems of cultural integration in society. Archetype of the *wanderer* and the *storyteller* as well as outcast from birth, “stripped of his past, forsaking the language of his ancestors for the languages of the archipelagos of the world, forsaking the ways of his ancestors for those of the places he drifted to, forsaking any hope of ideals in the face of the changing and contradicting ideals he encountered” (32), he is still unable to use “what has once been his curse to his advantage” (32), he loses his balance and falls.

“He was the leopard who changed his spots, he was the worm that turned. He was the shifting sands and the ebbing tide. He was moody as the sky, circular as the seasons, nameless as glass. He was Chameleon, changeling, all things to all men and nothing to any man. He had become his enemies and eaten his friends. He was all of them and none of them” (31).

Although in a very stylized way, in this novel the author already confronts the ideas of roots, history⁴ and memory: "It is the natural condition of the exile," he says, "putting down roots in memories. Flapping Eagle knew he would have to learn these pasts, make them his own, so that the community could make him theirs. He entered K in search of history" (107). *Grimus'* Livia Cramm, La Femme Crampon is the prototype of *The Satanic Verses'* Rosamund Diamond, the clutching woman who with her endless verbiage and daydreaming hypnotizes Gibreel Farishta, kept prisoner with invisible chains. The brothel, as in *The Satanic Verses*, is a place where refuge, asylum is given.

In this novel the author freely mixes contemporary authors, historical personages and legendary beings in an international compendium of myth. The main *cross-cultural transference* is the *translation* of the central theme of the book, taken from a Sufi poem of the XIIth century titled *The Conference of Birds*, into a western convention. In the myth of the mountain of Kâf twenty-nine birds set out to find the Simurg on the mountain where he lives. When they finally reach the peak they find out that they themselves are, or have become, the Simurg. In *Grimus* Rushdie also already shows the potentialities of his very peculiar ear for dialogue and his propensity to manipulate poliphony.

In *Midnight's Children*, published in 1981, the author's search for a narrative form and structure mirrors India's "national longing for form" (461) and democracy; her struggle to free herself from the colonial legacy is reflected *en abîme* by Saleem Sinai's struggle for survival.⁵ As in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, text, biography, history/History, autobiography are constructs of imagination and experience, and of language. Language expresses here identity in its most profound sense, recreating time and experience. If Saleem Sinai, who is falling apart and has to confide to paper before he forgets, rearranges events, misremembers dates, and creates causes and effects for real events that are utterly fictional (he is himself a fiction after all), also Moraes Zogoiby, the hero/narrator/narrated of *The Moor's Last Sigh*, fallen out of the garden of Paradise, having migrated from the security of his childhood into the depths of Bombay Central lockup and into the nightmare of Islamic fundamentalism and Vasco Miranda's fictional Mooristan, has been obliged to write the saga of his family if he wants to survive: "Every day, after that, he brought me pencil and paper. He had made a Sheherazade of me. As long as my tale held his interest he would let me live" (421).

In both novels Rushdie *translates* into English prose the rhythmic flow and high figurative content of Indian languages, myth, fable and belief in joyful profusion to suggest India's many-tongued diversity. Funny puns, word tricks, understatements are created by the author's act of juggling fragments of different words together, playing with the potentialities inherent in the words' sound content. Literary pointillisme is naturalized, as it is designed to echo the Indian talent for non-stop self-regeneration. Rushdie shows an endless capacity for connection, echo, multiplicity. Like Saleem Sinai, he is "obsessed with correspondences".⁶

India's postcolonial divided sensibility — the tensions between the archaic past and the technological present, Western intellectualism and Indian tradition, urban values and rural customs — is reflected *en abîme* by Saleem's nocturnal Anglepoise-lit writing and by the struggle to transform the European mode of writing dominated by the universe of "what-happens-next" (38) into a more acrobatic postmodern written orality. As the act of writing and reading coincide, literary creation and the inherent rehabilitation of a post-colonial/post-modern identity are a phenomenal collective will, a dream, a fantasy shared by both reader/listener and writer/narrator/teller. The novel's fragmentary and open structure, and its centrifugal movements, is counter-balanced by Leitmotifs, summaries, recapitulations alternating rhythmically and images produced by the author's literary translation. *Bipolar axes* with their dynamic correlative/opposite relation, contribute to create multiple recurring centripetal movements. Moreover, as in *Grimus*, many are the Eastern and Western intertextual *literary cross-references*.⁷

In *Midnight's Children*, as in *Shame* and in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, History/story is re-written, re-told and interpreted by a grotesquely deforming/deformed *peripheral hero/narrator*. If Saleem, born at the precise instant of India's arrival at independence⁸ and Moraes, the "Post-Mature ... Baby Gargantua Zogoiby" (*Moor* 144) are both freaks of nature, and Omar Khayyam is "a fellow who is not even the hero of his own life; a man born and raised in the condition of being out of things...Dizzy, peripheral, inverted, infatuated, insomniac, stargazing, fat" (*Shame* 25), all three share the same uncertainty, uneasiness and shame about their paternal/colonial origins/legacy.

Both Saleem Sinai and Moraes Zogoiby are obsessed by the need to give sense and to interpret what happens to and around them. Their exceptionality makes them feel isolated and sad, makes them feel exiled. "The

first lessons of my Paradise were educations in metamorphosis and disguise” (*Moor* 154), says Moraes sadly about himself, and comments: “I never thought of myself as a super-hero, don’t get me wrong; but with my hand like a club and my personal calendar losing pages at superspeed I was exceptional all right, and had no desire to be” (152).

In *Shame*, as in *Midnight’s Children*, *The Satanic Verses* and *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, time and perspective are deformed and altered before our eyes: living persons are treated as mythological figures, real events are transformed, *translated*, into imaginary legends.

In *Shame* Pakistan itself, like India, is an *imaginary country*, a failure of the dreaming mind: “The city’s old inhabitants ... had been given a bad shock by independence, by being told to think of themselves, as well as the country itself, as new. Well, their imaginations simply weren’t up to the job, you can understand that” (81). Pakistan’s neo-colonial failure is translated, projected metaphorically, into a narrative structure and form that builds itself through multiple juxtaposed, and basically self-contained, parables and fables.

The strong political allegorising, the parodic and ironic treatment of the permanence of the sacred text, the transformation of newspaper clippings, current events, anecdotes into magic tales, are all means by which the author interrogates History and its making. The result is a postmodern fairy tale, a grotesque parody of Pakistan’s postcolonial independence. Postmodern pastiche and the conventions of oral storytelling (juxtapositions, digressions, summaries) *converge* creating a very peculiar “palimpsest art” that is nevertheless also a history of the present. Knowledge is subverted by delirium, visionary violence and tragicomic epic exaggeration; through intensified metaphors the author offers the reader an analysis of the Islamic revival and its relation to the interests of political fundamentalism and their relation to social and sexual repression.

In the novel the male Raza/Iskander plot is counter-balanced by a feminine plot involving Bilquis, neurotic wife of Raza, Rani,⁹ long-suffering Penelope-like wife of Iskander and Sufiya Zinobia, brainsick daughter of Raza and wife to Omar. As the author says,

“the women seem to have taken over; they marched in from the peripheries of the story to demand the inclusion of their own tragedies, histories and comedies, obliging me to couch my narrative in all manner of sinuous complexities, to see

my 'male' plot refracted, so to speak, through the prisms of its reverse and 'female' side" (173).

All the novel is built around the shame/shamelessness *axis*: "meteorological conditions at both these poles are of the most extreme, ferocious type. Shamelessness, shame: the roots of violence" (116). The polarities repression/freedom reflect the *emotional displacement* of the female characters and their schizophrenic condition and the country's *political displacement*.

"And Pakistan, the peeling, fragmenting palimpsest, increasingly at war with itself, may be described as a failure of the dreaming mind. Perhaps the pigments used were the wrong ones, impermanent, like Leonardo's; or perhaps the place was just insufficiently imagined, a picture full of irreconcilable elements...now versus then: a miracle that went wrong" (87).

If the term Pakistan itself is a word born in exile and *borne-across*, *trans-lated*, brought East and "imposed... on history; a returning migrant, settling down on partitioned land, forming a palimpsest on the past" (87), the term *sharam*, of which *shame*, says the narrator, is a wholly inadequate translation, has its roots in the East. To write about it, about shame, the author had to "let the idea breathe its favourite air. Anna, deported, repatriated to a country she had never seen, caught brain-fever and turned into a sort of idiot" (116).

Sufiya Zinobia is the embodiment of the *trans-cultural ghosts* of three stories occurred in "Proper London" and reported by the media: the story of Anna or Anahita Muhammad allegedly dishonoured by a white boy and butchered by her father; the story of an Asian girl beaten and humiliated in a late-night underground train by a group of white teenage boys; a boy with his skin on fire found blazing in a parking lot. Sufiya is the embodiment of chaos, violence and political and social repression, an exterminating angel, that prowls around the edges of the story for most of the time and is nevertheless the monstrous referent and ultimate ground of all its dark vision.

In *The Satanic Verses* the narrative form and structure reflect *en abîme* the author's as well as the protagonists' stereoscopic and contrapuntal vision. The novel indeed continually oscillates between East and West, India and England, the multicultural cities of Bombay and London and the

fictional cities of Titlipur and Jahilia. It confronts the problems of cultural hybridity, migrant consciousness and the sense of estrangement that characterize the immigrant experience in Britain. It also tries to explore the nature of revelation and the power of faith from a sceptical point of view.

India's and Pakistan's longing for form, independence, democracy becomes in *The Satanic Verses* the migrant's longing for identity and integration. As a matter of fact the novel begins with a radical act of the imagination, an "endless but also ending angelicdevilish fall" (5) that symbolizes the fall of the migrant in general and in particular Gibreel's and Saladin's final passage to London, the London of their dreams (proper London, Vilayet, Alphaville, Babylondon, Ellowen Deewen) and their metamorphosis into "Satanic Migrants."

"Up there in air-space ... most insecure and transitory of zones, illusory, discontinuous, metamorphic, - because when you throw everything up in the air anything becomes possible - wayupthere, at any rate, changes took place in delirious actors that would have gladdened the heart of old Mr Lamarck: under extreme environmental pressure, characteristics were acquired" (5).

Transmutation, migration, reincarnation, metamorphosis, fall, mutation: from an old self to a new one, from country to country, from language to language, from man to goat, from man to archangel.

The Satanic Verses is an immense postmodern pastiche, where multiply-embedded-narratives rhythmically alternate in a *paradoxical juxtaposition* of different worlds and "dimensions".¹⁰ It may also be considered as an immense theological, an inhuman blob, an oneiric novel, or a cross-cultural version of a surreal 1001 Nights crammed into a week of evenings. Daydreaming and drifting (see Albertazzi) are two ways in which the author blurs the limits between reality and fantasy, as well as between sanity and insanity, good and bad, this and that, in a hallucinatory comic feast of creative frenzy and inventiveness. The novel, London and Bombay are all places of wonder, where "Lives that have no business mingling with one another sit side by side upon the omnibus" (314) an immense kaleidoscope where differences converge, *collide*, and are fused and confused. Persons, things and words are transformed in front of our eyes, each element is hyperdetermined, assumes a new meaning as the result of the metamorphosis of its form.

“The myopic scrivener” Salman Rushdie, “Ooparvala...The Fellow Upstairs,” clearly explains to Gibreel Farishta that “The rules of Creation are pretty clear: you set things up, you make them thus and so, and then you let them roll” (408).

The streets of “Proper London in the fabled country of Vilayet across the black water and far away” (35) become a mythological battleground where a modern *Mahabharata*, or *Mahavilayet*, is played out by metropolitan freaks, bizarre creatures, mutants.

Many are the visual, thematic and stylistic intertextual references recurring in this novel: from Truffaut to Dickens, from Kafka to Borges, from Ovid to Lucretius, from Defoe to Fanon, from the *1001 Nights* to *The Ocean of the Streams of Stories*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Koran*.

East, West, published in 1994, is a collection of short *cross-cultural stories* written, as usual, with great ingenuity and wit. If the first and the second section are clearly set respectively in East and West, the third section titled *East, West* is set in Britain, although the protagonists are of subcontinental origins or live a life *suspended* between East and West. In the first story titled *Good Advice is Rarer Than Rubies* England is described as “a great nation full of the coldest fish in the world” (8) the Englishmen are identified with the worst stereotypes and Lahore is a better place to live in than “Bradford, London” (14). Significantly Rehana prefers staying in India to following a man to whom she had been promised when she was nine years old. “It was an arranged engagement” (14), she explains to Muhammad Ali, who offers her “free-gratis” a false British passport outside the Consulate gates.

By contrast in *The Harmony of the Spheres* the protagonist, an Indian migrant, suffers from a disharmony of his personal spheres and tries desperately to make “a bridge between here and there, between my [his] two othernesses, my [his] double unbelonging” (141). As he says, “In that world of magic and power there seemed to exist the kind of fusion of worldviews, European Amerindian Oriental Levantine, in which I desperately wanted to believe” (141). Whereas in *Chekov and Zulu* two subcontinental diplomats, whose mission is to “explore new worlds and new civilisations” (151), play out Star Trek fantasies and collect Star Trek memorabilia: “Captain Kirk and Spock dolls, spaceship models — a Klingon Bird of Prey, a Romulan vessel, a space station, and of

course the Starship *Enterprise*" (150). But in their Star Trek fantasies somehow they *trans-transport* their post/anti-colonial feelings as well as Zulu's ethnic extremist opinions.

In the *Courter* damaged Mixed-Ups buy furniture or curtains for imaginary homelands, *translate* the articulacy and subtlety vanished from their speech into the game of chess or sing "cover versions of recent hits by Chubby Checker, Neil Sedaka, Elvis and Pat Boone" (180) as if they were lullabies to a baby called Scheherazade.

Finally, the author's last novel, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, defined by Kate Kellaway as *The Book of Exile* is "a book that *metamorphoses* in each of its four movements. It moves from the marginal to the metropolis, from high society into the depths and then steps out of the frame, goes abroad" (8).

To Moraes Zogoiby's fall corresponds the ruin of his family - in his autobiography *the Moor* indeed narrates the bloody and turbulent saga of his divided family - as well as the destruction of Bombay, which in the novel really blows up, torn apart by ethnic violence. If Moraes is "a real Bombay mix", neither a Catholic nor a Jew, in short a "Bastard", and Bombay is "the bastard child of a Portuguese-English wedding, and yet the most Indian of Indian cities" (350), Aurora Zogoiby, in her attempt to create a romantic myth of the plural, hybrid nation, uses in her paintings "Arab Spain to *re-imagine* India, and this land-sea-scape in which the land could be fluid and the sea stone-dry" is "her metaphor [...] of the present, and the future" (227). Like Rushdie's it's a "a vision of *weaving*, or more accurately interweaving" (227). "And to begin with, pass the pepper" (4).



Note, Notes, Anmerkungen



- 1) See, for instance, Naipaul, Ishiguro, Kureishi, Jelloun, Ondaatje, Brand, Mistry, Sicvorecky, Mukherjee, Nasrin, Jhabvala, Selvon, etc.
- 2) "Like an incompetent puppeteer, I reveal the hands holding the strings," says cunningly Saleem Sinai, the paradoxically peripheral hero of the

- author's second novel, *Midnight's Children*, to the reader/listener (*Midnight's Children* 65).
- 3) Saleem Sinai significantly comments: "Is this an Indian disease, this urge to encapsulate the whole of reality? Worse: am I infected too?" (*Midnight's Children* 75).
 - 4) "Writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt" (*Imaginary Homelands* 10).
 - 5) Says Saleem Sinai: "Please believe that I am falling apart. I am not speaking metaphorically... I mean quite simply that I have begun to crack all over like an old jug... This is why I have decided to confide in paper, before I forget (we are a nation of forgetters)" (*Midnight's Children* 37).
 - 6) "Similarities between this and that, between apparently unconnected things" he says "make us clap our hands when we find them out. It is a sort of national [and stylistic] longing for form" (*Midnight's Children* 300).
 - 7) From *Die Blechtrommel* by G. Grass (Saleem and Oskar are both freaks, physically deformed and morally reprehensible, and endowed with magical powers; both hide themselves in a washing-chest; the perforated sheet is the rushdian counterpart of Anna Bronski's many skirts), to Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, from the multiple digressions and the preoccupation with nose-size, to rabelaisian numeric, excremental, olfactory exuberance, to Forster's Dr Aziz, to the proustian madelaine (that becomes the rushdian "chutney of memory," "open-sesame," "abracadabra," "chutney... green as grasshoppers").
 - 8) "On the stroke of midnight" when "Clock-hands joined palms in respectful greetings". "Thanks to the occult tyrannies of those blandly saluting clocks I had been mysteriously handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country," he says (*Midnight's Children* 9).
 - 9) She's the silent author of "An epitaph of wool. The eighteen shawls of memory" saying "unspeakable things which nobody wanted to hear": "The Shamelessness of Iskander the Great" (*Shame* 191).
 - 10) In this way in *Grimus* Virgil Jones explains to Flapping Eagle the existence of potential "simultaneous dimensions": "The dimensions come in several varieties, you see, he said. There are million possible Earths with a million possible histories, all of which exist simultaneously. In the course of one's daily life, one weaves a course between them, if you like, but that does not destroy the existence of pasts or futures we choose not to enter. What has happened to you is that you have fallen into a different historical continuum" (*Grimus* 53).



Zitierte Literatur

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