Rushdie’s Cross-Pollinations
Rushdie’s Cross-Pollinations

By

Dana Bădulescu

With a Foreword by Petya Tsoneva and Three Subchapters on Quichotte

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Rushdie’s Cross-Pollinations

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I did most of my research on Salman Rushdie’s writing and career between 2010 and 2013 as a grante of the Postdoctoral Programme Project called “Applied social, human and political sciences. A programme of postdoctoral research training and scholarships in the field of human and political sciences.” Between March and May 2012, I carried out my research at the Center for InterAmerican Studies (CIAS) of the Karl Franzens University of Graz. I am deeply indebted to Professor Roberta Maierhofer, the director of CIAS, and to my colleagues Dr. Ulla Kriebernegg and Dr. Barbara Ratzenböck for their warm hospitality, their constant support and the challenging conversations we had together. My thanks go to Junimea, an old and prestigious Romanian press that published this book in its first edition in 2013. I am beyond grateful to my colleague Dr. Petya Tsoneva from the St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria, for her insightful reading of my book, for writing a preface to it, and for alerting me about Cambridge Scholars Publishing. I am thankful to all the editors of the magazines that gave me their written permission to publish my articles in this new edition of Rushdie’s Cross-pollinations. My special thanks go to Cambridge Scholars for their professional communication, their kind support and the advice they gave me throughout the publication process. Last but not least, I thank my family, who have always put up with my long absences from home and my immersion in activities which do not include them.
The “reading” of borders has become a recent prolific preoccupation of the academic world. The more recent need for a precise formulation of terms such as “global” literature and “world” literatures sets a finer scale of attuning local voices to the polyphony of cultural interactions. Borders have turned out to be instrumental to addressing the vitality of local literatures and their adaptability and welfare in the larger, cross-border community of letters. Translatability and the market economy are now more clearly seen as factors in the circulation of local literatures; “notional map-making” failed to produce viable cartographic forms; and Exophony, the condition of writing in languages that are not the writers’ native tongues, is currently a university discipline. The world – and the world of letters – has indeed become dense with movement and a desire for ways of describing it.

Dana Bădulescu’s book *Rushdie’s Cross-Pollinations* is a timely publication that seeks to synchronise the enhanced rhythm of global mobility and the tools, forms and strategies of its literary representation. The collection comprises a series of critical articles that discuss a variety of intrinsic and contextual parameters of Salman Rushdie’s work. One of the rewarding merits of this critical undertaking is its structural coherence – in spite of the broad gamut of perspectives on Rushdie’s comprehensive fiction, they are skilfully linked along simultaneous lines to produce a multi-level analysis of Rushdie’s spectacular position in the world of writing. The range of critical concerns spans octaves of theoretical investigation into Rushdie’s modern and postmodern literary modes and strategies. Employing the theories of transculturalism and cultural translation, Bădulescu discovers the multiple ramifications of identity politics in Rushdie’s works. She looks into Rushdie’s postcolonial subversive strategies and into the writer’s reflection and refraction of memories. The author of this book pays close attention to how the themes of origins and destinations, home and homelessness, physical and metaphysical occurrences, collective historical time and private stories underpin Rushdie’s *oeuvre*. She also has a keen eye for literary influences (James Joyce). The research insightfully registers the crossover of collective bodies and selves. Ultimately, Bădulescu’s astute analysis reveals that binary pairs like nations and individual lives, the natural and the supernatural, the East and the West form heterotopic, hybrid entities. “Cross-pollinations” – a conceptual term that modulates the degree...
of negotiable borders in Rushdie’s work – suggest liquid, cross-border and air-borne relationships between places, cultures, times and identities in his novels.

Claiming such relationships is possible within the liquid maps of Rushdie’s fictional worlds. In fact, liquefaction is most efficiently achieved by means of working with transparent tools – mirrors (significantly broken – as memories are), camera lenses and the air (frequently crossed in the course of the characters’ displacements). In The Ground Beneath Her Feet even the ground becomes liquid as it melts under the sway of the quaking elements. The characters who survive in Rushdie’s novels are either able to balance their own liquid identities against this liquid space, or they are engulfed by it. Vina Apsara, one of the three protagonists in The Ground Beneath Her Feet, is swallowed up by an earthquake. However, Vina’s disappearance is not rendered as death – her presence morphs into various continuations, including the figure of a young singer.

This proliferation of metamorphic transformations brings to mind a statement from Rushdie’s later rework of the Arabian Nights. In it, the mobility of the travelling self is imagined as the jinnia, a magical being, and expands to the point of being able to enter new shapes and change existing ones:

A jinnia, remember, is made of fireless smoke. If she chooses to shed her female form she can move through the two worlds like smoke, pass through any door into any chamber, through any aperture into any crevice, filling the spaces she enters as thoroughly as smoke fills a room; and then, if she so chooses, she can solidify again, taking on the character of the places she has entered […]. (Rushdie, 2015, 284)

This “magical” capacity of contraction and expansion, where the flexible, trickster-like body passes from one state to another, can be seen as the epitome of migrant postcolonial writing that enters the previously established dominant modes, genres and patterns of expression, which contain its subversive impulses from within. Bădulescu observes these strategies of appropriation, but she incorporates more angles of critical awareness through her research. Thus, apart from being a “tool of postcolonial self-assertion,” subversive camouflage serves to explore the “doors,” “apertures” and “crevices” that become liquid borders as they allow the entrance and exodus of difference; they are samples of “moving space,”

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1 The novel in question is Two Years Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Nights (2015).
namely a space of navigation that produces the impulse for crossing. It becomes clear that migratory writing is not a writing that merely travels from one place or identity to another, but is able to navigate the space between the two into a route, “a horizon, a destination never quite reached, like the boundary of the world” (Clingman, 2009, 22). Bădulescu taps into a rich, critical repertoire in order to clarify the forms this movement may take in Rushdie’s fiction. Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman is a constant reference in her reasoning. His models of social space and the “patterns of nomadism which have supplanted those of settlement consecrated by ‘solid’ modernity” (Bădulescu, 2013, 66) enable her reading of the constant border crossings in the characters’ ventures, including Rushdie’s own cultural relocation, as instances of cultural translation and as sources of liquefaction. She wisely observes, quoting Bauman’s seminal work *Liquid Modernity*: “If people are in a continuous transformation along their journey through their existence as modern individuals, communities are as loose and liquid as individuality. […] Both individualities and communities are liquefying and liquid, and like liquids they are mobile, they fill space but ‘for a moment’ and they travel light” (Bădulescu, 2013, 64–65). Liquidity, that jinn-like ability of individual and collective bodies to move, renders borders particularly elastic, porous and benevolent.

Going further along this lane of negotiation, Bădulescu’s critical undertaking assembles a multifaceted system of analysis that links together forms of liquid crossing and the ensuing constructions of places, times and identities. In Rushdie, they are located in the “beyond” of borders, that enigmatic “elsewhere” which Bauman identifies as a “non-place” and Michel Foucault as a “heterotopic site.” Being hybrid, “non-places” configure “the many versions our world has” (Bădulescu, 2013, 67) and the many versions of individual and collective identities. Rushdie’s settings and characters are ample examples of this creative principle – biographically and mythologically defined, their journeys generate hybrid, optically conjoined and volatile locations that resemble floating clouds, merging together and flowing in and out of each other. Bombay, London, New York and Jahilia, to mention a few settings, mirror and refract one another. They are made of the same material: the liquid substance of being everywhere and nowhere at the same time. This proliferating multiplicity enamours and plagues individual identities as well, and it marks the problematic inscription of collective stories in the individual consciousness (Saleem Sinai in *Midnight’s Children*), the amorphous existence of parents in their children.

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Foreword

(India/Kashmira in Shalimar the Clown) and the general concept of cultural multiplicity within political borders. Borderline identities turn out to be teeming with creative potential and burdened by the fear of falling apart.

In her seminal study Scandalous Bodies: Diasporic Literature in English Canada, published in 2009, Smaro Kamboureli, a Greek-born Canadian academic and postcolonial critic, attempts to define the migrant subject’s ambivalent position and finds herself in a critical impasse. In trying to identify the reason for this predicament, she calls forth Walter Benjamin’s “angel of history” – angelus novus (1969), whose gaze is always “turned toward the past” (Benjamin, quoted in Kamboureli, 2009, 7). Because of his limited vision, Homi Bhabha observes that the angel is the “guardian angel of the critics of nationalism” (quoted in Kamboureli 7), the keeper of origins, traditions and firmly-fixed boundaries.

Kamboureli’s troublesome relationship with the angel of the past problematises the ability of his unifocal gaze to communicate between the past and present, the here and there, which makes it likely to result in a distorted perception of the present: “We live in the shadow of his open wings … in the midst of the debris that he only gazes upon from afar” (8). As a postcolonial and diasporic critic, she confesses that she can “empathize with his predicament” (8) to the extent that her own problematic relationship with the past allows her to do so. However, she places her trust in a different kind of angel: one that she finds in Wim Wenders’ film Wings of Desire (1987) and that hovers in-between past and future. Wenders’s angels are migrant figures who dwell inside the walls of Berlin’s public library and are deprived of their angelic omnipotence. Expelled from heaven after an attempt to persuade God to abandon humanity in 1945, they are confined to a state of restricted freedom, visibility (only children can see them) and field of action. While longing to find their way back home, they are likewise eager to enter the human world and live as humans in bodily shapes. The ambiguity of their position, then, consists of a “longing for what was lost, but also for what has not yet been experienced. […] this is not the kind of nostalgia that turns one’s gaze backwards, towards some kind of originary point that might be nostalgically mythologized because it has been distanced or lost … It is, instead, a nostalgia for what is not yet known …” (Kamboureli, 2009, 9). One of the angels decides to plunge into the human world, exposing himself to the vertiginous forces of transformation which shape him into a fully visible and painfully material creature. His transformation, Kamboureli observes, entails numerous signs of inevitable and desired loss – thinning hair, missing wings and angelic armour traded for human clothes – that speak of the “inevitability of translation, of acculturation, of (ex)changes” (Kamboureli, 2009, 13) that accompany his
displacement. Given the fallen angel’s position as an allegory for the diasporic and, generally, migrant subject’s condition, she concludes that he “inhabit[s] a space where he [is] both displaced and at home … at odds with, yet steeped in history” (Kamboureli, 2009, 17).

In fact, the “fallen angel” route seems to have literally materialised in Rushdie’s life with the publication of his notorious novel *The Satanic Verses*. He experienced a very particular relationship between the bios (life) and gráphos (writing) in his post-fatwa life and literary quests, which suggests a kind of reverse “re-writing” of the author by his book. The publication of *The Satanic Verses* transformed him, by and large, into the author of a “demonic” text. In his latest autobiographical novel *Joseph Anton*, which narrates his life using a disembodied third-person voice, Rushdie contemplates on his traumatic experience in the following way, “He was the person in the eye of the storm, no longer the Salman his friends knew but the Rushdie who was the author of *Satanic Verses*, a title subtly distorted by the omission of the initial The […] ‘Satan Rushdy’, the horned creature on the placards carried by demonstrators […] the hanged man with protruding red tongue […]” (Rushdie, 2012, 5). As a consequence of these events, Rushdie had to spend more than five years of restricted life under police surveillance and face the delimiting finality of controversial label. This experience sharpened the subversive angle of the writer’s vision, enabling him to observe and articulate the world from “underneath.” Significantly, it is there that he embarked on his next novel, the allegorical children’s book *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, in which he rehabilitates the necessity of an unlimited, sea-like writing space corresponding to the writer’s freedom of speech.

Migration’s affinity to writing is the subject of Søren Frank’s study, which illuminates some essential points of conjunction between the two activities. The closest correspondence lies in the “nomadic” drive in writing, or the desire to render the “transcendental homelessness of the idea” in “a literary form” (Lukács quoted in Frank, 2008, 21). The statement that “all fiction is homesickness” (George, 1999, 1) slightly changes the prism of this definition by adding a nostalgic gesture towards the past, proposing the presence of a “home” that can be re-accessed through fiction. While both perspectives “tilt” the notion of fiction to different angles, they come together in the awareness that “writing,” like “roaming,” amounts to a flow-like movement in which time and space bend to produce new forms and cross multiple lines.

Within such contextual limits, the migrant writer can easily be envisaged as a major intellectual figure of recent times. Salman Rushdie both articulates and exemplifies this position through his life and writing.
Dana Bădulescu’s book, an exercise in liquid map-making, offers us a trustworthy roadmap for reading his worlds.

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Works Cited

Rushdie’s Cross-Pollinations originally came out in November 2013 at Junimea Press. In its first edition, the book gathers articles written and published in several academic journals in 2011, 2012 and 2013; one that was to be published in 2014; and an article published in “Philologia” several years before, in 2006.

I have always been fascinated by Salman Rushdie’s enthralling stories, and also by his public charisma, which allowed me to dedicate three years (between 2010 and 2013) to reading and assessing his achievements in the larger context of postcolonialism, postmodernism, transculturalism and, more recently, in terms of the global novel. Needless to say, the Rushdie “virus” develops into a never-ending addiction to his stories, for which there is no cure but further reading.

In the Preface to the first edition of this book I confess that Rushdie’s novels and essays started to come into being, and then to increasingly take hold of my mind not because their author is one of the most amply read contemporary writers, but because they were born of love. Rushdie is one of those writers whose stories are always about some kind of love. That love is for not one but several cultures, not one but several languages. The love may be seductive, treacherous, dangerous, deceptive or elusive, but it is essentially a love for reading, writing and listening to stories told in the most enamoured tones.

I chose the phrase “cross-pollination” for my title for a reason which is also related to love. One treasures and echoes the words in those books which have been brought to life by the act of reading. In his essay “Is Nothing Sacred” published in the collection Imaginary Homelands, Rushdie recalls that he “grew up kissing books and bread” (Rushdie 1991, 415). The gesture inspires respect and even love. In addition, “cross-pollination” is a phrase Rushdie uses in his title essay when he stresses that ours is:

[...] a time when the novel has never been a more international form (a writer like Borges speaks of the influence of Robert Louis Stevenson on his work; Heinrich Böll acknowledges the influence of Irish literature; cross-pollination is everywhere); and it is perhaps one of the more pleasant freedoms of the literary migrant to be able to choose his parents.” (Rushdie, 1991, 20-21)
As far as he is concerned, Rushdie accounts for his own parents to be of “a polyglot family tree” (Rushdie 1991, 21). Thus, the palimpsest, which guides Gérard Genette’s approach to literature in terms of “textual transcendence” (Genette, 1997, 1), is the encompassing principle of this book. Starting from Genette’s definition of “transertextuality,” a manifestation of “textual transcendence,” as “all that sets the text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts” (Genette, 1997, 1), I delve into the textual layers of Rushdie’s novels and essays. This engages me in what Genette, aware of the erotic undertones of the word, calls “a palimpsestuous reading” (Genette, 1997, 399), which leads “one who really loves texts” to “wish from time to time to love (at least) two together” (Genette, 1997, 399).

Aware of the richness and depth of the palimpsest metaphor, Rushdie weaves The Moor’s Last Sigh, the novel which marked his “disenchantment” with postcolonialism (De Loughry, 2020, 13), in palimpsestic layers of refined arabesques and ekphrastic effects.

In this edition, the order of the chapters follows the trajectory of a journey through Rushdie’s cross-pollinated gardens. The metaphor of reading as journey or quest, a pleasant but taxing activity which is not without pitfalls and perils, is suggested in the first place, by Rushdie’s writing, which, apart from being about some kind of love, is also about some kind of travelling or about the tension between travelling and staying put. The force of this metaphor left its poignant impression upon me when I first read Umberto Eco’s Six Walks in the Fictional Woods, a book based on the Italian writer’s Norton lectures. Inspired by Borges’s spirit, Eco stretches the metaphor to encompass “a garden of forking paths,” where “everyone can trace his or her own path, deciding to go to the left or to the right […] and making a choice at every tree encountered” (Eco, 1994, 9).

The author of this book is first and foremost a reader, and her journey starts with the first chapter, “Rushdie’s Sorcery with Language,” based on an article published in Philologica Jassyensia in 2012. Its topic was inspired by the magic process of “chutnification” as described by Saleem Sinai in Midnight’s Children, which I connected with the artistic transfiguration through palimpsesting and ekphrasis in The Moor’s Last Sigh, the “disorienting” magic in The Ground Beneath Her Feet and the many layers of arty sorcery in The Enchantress of Florence. Now, some eight years after the publication of the article included in the book, my sense that literature is indeed “magic” and “sorcery,” with deep roots in the times when the arts, in their syncretism with religion, were a part of ritualistic practices, is firmly grounded in yet other writers’ accounts of its magical nature. Referencing and quoting Robert Graves’s The White Goddess, John Berryman’s Dream Songs and Rainer Maria Rilke’s “Archaic Torso of
Apollo,” the American poet Edward Hirsch sees poetry as “stored magic” (Hirsch, 1999, 5-6). Witchcraft, ghosts and ghostly doubles, supernatural events, nightmarish scenes and bizarre effects create the mystic atmosphere of magic realism; at the same time, they project the novels written by Rushdie in the last decade of the twentieth century and in the new century and millennium onto a global axis.

In chapter 2, “Rushdie’s Joyce,” originally published in Analele Științifice ale Universității “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” of Iași in 2012, I argue that both Joyce and Rushdie can be regarded, by dint of their cosmopolitan choices, as transcultural writers. To a very large extent, Rushdie “translated,” culturally speaking, Joyce’s work, appropriating it and engaging in an intertextual dialogue with the Irish writer’s iconoclastic spirit.

Chapter 3, “Meddling with the Muddling Rushdie Affair” draws on an article published in Linguaculture in 2012, and it looks into the planetary scandal stirred by the fatwa, one of the most far-reaching, dramatic literary events of the late twentieth century. In 2012, even after more than 23 years since the “unfunny Valentine,” as Rushdie calls the fatwa in Joseph Anton (Rushdie, 2012, 11), was sent to him, the scandal, also known as the “Rushdie affair,” has not ceased radiating a whole spectrum of problems, which are still part of our global culture today.

Chapter 4, “Body, Sensuousness, Eros and the New Aesthetic Order from Schiller to Rushdie,” draws on an article published in Text Matters, a journal of literature, theory and culture based at the University of Łódź, and traces a whole counter-tradition of the culture-building Eros from Schiller’s ideas in Letters of the Aesthetic Education of Man, through the Pre-Raphaelites’ eroticism and the nineteenth fin de siècle aestheticised homoeriticism, to reach the eroticism of Rushdie’s novels. I deem this to be a new stage of the imagination infused with Eros. In that chapter I look into how two centuries of aesthetic modernity have been shaped by the reality principle proposed by Schiller, and how that essentially erotic model has suffered changes in time to culminate in Rushdie’s writing.

Chapter 5, “Liquid Bridges in Salman Rushdie’s Writing,” originally published in the proceeding volume Language, Culture and Change IV Intergenerational, Interdisciplinary and Intercultural Bridges in 2012, looks into the transnational and transcultural poetics and narrativity in several of Salman Rushdie’s novels. The groundbreaking theories of modernity provided by Zygmunt Bauman in Liquid Modernity and Liquid Times, and those provided by Homi Bhabha in The Location of Culture and Arjun Appadurai in Modernity at Large, endorse new perspectives on Rushdie’s transnational poetics. These theoretical approaches reinforce aspects of liquefying frontiers, self-translation and border crossing as
transgression, which I consider to be essential to Rushdie’s oeuvre. I concur with Ursula Kluwick’s approach that, as a consequence of the reader’s defamiliarisation with the notion of quotidian normalcy, “the magic realist universe is a fluid space in which boundaries between familiar and supposedly clear-cut separate entities collapse” (Kluwick, 2012, 77).

Chapter 6, “Rushdie’s Postmodernist Twist” was originally published in Ethos, a magazine on the theory of culture, in 2012. There I make a point of Rushdie’s eclecticism, his awareness of the fictitiousness of the text as a language construct and his reliance on myth and dreams in his non-mimetic narrative mode. Rushdie’s original combination of postcolonial opposition and play informs a postmodernist attitude that blurs Hassan’s distinction between “ludic” and “oppositional” postmodernism, and his pervasive metafictional strategies articulate a formula that expresses the writer’s hybrid and metamorphic culture. Postmodernism is one of the many sides of Rushdie’s writing worth exploring in conjunction with aspects of postcolonialism and magic realism.

In Chapter 7, “Rushdie’s Postcolonial Satire,” published in the same Ethos magazine in 2014, I tackle Rushdie’s writing in the light of Bakhtin’s theory of carnival and the carnivalesque, dialogic imagination, polyphony and heteroglossia, which are keys that may unlock the rich treasure-trove of Rushdie’s novels Midnight’s Children, The Moor’s Last Sigh, The Ground Beneath Her Feet and Fury. I focus on the carnivalesque blend of body and the space outside it, which is either Bombay or New York, or both, in some of the novels.

In Chapter 8, “From Rushdie’s Novel of Disorientation to His New York Novels” I look into The Ground Beneath Her Feet, a novel which came out in April 1999, when the old century was coming to a close and a new one was not born yet. Both temporally and spatially, the novel is a limbo drawing on Eastern and Western myths and archetypes, redolent of a transcultural sensitivity. New York is the new setting in Rushdie’s real life, and also the setting of the novels he published in the last twenty years or so, including his latest, Quichotte, which came out on the 29th of August 2019. My treatment of Rushdie’s Fury is based on the article “Salman Rushdie’s ‘Unfettered Republic of the Tongue’ in Fury,” published in Philologia, a Serbian magazine, in 2006. In this last chapter and in the Afterthought, I update my approach to Rushdie’s novels written in the wake of The Satanic Verses in the light of a new turn, i.e. the global novel disenchanted with postcolonialism and embracing a cosmopolitan world shaped by migration, media and technology.

Dana Bădulescu, Iași, May 2021
CHAPTER I

RUSHDIE’S SORCERY WITH LANGUAGE

The real language problem: how to bend it shape it, how to let it be our freedom, how to repossess its poisoned wells, how to master the river of words of time of blood: about all that you haven’t got a clue. How hard that struggle, how inevitable the defeat.
—Salman Rushdie, The Satanic Verses

I.1. Finding a Voice

Time and again, in his writings and interviews, Rushdie speaks about a writer’s voice and about how hard it is for a novelist to find it. In his essay “Is Nothing Sacred?” (Imaginary Homelands) Rushdie argues that “the most wonderful of the many wonderful truths about the novel form is that the greater the writer, the greater his or her exceptionality” (Rushdie 1991, 425). According to Rushdie, “exceptionality” in novel writing, which is so difficult to attain, is a matter of handling language: “the geniuses of the novel are those whose voices are fully and undisguisably their own, who, to borrow William Gass’s image, sign every word they write” (Rushdie 1991, 425-26). “Exceptionality” may seem an ambitious goal when a writer struggles with one language to make every word his own, but for Rushdie, who is a transnational and transcultural hybrid writer, literature is “the arena of discourse, the place where the struggle of languages can be acted out” (Rushdie 1991, 427). Rushdie is not the writer of one place, one culture or one language. His writings claim several places, cultures and languages across continents.

Everything started in Bombay, where Rushdie was born and raised until the age of fourteen. As he accounts in writing, Bombay was a cosmopolitan city where languages, cultures, styles and fashions blended. The narrators of Midnight's Children and The Moor's Last Sigh, who are born in Bombay, are literally filled with the city’s polymorphic composition. In Midnight's Children, Saleem Sinai feels that “consumed multitudes are jostling and shoving inside” him (Rushdie, 1995, 9). Several languages and
cultural identities wage their battle within Rushdie’s characters – most of whom are also narrators reflecting on their world for the reader – as fiercely as they wage it within the writer himself. However, these linguistic and cultural “multitudes” need to be contained; they need at least something that may look like a one-language medium, and this is where English comes in as the most convenient solution. In his essay “Imaginary Homelands,” Rushdie points out that one of the problems affecting Indo-British writers “has to do with attitudes towards the use of English,” which “needs remaking” for their own purposes (Rushdie 1991, 17). English is used by these writers despite their “ambiguity” towards it. There is a cultural and political implication of this self-conscious attitude towards the language, and that, according to Rushdie, amounts to cultural and linguistic freedom, which should be the consequence of these writers’ postcolonial independent status. In the name of, and on behalf of, the whole community of Indo-British writers, Rushdie states in “Imaginary Homelands” that “to conquer English may be to complete the process of making ourselves free” (Rushdie 1991, 17).

I.2. “We are translated men”

However, “embracing” the English language in the case of these postcolonial Indo-British writers is an act of transculturation at the level of language, which is very similar to translation. In the opening essay of his collection *Imaginary Homelands*, Rushdie sees himself, his fellow Indian writers writing in English, and most of his characters as what he calls “translated men” (Rushdie, 1991, 17). This act of “translation,” with all its cultural implications, is these writers’ means of “forging” a “British Indian identity” (Rushdie, 1991, 17). Looking at the issue of language and the writer’s task of “forging” it from this angle, the result is an echo of Stephen Dedalus’s determination “to forge in the smithy of [his] soul the uncreated conscience of [his] race” (Joyce, 1993, 276); while Rushdie was born in Bombay, he was later “borne across the world” (Rushdie, 1991, 17), in other words in a space which, linguistically speaking, is translation. The writer explains: “The word ‘translation’ comes, etymologically, from the Latin for ‘bearing across.’ Having been borne across the world, we are translated men” (Rushdie, 1991, 17). It is interesting and intriguing to note that what Rushdie actually does in such statements is “translate” a linguistic process into an ontological one: writing means being translated. The notion of “translated men” is of course a metaphor, but when looked at from an etymological perspective, one realises that the Greek word for “metaphor” has the same meaning as the Latin word “translatio”: “metaperein” means
“carrying beyond,” which amounts to the same process. Is this translation and the metaphorical status of being a “translated man” a loss or a gain? Rushdie is inclined to look on the bright side, at least linguistically: “It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained” (Rushdie 1991, 17).

Although this space of translation is so fascinating, sometimes one may slip into a crevice, travel back in time and space and dangerously undo one’s carefully translated persona. Saladin Chamcha, one of the protagonists in *The Satanic Verses* who “had shaped himself a voice to go with the face,” flies back to India. While on the plane, he falls “into a torpid sleep” (Rushdie, 1988, 33) and has a nightmare. Woken up by a flight attendant, Chamcha breaks into “the Bombay lilts he had so diligently (and so long ago!) unmade” (Rushdie, 1988, 34). In Chamcha’s case, the translation process has been clearly from an Indian idiom into a British English one that would cover up the original. Losing his British speech, Chamcha fatally relapses into his Indian skin, and the whole journey back home looks like a catastrophic regress, turning the nightmare into a pathetic, comedic return of the repressed in the heated fancy of the unmade-remade Indian: “How had the past bubbled up, in transmogrified vowels and vocab? What next? Would he take to putting coconut-oil in his hair? Would he take to squeezing his nostrils between thumb and forefinger, blowing noisily and drawing forth a glutinous silver arc of muck? […] What further, diabolic humiliations were in store?” (Rushdie, 1988, 34).

Chamcha may fail pathetically to be a perfect “translated man,” but at least he does not have the plight of a narrator. Rushdie’s personal struggles with containing his languages into one polyglot-sounding tongue is projected onto his narrators. He does this to articulate the multitude of cultural identities “jostling” inside him; in other words, to articulate his own predicament as a “translated man.” With every successful narrative voice, Rushdie scores a victory. Saleem Sinai may be the voice with which Rushdie is most pleased of all the voices he has created so far. That preference for Saleem’s voice may be due to the timing of *Midnight’s Children* in Rushdie’s novel-writing career. This is in fact the novel in which, through Saleem Sinai, the writer himself must have felt that he found his own voice to express his “mongrel self,” at last.

### I.3. “Chutnification”

At the very end of *Midnight’s Children*, Saleem speaks about a method which he playfully calls “chutnification.” From this novel on, the pleasure
one takes in reading Rushdie’s fiction and non-fiction books cannot miss
the appetising ring Saleem gives to writing. Although he designedly gives
the impression that he speaks about cooking, Saleem uses the analogy of
Indian cuisine to refer to the new language Rushdie himself has “forged” in
this novel. The best way to get to the essence of his books and enjoy them,
Rushdie implies, is by tasting their exquisite blend of spices and flavours,
which has an Indian name, “chutney,” but which is, in Bakhtin’s phrase,
hetero- and polyglossic. Saleem wonders: “What is required for
chutnification?” (Rushdie, 1995, 460). The answer does not enumerate only
a medley of ingredients, but also the sensual image of “Koli women with
their saris hitched up between their legs” (Rushdie, 1995, 460). Once the
covered body has done its luring trick, the next step is to uncover it.
Striped, the body’s anatomy is scanned with such a keen eye for detail that
its spare parts are metamorphosed into those ingredients, so this new
language sounds not only appetising but appetisingly sexy (or shall we say
“hot”?). What else is needed? Here, language does its further tricks under
the lover’s adoring gaze: “eyes, blue as ice, which are undeceived by the
superficial blandishments of fruit – which can see corruption beneath citrus-
skin; fingers which, with featheriest touch, can probe the secret inconstant
hearts of green tomatoes” (Rushdie, 1995, 460). Mesmerised by this magic
number of linguistic illusionism which beguiles one with its deliciously
sensual metamorphosis of ingredients into beautiful body parts echoing the
ingredients, the reader is now completely seduced and prepared for the
supreme perception given by the sense of smell: “above all” one needs “a
nose capable of discerning the hidden languages of what-must-be-pickled,
its humours and messages and emotions” (Rushdie, 1995, 460). Saleem’s
language here is an “un-English English,” as Rushdie would call it. It is an
English-looking rainbow in whose spectrum of variegated colours
Rushdie’s scrumptious Indianisms blend sensuously with Latinate words in
the English language’s loving embrace. The ending of Midnight’s Children
is not only a “declaration of independence” as far as language and cultural
identities are concerned, but also a completed act of seduction and
conquest.

“Chutnification” leads Saleem to pickling, which is a means of
preservation. Thus, this medley of everyday language is pickled, then
carefully jarred, and “one day, perhaps, the world may taste the pickles of
history,” which may be “too strong for some palates”; whatever their effects
on this or that palate, pickles are “acts of love” (Rushdie, 1995, 461) because
one cares to preserve only what one loves. Rushdie’s new language is
therefore a baby born of love, and the reader is implicitly urged to bear that
concept in mind, and to love the baby of words.
Is this “cooking” method, with all its incredible associations and metamorphic effects, an ordinary recipe? Is Saleem, an ordinary cook? Perish the thought! This is cooking as an act of magic. The whole chapter is titled “Abracadabra,” and the **hypocrite lecteur** is warned against false linguistic presumptions. “Abracadabra” is “not an Indian word at all, [it is] a cabbalistic formula derived from the name of the supreme god of the Basilidan gnostics, containing the number 365, the number of the days of the year, and of the heavens, and of the spirits emanating from the god Abraxas” (Rushdie, 1995, 459).

Indeed, Rushdie’s supreme commandment to his readers seems to be “thou shalt believe in magic,” and words are the very medium of his magic. Those words, as Saleem a.k.a. Rushdie the magician discovers in *Midnight’s Children*, are not the words of just one language. Several languages, as many as needed for the purpose, are magically summoned, and they obediently leap to the magician’s call. In his essay “Rushdie’s Whale,” Rustom Bharucha, an insider of Indian culture, describes the effect of Rushdie’s “chutnification”: “It is as if the Queen’s English has been ‘chutnified,’ fried in sizzling ghee, and dipped in curry” (Bharucha 1994, 160). Bharucha argues that this “appetite” for words is “distinctly Indian”; with tongue in cheek, the critic casually wonders: “Or is it Pakistani? We shall not distinguish between these cuisines” (Bharucha 1994, 160). Wherever the appetite may come from, India or Pakistan, the result of “chutnification” is “a bastardized, hybridized, and more recently Hindi-film-cinematized English that is now almost two centuries old” (Bharucha 1994, 160). The point Bharucha makes here is that Rushdie’s purpose when he deploys this “bastardized” language is not merely to colour his style Indian, but to eventually liberate “Indian English (both the literature and the language) from its false puritanism, its fake gentility” (Bharucha 1994, 161). In other words, as Rushdie himself insists, writing is a political act, and when he writes, language, or in his case languages, serve the purpose of liberating the whole culture from colonial domination.

“The empire writes back to the centre” is Rushdie’s engaging remark, selected by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin in their

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3 Rushdie dedicates a whole essay in *Imaginary Homelands*, which is titled “Outside the Whale” to the idea of writing as a political act. Rushdie’s text is a response to George Orwell’s argument in his 1940 essay “Inside the Whale.” If, through the biblical story of Jonah and the metaphor of the whale, Orwell pleads for detachment from the problems of the outside world, Rushdie argues, in strong opposition to Orwell’s idea: “works of art, even works of entertainment, do not come into being in a social and political vacuum” and “the way they operate in a society cannot be separated from politics, from history. For every text, a context” (Rushdie 1991, 92).
groundbreaking book *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. Thus, Rushdie becomes the emblematic voice of all postcolonial writers who use the former empire’s language to tell their own stories. There are many embodiments of the figure of the artist in *The Satanic Verses*, a book in which “language is courage,” as Jacqueline Bardolph argues in her essay of this title published in *Reading Rushdie* (Bardolph 1994, 209-219). Rushdie is aware that language is not only courage, but also power: it has the power to create, but also to destroy. Throughout her essay, Bharucha shows that “Rushdie’s words can kill” (Bharucha 1994, 165). In *The Satanic Verses*, the Grandee of Jahilia thinks to himself that “the pen is mightier than the sword” when he is in a border-state verging on dream (Rushdie, 1988, 102). Indeed, the words written in *The Satanic Verses*, by which Rushdie meant nothing but fiction, dangerously turned against him. “Chutnification” takes the form of a polyphony where not only words and languages, but also voices merge into the orchestrating narrative voice in *The Satanic Verses*. Like Joyce in *Ulysses*, Rushdie mixes languages, registers and styles, probing into the narrative strategies of bringing them into harmony and letting them sparkle and clash at the same time. Saladin Chamcha, one of the key figures in *The Satanic Verses*, is “the Man of a Thousand Voices and a Voice” (Rushdie, 1988, 60).

The language in *The Satanic Verses* is as “metamorphic” as identities, dreams and visions. “Metamorphic” is a word that contains, in a nutshell, Rushdie’s idea of shifting settings, characters and worlds, and he uses this particular word in later novels, too. More often than not, Rushdie’s language is self-reflexive. There are essayistic passages in *The Satanic Verses* and his later novels in which this new language narcissistically contemplates its own novelty, examining its looks in the mirror of the book’s reflective pages: “How does newness come into the world? How is it born?” (Rushdie, 1988, 8), the voice wonders. This is essentially the “newness” of language, which, by looking at itself in the mirror, explores and discovers itself. At this stage, Rushdie dwells on the self-reflexiveness of language to probe into its expressive potential. Like everything and everybody in Rushdie’s writings, language is not only the result of “fusions” and “conjoinings,” but also “translations.” Being “born,” language is a living thing, and one wonders how it survives, “extreme and dangerous as it is” (Rushdie, 1988, 8).

*The Satanic Verses* is, as the whole planet knows, the novel which consecrated Rushdie beyond dispute as an outstanding contemporary writer in his own “voice.” It is also the novel which stirred a global scandal and put the writer’s life in serious jeopardy. Through Baal the satirical poet,
there is an awareness in the novel of the fact that writing is a dangerous enterprise. Baal muses on the poet’s work, which is “to name the unnamable, to point at frauds, to take sides, start arguments, shape the world and stop it from going to sleep” (Rushdie 1988, 97). So far, the undertaking sounds heroic, but like soldiers on the battlefield, the poet may be wounded; Baal knows it, and he continues to muse: “And if rivers of blood flow from the cuts his verses inflict, then they will nourish him” (Rushdie, 1988, 97). If the poet’s work may be, as it often is, dangerous and transgressive, there is something in the poet’s nature which transcends this realm of contingency soaked in blood, something of the kind of magic which makes the poet rise above the pettiness and cruelty of the world. Moraes Zogoiby, better known as the Moor and narrator of Rushdie’s next novel The Moor’s Last Sigh, literally finds himself in this situation when the blood flowing from his wounds smudges the words he sets down; there is “blood and more blood,” (Rushdie, 1995, 432) and yet the Moor continues to write the story’s end. It looks as if the whole story were written in blood.


If “chutnification” is Rushdie’s metaphor for his newly created polymorphous language in which several languages blend and clash to eventually meet in the embrace of English, and if writing for a postcolonial writer is metaphorically being a “translated man,” The Moor’s Last Sigh is layered like a palimpsest.

Palimpsest becomes the master metaphor in The Moor’s Last Sigh. This master trope “translates” the text’s hybridity both temporally and spatially. Palimpsest, a term for a parchment on which inscriptions are made after the erasure of earlier ones, becomes a metaphor for the historically layered pluralism and hybridity of the city of Bombay, for the mosaic of cultures, religions and languages of India and for the layers upon layers of history within the Moor’s own “megalopolis” body in Rushdie’s novel.

Palimpsest becomes the imaginary, fantastic territory in the paintings of Aurora Zogoiby, the Moor’s mother. Throughout her life, the Moor’s artist mother paints these fantastic visions of India, delving far and deep into the past, i.e. uncovering its layers, making associations across cultures, and having the Moor and his fast-growing body in the centre, its “megalopolis” size containing the nation’s multi-layered history. This fantasy world is called “Palimpsestine,” and alternatively “Mooristan,” in the novel.
What Rushdie does by hyperbolising the palimpsest is to foreground writing itself as palimpsestic, or, in Genette’s erotically charged terms, “palimpsestous” (Genette, 1997, 399). Writing is what we read, and words are the medium. They are words which have surfaced into the text from their layered “tombs.” Writing is what contains the novel, the whole “body” of words, but it is not the only art in it. The writing’s palimpsest is a mirror of Aurora’s “Palimpsestine,” a series of paintings.

By describing those paintings, the words in the novel reflect them in ekphrasis. It is significant that the earliest surviving collection of ekphrases is the Eikones of Philostratus. Depicting Aurora’s paintings, Rushdie’s text becomes “iconic” in several ways. First, “ekphrasis” comes from the Greek “ek,” meaning “out,” and “phrasis,” meaning “speak.” Etymologically, the Greek word “ekphrazein” means “to proclaim or call an inanimate object by name.” Ekphrasis is thus a rhetorical device which joins image and word: it visualises the objects, naming them. The modern usage of ekphrasis is that of a literary description of a work of art. Like metaphor (a literary trope) and translation (a linguistic and cultural process), ekphrasis bridges over the visual arts and literature. Aurora’s paintings aestheticise Rushdie’s novel, turning it into an intersection of mirrors.

What Rushdie, the word sorcerer, discovers while writing The Moor’s Last Sigh is how to make words “show” the world, that is, how to make them visual reflections of it. From that point on, his novels are imbrications of literature and the arts in their aesthetic “cross-pollination.”

Writing is not only a political act. This is just one of the many things it is. Rushdie will never deny it; he will even overstate the importance of the connection between these two realms. With writing being a political

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4 Eikones = (Greek) “Images”
6 This is Rushdie’s coinage for an entire web of influences of writers and texts across cultures and ages, which can be applied to his methods of translating the languages of other arts (especially painting, but also the cinema, photography and music) into the language of fiction.
7 In Imaginary Homelands Rushdie reinforces the idea that writing is a political act in several essays. In the essay “Imaginary Homelands” he invokes Milan Kundera’s contention that “the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.” Rushdie sees his own books as “novels of memory,” and in the same essay he states that “writers and politicians are natural rivals. Both groups try to
Act, words are politically loaded, and writing strategies are politically oriented and motivated. The use of palimpsest is another example of the political implications of Rushdie’s writing. However, novel is fiction, literature is art and art transfigures the ordinary and transcends the mundane. It reflects politics and history, but also rises above them. The extensive use of ekphrasis in this novel is Rushdie’s means of transcendence from the shapeless, chaotic mundane into the iconic aestheticised realm of art.

In The Moor’s Last Sigh the eclectic, flamboyant aesthetics of Aurora’s murals is rooted in the Moorish arabesque: a fluid, metamorphic design described in playful “palimpsestuous” (in Genette’s terms) notes. The mother’s work falls into several stages marked by the styles that fuse the most apparently disparate elements in eastern and western cultures. Moraes Zogoiby (the Moor) depicts their enthralling, hypnotic effects:

In the ‘early Moors’ my hand was transformed into a series of miracles; often my body, too, was miraculously changed. In one picture – Courtship – I was Moor-as-peacock. Spreading my many-eyed tail, she [Aurora] painted her own head on top of a dowdy pea-hen’s body. In another (painted when I was twelve and looked twenty-four) Aurora reversed our relationship, painting herself as the young Eleanor Marx and me as her father Karl. [...] Nor was this our only double, or ambiguous, portrait; for there was also To Die Upon a Kiss, in which she portrayed herself as murdered Desdemona flung across her bed, while I was stabbed Othello fallen towards her in suicided remorse as I breathed my last. (Rushdie, 1995, 123)

As Tsoneva shows in Negotiating Borderlines, the Islamic aesthetics of the arabesque, a term invented by the Europeans to refer to the Arabic style onto which they projected their idea of sophisticated erotic desire and imagination, is liquid, defying any form of stasis, and highly adaptable. Aware of its cross-cultural aspects and flexibility, Rushdie employed the arabesque in the ekphrastic descriptions of Aurora’s paintings as a statement make the world in their own images; they fight for the same territory, and the novel is one way of denying the official, politicians’ version of truth” (Rushdie, 1991, 14).

of his own highly metamorphic style. The arabesque, which appeared and flourished in Moorish art, was underpinned by aesthetics of “cultures grafted onto each other and sprouting numerous tangles,” and, “like the ‘grotesque’, another term that registers heterogeneous connectivity, they have evolved to signify chaotic and wondrous heterogeneity rather than the harmony and order of authentic Islamic patterns” (Tsoneva 43). It is because the arabesque is so adaptable that it lent itself to a process of “Europeanization.” The hybridity of Moorish culture and its exceptionally mobile and adaptable aesthetics can undergo an indefinite number of permutations, and Rushdie grafted it onto his own ironic and nostalgic depiction of Palimpstine in *The Moor’s Last Sigh*.

I.5. “ORPHEUS – ROCK’N’ROLL – YES!!”

In an interview about *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, a novel published in 1999 at the end of the twentieth century, Rushdie declares that he planned to write this rock’n’roll novel as early as 1991, while he was still writing *The Moor’s Last Sigh*. Coming across one of his earlier notebooks, he could see he had written “in big capital letters the words: ORPHEUS – ROCK’N’ROLL – YES!!” followed by “several exclamation marks” (Rushdie 1999). The aforementioned is the writer’s explanation for the novel’s birth, which, this time, started from three words and several punctuation marks. The first two words connects the mythical archetype of Orpheus with the contemporary phenomenon of rock’n’roll. Once again, Rushdie’s fin-de-siècle novel brings two worlds, with all their cultural freight, together: the past and present; the old and the new. Spatially speaking, the novel moves across continents in a large sweep, back and forth between South America, India, England and North America. It opens in 1989, in contemporary time. Then it moves back in time to as early as the 1950s, when rock’n’roll was born. In its progress, it forwards the plot again, almost obsessively to 1989, the year of the heroine’s death, and beyond 1989 into the 1990s, close to its publication date.

In the same interview, Rushdie remembers that while writing the novel, he was pleased with the narrator’s voice, which he actually loved because he felt he could “speak through him in new and fresh ways” (Rushdie 1999). Indeed, “the only comparable feeling [he] can remember as a writer” (Rushdie 1999) is having Saleem Sinai tell the story of *Midnight’s Children* twenty years before. The story in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* is told by Umeed Merchant, better known as Rai, an Indian-born photographer who is also desperately, but more or less hopelessly, in love
with Vina Apsara, an American-born rock star of Indian origin on her father’s side.

Rai’s narrative voice gave its author the feeling that it “opened new doors in [his] writing” (Rushdie 1999), as Rushdie declares in the interview. What new doors does this novel open? The fact that the narrator, who is also a character in the novel, is a photographer allows Rushdie to continue to experiment with visual aesthetics in his writing. If the Moor’s narrative reflects Aurora’s paintings in *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, Rai reflects his own photographs, which he depicts in a series of ekphrases throughout the novel, in his own narrative. The experiment is pushed further, as Rai’s photographs and narrative echo and reflect the rock’n’roll music of the two protagonists Ormus Cama and Vina Apsara.

There is a recurrent word in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, repeated “like a mantra,” in Rushdie’s words in the interview: “disorientation.” Looking into the word and breaking it into its components, one gets “dis-orient-ation,” i.e. as Rai explains, the “loss of the East” (Rushdie, 2000, 5). The East is the Orient. In what ways is it lost, and how does language reflect such loss? “Disorientation” is a pun, and when Rushdie employs puns, his linguistic resourcefulness and virtuosity are at their best. The story is literally a “loss of the East” in the sense that the three Indians, Ormus, Rai, and Vina, go West and never return to India. Vina, born in America, is sent to India, where she meets and falls in love with Ormus; she then leaves India again and returns to America. Ormus goes to England, and then, persuaded by Vina, goes to America to be with her. Rai, because their destinies are intertwined in a triangle of love, goes to America. None of them return to India, but what each and every one of them together find in the West is “disorienting” because it is loose, unfixed and uncertain. “The ground beneath their feet” is gradually melting, and it literally shakes several times in the novel, whose successive moments are marked by a series of successive earthquakes of various intensities on the Richter scale. Vocabulary related to “earthquake,” which is recurrent in the novel, abounds: there are “fissures,” there are “cracks,” there are “faults” (also to be read as “errors”), and there are “chasms.” Rai muses: “This is all that will remain of us: our light in our eye. Our shadows in our images. Our floating forms, falling through nothingness, after the ground vanishes, the solid ground beneath our feet” (Rushdie, 2000, 508). However, for Vina “disorientation” also means the loss “of Ormus Cama, her sun” (Rushdie, 2000, 5). Before she dies and loses Ormus in death, she loses him to madness while still alive. Ormus’s “disorientation” is psychologically charged: he develops a “double vision” which gives him access to two worlds at once; later he loses the double vision, but he experiences
hallucinations, he suffers from terrible migraines, and he develops an obsessive fear of catastrophe, which actually happens. The West itself is “disoriented” and tries to find its Orient(-ation?) in the music of Ormus and Vina. The two lovers set up a band, which they call VTO, and “America, disoriented, seeking a new voice, succumbs to theirs. Young Americans, in search of new frontiers, board VTO’s Orient express” (Rushdie, 2000, 379).

_The Ground Beneath Her Feet_ is, as Geetha Ganapathy-Dore argues, “not so much a planetary novel as a creative passage to America” (Geetha Ganapathy-Dore, “An orphic journey to the disorient: Salman Rushdie’s _The ground beneath her feet_,” 2000, 17). Ganapathy-Dore also looks into the meanings radiated by “disorientation” in the novel. The critic contends that “disorientation” is personal, spatial, temporal, ideological and representational and that “the disconcertingly filmic mode in which it is written bears witness to Rushdie’s belief in the capacity of the cinema to save the novel from its _fin-de-siècle_ crisis” (Geetha Ganapathy-Dore, “An orphic journey to the disorient: Salman Rushdie’s _The ground beneath her feet_,” 2000, 17). This is not the first time when Rushdie employs the filmic narrative. Language itself in Rai’s hands is “disoriented”: it loses its “chutnified” flavour, and gains a westernised casualness, an Americanised ring. It sounds colloquial and often slangy, it takes on a sing-song tone, and it references or invents rock’n’roll albums or song titles and lyrics. In the same sentence, Rai’s frame of reference, vocabulary and tone may swerve from (fake) classical references and academic jargon to the beat of a song, whose lyrics “copy” the wishy-washy nonsense of pop: “‘Keep away from her,’ said Ameer Merchant, but once the inexorable dynamic of the mythic has been set in motion, you might as well try and keep bees from honey, crooks from money, politicians from babies, philosophers from maybes” (Rushdie, 2000, 83).

Rai’s voice is highly self-conscious. The photographer sets his whole arsenal of rhetorical skills to the task of telling Vina’s story from the point of view of a “non-belonger.” The reader can almost see Rushdie

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9 For a detailed argument of Rushdie’s use of filmic narrative in _The Moor’s Last Sigh_, see Dana Bădulescu, “Bolovanul istoriei se rostogoleşte în opera lui Salman Rushdie” in “Sfera politică” no. 164 (http://www.sferapoliticii.ro/sfera/164/art11-Badulescu.php). Rushdie’s interest in experimenting with translating visual art techniques into writing started earlier than _The Moor’s Last Sigh_, but The Moor is the first in a series of novels where he commits his writerly skills to further experiments and to an extended use of ekphrasis.

10 The term “non-belonger” is another of Rushdie’s coinages in this linguistically playful novel. Rai glosses: “in every generation there are a few souls, call them lucky or cursed, who are simply _born not belonging_, who came into the world semi-