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Identity and Displacement in Contemporary Postcolonial Fiction

*Identita a vykořeněnost
v současném postkoloniálním románu*

Dizertační práce

vedoucí práce – PhDr. Soňa Nováková, CSc., M.A.

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Prohlašuji, že jsem dizertační práci napsala samostatně s využitím pouze uvedených a řádně citovaných pramenů a literatury a že práce nebyla využita v rámci jiného vysokoškolského studia či k získání jiného nebo stejného titulu.

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Summary

The main objective of this thesis is to present some key issues relevant for postcolonial field of study with respect to two basic areas of interest: concepts of identity and place, respectively displacement in contemporary postcolonial discourse and their reflection in fiction, too. The thesis should provide the potential reader with basic theoretical background based on the most fundamental sources and by means of selected literary works it should support (or disclaim, if necessary) conclusions reached by the most notable theories.

This dissertation work consists of three major parts. In the introduction, apart from providing the motivational, theoretical and literary objectives of the thesis, I cover some basic difficulties that may occur when dealing with the postcolonial field of study. The central part of the thesis can be divided into two parts, each of them consisting of two further sections. The first one, "Identity in Postcolonial Discourse", is focused on one of the key terms in all of postcolonial theory: *identity* and other concepts related with it. I cover the basic development of theoretical reflection concerning this concept, drawing primarily from secondary sources dealing with it. The theoretical part on identity is succeeded by a chapter "Reflections of Identity in the Postcolonial Writing – Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* and Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*, where such issues as practical manifestations of *binarism* and *epistemic violence* are analyzed together with literary depiction of *hybridity* and *mimicry*.

The second theoretical part called "Place and Displacement" covers the issue of displacement. The place concept as such plays a fundamental role together with migration process from the ex-colonial periphery to the ex-Mother Country. *Diaspora* and *diaspora fiction* are the most prominent notions together with *homing in, assimilation*, *cartography*, *imaginary homelands* etc. The displacement theoretical part is supported by close reading of works of Kiran Desai (*The Inheritance of Loss*) and V. S. Naipaul (*The Enigma of Arrival*).

Resumé

Hlavním cílem této dizertační práce je zachytit dva klíčové aspekty postkoloniální teorie – identitu a pojetí místa a vykořeněnosti a jejich reflexi v dílech autorů zařazovaných běžně do kánonu postkoloniální literatury.

Práce se skládá ze tří hlavních částí. V úvodu nastiňuji motivaci práce a teoretická a literární východiska. Samotná dizertační práce je rozdělena na dvě samostatné části. První část nazvaná "Identita v postkoloniálním diskurzu" se zaměřuje na zpracování tohoto pojmu v sekundární literatuře a pojmenování jednotlivých strategií, jež postkoloniální subjekty zaujaly jak v dobách kolonialismu, tak v důsledku imigrace. Teoretická část věnovaná identitě předchází interpretační části, která analyzuje dvě stěžejní díla postkoloniálního literárního kánonu: *Satanské verše* Salmana Rushdieho a *Buddhu z předměstí* Hanifa Kureishiho.

Druhá teoretická část je nazvaná "Koncepty místa a vykořeněnost". Jak je již z názvu patrné, pojednává o jednom z nejdůležitějších témat celé postkoloniální literatury – zabývá se pojetím místa jako takového ve vztahu k postkoloniálním subjektům a dalšími fenomény, které s konceptem místa souvisejí: *vykořeněností,* definicí *domova,* tzv. *bájnými domovy* aj. Tato teoretická část předchází opět analýzám dvou děl, která jsou ve spojitosti s koncepty místa hodna pozornosti, konkr. románů *Dědictví ztráty* Kiran Desai a *The Enigma of Arrival* V. S. Naipaula.

Klíčová slova:

Postkolonialismus, binarismus, Stejný a Jiný, Orientalismus, identita, hybridita, liminalita, mimikry, epistemické násilí, centrum X periferie, migrace, diaspora, koncepty místa, kartografie, vykořeněnost, unheimlichkeit, bájné domovy, diasporický román, kosmopolitní román.

Key Words:

Postcolonialism, binarism, the Same and the Other, Orientalism, identity, hybridity, liminality, mimicry, epistemic violence, centre X periphery, migration, diaspora, place concepts, cartography, displacement, unheimlichkeit (not-at-homeness), imaginary homelands, diasporic novel, cosmopolitan novel.

Obsah

1. Introduction

1.1. Motivation

Postcolonial literature is a notion that has been ignored for a long time in the Czech environment both in theoretical/philosophical and literary circles. The reasons are various. On the one side the very essence of this field of study is closely related to colonialism and its heritage. It is evident that there is a different response in countries that have at least some experience with colonialism as well as post-independence period and that have a great diaspora from ex-colonial countries. Largely absent of this history, the Central European area finds hardly any space for postcolonial literature, which is, frequently labelled as multicultural one, often at present impacted by a rather negative perception of multiculturalism as such, especially after 9/11 2001 and July attacks of 2005 in London that changed public opinion and negatively influenced reception of ethnic literature, mainly the one of Muslim authors.[1]

I came across the novels that might by labelled as postcolonial[2] during my university studies, nevertheless often only by chance without any detailed knowledge of this field of study and literary genre. There was then unfortunately no seminar or lecture that would cover contemporary postcolonial literature or that would provide students with its theoretical background. Already at that time I could see there was a great number of authors who could be classed within the postcolonial literary canon and I was quite surprised at the ambiguity of their classification and disparateness of the themes and styles of these books. When I started to deal with contemporary British fiction professionally, especially in literary criticism and projects that were to introduce this fiction to Czech readers, I realized what a phenomenon this literature was in Britain and how much it was neglected in the Czech environment, first and foremost in the lack of

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[1] This dissertation work does not want to open some controversial issues also related with this type of literature, mainly the religious ones, though frequently reflected by authors of the postcolonial literary canon. It concentrates primarily upon novels written before these events that not only affected particular countries involved in the 9/11 fight against terrorism, but also a general opinion as for this type of literature and their authors. The market stopped being as free minded as before and authors, especially those of a Muslim origin had to often gain their readership back, sometimes by means of a radical change of themes and styles.

[2] See the passage 1.2. "Delimitation of the Postcolonial Field of Study, Historical Perspective, New Literature" dealing with the term of postcolonial as such.

Czech translations. Often there was a certain hesitance from the side of publishers who feared its potential exotic character, foreign (and generally unfamiliar names) of authors and sometimes language[3], potentially complicated for translation.

Postcolonial literature, especially the one written in English, became in the second half of the 20th century, mainly its end a rather unprecedented phenomenon which in my opinion deserves a great deal of attention, also due to the fact, that it, despite unfavourable social and political circumstances of the beginning of the 21th century, managed to "survive" and revive its popularity with the Western readership.

When we look closer upon the list of literary works published in Britain in say last 30 years, we will notice an evident trend. Each year there were more and more works of authors that would not have belonged several decades before into the so-called "English literary canon". As late as before the WWII they would have been labelled as ethnic authors without taking into account the character of their work or the fact they write in English, and they would have been either totally ignored or marginalized.

At present these authors are in most cases grouped within the category of "postcolonial" literature which is often as misleading as other, frequently derogatory labels, such as "Black writing", "New", and "Commonwealth" or "multicultural" literature.[4] Regardless of a rather confusing approach of some journalists and theoreticians to this type of literature, these authors and their works have become, especially in last two decades, immensely popular with the readership. Many have become bestsellers exceeding in sales established and traditional "British" authors. These postcolonial authors are paid huge advances for their next works and are awarded prestigious literary prizes. Just for illustration, when we look at two most acknowledged

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[3] A whole chapter is dedicated to language, particularly reasons, why English became so popular as the literary language in postcolonial countries. See e.g. the chapter 2.2.4."Why English?" This chapter follows the one on epistemic violence where some aspects of the use of language as a weapon of colonization are analyzed. Apart from traditional utilization of the language several pioneering strategies will be described, too, that foreshadowed an active and in a way undermining approach of postcolonial writers to English, called pregnantly by Salman Rushdie "writing back". See the chapter 2.2.5. "Empire Writes Back".

[4] As for terminological ambiguity, there are numerous sources helpful that in a very illustrative way cover the whole genesis of this field of study. Above all see: Dennis Walder, *Post-colonial Literatures in English: History, Language, Theory* (London: Blackwell Publishing 1998), Roger Bromley, *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions (*Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2000), Vijay Mishra and Bob Hodge, "What is Post (-) colonialism", *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: A Reader*, eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester 1994).

awards, The Man Booker Prize and The Costa Book Awards (formerly The Whitbread Book Awards), we will come across famous prize winners from this literary genre. Let us name a few: Booker Prize: V. S. Naipaul (1971), Salman Rushdie (1981), Arundhati Roy (1997), Kiran Desai (2006), Aravind Adiga (2008), Costa /Whitbread Awards: Shiva Naipaul (1973), Salman Rushdie (1988, 1995), Hanif Kureishi (1990), Zadie Smith (2000), Tash Aw (2005) et al. Apart from the winners there are of course dozens more at least long or short listed.

How is it possible that this type of literature has become so popular? How come it appeals so much the Western readership, sometimes to such an extent that it surpasses "home" authors? Is this phenomenon interpretable mainly due to a huge diaspora readership in Britain, or is there anything that most of these books share that can be attractive both for ex-migrants and their families and British readers, too? Can really all these thousands of works of authors coming from Africa, Indian Subcontinent, the Caribbean etc., though all written in English, have something in common?

It is one of goals of this dissertation to answer some of these questions. Those concerning pregnant definitions of the term postcolonial and postcolonial literature turned to be the most complicated ones, since the criteria of particular classification are quite vague and often misleading.[5] Difficulties with the postcolonial literary canon will be covered, too, above all in final passage of this introduction dealing with literary objectives and the selection criteria of primary sources[6]. The conclusion why the postcolonial literature as such is so popular both in Britain and in other English speaking countries is not easily to be reached; it is more of an issue for literary criticism and publishers.

The main objective of this thesis is nevertheless to present some key issues relevant for this rather varied field of study, with respect to two basic areas of interest: concepts of identity and place, respectively displacement in contemporary postcolonial discourse and their reflection in fiction, too. The thesis should provide the potential reader with basic theoretical background based on the most fundamental sources and by

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[5] See the following passage "Delimitation of the Postcolonial Field of Studies" that tries to cover a rise of this field of study and foreshadows difficulties connected with a broad scope of both a postcolonial theoretical discourse and postcolonial literature, too.
[6] See the chapter 1.3."Structure of the Work, Theoretical and Literary Objectives".

means of selected literary works it should support (or disclaim, if necessary) conclusions reached by the most notable theories. This thesis strives to seek links between seemingly disparate literary generations and provide those interested in this field of study – not so popular out of English speaking countries – with a starting point for further study and reading. The issues covered are only limited, the work does not deal e.g. with gender or religion, but they represent some of the most important themes that appear repeatedly in most literary works of the so called postcolonial literary canon.

1.2. The Delimitation of the Postcolonial Field of Study, Historical Perspective, New Literature

The semantic basis of the word *postcolonial* suggests that it implies literatures of countries after the colonial experience. It would then concern primarily national literatures after the departure of the imperial power. There would logically arise a binary of the colonial situation, i.e. before independence of a particular country, and after independence, which might be called national writing.

The problem however is that most cultures are deeply affected by the imperial process, from the first moment of colonization up to present time. As the authors of *The Empire Writes Back* remark: "there is a continuity of preoccupation."[7] What do have then these literatures in common, if we leave aside special and distinctive regional characteristics? Let us give word to *The Empire Writes Back* once again:

> They (literatures) emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial centre. This is which makes them distinctly postcolonial.[8]

According to Neil Lazarus, the label postcolonial was created first "to identify the period immediately after decolonization. It was a periodizing term, a historical and not an ideological concept. Erstwhile colonial territories that had been decolonized were just postcolonial states."[9]

When the Empire broke up after WWII (mainly India in 1947 as the largest country of the Empire), this event had necessary political, economical and geographical consequences but without any doubt cultural ones, too. Before most writers who lived outside UK but wrote in English, such as Tagore et al., were either ignored or assimilated. The fall of the Empire however foreshadowed another event: English literature stopped being a unitary subject. As the Empire attempted to sustain an illusion

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[7] Bill Ashcroft, et al., *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures,* (London and New York: Routledge 2003) 2.
[8] Ashcroft, p. 2.
[9] Neil Lazarus, "Introducing Postcolonial Studies," *The Cambridge Companion to Post-colonial Literary Studies,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004) 2.

of continuity by means of Commonwealth, similar strategy was applied as for the literature. Thus the literature got a new label, the Commonwealth literature. The first school of Commonwealth literature was founded at Leeds University in 1964 and the first conference was held soon after. The Commonwealth literature distinguished six major divisions of writing based on geographical criteria – Indian, African, West Indian, Canadian, Australian and literature from New Zealand. It also stressed national identity of individual literatures.

Nevertheless it is fundamental to stress that Commonwealth literature did not include the literature of the centre which was still perceived as some kind of standard according to which any other literature should be judged. The literature of Commonwealth was seen as the periphery and the canon of "English literature" was to be protected under any price. Yet a debate was soon started within English studies that disliked the idea of the British literary canon superiority and marginality of the Commonwealth writing and tried to set up their own canon of major works from non-British writers writing in English. This was time when the postcolonial theory came into being, in Denis Walder's words "as a part of decentring tendency of post 1960s thought of the West, ...a part of metropolitan, left-wing response to the increasingly visible and successful struggles for independence of colonized peoples worldwide."[10]

The first postcolonial discourse was indeed of an oppositional character. It fought against clear distinction between the colonizer and colonized, "against constructing the colonized as a fixed reality."[11] It also wanted to deconstruct "an alien subjectivity"[12] imposed by the centre. As Benita Parry paraphrases a prominent postcolonial theoretician G. CH. Spivak and her approach: "postcoloniality involves an assumption of a deconstructive philosophical position towards the logo centrism and identitarian metaphysics underpinning Western knowledge."[13]

[10] Dennis Walder, *Post-colonial Literatures in English: History, Language, Theory,* (London: Blackwell Publishing 1998) 59.

[11] Vijay Mishra and Bob Hodge, "What is Post(-)colonialism," *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: A Reader*, eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester 1994) 281.

[12] Mishra.

[13] Benita Parry, "The Institutionalization of Postcolonial Studies," *The Cambridge Companion to Post-colonial Literary Studies,* (*Cambridge:* Cambridge University Press 2004) 67.

This type of an approach might be called a modern postcolonial criticism drawing significantly from poststructuralism. In Mishra's and Hodge's classification, it is a so-called "complicit postcolonialism" which contrary to the oppositional one counts with a certain "underside within colonization itself"[14]. It stresses hybridity and syncretism in postcolonial writing: "Cultural products are exposed as hybrid, as tying influences from many traditions, as existing not so much in a specific place and time as between different places at once."[15]

If we generalize the whole struggle was predominantly about finding a place, about "writing across the body of both canonical and popular British literature"[16]. The authors and their works had to find their own path and to show they were far from being mere "imitations of the dominant Western modes...", that the works:

> ...written or performed within other cultural contexts, or from margins of the metropolitan centres, often comprised remarkable innovations. Such works, as scholars working within postcolonial studies have shown, not only incorporate, transgress, and redesign the forms, aesthetic conventions, and cognitive resources of the Western tradition, but also draw on traditional narrative forms and idioms.[17]

There is no doubt that "new" cultural fictions are the texts that build upon the experience of social and cultural marginality, that they are written from the disjunctive, fragmented, displaced agency and most of all from the perspective of standing on the border. In Roger Bromley's words: "Excess, dream and fragment shape these fictions in an attempt to produce an act of reinscribing, of revising and hybridising the settled

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[14] Mishra and Hodge, p. 285/6.
[15] Andrew Smith, "Migrancy, Hybridity, and Postcolonial Literary Studies," *The Cambridge Companion to Post-colonial Literary Studies*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004) 245.
[16] Benita Parry, "The Institutionalization of Postcolonial Studies," *The Cambridge Companion to Post-colonial Literary Studies,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004) 71.
[17] Both Parry, p. 73.

discursive hierarchies, by constructing a third space beyond existing political, social and cultural binaries."[18]

As it had been stated above the long time existence of the new literatures has been affected by constant neglect of dominating cultures. The arrival of particular artistic forms, literature predominantly, was stigmatized by its permanent dialogue with the superior Western theoretical discourse and the Western literary canon. Using Bakhtin's concept of the dialogical as the "means of challenging the oppositional presumptions of border, division, exclusionary thought and absolute difference"[19], the development of the new literature within the existing English traditional one was indeed working on the principle of the dialogical, of the never finalized interactivity. This type of border writing was characterized by the features of transformation, textual negotiation and cultural translation.

Such narratives originating from the migrant othered are always articulated in antagonism with the othering discourse (colonialism, racism, hegemonic whiteness or Western values etc.)"[20] They can be either of a polemic and rejecting nature, or in most cases of an admiring and idolatry one. What is however important is the fact that the narrative is forced by the circumstances to alter itself under the othering discourse influence. It – being in the subordinate position – cannot then speak from its cultural discourse, nor it is simply a voice of the "othering" culture but finds itself in the edge position of intense dialogicality.

The first types of the new literatures were strictly based upon the binary principle being forced to adopt not only the colonial language (namely English) but moreover the Western literary forms and genres. The situation changed significantly when literature started originating not only from the residents dwelling in the colonized space but more and more from the expatriates – migrants or diaspora subjects. Scilicet, the migrants were not merely passive travelers, the influence stopped being unidirectional – the migrants began to transform actively the world they entered.

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[18] Roger Bromley, *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2000) 1.
[19] Bromley, p. 2.
[20] Roger Bromley, *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2000) 122.

They wanted to break the boundaries that were separating them as the Other and the original "mother culture". They made an effort to go beyond the boundaries and to "exceed the limits of the racialised, colonized and national identities."[21] Their work ceased to be a mere tribute or copy of Western literary forms and themes but strove to portray all the "complexities of belonging and identity, the shifting and cross-cutting cultural experience of diaspora and relocation"[22] that all the migrants shared.

Their works left behind the idolatric mode obsessed with the Golden Age of British Raj and oriented to more relevant topics concerning the experience in their new homes – the inter-generational conflicts of the newcomers, the cultural heritage, the act of remembering, potential return. Largely they tried to record the hyphenated identities, hybrid realities, in-between zones and displacement feelings that their migration had fetched along.

Stuart Hall calls such a shift from the binaries and antagonism of the imperial discourse to the ambivalent identity of the migrants "the third scenario"[23]. This emergent discourse, that is neither a binarist space of reflection nor the multicultural space where several cultures are juxtaposed next to each other (but still preserving their firm boundaries) becomes the place enabling other new positions to emerge. Thus hybridity, translation, negotiation have found their way to the lives of the migrants and their works. In Stuart Hall's words (paraphrased by Roger Bromley):

> Migration may be a one way trip, but many of those who inhabit the "transnations" of diasporic communities maintain links with their land of birth or origin and with other diasporized members both within, and beyond, the country of migration. These multilocational attachments and, in some cases, travelling back and forth, help to constantly refine and revise the diasporic experience as always being in motion. Hybridity is the condition of belonging to an inter-continental border zone, in place where no centers remain.[24]

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[21] Bromley, p. 3.
[22] Bromley, p. 4.
[23] See Roger Bromley, "Introduction: The Third Scenario," *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2000) 1.
[24] To be found in: Roger Bromley, *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2000) 8.

The third space narratives are then an "intensive reworking in which the text presupposes, without necessarily articulating, a dialogues in which the statements of the second speaker are omitted but which are present invisibly, leave deep traces and penetrate deeply inside what is, nevertheless, an active reworking and reversal of the historical legacy in which the other has been oppressively dominated by the othering discourse."[25] What is even more significant is that the ex-colonized that is the originally silenced finally not only speaks but also "writes back"[26] freely, the former canonical texts lose their initial influence and in addition become gradually translated, negotiated and rewritten.

The third space narratives will bring into life new thematic spheres that will become later both the backbone of the whole new literature and at the same time a kind of curse sentencing it to a new stereotype perceiving it as a mere "journey and assimilation" type of literature. On the other hand, there are specific prevailing tendencies and themes relevant first to the works of the 1st and 2nd generation authors.

Most of all, there are numerous themes to be found concerning place and displacement and their impact upon the shattered identities of migrant subjects. First of all they abound in journey metaphors and succeeding homing in strategies. At first homes are provisional, the borders are crossed, and the identities are being formed on the move. At the same time the past is upgraded to something sacred and inviolable – the original homelands are being prayed to – they become the "imaginary homelands"[27]. Subsequently, when the first obstructions had been passed, the enigma of arrival was replaced with the enigma of survival[28]. Settling in a new and strange space and further assimilation with the majority was a painful process innumerably recorded in the migrant's fiction to come. A specific chapter of this dissertation will further analyze the particular, above mentioned themes in detail – the place and displacement and no less significant issue of the migrant identity.

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[25] Bromley, p. 122.
[26] See: Salman Rushdie, "The Empire Writes Back with Vengeance," *The Times* 3 July 1982: 8.
[27] See: Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticisms 1981-91*, (London: Granta Books 1991).
[28] Title of the chapter, in: Bromley, p. 148.

1.3. Structure of the Work, Theoretical and Literary Objectives, Methodology

This dissertation work consists of three major parts. In the introduction, apart from providing the motivational, theoretical and literary objectives of this thesis, I cover some basic difficulties that may occur when dealing with the postcolonial field of study. That is why the term "postcolonial" is closely analyzed and a basic overview of the historical perspective of postcolonial literature is presented together with basic definition of the so-called new literatures and their character.

The central part of the thesis can be divided into two parts, each of them consisting of two further sections. The first one, "Identity in Postcolonial Discourse", is focused on one of the key terms in all of postcolonial theory: identity and other concepts related with it. I cover the basic development of theoretical reflection concerning this concept, drawing primarily from secondary sources dealing with it. I lay an emphasis upon one of main objectives of the postcolonial theory that strove to undermine binarist principles imposed by colonial discourse. At first essential concepts[29], such as the Same and the Other, binarism and stereotypes will be analyzed that are closely connected with discriminatory approach of colonialism which survived long after the fall of the Empire. The basic theoretical development of this field of study will be covered for it is important both for the rise of the postcolonial theory as such but also for a close reading of the literature, too. Since issues of binarism and imposed stereotypes are closely matched with epistemic violence, great attention will be paid to language and textuality perceived as basic instruments of epistemic violence[30]. This passage might answer some

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[29] See first of all the chapter 2.1."Same and the Other – We and They", that provides with a development of the theoretical discourse on this issue. It draws from various sources, e.g. Emmanuel Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity,* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press 2005), Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage 1979), Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (New York: Routledge 1994), Robert Young, *White Mythologies*: *Writing History and the West*, (London and New York: Routledge 1990) etc. whose works were indeed fundamental mainly for naming and dismissing long held stereotypes present in theoretical discourse for decades.

[30] See the chapter 2.2."Language, Textuality and Epistemic Violence" which deals with some of the most powerful weapons of colonialism, language and literature. It is based on sources that thoroughly analyzed epistemic violence of various kinds, such as Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage 1979), Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (New York: Routledge 1994), mainly the chapter "Signs Taken for Wonders", Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writing 1972 – 1977*, (New York: Pantheon 1980), Gillies Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, "Treatise on

questions already foreshadowed at the very beginning of this introduction regarding the role of the language (particularly English) in the process of colonization and in postcolonial period, too. Particular answers will be provided as for a historical perspective about the use English, mainly in the region of the Indian Subcontinent, the impact of English upon local literature and identity of colonial/postcolonial subjects. Two responses to this type of violence will be mentioned, too – as well as the passive one of adoption and appropriation on one side, and the active "writing back"[31] on the other.

The complicit postcolonialism (as labelled by Denis Walder[32]) stopped operating on the basis of a mere opposition to the ex-colonial centre. It tried to seek alternatives arising from the in-between position of postcolonial subjects. Mainly such issues as hybridity, liminality and mimicry will be analyzed that were products of seeking of a new approach which would describe best an ambivalent identity of postcolonial subjects. Though it may seem a final solution of the whole problem, a potential danger of this theory will be pointed out, too, mainly its prevailing use within fixed binaries and its totalizing and generalizing character.

The second theoretical part called "Place and Displacement" will cover the issue of displacement that has become indeed an evergreen of the whole postcolonial literature and which is also one of the key terms of the postcolonial theory. As it is said at the very beginning of that passage, the whole history of postcolonial literature is the history of the journey and subsequent effects it had on postcolonial subjects. The place concept[33] as such will play a fundamental role, first being analyzed once again from the

Nomadology: The War Machine," *Norton's Anthology of Literary Theory,* (New York: Norton 2001), Bill Ashcroft, et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, (London & New York: Routledge 2003), Salman Rushdie, "The Empire Writes Back with Vengeance, *The Times* 3 July 1982: 8) and their impact upon postcolonial countries and their literatures.

[31] See the chapter 2.2.5. "Empire Writes Back with Vengeance" that covers an active response of postcolonial countries to epistemic violence, mainly active undermining and transformative tendencies of literature and literary discourse. It analyzes two principles concepts, of "appropriation" and "abrogation" that were both strategies how to put up with totalizing and discriminatory approach of English language. Several examples from contemporary postcolonial fiction are provided that illustrate a development of these strategies and their practical utilization.

[32] See Dennis Walder, *Post-colonial Literatures in English: History, Language, Theory* (London: Blackwell Publishing 1998) 285-6.

[33] See the chapter 4. "Place and Displacement". It provides with interpretation of basic terminology, such as diaspora, migration, migrant identity, homelessness, uprootedness etc. Several sources have been made

position of colonizers that made use of it as an instrument of colonization (cartography, empty places). A great attention will be paid to migration from the ex-colonial periphery to the ex-Mother Country which was in most cases connected with certain illusions as for Britain that frequently ended in logical disillusionment, frustration and either a real or imaginary return to roots, seeking of homelands and obsession with a glorious past. Diaspora and diaspora fiction[34] are the most prominent notions together with homing in and assimilation.

The theoretical perspective is significant for case studies of particular novels since these will be reflected with respect to issues already analyzed. It does not mean that the authors wrote their novels having been influenced directly by theoretical discourse in this field of study. Nevertheless the themes and objectives most frequently covered in theoretical discourse appear to a similar extent in fiction and they bring into life the very same questions on the character of postcolonial identity, the relevance of identity strategy, the totalizing character of these strategies, and relevance of historical heritage of colonialism and the surviving legacy of the Empire. Though it may seem that most of these concepts are at the beginning of the 21st century long dead, the literary reflections of these issues prove that there is not such a difference between the works of say V. S. Naipaul, born in 1932 and the one of Kiran Desai, born 1971. Their novels (though written by authors of different literary and migrant generations, with different experiences and literary styles) share many themes and reflect a similar uncertainty and fragility of characters, mainly those who have undergone a process of migration, but also those who have to cope with a colonial heritage at present.

Let us borrow once again the definition of Dennis Walder as for the term postcolonial:

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use of, e.g. Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora*, (London and New York: Routledge 1996), Salman Rushdie, "The Indian Writer in England," *The Eye of the Beholder: Indian Writing in English,* ed. Maggie Butcher, (London: Commonwealth Institute 1983), Susheila Nasta, *Home Truths – Fictions of the South Asian Diaspora in Britain,* (New York: Palgrave 2002), Robert A. Lee, *Other Britain, Other British: Contemporary Multicultural Fiction*, (London: Pluto Press 1995), Hanif Kureishi, "Rainbow Sign," *My Beautiful Laundrette*, (London: Faber and Faber 1986) etc.

[34] See the chapter 4.6. "Diaspora Fictions – Common Settings and Central Themes Summary and Chart" based on Monika Fludernik´s classification of migrant fiction that I find highly illustrative and helpful. In: Monika Fludernik, "Imagined Communities as Imaginary Homelands: The South-Asian Disapora in Fiction," *Diaspora and Multiculturalism: Common Traditions and New Development,* ed. Monika Fludernik, (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi 2003) 261- 285.

The term postcolonial is used to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day. What each and every national literature has in common beyond their special and distinctive regional characteristics is their emergence out of this process, and their assertion of "differences" from assumptions of the imperial centre.[35]

This quote could be helpful in setting literary objectives of this dissertation work. Having in the title "contemporary postcolonial literature" it necessarily draws from the postcolonial literary canon. Predominantly it works with novels of authors of the so-called Indian Subcontinent origin[36], V. S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Kiran Desai and Hanif Kureishi, but also others whose works are relevant for issues discussed. It may seem at first glance that apart from the South Asian origin the authors cannot have anything in common. It turns out however that even this geographical classification fails to a certain extent. Naipaul is indeed of an Indian origin, but was born in Trinidad and came to Britain as late as when he was 18. Rushdie was born in Mumbai to a Muslim Kashmiri family and was sent to study in England at the age of 14. Due to a well-known controversy over his novel *The Satanic Verses* he was later on forced to hide and finally moved to the USA. Kureishi was born already in England to a Pakistani origin father and white middle class British woman. Kiran Desai was born in New Delhi, lived there till her 10 years of age, when she moved with her writer mother for one year to England and then to USA where she has been since. The authors are also of different generations, not only due to the year of their birth but also concerning literary and migrant ones.

It is quite difficult then to find what these seemingly incongruous authors share as for their literary work. This dissertation will be thus about seeking of similarities and differences, about shared themes and rejecting. I have chosen four novels that I deem

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[35] Dennis Walder, *Post-colonial Literatures in English: History, Language, Theory* (London: Blackwell Publishing 1998) 68.

[36] Due to huge postcolonial literary production in English it was necessary to make a decision and chose only one geographical region. Indian Subcontinent used to be the most prominent part of the Empire and as it seems the direct impact of postcolonialism was there also strongest. As for literature the Subcontinent produces each year thousands of new books, most of which remain unknown to Western readership, but quite many get successfully to British literary market. Several books of authors not belonging to Indian Subcontinent literary canon are mentioned and quoted (such as Caryl Phillips or Buchi Emecheta), too, being it due to highly illustrative and generally applicable character of extracts chosen.

highly illustrative and that cover in my opinion the best themes and objectives I analyze in detail in the theoretical part.

These novels are generally perceived as postcolonial meeting some of the later on mentioned criteria, despite the fact they take place in different locations, either in the ex-colonial centre (in most cases London), or as in Kiran Desai's novel also in the imperial periphery, too. Regardless the location and period they are situated in they all cover impact of colonization and succeeding process of decolonization. At the same time they reflect key issues of postcolonial reality that will be analyzed thoroughly in the theoretical part of this work, first and foremost identity, together with all themes and objectives that are closely connected with it, such as identity strategies, assimilation struggle, attitudes of the majority and of the migrant community, too as for particular strategies. They anticipate future of these strategies, their success of failure. As for displacement as the second key issue of the dissertation work and one of the most fundamental themes in the whole postcolonial theory and literature, mainly issues related to migration will be dealt with, such as diaspora, homelessness, imaginary homeland theory et al.

The theoretical part on identity is succeeded by a chapter "Reflections of Identity in the Postcolonial Writing – Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* and Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*". In its introductory part some theoretical concepts will be mentioned once again, at this moment with a respect to their direct impact upon literature and particular reflection in fiction. Such things as practical manifestations of binarism and epistemic violence will be analyzed together with literary depiction of hybridity and mimicry. As for individual case studies, I start with Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, hence a novel that is generally known, but unfortunately not for its literary merits but due to controversy that it called right after its publication. *The Satanic Verses* is however a novel that is archetypal as a work depicting issues related with first generation migrancy and strategies that these had to adopt to succeed in Britain. My close reading of the novel concentrates on comparison of two central characters, Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha and follows their transformation essentially influenced by their migrant experience. It is focused on two key terms dealt thoroughly with in the theoretical part, i.e. hybridity and mimicry, their potentials and pitfalls. Controversial dream passages accused of blasphemy have not been analyzed since they do not correspond with objectives of this dissertation work.

Hanif Kureishi's novel *The Buddha of Suburbia* has become an evergreen of postcolonial literature covering in highly illustrative way identity insecurity of a character of the second migrant generation. Kureishi had thus advantage of comparison of two generations; he could expose their strategies as for settling and assimilation and express doubts as of their functioning. His Karim is a pioneering character to a certain extent, mainly due to level of his "westernization", dislike of suburbs and fascination by metropolis culture. Even though both Rushdie's and Kureishi's novel end in a rather unexpected compromise not having found a simple solution of identity crisis of characters they both cover the process of seeking full of mistakes, detours and turnings.

The displacement theoretical part is supported by close reading of works of Kiran Desai and V. S. Naipaul. Kiran Desai's novel *The Inheritance of Loss* is a representative of the work of the youngest generation that should be due to their cosmopolitan background less burdened with the colonial heritage. Nevertheless, as it is shown in the particular case study, it is on the contrary. Desai's novel compiles in a certain way all "clichés" of the postcolonial literature, mainly such to be found in works of English writing authors of the Subcontinent. She gave birth to three central characters who each represent a different type of a postcolonial subject, the criteria being the level of their "anglicizing", experience with a journey to Britain (resp. America), obsession with past. Several principle issues analyzed in the theoretical part are reflected, such as displacement and epistemic violence imposed by colonization, mainly the language and literature.

V. S. Naipaul's *The Enigma of Arrival* is in a way an exceptional novel, both in Naipaul's own work and in postcolonial literary canon, too. It is meditative work on an impact of migration, on imaginary homelands and illusory perception of Britain from the side of postcolonial subjects that is doomed to failure. It is not so much about the impact of colonial heritage in ex-colonies, but about false perceptions that the migrants brought with them to new home, mainly flawlessness of English countryside, general dignity of British people etc. His nameless character has to face similar disillusionment as thousands other migrants, in addition he undergoes a crisis as a writer being forced to change attitude to his surroundings.

1.4. Delimitation of Primary and Secondary Sources

The choice of primary and secondary sources was influenced by many circumstances. At this point it is necessary to mention once again the genesis of this work. Having come across works of authors that are generally classed within the canon of postcolonial literature during my journalist and translating career, I decided to chose postcolonial literature as a main theme of my dissertation work, too. Being it a rather ignored field of study in the Czech Republic, both from a literary and theoretical perspective, there were many potential themes worth analyzing. First of all, it was necessary to find a proper form of the thesis, to decide, whether it would be more of a summary of themes and objectives or a historical overview or whether to concentrate on some phenomenon reflected plentifully in the majority of sources.

Originally I focused first and foremost on place concepts, primarily diaspora. Nevertheless, then I decided to supplement it by means of a theory of postcolonial identity, which turned to be crucial and which could have been hardly left out. At this point I would like to thank prof. Martin Procházka whose PhD. seminar in 2004 at FFUK was immensely helpful providing essential theoretical background and suggesting further reading in this field of study. The reading list of this seminar became the very core of secondary sources used primarily for the first theoretical chapter of this dissertation, e.g. Emmanuel Lévinas and his *Totality and Infinity*, Jacques Derrida. "*Violence and Metaphysics*", Michel Foucault's *Power/Knowledge*, Edward Said's *Orientalism* and especially Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*. These works became then a starting point for further study, mainly during my one year stay in New York, which enabled me to study many other sources which would have been out of my reach in the Czech Republic. My personal meetings with some writers were very inspirative, too, particularly Robert J. C. Young, whose kind proof reading of my conference paper and some passages of this thesis was very helpful, Caryl Phillips and Jhumpa Lahiri the interviews with whom opened new issues relevant for analyzing in this work, too.

As for delimitation of primary sources, the authors have been chosen as already mentioned above with respect to their geographical origin (which can be of course rather ambivalent and misleading). For practical reasons, I have focused upon those from Indian Subcontinent. Apart from English language as a main link, there are first

and foremost common themes to be found in their work, such as migration, diaspora, assimilation, hybridity, mimicry, imaginary homelands, etc.

These intersections have been fundamental for the selection process of these primary sources. The selection as such was a difficult task, mainly due to an incredible amount of books labelled as postcolonial and published every year both in Britain and in the rest of the world, too. Accessibility of some books was also limited, since apart from notoriously popular names such as Hanif Kureishi or Salman Rushdie, many authors are not generally known. Most of the works have also not been published in Czech (apart from *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *The Inheritance of Loss*).[37] I have concentrated then on such novels, that I found, on the basis of my previous reading experience, illustrative for issues analyzed, and the authors which were at least partly known or were mentioned in relevant secondary sources.

1.5.   Publications Related

As already hinted, the genesis of this work is closely connected with my other literary activities, mainly in the field of literary journalism for dailies and literary weeklies, the literary website www.iliteratura.cz and my translating and editing work, especially my cooperation with the publishing house Euromedia Group/Odeon.

The theoretical core of the thesis is based partly upon my paper called "WE and THEY: The Same and the Other in Lévinas' *Totality and Infinity* and Their Further Reflections in the Postcolonial Theory of the 20th Century" for the conference "Human and Its Other" held by the ACLA in Princeton in March 2006. As for primary sources I have made use of my study "Současná postkoloniální literatura psaná v anglickém jazyce" published in 2005 at www.iliteratura.cz (under the name Markéta Musilová similarly to my other work) as a part of the project introducing readers to selected key works of the postcolonial literary canon (Sam Selvon, Anita Desai, V. S. Naipaul et al.) Together with many reviews of postcolonial novels, numerous short biographical

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35 Published as: *Buddha z předměstí*, (Litomyšl and Praha: Paseka 1996), *Dědictví ztráty*, (Praha: Euromedia Group/Odeon 2008). Salman Rushdie´s *The Satanic Verses* were published in Czech anonymously, due to famous controversy and several attacks on translators of the books in the world.

articles were also published helping those interested to get acquainted with generally not very well known names of this literary genre.

Two long studies of postcolonial authors were published that dealt with some issues relevant for this thesis, mainly identity and diaspora. The one on Hari Kunzru called "Nebojím se nových témat" introduced this prominent author to readers of the literary weekly *A2* 6/2007, another on Arundhati Roy called "Mladá rozhněvaná Indka" in the weekly *Respekt* on 11 March 2007.

I have also published several epilogues for novels of postcolonial authors, e.g. Hari Kunzru's *Transmission*, published in Czech as *Virus*, Praha: BB/art 2006, Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*, in Czech under title *Dědictví ztráty*, Praha: Euromedia Group/Odeon 2008 and Indra Sinha's *Animals People*, in Czech as *Zvířetovi lidé*, Praha: Mladá fronta 2008.

As for interviews, two are relevant for this field of study, the one with Jhumpa Lahiri from 10 January 2010 published in *DNES* daily and the interview with Caryl Phillips called "Z thatcherovské Británie pod Bushův okap" published in the weekly *A2* 21/06.

2. Identity in Postcolonial Discourse

2.1. Same and the Other – We and They

> The White Man takes his own mythology, Indo-European mythology, his
> own logos that is the mythos of his idiom, for the universal form of that
> he must still wish to call reason.

<div align="right">

Jacques Derrida: "White Mythology"[38]

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2.1.1. Binarism

As pointed out in the introduction, one of the fundamental issues explored in the postcolonial fiction is the issue of identity. As there will be an individual chapter dedicated to problematic identity of colonial/postcolonial subjects, it is necessary at this point to analyze primarily theoretical concepts that helped to name and capture the rather unstable ground that such a problematic subject occupies. As it will be shown, most of the aspects have been dealt with in the history of philosophy and literary theory for a long time, however it is primarily the second half of the 20th century, due to a rise of post-structuralism and later on deconstruction, that we began to view this subject from a slightly different perspective even as we dared to dismiss some long held stereotypes. One such stereotype present in the theoretical discourse for decades was binarism, the tendency of scientific discourse along with the more general one to perceive the world in terms of oppositions dividing it into two distant and mutually disparate "camps".

Though binarism as such has its roots deep in the past, contemporary theory blames mainly imperialism and colonialism for its utilization and perfection. The authors of *Key Concepts in Postcolonial Studies* give an example of one of such binarisms, particularly centre and margin:

> Colonialism could only exist due to postulating that there existed a binary
> opposition into which the world was divided, i.e. a stable hierarchical

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[38] Jacques Derrida, "White Mythology," *Margins of Philosophy*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press 1982) 213.

relationship. The colonized existed as the Other of the colonizing culture. Geography of difference was constructed; differences were mapped and laid out in a metaphorical landscape that represented not geographical fixity but the fixity of power.[39]

The world became divided into two zones, the civilized one, called the centre, known thus as the acceptable, the Same, and the savage, primitive Other. What is also important is that this imperial binarism always assumes a movement in one direction only; clearly the colonial mission as such wanted "to bring the margin into the sphere of influence of the enlighted centre."[40]

It does not matter whether the binary oppositions are called the colonizer x the colonized, the West x the East, the Occident x the Orient, the developed x the developing, the white x the black or philosophically the Same and the Other, still the general mechanisms remain the same. Lévinas wrote in his "*Metaphysics and Transcendence*" that "the history of thought appears as the movement going forth from a world that is familiar to us to whatever be the yet unknown lands that bound it, that it hides from view, from an "at home" which we inhibit, toward an alien outside-of-oneself, towards yonder."[41] Similarly to Lévinas Deleuze and Guatarri speak in their *A Thousand Plateaus* about a long operating aspect in the Indo-European mythology that they call the magician x king binary, "two figures who stand in opposition respectively, as the obscure and the clear, the violent and the calm, the fearsome and the regulated."[42]

Nevertheless, Deleuze and Guatarri were aware of the relativity of this opposition, of the necessity of the functioning of these as a pair. The imperial or colonial discourse nevertheless operated in a quite different way which is already evident in the chosen terminology: centre and margin, the Same and the Other. Let us use one of rather illustrative definitions of binary strategies:

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[39] See the entry "centre X margin". In: Bill Ashcroft, et al., *Key Concepts in Post-colonial Studies*, (London: Routledge 1998), 36.
[40] Ashcroft et al.
[41] Emmanuel Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity*, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press 2005) 34.
[42] Gillies Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, (New York: Semiotext(e)) 351.

When we encounter diverse worlds, histories, culture and experiences within an apparent communality... it is an encounter with a previous sense of the self, of one's reason and certitude. A "self" that cannot abide its own non-mastery of the world fears and hates the other for concretizing its own specificity and limits, and seeks to reduce otherness at every opportunity to a form of sameness and identity modelled on itself.[43]

As John Rutherford adds further on: "Binarism operates in the same way as a splitting and projection: the centre expels its anxieties, contradictions and irrationalities onto the subordinate term, filling it with the antithesis of its own identity, the Other, in its very alienness, simply mirrors and represents what is deeply familiar to the centre, but projected outside of itself."[44] The centre then struggles to assert and secure its boundaries by means of hatred and hostility that it imposes upon the Other.

2.1.2. The Culprit – Colonialism

One of the most influential theoreticians of the 20th century, E. W. Said saw the beginning of colonial supremacy and practices as early as in the destruction of original cultures of Americas and he used as for the birth of the binary the West and the East and with it related mechanisms following statement originally pronounced by Tzvetan Todorov:

The destruction of the indigenous cultures of Americas set the pattern for much of the history of Western colonialism thereafter. This was tied up with the creation of the "Other" that is to say the creation of the specific social groups that are not "I" or "We" in the writing or discourse about those "other" people in that place.[45]

Though Said called this "Other" Orient, the principles of this binary practice were the same everywhere and can be applied to imperialism or colonialism all around

[43] Elizabeth Grosz, "Judaism and Exile. The Ethics of Otherness," *New Formations 12*, Winter 1990:81.
[44] John Rutherford, "A Place Called Home: Identity and the Cultural Politics of Difference," *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford., (London: Lawrence & Wishart 1990) 22.
[45] Dennis Walder, *Post-Colonial Literatures in English: History, Language, Theory*, (London: Blackwell 1998) 31. Based on Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America – The Questions of the Other*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press 1999).

the world. This Other was anything lying behind the border of "our world"; it was everything that the West was not. Never was it the relation of equal partners, since the Orient was the place of ignorance and naiveté. That is why the West occupied a superior rank and the East had to become its "Other" in a subservient position. To sum up, the East was the deepest and most recurring image of the Other."[46]

However this encounter of the two disparate worlds and their further division into the Same and the Other also brought another strategy that was indeed fundamental for the years to come. Such an encounter always brought emotions on both sides, however it was the negative feeling, the fear and dread of a danger on the side of the colonizer that were surprisingly the source of most tensions and violence. The colonizer or the Same comes with the idea of its own mastery and superiority and thus it treats the colonized exactly in accordance with this logic. As Frantz Fanon writes in his famous work *The Wretched of the Earth*: "Every effort is made to bring the colonized person to admit the inferiority of his culture which has been transformed into instinctive patterns of behaviour, to recognize the unreality of his "nation", and in the last extreme, the confused and imperfect character of his own biological structure."[47] The basic strategy of the Same in this case is to persuade the Other of its otherness, to present oneself as the colonized, rational, intelligent being and anything else as the "Other" thus a total opposite. There is only one thing that is desirable, and that is to adopt everything what the Same brings. The ideal for the Other is to be westernized, that is the only way how to be truly human. Since the Other is according to the Same imperfect, unreal and confused, the only chance for it is to learn all the virtues of the Same. In Lévinas' words: "The Other is then constituted as the Self's shadow."[48] The worst "sin" of the colonial discourse as for this aspect is its forming of a stereotype and its treating of the colonized lands as something fixed, "on the one side unknown, thus other, but on the other knowable and visible."[49]

If these practices had been only military ones, their impact would not have been so big. Nevertheless, such an attitude was quite soon adopted by the theoretical

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[46] Edward Said, *Orientalism,* (New York: Vintage 1979) 1.
[47] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of The Earth*, (New York: Grove) 236.
[48] Emmanuel Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity*, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press 2005) 38.
[49] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* (New York: Routledge 1994) 70.

discourse, too. The most fundamental fact of all was that the "colonial discourse of the West produced and codified knowledge about the non-metropolitan areas and cultures, especially those under colonial control."[50] This knowledge was then used to justify the deployment of Western power in those countries.

It would be however a great mistake to blame only imperialism and Anglophone colonialism for the constitution of such knowledge and for giving a birth to this specific discourse. This theoretical discourse drew from many philosophical sources, some of them being very old ones that helped to constitute this language of superiority and supremacy. It is now necessary to have a closer look at some of theoretical concepts that are relevant and that became later foundation stones of the newly constituted postcolonial discourse.

2.1.3. Theoretical Development

As it had been stated above most of theoreticians blamed mainly imperialism and colonialism for constituting the binary of the Same and the Other (regardless whether we call it colonizer x colonized, or differently). However, colonialism as such would not probably have managed to cause the Other to adopt this logic and to start perceiving itself as the Other. If the colonialism had not had a powerful weapon to use, a theoretical discourse that imposed upon the colonized another power, the power of knowledge, would not have worked.

There are logically many theories and movements that can be seen as the creators of this situation; none the less most of the theoreticians and philosophers agree that the main "culprit" must be historicism, called by some "the Empire of the Selfsame". Historicism held that man had been created as the centre of everything and on the top of it the man had defined himself against the Other, any marginalized groups. As Robert Young writes in his work *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West:*

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[50] Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: A Reader,* (London: Harvester and Wheatsheaf 1993) 3.

The appropriation of the Other as a form of knowledge within a totalizing system must be set alongside the history of European imperialism and constitution of the other as Other.[51]

If we are to generalize and name the common goal of most of the theoreticians of the 20th century, they struggled for refusal of all conceptualization. The French post-structuralism wished to construct a form of knowledge that represents Other without absorbing it into the Same[52] (this way similarly Lévinas had already accused Western philosophy by saying: "When the knowledge or theory comprehends the Other, then the alterity of the latter vanishes and becomes the part of the Same."[53])

Even before Lévinas it was Sartre who openly accused Hegel and his master and slave dialectic[54] as being a source of totality. He said in particular:

Hegel describes the confrontation of two persons, "two consciousnesses" who have forged their identities in isolation from other people. Upon meeting, each sees the other as a threat to his or her individual existence, and, more important, each seeks to dominate the other so as to be more certain of his existence. (Hegel speaks here of "self-certainty".) The two struggle for domination, for the recognition of the strength of their respective individualities. The loser of the struggle is the one who decides that life is more important than the recognition originally sought. The person abandons the fight and is made a slave who recognizes the sovereignty of the master. In other words, the loser allows the animal desire for self-preservation to take precedence over the human desire for recognition.[55]

Sartre and his humanism not only became central to colonial discourse of the theoreticians such as Frantz Fanon or Aimé Césaire, but without him "the emergence of structuralism in 1950s and1960s as a critique of humanism could not leave the discourse of colonialism intact and unscathed."[56]

His main goal was to constitute a new history that would not be exclusively white; he wanted "to overcome the gap between the European self and the colonial other by developing a theory of history... that would make the idea of a human culture after colonialism possible."[57] He was quite openly criticized, mainly for the fact that his works seemed to "reinforce ethnocentrism and universalism at the expense of other cultures and modes of knowledge,"[58] that is in simple words for nepoting these other cultures and modes of knowledge, similarly to Frantz Fanon, another theoretician whose works are analogously significant for the constitution of the postcolonial theory. Though often marginalized by predominantly Anglophone theoreticians, he dealt primarily with the role of unconsciousness, the dislocation of subjectivity, the Otherness as such and colonial desire. Following Hegel and Sartre he argued in his *Black Skin, White Masks* according to Simon Gikandi that:

> The black had no identity in himself, identity depended on recognition
> from the European, this recognition could not be granted but had to be
> demanded through an act of resistance.[59]

It is the resistance that became key term of this work of Fanon's. Contrary to other theoreticians who merely described the situation, he called for reaction and provided the colonial subject at least with some advice how to cope with the situation:

> It was only when it encountered resistance from the Other that the self-
> consciousness would undergo "the experience" of desire and it was out of
> this experience that one would ask to be recognized.[60]

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[56] Gikandi.
[57] Gikandi.
[58] Gikandi.
[59] Gikandi.
[60] Simon Gikandi, "Poststructuralism and Postcolonial Discourse." *The Cambridge Companion to Post-colonial Literary Studies*, ed. by Neil Lazarus, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004) 106.

It was Aimé Césaire who once remarked it was difficult to write a new history when the only history was white. As for the true birth of postcolonial discourse this statement could have been slightly altered in the following way: How to write a new history, mainly the one of Anglophone colonialism, when the only discourse was French. There had been logically some attempts but it was E. W. Said who was one of the first to deal with the legacy of the French theories and who tried to apply those theories to English colonialism. He published in 1978 his famous books *Orientalism* where, in Robert Young's words "he dealt with a deep complicity of academic forms of knowledge with institutions of power."[61] None the less Said's work was perceived by many, not only by Young himself, but much later also by Homi Bhabha, that it did not provide any solution. On one side it criticized fixed knowledge and a discriminatory discourse operating within binary logics, on another Said himself was too much trapped in binary oppositions. As Young points out:

> Said's difficulty is that his ethical and theoretical values are so deeply involved in the history of the culture he criticizes, that they undermine his claims for the possibility of the individual being in a position to choose, in an uncomplicated process of separation, to be both inside and outside his or her own culture.[62]

However, there is still one significant change to be found that was later on examined thoroughly by Bhabha concerning the identity of the colonial subject. Said proposed a certain model for the critic, saying that "he/she should occupy a space of critical consciousness "between" the dominant culture and the totalizing forms of critical systems. Criticism must distance itself from the dominant culture and assume an advertial position."[63]

Homi Bhabha harshly opposed Said and his tendency to work within the very same binarism he criticizes. He operates with a similar in-between space and calls it a median category. It is mainly hybridity that helped the subject to escape the dominating

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[61] Robert Young, *White Mythologies*: *Writing History and the West,* (London and New York: Routledge 2005)166.
[62] Robert Young, p. 172.
[63] Young, p. 175.

and discriminatory power of the colonized and that in his words can enable active forms of resistance. [64]

2.1.4. Stereotypes

There is another aspect connected with the concept of "otherness" that is a colonial stereotype that must be necessarily pointed (at least briefly, since it will be in detail analyzed in the chapter on identity). When having divided the world according to binary logic, the Same/colonizer imposed its influence and power upon the Other that, usually without any significant resistance adopted the logic and adopted the whole theory of Otherness deeming the colonizer as the developed, educated and superior being and itself as the very opposite. All this would not have been possible without another powerful weapon used by the Same, the stereotype.

There are several features typical for the colonial stereotype. First of all it is necessary to stress that, as Homi Bhabha stated in his *The Location of Culture* "stereotype is a false representation of a given reality."[65] This is the way how the Same perceives it regardless whether it is rightful or not. However, there is not only a falsity in this perception of reality, there is, again in Bhabha's point of view, an excess present, "excess of what can be empirically proved or logically construed."[66]

However, it is important to mention once again, that the main problem of the stereotyping did not lie in the stereotype itself, in its falsity or excess, but in the fact that it was adopted by the Other, by the colonized subject. As Iain Chambers writes:

> Subordinate subjects have been ordained to the stereotyped immobilism
> of an essential "authenticity" in which they are expected to play out roles
> designated for them by the other.[67]

As it had been shown in previous pages on the very essence of the Same and the Other, already Lévinas referred to the matter of fact that the Same was partly confused as what the desired effect should be. On the one side it (the Same) wanted the Other to become

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[64] As for identity, see the chapter 2.3. "Identity, Difference and Hybridity".
[65] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (New York: Routledge 1994) 107.
[66] Bhabha, p. 95.
[67] Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*, (London & New York: Routledge 1994) 38.

recognizably the Same, particularly a kind of a copy of the Same, on the other it wanted it to preserve some of its Otherness. Then logically this Otherness was not to be lost, this "assimilation" could not be performed and the colonized or migrants were forced to admit the Otherness as such without having a chance to doubt it.

Similar practices have been used during the whole assimilation process and are, at the same time very important as for the racism, that is based on the very same binary logics and differentiating between the Same and the Other, being it, of course, based predominantly on the colour of the skin.

2.2. Language, Textuality and Epistemic Violence

2.2.1. Introduction

Needless to say most literature labelled as "Postcolonial Literature" has been deeply influenced by the colonial heritage. It would have been surprising if such a long-time co-existence and a targeted cultural surveillance had not left visible traces in the culture of the colonized countries and in the works and opinions of their artists.

No culture, the literature inclusive, can be regarded as homogeneous but it is in its essence heterogeneous and hybrid: it absorbs and transforms the influences from the outside. All cultures, together with the human societies that created them, have tended to define themselves in the relation to the Other, the strange (in particular anything that differentiated from the Same). Nevertheless, the cultural history has proved that it mattered profoundly whether the particular culture was generally acknowledged as the culture of the centre or the marginal, secondary one. In this light, as one of the interrelating cultures is perceived as the major one (the British) and the other as the dependent (the one of the subcontinent), such an interrelation can never be considered equal.

The previous chapter dealt with the principles of binarism and how they managed to divide the world into two strictly separated poles – the Same and the Other. The very same principle, apart from its peremptory impact upon the interpersonal

relations, concerns significantly the cultural issues, too. Orient[68] (an artificial label used for generalizing the whole of Asia) acted for many centuries as an archetypal culture that was interpreted synonymously as strange, inferior and marginal. For generations of theoreticians and scientists, it became a mere object of study, "one of the deepest and most recurring images of the Other"[69], something, which – when one couldn't obliterate it – was to be "captured, treated, described, improved and radically altered."[70] As a mere object of study, no other attributes were ascribed to it – it was seen as non-active, a non-participating substantiality that comes to being only when studied and described.

As the main focus of this thesis is the postcolonial literature, I will analyze closely one of the most powerful literary weapons that helped the West to colonize the South-Asian continent (however this analysis is applicable to the colonization in general). Knowledge, education, theoretical discourse in short was embodied in the "English book" that became "signs taken for wonders – as an insignia of colonial authority and signifier of colonial desire and discipline."[71] It is indeed the book itself, regardless whether it took a form of fiction or non-fiction, it was the English language as such that sustained a tradition of English cultural rule. However, books, texts, discourses, they don't only "create the knowledge but also the reality they appear to describe."[72] In time such knowledge and reality produce a tradition – or – what Michel Foucault calls a discourse, such as the Orient was silent[73], available to Europe for the realization of projects that involved but were never directly responsible to the native inhabitants, and unable to resist the projects, images, or mere descriptions devised for it.

If such consciousness of the Asian nations had been constructed on a true basis, there would have never been any particular cultural tradition that would answer back the colonizing and assimilating tendencies of the West. The major objective of this thesis is to concentrate mainly upon the new literary tradition that emerged from the remains of the colonial heritage. There is no doubt that even before colonization, there had been a

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[68] See Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage 1979).
[69] Said, p.1.
[70] Said, p. 95.
[71] "Signs Taken for Wonders," In: Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* (New York: Routledge) 102.
[72] Said, p. 92.
[73] See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "A Critique of Postcolonial Reason," *Norton's Anthology of Literary Theory,* (New York: Norton 2001) 2194 -2208.

lively and developed culture that in some aspects equated and perhaps even surpassed the one of the colonizing powers. If we focus on the period after WWII, on English literature of the subcontinent or the one of authors coming from there but living in the ex-imperial centre, mainly Great Britain, we will have to ask few elementary questions to begin our investigation. Why even now, 60 years after the Independence of India, does the English culture bear such significance? Why has it been so influential? Why is it that the educational system of subcontinent with its emphasis upon classical cultural, Victorian values, and the literary canon has not only survived till now but in some way has even become a norm that is desirable to follow? Why do the authors originating from dozens of different dialectical groups concur in the sharing of the same literary language – English? It seems to be more and more important to answer these particular questions, especially with regards to growing importance of the literature of the subcontinent that might have been once interpreted as marginal, but now represents the largest publisher of English written literature in the world after the USA and Britain.[74]

2.2.2. Binarism and Its Concretization

As it has been already pointed out, there is a certain kind of violence that the Same imposes upon the Other to reduce its alterity and to transform it – to make it the "Self's shadow"[75]. The encounter of cultures, the creation of the Other has taken its course according to similar scenarios in most cases.

We are usually only willing to recognize differences so long as they remain within the domain of our language, our knowledge, our control. It leads to a highly charged practice when:

> ...we encounter diverse worlds, histories and cultures and experiences
> within apparent communality. It is a meeting, a putting yourself in the
> line, that is invariably accompanied by uncertainty and the fear. For it
> involves an encounter with a previous sense of the Self that cannot abide

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[74] 1981 survey showed that 8.000 out of the 17.000 titles published that year in India were written in English; in addition it comprised the bulk of British book exports of 4.5 million pounds. See: Nirad C. Chaudhuri, "Opening Address," *The Eye of the Beholder: Indian Writing in English,* ed. Maggie Butcher, (London: Commonwealth Institute 1983) 24.
[75] See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "A Critique of Postcolonial Reason," *Norton's Anthology of Literary Theory,* (New York: Norton 2001) 2197.

its own non-mastery of the world it fears and hates the Other for concretizing its own specificity and limits, and seeks to reduce Otherness at every opportunity to a form of Sameness and identity modelled in itself.[76]

In order to regain the self-consciousness and the mastery, the Same imposes the violence upon the Other in order to deprive it of its alterity – to assimilate it and make it similar to the Same. It is a dual violence – the physical one, naturally accompanying all the wars and closely related to the colonization as such – and the intellectual one - oriented primarily towards the colonized subject as one of the representations of the Other – called by Michel Foucault "epistemic violence"[77]. Foucault interprets the intellectual power as functioning discursively to produce the very subject over which it then exercises mastery. Foucault has this to say:

> There is a certain position in the Western ratio that was constituted in its history and provides a foundation for the relation it can have with all other societies, even with the society in which it appeared.[78]

Homi Bhabha analyzes it further saying:

> Foucault is able to see how knowledge and power came together in the enunciative "present" of transference: the "calm violence" as he calls it, of a relationship that constitutes a discourse. He disavows precisely the colonial text as the foundation for the relation the Western ratio can have even with the society in which it historically appeared.[79]

The original attitude of the Same, here namely the colonizing power of imperialism was to place on a pedestal its own knowledge high above anything it encountered within the Other. Vice versa, imperialism originally approached the Other and its knowledge as the one whose knowledge was treated as "subjugated knowledge,

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[76]Elizabeth Grosz, "Judaism and Exile. The Ethics of Otherness," *New Formations 12*, Winter 1990:81.
[77] See: Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "A Critique of Postcolonial Reason," *Norton's Anthology of Literary Theory,* (New York: Norton 2001) 2194.
[78] Michel Foucault, *Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences,* (London: Tavistock Publications 1970) 52.
[79] Homi Bhabha, "In a Spirit of Calm Violence," *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Post-Colonial Displacement,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1995) 327.

the whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity."[80] All the Eastern colonies, labelled often as Orient were treated as the unorganized chaos, and knowledge functioned then as an operation of conquest and mastery driven by generality[81] that was supposed to redeem them.

The forthcoming passage on the Colonial Power will focus on the concrete manifestations of such discriminating attitude and "calm violence", especially in colonial India of the 19th century that later on had an immense impact upon forming the hybrid and bi-lingual literary culture of the Indian subcontinent. Still before discussing closely the mentioned manifestations, there is a need to point out the most strategic tool that such a binarist approach of the Same / colonizer brought with – the role of language – the English, and the text as the manifestation of the language.

As Lévinas pointed out at the end of the second chapter of "Metaphysics and Transcendence" called "The Breech of Totality", it is the language that plays a significant role in the relation of the Same and the Other. Namely, he states:

> We shall try to show that the relation between the Same and the Other – upon which we seem to impose such extra-ordinary conditions – is language. For language accomplishes a relation such that the Other, despite the relationship with the Same, remains transcendent to the Same. The relation between the Same and the Other, metaphysics, is primordially enacted as conversation, where the Same, gathered up in its ipseity as an "I" as a particular existent unique and autochthonous, leaves itself.[82]

For Lévinas, language was the means that ensured autonomy of the Same and the Other. Nevertheless, he did not take into account that it would be the same language and discourse as one type of its manifestation that would become – in the hands of the

[80] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writing 1972 – 1977,* (New York: Pantheon 1980) 82.
[81] See: Gillies Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Norton's Anthology of Literary Theory,* (New York: Norton 2001) 1594.
[82] Emmanuel Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity,* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press 2005) 40.

colonial power – a device for the depriving the Other of its alterity and the means for sustaining the colonial dominance.

As Frantz Fanon stated in his introduction in *Black Skin, White Masks*: "The man who possesses the language, consequently possesses the world. To speak a language is to take a world and culture."[83] The truth of this statement has been proved in the course of human history several times. The language as one of the strategies of the colonial power is inseparable to other types of violence that the colonizer imposes upon colonized subjects. When you have the command of the particular language you have the control over the means of communication. As Tzvetan Todorov pointed out in his *Conquest of America*, the colonizers accentuated the written tradition that they had brought with them to new lands and rejected languages and cultures existing predominantly in oral tradition for lacking the very same thing. They equated literacy with being civilized. Textuality then, i.e. being written was the criterion of class and of culture. Because of such a preference for written discourse and due to the vulnerability of the oral societies, they could easily reject all the particular culture of the colonized lands and their history first of all having proclaimed it a mere "myth making"[84].

The ordered, cyclic, paradigmatic oral world could under no circumstances compete with the unpredictable and syntagmatic world of written word. In addition, the other cultures started being interpreted from the position of power; being written meant becoming a new reality. The prevailing attitude of the dominating power was of a discriminatory kind that is to perceive the colonized as a blank space. Through language and through the process of being written and named the colonized space was brought into being. The unknown was described and named; the known was renamed – all the spatial reality of the Other was textualized. Spivak called this approach "the palimpsestic narrative of imperialism"[85]. In sequence to actual process of mapping the

[83] Frantz Fanon, *Black, Skin, White Masks*, (New York: Grove Press 1967) 18.
[84] See: Bill Ashcroft, et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, (London & New York: Routledge 2003) 78.
[85] See: Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "A Critique of Postcolonial Reason," *Norton's Anthology of Literary Theory*, (New York: Norton 2001) 2197.

colonial subject was being similarly mapped, written and named having been perceived as similarly blank space as the newly colonized lands.[86]

As I have already stated the success of the colonization would not have been of such a degree if it hadn't been for the English book and its impact upon colonized lands. No wonder it all started with religious texts – the Bible first of all. The significance of the written word that stood for the fixed reality much more than any oral tradition and its effect was striking – as Homi Bhabha points out: "The discovery of the book was at once a moment of originality and authority. Never having heard of a printed book before, its very appearance seemed miraculous to these people."[87] Especially when the Bible was being interpreted as follows: We, the white Sahibs were given it by God a long time ago, and now we are bringing it to you. The colonizers brought a ready truth and there was not much space left for the colonized to question its righteousness. As Bhabha continues:

> The discovery of the book installed the sign of appropriate representation: the word of God, truth, art creates the conditions for beginning, a practice of history and narrative. The book truly indeed stood for the most significant mediator of the cultural authority – the immediate vision of the book figures those ideological correlatives of the Western sign – empiricism, idealism, mimeticism, monoculturalism.[88]

No doubt that the discovery of the English book established both a measure of mimesis and a mode of civil authority and order. Nevertheless, what the postcolonial theory stresses, the colonial presence is always ambivalent – it is both original and authoritative, both based on repetition and difference. Thus the colonial scene as the invention of historicity, mastery and mimesis has brought into life the other scene, too. Similarly to issues of identity that will be analyzed further on, something new emerged due to an ambivalent – in-between position of the colonial subjects. Apart from the pure mimetic and adolatory approach to the British book and Victorian literature most of all,

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[86] See the entry "palimpsest". In: Bill Ashcroft, et al., *Key Concepts in Post-colonial Studies,* (London: Routledge 1998) 174.
[87] Homi Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders," *The Location of Culture,* (New York: Routledge 1994) 103.
[88] Bhabha, p.105.

the new open textuality emerged based on displacement, fantasy and psychic defence. The reign of opinion gave partly way to the double vision:

> Despite appearances, the text of transparency inscribes a double vision: the field of the "true" emerges as a visible sign of authority only after the regulatory and displacing division of the true and the false. From this point of view, discursive "transparency" is best read in the photographic sense in which a transparency is always a negative, processed into visibility through the technologies of reversal. Enlargement, lighting, editing, projection, nor a source but a re-source for fight. Such a bringing to light is a question of the provision of visibility as a capacity, a strategy, an agency.[89]

Bhabha here refers to his hybridity theory that is concerned first of all with issues of identity of the postcolonial subject. However hard the "Mother culture" tried to transmute the Other to be as much similar to the Same as possible; it has not succeeded fully in most of the cases: the Same was repeated, indeed, but the repetition was never exactly the same but different – it was a mutation, a hybrid. The colonized culture according to Bhabha managed to prove its not being the passive power. On the top of it, it managed to strike back. It succeeded in finding its own way, although there is no way how to get rid fully of the epistemic violence that had so long been forming and influencing the colonized cultures; there was a possibility found how to use this tradition and transform it in accordance to the particular needs. In addition, "the other denied knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and enstrange the basis of its authority – its rules of recognition"[90]. This is what the original mother culture never predicted.

Such a backward effect which Salman Rushdie called symptomatically "The Empire Writes Back (with Vengeance)"[91] and which was used as the title of one of the most influential books on postcolonial theory[92] can be observed and described in relation to the English as the literary language and the changes it has undergone due to

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[89] Homi Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders," *The Location of Culture,* (New York: Routledge 1994) 110.
[90] Bhabha, p. 109.
[91] See: Salman Rushdie, "The Empire Writes Back with Vengeance,"*The Times*, 3 July 1982:.8.
[92] See: Bill Ashcroft, et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, (London & New York: Routledge 2003).

the influence of the postcolonial discourse. The concrete examples will be stressed out either in the chapters to come dealing with the English as the literary language of many South-Asian authors and its representation and interpretation in the works of the very same authors or the separate part focused on the role of language, education and colonial epistemic violence in the lives of the characters in the postcolonial fiction.

2.2.3. Calm Violence in Operation: Colonial Power and Its Strategies

Language is not primarily a means of communication; it is above all, a means of cultural construction in which our very selves and sense are constituted. This understanding of language, as a material that is potentially shared and yet differentiated, is then further compounded, when we shift our gaze from the local underworld of the West, its hidden histories and subaltern cultures, to the further horizons and territories of contemporary metropolitan cultures elsewhere.[93]

As I have striven to depict above, the language by the means of its primary tools – the education and the literature was participant significantly in creating of new colonial subjects, in creating a new reality of their lives, in an attempt to make them more resemble if not the very same as the subject of the colonizer, in changing their identity in accordance to the wishes of the colonizing power. How then has this calm violence factually operated, what were the strategies of the colonial power mainly during the Victorian era that managed so successfully to transform the everyday lives of millions of new subjects?

All the mentioned issues are very closely intertwined with the history of the British colonial rule. There was not any single Indian state till the midpoint of the 19th century. India had consisted of hundreds small kingdoms that devolved after the 23rd of June 1757 victory of British troops at the Battle of Plassey under the conduct of the East India Company that served both as military as well as a commercial power. The wealth gained from the Bengal treasury allowed the Company to significantly strengthen its military might and as a result, extend its territories, conquering most parts of India with the massive Indian army it had acquired. Although this date and these events marked the

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[93] Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*, (London & New York: Routledge 1994) 22-23.

beginning of British rule in India, the real British India did not come into being till the second half of the 19th century. For more than 90 years the Indian lands were governed not by a political but the enterprise power of the East India Company. It was not until 1857 when the Indian rebellion against the Indian enterprise dominion and specifically the East India Company called the Indian Mutiny, made the British change their political attitude towards their most significant holding in the world and transform it into a proper British colony. The British East India Company was dissolved and the period of direct British rule in India known as the British Raj was to come, when the regional contemporary states such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar would collectively be known as British India.

As for the cultural policy during the early period of the East India supremacy the British authorities seem surprisingly tolerant as for the local languages and cultures. The 18th century Orientalists even asserted that the British should learn Indian languages in order to empower their economical interests in the area. However such a task was found soon impossible. Considering that there were 22 official languages in India, it was extremely demanding to communicate with the local authorities. This failure accompanied by the growing importance of India as the colony brought in a significant change. As Benedict Anderson points out: "When the East India Company's charter came up for renewal in 1813, Parliament mandated the allocation of 100.000 rupees a year for the promotion of native education, both oriental and western."[94] In 1823, a Committee of Public Instruction was set up in Bengal and in 1834 a hugely influential personality became president of this committee. Thomas Babington Macaulay, the 1st Baron of Macaulay "was a convinced colonialist and a believer in European, especially British superiority over all things Oriental. Serving on the Supreme Council of India between 1834 and 1838 Macaulay was instrumental in creating the foundations of bilingual colonial India, by convincing the council and parliament to close schools and colleges teaching in Sanskrit or Arabic and instead to teach English to "natives" and provide education in English only."[95]

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[94] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* (London & New York: Verso 1991) 90.
[95] See e.g. "Thomas Babington Macaulay, the 1st Baron of Macaulay", 10 September 2006, http://www.statemaster.com/encyclopedia/Lord-Macaulay.

His appointment turned out to be one of the most crucial events in relevance to the enthronement of the British cultural superiority in all the colonies. His infamous "Minute of the 2nd of February"(known also as "Minute on Indian Education") became the key text of the cultural transformation of the Indian subcontinent into the British cultural periphery. It founded the long-time tradition of the British educational system in the sub-continent that virtually has been in operation so far. Using the peremptory quotations from Macaulay's speech I will try to point out the most fundamental strategies concerning the language, education and literature.

As for the languages Macaulay deals with the query whether it is worth for new students in the British schools in India spending time in studying the vernacular languages of the sub-continent when there is a time-proved, developed language such as English that can serve colonial purposes much better than any of the local languages. In particular Macaulay states:

> All parties seem to be agreed on one point, that the dialects commonly spoken among the natives of this part of India contain neither literary nor scientific information, and are, moreover, so poor and rude, that, until they are enriched from some other quarter, it will not be easy to translate any valuable work in them. It seems to be admitted to all sides that intellectual improvement of those classes of people who have the means of pursuing higher studies can at present be effected only by the means of some language not vernacular amongst them.[96]

As for English, he states further on: "English stands preeminent even among the languages of the West.... Whoever knows the language has ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth."[97]

At the end of his speech he resolutely concludes his opinion on the local languages as follows providing his personal advice how to solve the situation:

> What we spend on the Arabic and Sanskrit colleges is not merely a dead loss to the cause of truth, it is bounty money paid to rise up champions of

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[96] Thomas Babington Macaulay, "Minute of the 2nd February," *Speeches by Lord Macaulay with His Minute on Indian Education,* (London: Humphrey Milford 1979) 348.
[97] Macaulay, p. 350.

error. It goes to form a nest, not merely of helpless place hunters.... We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees for vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of population.[98]

If Baron Macaulay did not acknowledge a single virtue of local languages, he went much further in his condemning of local science and literature; thereby he contributed immensely to the coming dominion of the Western science and literary canon that in a way has never ceased.

When he quotes the traditional Orientalist discourse on Indian literature he proclaims: "I have never found one (Orientalist) who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia...."[99] As for the "Oriental" science he adds:

I believe, no exaggeration to say, that all the historical information which has been collected from all books written in the Sanskrit language is less valuable that what may be found in the paltriest abridgements at preparatory schools in England.[100]

No wonder that he sees a future in maximal adopting of British culture and literature: "A young Hindu who has made the most of his time at college will write by the hour a somewhat florid and stilted English with perfect ease and accuracy; and will read and enjoy, and criticize any of our authors from Chaucer down to Robert Browning and Carlyle."[101]

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[98] Macaulay, p. 359.
[99] Macaulay, p. 349.
[100] Macaulay.
[101] Thomas Babington Macaulay, in: Peter Childs, "Introduction," *Postcolonial Theory and English Literature Reader,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 1999) 3.

Such statements of Macaulay's only evidence what significance the British authorities were at that time ascribing to the English literature and education. As I have stated in previous passages the English literature indeed became the major strategic tool for the colonizing power. The literature played a part in the organization of Empire in India being perceived as the means of moral instruction among local inhabitants. The literature accompanied by the traditional British education, both boarding schools and universities in the mother country or the newly founded institutions within the Indian subcontinent, participated in creation of the new Indian identity and the whole new Indian reality. The remains of this cultural policy have survived up to present time – there would still be a majority of educated people whose command of English surpassed their command of any local language; similarly their awareness of the literature was often restricted to virtuous knowledge of the English classics, such as Dickens, Austen, Carlyle, Browning (surprisingly mostly 19th century authors related to the golden era of English literature and inseparably connected with the colonial Victorian period) but will lack any awareness of the contemporary Indian fiction.

By the 1880s all the Macaulay's visions had come true. The first Indian University was founded in 1857 having been modelled mainly on the pattern of London University:

> By the time the Indian National Congress was founded by predominantly Western educated men in 1885, a system in English medium schools existed throughout India as well as the rest of British Empire, providing the elite which was to dominate the professions, trade and missionary activity and to spread European values.[102]

Only few have pronounced certain worries that such an attitude of education would totally deprive the whole subcontinent of its authenticity, the general assimilation strategy surpassed all of them. This cultural and linguistic assimilation might have been at first enforced, but within the decades to come (regardless the British Empire or the Indian independence era) it became a tradition, a standard that has penetrated into everyday lives of the inhabitants of the ex-British Indian countries. What were thus the

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[102] Dennis Walder, *Post-Colonial Literatures in English: History, Language, Theory,* (London: Blackwell 1998) 49.

particular effects that this type of "calm colonial violence" has brought with? What were the specific manifestations?

As I have mentioned, the epistemic violence was in this case of a palimpsestic nature: the language and culture as such served as the means for rewriting and creating a new reality. The new language and culture were accompanied by new realities that the new speakers and users had to adopt. As Nirad C. Chaudhuri writes in his study on the history and use of English language "at the end of the 19th century English was so firmly established in upper class Bengali society that among them the conversation was half and half in English and Bengali; besides numerous English words were interspersed in Bengali sentences."[103] Since the language was usually taught at that time by means of literature or e.g. "letter writing manuals" the learners in order to adopt the language had to adopt the reality these books were presenting. It was not merely a generally popular Shakespeare that served to many English learners in the subcontinent as the beau-ideal of the English. Readers of Jane Austen, Thomas Hardy had to incorporate new ideals of culture that included for them totally new forms of inter-personal relations and behaviour, especially as for the husband and wives (e.g. love vocabulary). Chaudhuri adds:

> We could not write in English without changing mentally – we could not
> merely pay the tithe of mint and anise and cumin to the language and
> omit the weightier matter of revising our attitude towards our wives and
> husbands: of course promoting the wives and demoting the husbands.[104]

The English language has not merely imported a new cultural tradition; in addition it – first by predominantly linguistic means – mutilated the already existing cultural reality of the subcontinent. The English language and the brand new terminology not only entered the lives of the colonized people but due to its arrogant superiority, it manipulated with the local languages and terminology as it wished. Surprisingly there would be many misunderstandings and misnamings found that were effectively incorporated into the common speech without pausing to consider its real

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[103]Nirad C. Chaudhuri, "Opening Address," *The Eye of the Beholder: Indian Writing in English*, ed. Maggie Butcher, (London: Commonwealth Institute 1983) 9.
[104] Chaudhuri, p. 10.

etymology and meaning. A following extract form Farukh Dhondy's *Bombay Duck* shows one of such mutilations:

> Bombay Duck is not a duck at all. In fact it should be spelt Bomby Dak. What it is, is a dried fish (known in Bombay as Bombil) and when the British introduced the railway system to Western India under the Raj, it started going in wagon loads to the interior from Bombay. The crates stank of dried fish. They were marked "Bombay Dak" literally "Bombay Mail". At the time the railway was run by the whiteys. The English may call a spade a spade, but they don't call "stinking fish" by that name. They referred to it euphemistically as "Bombay Dak", the Bombay mail.[105]

The universal adoption of the language by the elite classes has caused also another thing: it spawned the alienation of the upper classes from the lower classes and peasants: they virtually cut themselves off from the rest of the nation.

> The Indian Magistrates had not only passed a very rigid test on the same terms as British members of the service, but had spent the very best years of the formative period of their youth in England. Upon their return to their homeland, they practically lived in the same style as their brother civilians, and almost religiously followed the social conventions and the ethical standards of the latter. In those days the India-born civilian practically cut himself from the parent society, and lived and moved his being in the atmosphere so beloved of his British colleagues. In mind and manners he was as much an Englishman as any Englishman. It was a small sacrifice for him, because in this way he completely enstranged himself from the society of his own people and became socially and

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[105] Peter Childs, "Introduction," *Postcolonial Theory and English Literature Reader,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 1999) 25.

morally pariah among them.... He was as much a stranger in his own native land as the European residents in the country.[106]

Such an enstrangement is fundamental for the issues of identity of the postcolonial subject that I will discuss in detail in a separate chapter on identity. They show how the impact of epistemic violence influenced profoundly all the aspects of the lives of the colonial and postcolonial subjects. The ones to be blamed most are the issues of language and cultural assimilation that became crucial especially in connection to the South-Asian immigration to the United Kingdom after the WWII.

Last but not the least, the effect of the British linguistic and cultural dominion in the subcontinent has promoted the English to the position of the 2nd official Indian language making it a vitally necessary skill for any professional and social success of the citizens. The inadequate command of English disqualifies regardless being it in Britain as for the diaspora members or in India as for the local inhabitants. Far from being a mere world and global language, English became the signifier of status, both for the professionals and ordinary people (e.g. there is no hope in getting a good match for the girl if she does not have a proper command of the English language.)

2.2.4. Why English?

The Englishizing of the colonies succeeded without any doubt. This success managed to form a new class that Macaulay so unhappily named mediators who had virtually more in common with Great Britain than their fellow countrymen. Under the circumstances, their preference for English seems thus unnatural. Why was it that even though the British Raj ended after the WWII this class of people did not cease to use the language of the Empire and did not adopt any of the national languages? Why have not the countries of the Indian subcontinent adopted the same pattern as many African ex-colonies that fought for the establishment of the national languages, at least as the literary language.

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[106] Recollections of Bipin Chandra Pal in 1932. To be found in: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* (London & New York: Verso 1991) 92- 93.

There are two major strategies that are according to the postcolonial theory applicable to the language situation in the postcolonial societies and writing predominantly. As the authors of *The Empire Writes Back* state:

> In the early period of postcolonial writing many writers were forced into the search for an alternative authenticity which seemed to be escaping them since the concept of authenticity itself was endorsed by a centre to which they did not belong and yet was continually contradicted by the everyday experience of marginality.[107]

Only two solutions were possible in such a position: either to quest for the essential cultural and linguistic purity which backed the national literary model discussed in the chapter on the thematic parallels in the postcolonial writing or to assay to work and transform somehow the existing though not original but enforced cultural environment and the adopted language.

The whole history of the postcolonial writing after WWII is above all connected to the latter: adoption of the colonial language and its further development. Before analyzing the specific advancement that the postcolonial authors have used in order to fully take advantage of the language that was given to them, it is appropriate first to discuss further the particular motivation that the postcolonial writers have had for preferring the language of the colonizers to their mother tongue.

If we are to deal with the appropriateness of English as the literary language there is a good opportunity to discuss the most concerned: the authors of South-Asian origin but writing in English. There have been many discussions whether the English is indeed appropriate to the truly Indian themes. Salman Rushdie sees no option of rejecting the English since there is a growing audience that is already and will be in greater scale speaking English as the first language.

First of all there is a purely practical reason that many of the authors accentuate. The writers' choice of language is quite often motivated by economical interests: the choice depends on whether or not they wish to be read and published, both abroad and at home. The motivation of getting published has pressed many authors to address

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[107] Bill Ashcroft, et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, (London & New York: Routledge 2003) 40.

English speakers and readers rather than traditional indigenous audiences. The English educated audience provides much more secure literary market than the traditional readership could ever offer.

Since English is already the second official language, Rushdie sees (as many other writers do) no reason why the English should not be applied as the literary means for depicting the Indian reality. It has become, in his opinion, the integral part of the new Indian identity, together with other British "imports" such as cricket or 5 o'clock tea. Nothing can be more illustrative than the following poem on the very same subject by Kamala Das:

> I am Indian, very brown, born in
>
> Malabar, I speak 3 languages, write in
>
> Two, dream in one.
>
> Don't write in English, they said
>
> English is not your mother-tongue.
>
> Why not leave
>
> Me alone, critics, friends, visiting cousins
>
> Every one of you?
>
> Why not let me speak in
>
> Any language I like? The language I speak
>
> Becomes mine, its distortions, its queerness
>
> All mine, mine alone. It is half English half
>
> Indian, funny perhaps, but it is honest
>
> It is as honest as I am human, don't
>
> You see? It voices my joys, my longings, my
>
> Hope, and it is useful to me as cowing
>
> Is to crows or roaring is to lions.[108]

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[108] Dennis Walder, *Post-Colonial Literatures in English: History, Language, Theory,* (London: Blackwell 1998) 52.

Despite the bilingual identity of the most postcolonial writers, many writers do not see both the languages as equals. It does not concern so much the issues of the surviving colonial attitude to the indigenous languages, but moreless the general "cultural" significance. Be that as it may, the languages are still organized in a hierarchy so that English is the most valuable. English has not become only a new cultural language but also a kind of mediator that enabled the authors mistakenly labelled as Indian authors (but being of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Caribbean and East African origin and having as many different mother-tongues) to take advantage of the culturally neutrality of the language – English, sort of lingua franca, which ironically seems to the speakers of Tamil, Kannada or Malayam less colonial than their own languages or Hindi.

In addition, the authors have to face another problem when deciding whether to use their mother-tongue or the English. Their own languages appear not to be sufficiently flexible so that they could portray the colourful and complicated reality of postcolonial subjects. To be specific, Salman Rushdie reproaches Urdu for following defects:

> It is a language which is very beautiful as long as you keep the rules, but there is no elbow room in it. The way in which Urdu is being adopted in Pakistan today is by adulteration, by the incorporation of Punjabi and Sindhi, which are very much colloquial down-to-earth languages. The Urdu now spoken in Pakistan is not Urdu really, it is really Punjabi and Sindhi with some other elements, Urdu is bad at colloquialism, bad at the everyday. It is very good at the moon.[109]

As the indigenous languages being either too formal or on the other hand too colloquial the English seemed to have provided the appropriate neutrality for such a type of literature that first the colonial and subsequently the postcolonial writers desired to create. It was already in the colonial era that the writers needed a tool how to express feelings towards the colonizers. Lacking the suitable means in their own language they broke into the master's house and appropriated his original tool. Dennis Walder

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[109] Michael Reder, *Conversations with Salman Rushdie,* (Jackson: University of Mississsippi 2000) 64.

compares the situation to the literary classical one of Prospero and Caliban in *The Tempest*: The "savage and deformed" Caliban snarls at Prospero, whereas Prospero has the wonderful advantage of being able to express how he feels towards him. Caliban's attitude prefigures that of many colonial (and later postcolonial) writers who have used the imposed European tongue to represent their condition."[110] Nevertheless, this appropriation of the "superior" language was not as passive as all the "Prosperos" expected. Being first a mere means for better expressing the new reality of their lives, the language and simultaneously the literature turned slowly into a weapon by which Caliban answered back. The language and the literature of the centre started slowly being changed under the influence of the periphery.

2.2.5. Empire Writes Back

Having used Salman Rushdie's title of the highly influential newspaper article[111] that later became the title of no less significant work of postcolonial theory[112], I will try to analyze the development that all the language has undergone due to the influence of postcolonial users, writers most of all. Although many postcolonial theoreticians have perceived the colonized subjects and their culture above all as the passive voice, very often of merely mimetic character, others, namely e.g. Homi Bhabha and Salman Rushdie have opposed such accusation and referred to the fact that the colonial and later postcolonial subjects have participated actively in constructing the modern culture, language and literature. Not only have they participated actively but on the top of this they have taken part in disturbance of the linguistic and cultural supremacy by means of active influence.

Such a change from the "passive" voice to the active renovator of the "master's house" would have never been possible without the liberating and decentralizing intellectual tendencies in the West of the 1960s. Starting with the active support of the independence struggles of colonized peoples worldwide (Fanon, Sartre) they simultaneously focused on the relativization of the literature and literary texts and

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[110] Dennis Walder, *Post-Colonial Literatures in English: History, Language, Theory,* (London: Blackwell 1998) 42.
[111] See: Salman Rushdie, "The Empire Writes Back with Vengeance,"*The Times*, 3 July 1982:8.
[112] See: Bill Ashcroft, et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, (London & New York: Routledge 2003).

undermining the universalist claims about the centrality of the accepted canon of great works around which criticism and teaching circulated. They opened the possibility of attending more closely to the alternative claims of the neglected or marginalized works which promote a sense of difference, of "the other"[113] (Tzvetan Todorov, Roland Barthes). Only then the newly established postcolonial theory could struggle for the promotion of the once neglected authors outside the so-called metropolitan centres, only then it could disrupt the supremacy of the "pure" British English and English literary canon and point out the virtues of the former "colonial periphery". Supposedly, such active undermining and transformative tendencies are to be found mostly in the mutual language exchange.

According to the authors of the *Key Concepts in Postcolonial Studies*[114] there are two major tendencies as for the adoption of the colonial language and its further utilization. Appropriation is:

> a term used to describe the ways in which postcolonial societies took over those aspects of the imperial culture – language, forms of writing, even modes of thought and argument such as rationalism, logic and analysis that maybe of use to them in articulating their own social and cultural identities.[115]

As for the language and textuality as such "dominant language and its discursive forms are appropriated to express widely differing cultural experiences and to interpolate these experiences into the dominant modes of representation to reach the widest possible audience."[116] Appropriation is based predominantly on adopting the tools of the dominant discourse which does not embody such a level of active communication and resistance as the second tendency – abrogation. Drawing from the decentralizing discursive tendencies of the 1960s, it refers to the:

> rejection by the postcolonial writers of a normative concept of correct and standard English. Abrogation offers the counter to the theory that use

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[113] Dennis Walder, *Post-Colonial Literatures in English: History, Language, Theory,* (London: Blackwell 1998) 59.
[114] See Bill Ashcroft, et al., *Key Concepts in Post-colonial Studies*, (London: Routledge 1998).
[115] See the entry "appropriation", Ashcroft et al. , *Key Concepts,* p. 19.
[116] Ashcroft, et al., *Key Concepts,* p. 5.

of the colonialists' languages inescapably imprisons the colonized within the colonizer's conceptual paradigms.

It opposes the view that "you can't dismantle the master's house with the master's tools", vice versa, abrogation implies that "the master's house is always adaptable and the same tools offer a means of conceptual transformation and liberation."[117]

Only abrogation enables the colonial subject writing out of the condition of Otherness to fully take hold of his/her marginality and to "make the hybridity and syncreticity imposed on it the source of cultural and literary redefinition."[118] Returning to Salman Rushdie we would get a concrete example of the abrogation working. In his opinion there is the need for the decolonization of English as the language, especially by those who use it from the position outside the Anglo-Saxon culture. Only due to an enormous flexibility of the English language can the ones once colonized by it be now rapidly remaking it, domesticating it. It is not a new tendency, similar things have already occurred to English: "the Irishing of English and the Americanizing of English has been going on for two hundred years since James Fennimore Cooper and *Huckleberry Finn*."[119] There were authors who have had the courage and dared infuse the English with the new literary voices: rhythms, histories (Toni Morrison, Ralph Elison, James Baldwin). "English, no longer an English language, now grows from many roots; and those from once colonized are carving out large territories within the language for themselves. The Empire is striking back!"[120]

To be specific Rushdie illustrates this phenomenon using and analyzing the word he chose to name one of his characters in The *Satanic Verses* after. Chamcha – signifying both the spoon and the persons who suck up to the power of powerful people, the collaborator – is to him a symbol of the feature without which the British Empire would not have lasted. As he states: "The Raj grew fat by being spoon-fed; in addition the British left us, disguised as freedom, this dominion of spoons." What he praised

[117] Bill Ashcroft, et al., *Key Concepts in Post-colonial Studies*, (London: Routledge 1998), 5.
[118] Ashcroft et al.
[119] Hari Kunzru, "Salman Rushdie Interview Transcript RSC Rehearsal rooms Clapham 03.Jan.03, 5 December 2005, http://www.harikunzru.com/hari/rushdie.htm
[120] Salman Rushdie, "The Empire Writes Back with Vengeance," *The Times*, 3 July July 1982:8.

significantly, is that there were such authors who similarly to the above mentioned African-American writers promoted the language of chamchas and equated it to the standard "canonical" English. Namely the work of G. V. Desani *All about H. Hatter* (1948) showed "how English could be bent and kneaded until it spoke an authentically Indian voice."

> Desani's triumph was to take babu-English, chamcha English, and turn it against itself: the instrument of subservience became a weapon of liberation.[121]

And that seems to be one of the major successes of the postcolonial writers. Despite the centuries lasting colonial supremacy and discriminatory neglect they managed to grasp the master's tools and to start slowly transforming the master's house from the very foundations. The Empire has been indeed writing back and in a way has been helping to wipe away the colonial aggradation that has survived so far.

2.3. Identity, Difference and Hybridity

> The migrant suspects reality: having experienced several ways of being, he understands their illusory nature. To see things plainly, you have to cross a frontier.
>
> Salman Rushdie: "The Location of Brazil"[122]

2.3.1. Introduction

As it is evident from the title of this chapter, it will deal with problematic issues of a postcolonial subject's identity, its variations and at the end with its manifestations in the works of fiction. Before focusing on particular problems that are related to post–colonial theory and fiction key term, it might be helpful to look up what the dictionaries have to say as for the definition of the notion of "identity". The most common definitions of the word are as follows:

Identity:

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[121] Salman Rushdie, "The Empire Writes Back with Vengeance," *The Times*, 3 July1982:8.
[122] Salman Rushdie, "The Location of Brazil," *Imaginary Homelands,* (London: Granta Books 1991) 124-125.

– The collective aspect of the set of characteristics by which a thing is definitively recognizable or known.

– The set of behavioural or personal characteristics by which an individual is recognizable as a member of a group.

– The quality or condition of being the same as something else.

– The distinct personality of an individual regarded as a persisting entity; individuality.[123]

Though focusing on different aspects of the term, some of these definitions bear something strikingly in common: such words as "set", "collective", and especially "condition being the same" induce an idea that identity as such is based upon a confrontation with some norm, upon comparison of something already existing to something new.

As for cultural identity, which is in the very same sources described as "an (feeling of) identity of a group or culture, or of an individual as far as he/she is influenced by his/her belonging to a group or culture"[124], brings necessarily a question whether the subject (who is the bearer of identity) is a part of the group or the culture mentioned, whether he/she identifies with it. Abreast with it there is a question arising whether identity can be perceived as something fixed, stable, unchanging, or if there is any progress, if the subject may undergo certain change as for his identity in the course of his/her life?

All of the questions will be analysed further with regards to a specific life experience of the (post) colonial subjects – the experience immensely influenced by a surviving colonial heritage and no less by a highly influential migrant "adventure" – with stress upon the transformation of the theoretical approach from the extremely oversimplifying and discriminatory one of the colonial theory to a non-dogmatic and questioning one of postcolonialism.

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[123]See the entry "identity", 10 March 2007, http://www.yourdictionary.com/ahd/i/i0020300.html
[124] Anthony King, "Identity", *Architecture and Identity,* eds. Peter Herrle and Eric Wegerhoff, (Berlin: Lit verlag Dr.W.Hopf 2008) 222.

One of the leading representatives of the postcolonial theory, Stuart Hall, distinguishes two basic ways of thinking about cultural identity: the first one operates in terms of one, shared culture; there is a sort of collective "one true self" which people with shared history and origin have in common. For the cultural identity, in most cases closely tied down to a specific place, it means that the selves share the identity with the fellow countrymen on the basis of common – shared location. "Our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as "one people" with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history."[125]

It is the "oneness", the similarity, which is according to Hall a true essence of such a shared culture identity.

Second perception of the cultural identity draws significantly from the experience of dispersal and fragmentation characteristic for the present postcolonial reality. It states it is not possible to speak about one single experience, one identity without acknowledging the other side. It does not perceive identity as a fixed origin to which we can make some final and absolute return, but as something which at the same time exists but also is becoming, coming into being, something which is in progress, "something, which can be at the same time similar and different."[126]

Such a doubleness which originated from the multilayered realities of postcolonial subjects has much to do with some kind of response, reaction and development of identity that the shared culture identity experience induced in the second half of the 20th century. Nevertheless, it is immensely helpful to analyse in a detail some features of the shared cultural identity that stood not only at the birth of nationalist movements (e.g. négritude) in ex-colonies in the second half of the 20th century but was also a corner stone of the colonialism as such.

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[125] Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader,* eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf 1993) 393.
[126] Hall, p. 396.

2.3.2. Identity as Binary Opposition

There is no doubt that postcolonial subjects have been bearers of what Simon Gikandi calls "shreds and patches of the British colonial heritage"[127], then the institutional, ideological and aesthetic remains of the centuries long colonial supremacy of the West. As it has been discussed in the chapter specifically focused on one of the most crucial manifestations of power – epistemic violence[128], it was predominantly "the binarism, the seeing the world in terms of binary oppositions that established a relation of dominance."[129] This type of an approach which strictly separated the world in such polarities as centre / periphery, inside / outside, First World / Third World and most of all the Self / the Other always assumed a movement in one direction only, that is from the centre to the periphery, from the "civilized" to the "savage".

Such a practice of looking down on the colonized world, of perceiving the self as the righteous and faultless master of newly subjected areas arose according to many theoreticians from a persisting feeling of fear which encounters with new, strange and unknown places and people evoked. This feeling produces a rejection of such unfamiliarity and "seeks to reduce otherness to a form of sameness and identity modelled in itself."[130] There is contempt present as for the encounters of the West with the East, contempt for its difference and strangeness that the West is incapable to grasp. It is the difference, the "deviation" from the sameness that is the criterion for the classification and judgement. To be fully "human" means to be westernized, to succeed means to get rid of the otherness and assimilate – accept the identity of the colonizer (the Westerner, namely the Englishman as the embodiment of universal values), become recognizably the same as the colonizer. To summarize the whole process: "The subordinate subjects have invariably been ordained to the stereotyped immobilism of an

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[127] Simon Gikandi, "Poststructuralism and Postcolonial Discourse," *The Cambridge Companion to Post-colonial Literary Studies*, ed. Neil Lazarus, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004) 3.
[128] See the chapter 2.2 "Language, Textuality and Epistemic Violence."
[129] See the entry "binarism", Bill Ashcroft, et al., *Key Concepts in Post-colonial Studies,* (London: Routledge 1998) 23.
[130] Elizabeth Grosz, "Judaism and Exile. The Ethics of Otherness," *New Formations 12*, Winter 1990:81.

essential "authenticity" in which they are expected to play out roles designated for them."[131]

To be successful in such a task the colonizer had to have a powerful weapon that would enable him to enforce the norms upon the colonized. Homi Bhabha, one of the leading personalities of the postcolonial theory was one of the first who dared pronounce and name aloud the true substance of the colonial strategy. He adverted to the work of the world famous Edward Said and his *Orientalism*[132] and pointed out that even such a revolutionary work on Western thought and history is trapped within the above mentioned binarism. He stressed out that the influence of the Western discourse is much bigger than it had been originally thought. His theory of epistemic violence, hegemony – a power which is not "exorted by a force but by a more subtle and inclusive power over the economy and over state apparatuses such as education and the media"[133] drew mainly from works on power and violence as such[134] and strove to analyse in detail the strategies of violence and supremacy in the colonial (but also in the postcolonial) reality.

As for the means of such violence the stereotype proved to be the most efficient. Stereotypes turned out extremely powerful as for forming new (post) colonial identities of the former (post) colonial subjects. Similarly to the already discussed binaries stereotypes as such were extremely ambivalent. Within the grid of a stereotype (or fetish as Homi Bhabha calls it) "the identity is predicated as much on mastery and pleasure as it is on anxiety and defence, for it is a form of multiple and contradictory belief in its recognition of difference and disavowal of it. This conflict of pleasure / unpleasure, mastery / defence, absence / presence has a fundamental significance for colonial discourse."[135] Such an ambivalence of a colonial stereotyping lies in its desire for the originality on the one hand and in its fear of any difference, namely in race, colour, culture. What Bhabha points out (paraphrasing Frantz Fanon and his *Black Skin,*

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[131] Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*, (London & New York: Routledge 1994) 38.
[132] Edward Said, *Orientalism,* (New York: Vintage 1979).
[133] See the entry "hegemony". Bill Ashcroft, et al., *Key Concepts in Post-colonial Studies,* (London: Routledge 1998) 116.
[134] See e.g. (Jacques Derrida and his "Violence and Metaphysics", *Writing and Difference,* (London: Routledge 2005) and Michel Foucault´s *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977* (Pantheon Books 1980).
[135] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* (New York: Routledge 1994) 75.

White Masks) stereotype is always a "false representation of a given reality; it is a simplification because it is arrested, fixated form of the representation that, in denying the play of difference, constitutes a problem for the representation of the subject in significations of psychic and social relations."[136]

There is no significant difference whether the stereotypes are applied to the culture of the colonized subjects, or the subjects themselves – their identity as such, race, colour of skin. After-maths of such violence are usually boundless. From the colonizer's point of view – there may be a satisfaction[137] with a well-done job – the fear of the Other has been if not wiped out then at least diminished. As for the (post) colonial subject his/her everyday reality has been transformed markedly. To start with the shared culture "the culture once living and open to the future, becomes closed, fixed on the colonial status, caught on the yolk of oppression. Both present and past is mummified, it testifies against its members... As though it were possible for a man to evolve otherwise than within a framework of a culture that recognizes him and that he decides to assume."[138]

For Fanon it is the skin that is the key signifier of a cultural and racial difference. Nevertheless, his example may serve as well as an illustration for any process of stereotyping that transforms the identity of the colonized. Fanon recalls an encounter when a small child seeing for the first time a black shrieks out. The reaction of the black man is then of rejecting his own otherness. As Fanon says: "The subject turns around the pivot of the "stereotype" to return to the point of total identification, here namely the black person turns away from himself, his race, in his total identification with the positivity of whiteness which is at once colour and not colour."[139]

Hanif Kureishi described his initial rejection of the shared identity of his ancestors as follows:

> From the start I tried to deny my Pakistani self. I was ashamed. It was a
> curse and I wanted to be rid of it. I wanted to be like everyone else. I read

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[136] Bhabha.
[137] Bhabha calls such a satisfaction a "scopic drive". See: Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* (New York: Routledge 1994) 76.
[138] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* (New York: Routledge 1994) 78.
[139] Bhabha.

with understanding a story in a newspaper about a black boy who, when he noticed that burned skin turned white, jumped into a bath of boiling water.[140]

Regardless of whether such a disavowal of once shared identity and reidentification with the (white) colonizer bears upon race difference or cultural one, it brings a common reaction – ambivalent feeling of the colonized and his/her gradual enstrangement from his/her original culture and identity.

> Why would anyone with a brown face, Muslim name and large well-known family in Pakistan want to lay claim to that cold little decrepit island off Europe where you always had to spell your name? Strangely, anti-British remarks made me feel patriotic, though I only felt patriotic when I was away from England.[141]

To be more specific we might use a particular example – recollections of the people who for various reasons disavowed their original identity and identified themselves with a more "desirable" one.

> In mind and manners he was as much Englishman as any Englishman. It was no small sacrifice for him, because in this way he completely enstranged himself from the society of his own people and became socially and morally pariah among them.... He was as much stranger in his own native land as the European residents in their country.[142]

How such an enstrangement functioned, what feelings and identity crisis it caused as for the postcolonial subjects, migrants predominantly, is a topic to be discussed in the following passage. Before doing so, there must be another issue dealt with: what was the particular "norm" that the colonized were to adopt, to identify with, what were the specific manifestations of Englishness (which we are interested most in) that were desirable for the colonized to exchange for their "Indianess, Pakistaniness" etc.

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[140] Hanif Kureishi, "Rainbow Sign," *My Beautiful Laundrette,* (London: Faber and Faber 1986) 9.
[141] Hanif Kureishi, p. 17.
[142] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*: *Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* (London & New York: Verso 1991) 92-3.

2.3.3. On Being "English"[143]

Since this work is primarily focused on issues and topics related to immigration from the South-Asian British colonies, what we are interested most in is the impact of British colonialism. As for the identity of the South-Asian ex (post) colonial subjects the primary clashes they have encountered irrespective whether in their homeland or owing to their migrant experience were those concerning Englishness that was being imposed upon them constantly.

As previously stated, the white Englishman has become a norm, his values and culture one which is desirable to conform. The majority culture set a norm of what the cultural essence is, of something that in Talal Asad's words exceeded a mere "paying taxes, voting, using state welfare services, and in general being subject of the laws of the country."[144] Such identification with the other identity from the side of the colonized people is of course understandable (taking into account a political situation and decades lasting presence of the English in Indian sub-continent). What is more surprising (and what has become one of the most discussed issues in postcolonial theory) is why postcolonial subjects have clung to these imposed norms and new identities so far, after decades of independence since the fall of the British Empire.

If this problem is easily answerable as for the English language and literature (being it mainly economic reasons), the adherence to an English identity, especially concerning postcolonial subjects living in Indian sub-continent, remains somewhat of a mystery. There might be an answer found which bears certain reference to a use of the common language – English, of course. There has always been a need of singularity, unity, which the fragmentational world of the South-Asia (of countless ethnics,

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[143] The issue of Englishness brings quite a fundamental problem as for terminology. Since most of the theoretical sources use predominantly a colonial rhetoric, they also use the term English/Englishness that can be now perceived minimally as politically incorrect. The colonial and later on also postcolonial theory concentrated mainly upon the binarism colony/mother country and it totally disdained the key difference between Englishness and Britishness. For colonial and postcolonial subjects however such a problem did not bear any significance, they took all British citizens as one regardless their origin and what they desired was becoming the English, not the British. Hence I will adopt this terminology and use the terms English and Englishness instead of British and Britishness with exception of the secondary sources that I will quote without any changes.

[144] Talal Asad, "Multiculturalism and British Identity in the Wake of the Rushdie Affair," *Politics and Society* 18/1990: 458.

languages, religions) could not provide. Similarly, such a need arose as for the singular identity. There is nothing like the Indian, the Pakistani, the Bangladeshi, the reality is much more complicated than anywhere in the Western world. As Salman Rushdie explains: "This word Indian is getting to be a pretty scattered concept."[145] As for the problem of non-singular identity he adds:

> It's not the traditional identity crises of not knowing where you come
> from. The problem is that you come from too many places. The problems
> are of excess rather than from absence.[146]

In such a situation when the local reality was too complicated it was then logically much easier to identify with a simple singularity that the Englishness offered – of cricket, boarding schools, admiration for the Victorian classics and English history.

The golden age of the British Empire indeed did not call for any questioning whether such an attitude to colonies and colonial subjects was righteous. The first veritable doubts came into being as late as the end of WWII and the fall of the Empire.

What does the Englishness in fact embody? When we brood over such a question, there is only one acceptable answer to be found: it has always been a means of delimitation and supremacy, a "cultural and literary phenomenon produced in the ambivalent space that separated but also conjoined metropolis and the periphery."[147] There are no doubts about how much the imposed Englishness transformed the former colonies. What is less obvious is the impact that the Pax Britannica[148] had on its originator, that is to say Britain. According to Simon Gikandi there has always been:

> ...a powerful myth that the mother country remained unaltered by the
> experience of the Empire, the myth based on the belief that the
> connections between the metropolitan centre and its colonial periphery
> were loose and ephemeral, that the character of the island nation

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[145] Salman Rushdie, "The Indian Writer in England," *The Eye of the Beholder: Indian Writing in English,* ed. Maggie Butcher, (London: Commonwealth Institute 1983) 80.

[146] Michael Reder, *Conversations with Salman Rushdie,* (Jackson: University of Mississippi 2000) ix.

[147] Simon Gikandi, "Poststructuralism and postcolonial discourse," *The Cambridge Companion to Post-colonial Literary Studies*, ed. by Neil Lazarus, (Cambridge*:* Cambridge University Press 2004), preface XII.

[148] Refers to the period of British imperialism after the 1815 Battle of Waterloo, which lead to the era of overseas British expansionism; the global superiority of British military and commerce.

remained unaltered by its long and exclusive contact with colonial spaces.[149]

Naturally the doubts appeared what the exact natures of the relations between the empire and colonies were (later between the metropolis and postcolony).

Many of the historians and theoreticians realized that Britain had always "defined itself against a real or imaginary Other"[150], that it used to be described either as the pastoral idyll or the racialized body. There was only a small step missing to find out that the whole Englishness and Britain as the metropolis is only an invented, imaginary nation.

Despite the assumed transformation that was expected to come, Britain fixed in a way the colonial condition; if the decolonization was at least accomplished in the colonies, the centre, the metropolis remained unaffected. As we have discussed the colonial centre has been partly robbed of its most powerful weapon, the language, which had been transformed and used by the colonized irrespective of the disapproval of its former master. As for Englishness and the fall of the imposed Western identity, such a deconstruction never happened. Maybe some of the particular successes came into being (e.g. the "confiscation" and rendering of some typical attributes of Englishness by ex-colonial subjects; Gikandi points out for example the cricket that ceased to be "thought of as the game that signified the core values of Englishness; it was viewed as the mode of the play and ritual that has been redefined by Indian and West Indian players well beyond its original configuration"[151]) but otherwise no significant change in perception of the periphery but also of the centre came into operation.

The official Englishness has "dressed itself up in imperial nostalgia, as a way of restaging its lost identity"[152]. The most fundamental objections to the colonialism's decent functioning in the forms of English identity came out in the restless months

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[149] Simon Gikandi, "Poststructuralism and Postcolonial Discourse," *The Cambridge Companion to Post-colonial Literary Studies*, ed. Neil Lazarus, (Cambridge*:* Cambridge University Press 2004) 78.
[150] Gikandi, p. 24.
[151] Gikandi, p. 11.
[152] Gikandi, p. 20.

surrounding the Rushdie's affair.[153] According to Stuart Hall the peak of Thatcherism that "derives its success from its performance of patriotism and imperial nostalgia"[154] reveals the ultimate crises of English identity and society. Such passionate debates did not dispute merely whether Rushdie was or was not a blasphemous writer of a highly controversial novel but dealt with what it means to be English or British in the second half of the 20th century.

These new theoretical and cultural debates on being "British" have not if solved then referred to two significant aspects related to the issue of Englishness and its relevance to present postcolonial subjects: first of all they stress the ambivalence that the imposed new identity brought to the ex-colonial subjects (much worse than when they had to settle with the disturbing experience of immigration and following assimilation in foreign country). In Gikandi's opinion the subjects "had to adopt Western values, vocations, modes of dress and European demeanour, they had to renounce their previous identities to enter an imperial future" only to find out that they remained marginal; "the new subjects were located at destabilizing epistemological juncture: their past identities and narratives could not disappear entirely, nor could they remain central to their lives."[155] They found themselves in the in-between position – of belongingness and unbelongingness at the same time. As for the aforementioned crises of English identity, it was being undermined by a significant shift: from gazing at the Other, They (the British) started being gazed at and their "sacred" identity was to be transformed from the ground up. The decolonization of the metropolis began.

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[153] An outrage called out by publication of his novel *The Satanic Verses* in September 1988. A *fatwa* requiring Rushdie's execution was proclaimed on Radio Tehran by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, succeedingly further violence occurred around the world, with the firebombing of bookstores. Muslim communities throughout the world held public rallies in which copies of the book were burned. Several people associated with translating or publishing the book were attacked and seriously injured or killed. In late 1990, Rushdie apologised to Muslims and even formally converted to Islam, but recanted a short time later describing it as the "biggest mistake of my life" in an interview he gave to Anne McElvoy in *The Times* published on August 26, 1995.

[154] Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader,* eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf 1993) 392-410.

[155] Simon Gikandi, "Poststructuralism and Postcolonial Discourse," *The Cambridge Companion to Post-colonial Literary Studies*, ed. Neil Lazarus, (Cambridge*:* Cambridge University Press 2004) 37.

2.3.4. Neither Fish nor Fowl

When we adopt the binary logic of colonialism, then understanding the colonial world as the "battlefield" of the West and the East (as well as the rest of the world), we must also accept the colonial theory of fixed identities, that are predefined and unchangeable. Nevertheless, if such a generalization worked in the clearly stratified colonial world, what happened then when the set borders of colonialism were shattered and the whole system collapsed?

There are several significant issues that need to be mentioned concerning the postcolonial transformation of identity. Contrary to colonialism that perceived its participants as separate entities and that acknowledged the movement only in the axis the colonizer – colonized, the new era brought much more dialogical approach. In sequence to Bakhtin's concept of the dialogical[156] "the oppositional presumptions of border, division, exclusionary thought and absolute difference were challenged."[157] The principle of the dialogue embodied in the never finalized interactivity, in a continuous process where the postcolonial (or diasporic) identities are produced.

Migrants and postcolonial subjects who became major bearers of postcolonial identity have ceased to be perceived as a merely passive force, consistently under the influence of the "enlightened" centre or metropolis, but reversely as "active transformers of the worlds they entered."[158] As Rushdie stated (see above) the migrants are rooted in multiple worlds; they live in a mixture, they carry their identity with them, the identity that usually clashes with the identity of the majority they are going to settle within. Thus their identity, contrary to colonized subjects, is very much of a geographical ascription. This troubled identity very much depends on the rootedness or uprootedness of the subject and his/her understanding of the notion "home".

Unfortunately what this new situation brought to most of migrants was a confusion: instead of an imposed but singular identity of the colonizer that had formed and influenced their lives for decades there was now an ambivalent feeling left whether

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[156] See: Michail Michajlovič Bachtin, *Román jako dialog,* (Prague: Odeon 1980).
[157] Roger Bromley, *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2000) 2.
[158] Bromley.

to get rid of the colonial heritage and imposed Western norms, or to preserve it not being certain which new identity to adopt. The identity was far from definite and singular but much more split between two worlds.

Salman Rushdie wrote in his *Shame:* "I too am a translated man." He says in particular:

> I think I've been fortunate, in a way, because of the accidents of my life, to have insider access to a number of worlds. But something happens to individuals who move across the planet: out of language, out of culture, out of place... Something is lost in translation. However, you can also add to whatever it is you think of as yourself, as a result of such a journey, such a translation.[159]

Being entrapped in the old binarism of the traditional identity of the "centre" and the one of the "periphery" that was as for the diaspora and migrancy represented by migrants themselves the only solution to such an inextricable problem was to find a new place where new identities would come into being. New philosophical and cultural theories rejected the fixed perception of the (post) colonial subject as that of a passive being. They did not see the process of decolonization as one-sided, yet they were not based on the nationalistic concept of the colonizer's power and the resistance of the colonized. These theories were based on mutual encounters of the zones, on mingling and influence. It is the in-between space – the contact zone: "The space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish on-going relations"[160] that participates in construction and re-definition of the identity of the postcolonial subject. The contact zones being for Mary Louise Pratt the place of "coercion, inequality, and intractable conflict"[161] have become for the postcolonial theorists a place "where presencing begins"[162]. It is this in-between space, third space of enunciation[163] or a median category[164] that has contributed in a

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[159] Salman Rushdie, *Shame,* (New York: Knopf 1983) 24.

[160] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation,* (London and New York: Routledge 2002) 6.

[161] Pratt, p. 6.

[162] Martin Heidegger, "Builiding, Dwelling, Thinking," *Poetry, Language, Thought*, (New York: Harper Colophon Books 1971) http://pratt.edu/~arch543p/readings/Heidegger.html.

[163] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* (New York: Routledge 1994) 37.

termination of the supremacy of one discourse and enabled the dialogue and rise of new forms.

> The intervention of the Third Space of enunciation, which makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process, destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as integrated, open, expanding code. Such an intervention quite properly challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by originary Past, kept alive in the national tradition of the People.... It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew.[165]

Instead of prioritizing the Same, the Other has not only got a chance for self-expression but it has also been acknowledged a certain merit on the decolonization of the centre. It not only wrote back and gazed at the centre but it as for the identity started to undermine the Western identity by mimicking and hybridizing its very essence.

2.3.5. Bhabha's Solution

2.3.5.1. Introduction

As previously discussed, one of the main goals of postcolonialism was to deconstruct colonial heritage, both the material and the theoretical one represented predominantly by Western knowledge as such. New relationships with the world were being looked for, new definitions of the identity of postcolonial subjects were being questioned. However the main task that the theoreticians faced was to "liberate the cultures from the deconstructive dialectics of history, imagination."[166]

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[164] See: Emmanuel Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity*, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press 2005) 44.
[165] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* (New York: Routledge 1994) 37.
[166] Bill Ashcroft, et al., *The Empire Writes Back*, (London & New York: Routledge 2003) 33.

It was Homi Bhabha, the author of the prominent work on modern culture *The Location of Culture* who further developing works of his colleagues and scientific predecessors openly proclaimed his disgust in binarism still operating in modern societies and who tried to find alternative ways and attitudes to the postcolonial reality. He drew not only from the above mentioned Frantz Fanon and his psychoanalytical model of colonialism and Jacques Lacan's concepts of mimicry and the split subject (see the chapter 2.6.2.4. "Mimicry"), but above all from Jacques Derrida and his works on violence and Michel Foucault and his studies on power.

As he declares in one of the interviews:

Foucault was attractive to me because I was contesting polarized and binary notions of constructing subjects within the play of power. I was persuaded by my reading of Foucault to rethink the very nature of power outside the polar or binary model... I think where I felt most concern to put pressure on Foucault was on his inability to look outside certain paradigms of Western modernity. He was always illustrating the liminal, or exclusionary, or normalizing, or individuating forces of Western modernity, but he never dealt adequately with the disjunction between modernity and what I consider its other space, its double session or inventory – the colonial space.[167]

If Bhabha together with other postcolonial theoreticians rejects Western knowledge for its binary logic, where does the principle of postcolonial theory rest despatching the binary oppositions of the Same and the Other, of cultures, that prioritizes and stresses cultural difference?

First of all postcolonialism focused on people who "have been forced by cultural displacement to accept the provisional nature of all truths, all certainties"[168] – the migrants. According to Andrew Smith, it is just migrants who have become emblematic figures of postcolonial studies because "they represent a removal from "old"

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[167] W. J. T. Mitchell, "Interview with Homi Bhabha,"http://prelectur.stanford.edu/lecturers/bhabha/interview.html. 1995, 22 March 2011
[168] Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands,* (London: Granta Books 1991) 12.

foundations and from previous "grounded" ways of thinking about identity."[169] Using Bhabha's term of "borderline community" referring to migrants Smith also points out another advantage that the presence of the migrant in the modern world brings: the migrants show us "how despite the attempt to fix others (and ourselves) with stereotypes of sameness and essence, cultures are not closed and complete in themselves, but split, anxious and contradictory."[170]

Given that we accept the incompetency of binarism and acknowledge that the split, contradictory identities of migrants might bring us the solution how to overcome it; there arises logically a question what will replace it, what kind of a new identity will emerge.

Bhabha's interest as it had been pointed out dwells beyond the existence of dialectical pairs, such as the colonizer / colonized, the centre / periphery, the local / immigrant. Such distinctions are according to him only ruses how to create unequal relations in the world. However, if we adopt Mary Louise Pratt's theory of contact zones where the difference emerges, where the cultures encounter each other, when we look closer at the borderline between communities, at the threshold, then we must admit there is nothing like separate identities. At the threshold the identities meet, clash, merge, mingle, they are implicated: "It is the "inter" – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture."[171]

2.3.5.2. Liminality

In the *The Location of Culture* Bhabha left the discriminatory logic of the binarism, he refused to admit the predisposition and definiteness of culture but tended to perceive it as the iterative, as a form of:

> A contingent conditionality, or as an interstitial articulation that both
> holds together and comes between – not only in the sense of being a
> space or mode of passage but in the colloquial sense of coming between,

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[169] Andrew Smith, "Migrancy, Hybridity, and Postcolonial Literary Studies," *The Cambridge Companion to Post-colonial Literary Studies*, ed. by Neil Lazarus, (Cambridge*:* Cambridge University Press 2004) 249.
[170] Smith.
[171] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* (New York: Routledge 1994) 36.

that is meddling, interfering, interrupting, and interpolating: making possible and making trouble, both at once.[172]

To be more specific he focused on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of the cultural difference.

Bhabha's interstitial passage or more simply in-betweenness is very closely related to the notion of liminality. *Limen* is the word used in the psychology to indicate the threshold between the sensate and subliminal, the limit below which a certain sensation ceases to be perceptible.[173] As for postcolonial theory it proved to be useful as for describing an "in-between" space in which cultural change may occur:

> ...the transcultural space in which strategies for personal or communal self-hood may be elaborated, a region in which there is continual process of movement and interchange between different states.[174]

As for the interstitial passage Bhabha does not deny the inspiration that he drew from work of the African-American installation artist Renee Green, mainly her architectural work *Sites of Genealogy* where she aspired to display but also to displace the binary logic by means of which identities of difference are often constructed. Green employed the museum building as the metaphor for the binary division and put a stress upon the staircase as the liminal area:

She herself described her intention as follows:

> I used architecture literally as a reference, using the attic, the boiler room, and the stairwell to make associations between certain binary divisions such as higher and lower and heaven and hell. The stairwell became a liminal space, a pathway between the upper and lower areas, each of

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[172]W. J. T. Mitchell, "Interview with Homi Bhabha,"
http://prelectur.stanford.edu/lecturers/bhabha/interview.html. 26th June 2007.
[173] See the entry "liminality". In: Bill Ashcroft, et al., *Key Concepts in Post-colonial Studies*, (London: Routledge 1998) 130.
[174] Ashcroft 130.

which was annotated with plaques referring to blackness and whiteness.[175]

Though Green understands her "museum" and its division first of all in the terms of racial binaries, her theory of the pathway, the liminal space as a symbol of the progress and interaction can be successfully applied to all discussions concerning identity as such.

Bhabha further developed Green's stairwell in his *The Location of Culture* in this manner: "The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities."[176]

We have managed to abandon the binarism closely linked with the colonial heritage, we have new subjects – migrants whose split identities and "uprooted" experience make them perfect participants in the process of gaining new identity and whose dwelling in the threshold of cultures enables them to profit from their position on the borders of the two cultures – the one they come from and the new one they are going to adopt. The last question remains unanswered and it is the true nature of their new reality, the result of such a being on a threshold – the new identity that emerges in the in-between space. Subsequent Bhabha's statement gives us a satisfactory response:

> This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the
> possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an
> assumed or imposed hierarchy.[177]

Bhabha himself answered the question what can the liminal space, the in-betweenness bring new as for the identity of the postcolonial subject.

2.3.5.3. Hybridity

That what has become the principle of Bhabha's theoretical work and what Salman Rushdie incorporated as the primary strategy into his fiction is indeed a new

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[175] Quoted in Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. Originally to be found in*:* Renee Green, *Sites of Genealogy,* (New York: Out of Site, The Institute of Contemporary Art, Long Island City) 3-4.
[176] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* (New York: Routledge 1994) 4.
[177]Bhabha.

emergent discourse that was based on the non-binarist space of reflection, not on a "liberal multicultural space in which several cultures are juxtaposed with their essential frontiers"[178] – based on the boundary where in Heidegger's words presencing begins, on the boundary that allows other positions to emerge.

The notion of hybridity – of something what is "new, neither the one nor the other"[179], something that emerges from the third space and something which goes hand-in-hand with unfixed and unstable postcolonial progressivity and its conception of the cultural difference and cultures as such – is one of the most widely employed and most discussed terms of postcolonial theory. When we employ dictionaries the most often used definitions will be of two kinds, the general ones defining hybridity as "anything produced by combining elements from different sources" and the biological one that sees it as "an animal or plant produced by crossing two different species, varieties, races or breeds; a mongrel."[180] The first statement can be possibly applied to many fields of study, such as linguistics. None the less, the second points out the most probable original of the word referring to a racial crossing and mixing. According to Robert Young "hybrid was originally the term of denigration – the blackening and sullying of the thing."[181] It was related to the 18th and 19th century discussions on miscegenation, to the fear of dissolution of the blood of higher races and its obsession with the racial purity. It was very closely linked to colonial separateness of races, colonial clinging to borders that were not to be broken and trespassed.

Homi Bhabha's hybridity and hybrid identities are conversely "characterized by a continuous attempt to overcome the binary opposition of "us" versus "them" expressing the frequent reference to the liberating "beyond", the "in-between" space in which the difference loses its menacing connotations."[182] Bhabha's hybridity describes a

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[178] Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader,* eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf 1993) 392.
[179]Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* (New York: Routledge 1994) 21.
[180] Both definitions see: http://www.allwords.com/word-hybridity.html, 15 April 2007.
[181] Robert Young, "Hybridism and the Ethnicity of English," *Cultural readings of Imperialism: Edward Said and the Gravity of History,* eds. Keith Ansell-Pearson, Benita Perry and Judith Squires, (London: Lawrence & Wishart 1997) 127.
[182]Roy Sommer, "Simple Survival in Happy Mullticultural Land: Diasporic Identities and Cultural Hybridity in the Contemporary British Novel," *Diaspora and Multiculturalism: Common traditions and New Development,*.ed. Monika Fludernik, (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi 2003) 162.

creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization. Contrary to colonialism that operated in separated categories of race, culture etc. Bhabha's theory of cultural hybridity referring to the identity of postcolonial subjects points out the independence and mutual construction of their subjectivities. It is not just one culture, nation, race that in his opinion transforms the others anymore, much more it is a mutual transformation and interaction of participants of cultural exchange. To be more specific as for British postcolonialism and British postcolonial migrants, Britain ceased to be (as Bhabha hoped) the only power in the whole process; the postcolonial subjects and the migrants started to participate in creating their new identity much more. Bhabha's theory has thus taken a share in the long-lasting struggle of challenging and resistance against a persisting colonial power and has been one of the first works that stressed an active participation of postcolonial subjects in this struggle (not perceiving them – as many other theoreticians did – as a mere passive objects just standing by).

2.3.5.4. Mimicry

Bhabha's employment of the term hybridity and his theory was indeed pioneering as for the postcolonial theory and thereby controversial and for many of his colleagues indigestible. Nevertheless, the question where the major pitfalls rest will be analyzed in the final section of this chapter.

As it had been mentioned one of the most important assets of Bhabha's work was his different perception of the postcolonial subject – as an active transformer of the postcolonial society. Both Rushdie and Bhabha's understanding of the subjects was based on the particular response that ex-colonized subjects inflicted to their former "masters". The Empire wrote back with vengeance – Rushdie proclaimed in his previously quoted paper. Referring predominantly to the language, such a writing back, such answering concerned the identity as well.

Bhabha's hybridity that emerged from the position in between two cultures, in the borders, could have been understood as a pure mingling, unconscious adopting of the identity or the culture of the Other (irrespective of who would be this Other.) However, there would be tendencies to read it as assimilation, when we speak about migrants, as a mere conformation of the newcomers to the majority they settled in. There would prevail the feeling that it is the major culture and identity that are to be followed and the majority would never admit there might be something in the new

identity or culture that might enrich their own. Secondly, if the majority took for granted that it would be their culture and identity that the newcomers would pattern after, they never expected that the migrants could have participated actively not only in its adopting but also transforming.

Similar situation occurred already concerning the language – the most powerful weapon of the colonization – that the colonized and later postcolonial subjects "seized" and transformed in compliance with their needs. As for the identity their transformation of it, namely of the essential Englishness, was based on mimicry. Bhabha dedicated to the problems of mimicry one of the chapters of *The Location of Culture* called symptomatically "Of mimicry and men: The ambivalence of colonial discourse". Deriving mainly from the work of Jacques Lacan, Bhabha analyzes mechanisms of imitation that the postcolonial subjects assumed and the menace that such an imitation might evoke both regarding the Imitating and the Imitated.

> Mimicry reveals something in so far as it is distinct from what might be called an itself that is behind. The effect of mimicry is camouflage.... It is not a question of harmonizing with the background, but against a mottled background, of becoming mottled – exactly like the technique of camouflage practised in human warfare.[183]

Mimicry is the "phenomenon in which an individual gains an advantage by looking like the individuals of a different species."[184] As for colonialism, and eventually postcolonialism, it was not generally a spontaneous choice, but the necessity given a political or personal need. Mimicry is closely associated to the colonial stereotyping – there was a genetically acknowledged model that was desirable to follow, and in relation to identity it was desirable to resemble the colonizer as much as possible. Bhabha cannot leave aside the notorious quotation of Macaulay's about the magistrates and the class of mediators in India[185]. Apart from the desire of colonizers to deprive

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[183] Jacques Lacan, "The Line and Light," *Of the Gaze,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1989) 103.
[184] See the definition of the word "mimicry",
http://www.everythingbio.com/glos/definition.php?word=mimicry, 10 March 2007.
[185] See: Thomas Babington Macaulay, "Minute of the 2nd of February,"*Speeches by Lord Macaulay with His Minute on Indian Education,* (London: Oxford University Press, Humphrey Milford 1979) 349 resp. 359.

their subjects of their Otherness, the colonizers also fear that the colonized might one day really become the Same. They wanted them (the subjects) to be the Same as the colonizer but still different. The attitude of the colonizer is then truly ambivalent – on the one side there is the desire for the reformed, easily recognizable Other, on the other hand there is a constant sticking and pointing out to its difference.

Almost the same but not quite would be the most significant description of the mimicry. The imitation is never perfect; it is just partial, metonymical. As Lacan comments: "Mimicry is like a camouflage, not a harmonization or repression of difference, but a form of resemblance that differs from or defends presence by its displaying it in part metonymically."[186] What is even more primary is the fact that the "mimic man", the person in-between, stands on the borderland between the fixed reality that is being imposed upon him and a change that is supposed to happen. His insecurity and puzzlement brings only an ironic compromise – the change is realized but not to a full satisfaction.

As the subject adopts the colonizer's assumptions, cultural habits, institutions etc., "the result is never a simple reproduction – it is rather a blurred copy of the colonizer that can be quite threatening... it is never far from mockery."[187] And there dwells the first menace of such a forced imitation. The identity that is formed in this way is the identity that is never quite like the colonizer's, as Bhabha points out:

> The mimic man, in so far as he is not entirely like the colonizer, white but not quite, constitutes only a partial representation of him: far from being reassured the colonizer sees a grotesquely displaced image of himself. Thus the familiar, transported to distant parts, becomes uncannily transformed, the imitation subverts the identity of that which is being represented, and the relation of power, if not altogether reversed, certainly begins to vacillate.[188]

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[186] Jacques Lacan, "The Line and Light," *Of the Gaze.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1989) 103.
[187] See the entry "mimicry". In: Bill Ashcroft, et al., *Key Concepts in Post-colonial Studies*, (London: Routledge 1998) 139.
[188] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* (New York: Routledge 1994) 127.

However, it is not only the colonizer or the centre that starts to lose the ground beneath its feet, but also the mimic man who has to face growing problems concerning his/her new identity.

> Their mixed and split origin is what decides their fate. We may compare them with individuals of mixed race who taken all round resemble white men but who betray their coloured descent by some striking feature or other and on that account are excluded from society and enjoy none of the privileges.[189]

Though Freud described what happens mainly referring to subjects of the mixed race, he pointed out a menace that the mimicry might cause to its bearers. The mimicry then does not bring to the mimic man the long-yearned-for integration and status, but surprisingly a rejection from both sides – the culture he desired to adopt and at the same time the one he/she had left behind. As for the migrants to England, there is an immense difference between being English and being Anglicized. In the eyes of many they will never become fully English, on the other hand for their fellow countrymen they will always be Anglicized too much. Thus colonial and predominantly postcolonial subjects have found themselves once again in-between – though endeavouring hard to adopt the new identity, they have not been permitted to do it, though attempting to erase the traces of their old culture they haven't managed. If we take colour of skin as one of the most visible markers of Otherness, they are too brown to be English but too white to be Indian (Pakistani, Bangladeshi etc.) And it is this ambivalence of not belonging, of being in-between that has become one of the most crucial problems of postcolonialism and one of the key themes and topics of postcolonial theoretical discourse as well as literature, too.

2.3.6. The Failure of Hybridity

Such concepts of new identity based on new forms emerging thanks to encounters of different cultures however proved to be (retrospectively), predominantly theoretical. Their implementation into practical life turned out to be if not totally

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[189] Sigmund Freud, "The Unconscious," SE XV 1915:190 – 1.

impossible than at least highly problematic. Both hybridity propagated by Bhabha and further adopted by Salman Rushdie and multiculturalism as such have been, after several decades of the struggle found un-productive. Multiculturalism represents "an attempt both to respond to and to control the dynamic process of the articulation of cultural difference, administering a *consensus* based on a norm that propagates cultural diversity."[190] Again a new norm came into operation that did not bring independence but rather new restrictions. The yearned-for balance has never come into being; the particular cultures that were thought to become equal starting points for further interaction have remained separated entities that have still been perceived from the perspective the original one versus new, thus inferior one. Instead of merging and mingling the borders have surprisingly not only remained where they had been before the decolonization started, but in some ways have been reinforced. New ones have even been created and also the interpretation what it means to be inside and outside has been modified.

As Hari Kunzru writes in his novel *Transmission*:

In the twenty-first century, the border is not just a line on the earth anymore. It's so much more than that. It's about status. It's about opportunity. Sure, you're either inside or outside, but you can be on the inside and still be outside, right? Or on the outside looking in. Anyway, like we say in one of our slides, 'the border is everywhere. The border, and this is key, is in your mind.[191]

One of the key problems that has occurred regarding the new identity particularly of the migrants but also of the postcolonial subjects within the ex-colonial countries is the several times mentioned binary logic that operated in the distinction mother country (centre etc.) and (ex) colonial country (periphery etc.) As for migrants the problem arises, particularly where to incorporate them, the question of belonging – whether they are to be perceived as subjects belonging to their home country, or the ones newly subjected to their new home. Their identity is on the one side similarly

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[190]Homi Bhabha, "On Multiculturalism, Cultural Diversity and Cultural Difference," *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference,* ed. Jonathan Rutherford, (London: Lawrence & Wishart 1990) 208.
[191]Hari Kunzru, *Transmission,* (New York: Dutton 2004) 212.

variable as the place they dwell in and on the other fixed, clinging to inherited habits and experience, thus it is notably ambivalent, multiplied, but also split. Contrary to the colonial subjects whose model had been succinctly stated the migrant does not have such a pregnant standard, norm, that to share. On the one side he/she yearns to adopt the new identity, on the other knows that it will probably bring him/her no good. That is one of the reasons why all attempts to assimilate the migrants in England have, if not totally than at least generally, failed.

In Great Britain the authorities (and in some periods also majority of citizens) have always understood the migrants as "other" culture that is to adopt fully all the habits and rules functioning in England. There was no alternative acknowledged, either full assimilation (that was constantly being made more difficult by racist attacks and various other obstacles) or strict separation of the cultures (that is why something like ghettos appeared, that isolated the migrants from the rest of the population). There was one norm – Englishness, that was to be adopted and all other-nesses were deemed only as sometimes interesting, as exotic diversification of the traditional, more desirable values. Assimilation or even hybridity has always been understood as a merely one sided process when the new is to pattern after the old and the old remains unaltered.

Nevertheless, why are there such problems in Britain and the USA, though having provided in a similar way home to millions of immigrants, cope without bigger problems? American multiculturalism, as Monika Fludernik points out, "proposes both-and solution: subjects can be both Indian (and other) at heart and good American citizens at the same time. They establish themselves as hyphenated Asian-Americans, as South Asian Americans, as South Asians in North America or as expatriated Hindus in North American academia."[192] Fludernik compares American multiculturalism to a salad bowl, where there are many ingrediences that only all together form a certain dish. "Immigrants remain ethnically distinct but acquire some American veneer."[193]

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[192] Monika Fludernik, "Imagined Communities as Imaginary Homelands: The South-Asian Disapora in Fiction," *Diaspora and Multiculturalism: Common Traditions and New Development,*.ed. Monika Fludernik, (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi 2003) 261-285.
[193] Fludernik, p. xxiii.

2.4. Conclusion

The preceding theoretical part of the dissertation work tries to provide a necessary theoretical background essential for further studying both postcolonial theoretical discourse and postcolonial fiction, too. Several principal theories have been covered, mainly those analyzing thoroughly the issues related with migrant's identity and suggesting possible strategies how to break free from binding binaries surviving from colonialism and discriminatory Western discourse based on prioritizing the culture of the centre. These strategies based on hybridity, mimicry and an active attitude towards language appear logically in postcolonial fiction, too. Similar themes as in the postcolonial discourse are reflected there showing different experience of those with the diaspora experience and those who remained in ex-colonial countries. The issue of generation also plays a significant role, mainly as for the authors of the first and second migrant generation.

Concerning identity and difference issues two primary sources have been selected, Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* and Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* that are in connection with concepts analyzed rather archetypal.

3.   Reflections of Identity in the Postcolonial Writing

3.1.   Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*

3.1.1. Introduction

3.1.1.1. Binaries and Racism

As it is shown in preceding passages dealing with the most crucial issues regarding binarism, identity and accompanying strategies enabling the postcolonial subject or migrant to escape such practices, the division of the world into binaries had been in operation long before any migration to Britain started, even long before the rise of the Pax Britannica. Nevertheless the colonization based on a division centre X margin was undoubtedly a golden era of binarism and its manifestations. At the time of the peak imperialism such a division into the centre x margin, i.e. the civilized and the primitive was normal and thus rightful and it was moreless accepted by both sides, too. The strategies used by colonizers have been already mentioned in previous chapters, being it mainly the imperial discourse, language and the culture as such that helped to distribute the British way of life worldwide and was used as the means to "westernize" and "civilize" the subjects. The colonial subjects then adopted the rhetoric of this discourse and internalized it.

As for the fiction of authors who either still live in ex-colonies or who do not deal with the migrant experience in their works but mainly the one of the postcolonial subjects who have to do away with this colonial legacy, it is probably one of the most recurring images present in most of the works regardless the generation or the origin of the author. Superiority of the British and resulting racist approach have become an integral part of this type of literature, nevertheless it can be found also in many other works depicting the colonial experience and meeting of two cultures (let us mention e.g. Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* or legendary E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*).

The migration of ex-colonial subjects to the mother country caused many "troubles". The racism of colonizers was at the time of imperialism based on often presumed natural superiority of the West, particularly such things as the command of language, dignity, education, culture etc. The encounter of the British majority with migrants on their own domain started a till that time unprecedented form of racism,

based first and foremost on the colour of skin, generalization and stereotypization of the worst kind. For illustration of the situation when the first migrants came, let us use an authentic statement of one of such migrants on this issue:

> All newcomers who have made their way to post-war Britain have experienced prejudice to varying degrees from both the state and English natives. At the most basic level immigrants and refugees have endured English coldness and refusal to enter into social and economic discourse. Such actions were supported by state functionaries in the forms of judges, policemen and immigration officials, whose decisions have been influenced by the ethnicity of a defendant. The media have played the central role in the perpetuation of racism, by their stereotyping and by focusing upon particular issues at particular times.[194]

As it has been already mentioned, the authorities indeed contributed greatly to a rise of hostile feelings towards newcomers, namely after the ill-famous speech of Enoch Powell in 1968, similarly problematic later statement of Margaret Thatcher and many other demonstrations of a negative official attitude of the political representation.[195] Though it may seem rather insignificant, being it just speeches of some overtly conservative politicians, the impact was indeed immense. As Kureishi says in his "Rainbow Sign":

> Powell allowed himself to become a figure head for racists. He helped to create racism and was directly responsible not only for the atmosphere of fear and hatred, but through his influence, for individual acts of violence against Pakistanis.[196]

The reason for all this was obvious. The British were afraid of losing their alleged superiority and were afraid of being "flooded". The new racism that emerged was not however based any more upon cultural difference so much, but upon, as Vijay

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[194] Panikos Panayi, *The Impact of Immigration: A Documentary History of the Effects and Experiences of Immigrants in Britain since 1945,* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press 1999) 129.
[195] The "Rivers of Blood" speech made on 20 April 1968, Birmingham. Closer see http://www.enochpowell.net/fr-79.html, 26 March 2011. Margareth Thatcher made her speech on Granada TV on 27 January 1978. Closer see: http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/103485, 23 February 2012.
[196] Hanif Kureishi, "Rainbow Sign," *My Beautiful Laundrette,* (London: Faber and Faber 1986) 12.

Mishra states in his essay "Diasporic Narratives of Salman Rushdie", "a racial, linguistic difference"[197]. "The difference however had to be anchored somewhere, and the easiest means of doing this was by stipulating that nations were not imagined communities constructed historically but racial enclaves marked by high levels of homogeneity. Thus race had a nation to which it belonged."[198]

Nonetheless, it is a defensive aspect of this kind of racism that was to protect the "true" Britishness which is much more important.

> The new racism was used to defend Britishness itself, to argue that multiculturalism was a travesty of the British way of life, which was becoming now extremely vulnerable. The only good immigrant was one that was totally assimilable, just as the only good gay or lesbian was someone who led a closet life.[199]

The requirement of a total assimilation was crucial. Regardless the fact that one hundred percent assimilation is not possible (and at the same time was not accepted by the majority either), the ideal was a perfect mimic man who would copy the British gentleman in every aspect. A logical result was to come. The subjects started rejecting their origin; often the background and their own families in order to fit better into the majority of society.

3.1.1.2. Epistemic Violence in Practice

As it had been already discussed in the previous theoretical chapter on Epistemic Violence, it was the language, particularly English and English books as such that became the most powerful weapons at the time of colonialism. These weapons were more effective than any oppression and violence. When being educated in the British educational institutions the colonial subjects started to internalize many values presented by "noble" and "dignified" teachers and officials. This was for them the only way to better future, to a potential success in the "civilized" world. Only when mastering the language and adopting the culture of the colonized they could think of a

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[197] Vijay Mishra, "Postcolonial Difference: Diasporic Narrative of Salman Rushdie, "*Postcolonial Theory and English Literature Reader,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 1999) 431.
[198] Mishra, "Postcolonial Difference: Diasporic Narrative of Salman Rushdie."
[199] Mishra, p. 432.

career in administration. These values penetrated even into traditional local cultural issues, such as marriages and bringing up of children. Only a girl who had mastered English was marriable (apart from having the fairest complexion possible, of course), only a child who could play cricket or was able to quote from Victorian classics had a chance to succeed in his/her life. Proper command of English became at the time of peak imperialism but also later on a necessity, a criterion of success or failure.

However language was only one thing, the other was the British culture as such that was to be adopted by colonial/postcolonial subjects. Apart from clothing, which played a significant role in turning the subjects into mimic men, there was literature as the easiest way for spreading British values. As mentioned in the chapter on language and writing in English[200], it is quite interesting that this strategy has been still working, that the British classical literature, namely the Victorian one has been still forming and shaping an identity of individuals. It is quite surprising to such an extent the ill-famous Macaulay's statement on the superiority of British classics and literature as such has survived up to now and it still has a sort of formative influence upon people not only in the subcontinent, but in Britain, too.

As Caryl Phillips writes in his *The Final Passage*, England indeed "became a college"[201] for the citizens of the British Empire. Whether educated or not in British institutions, most of citizens deeply admired the distant mother country and praised its culture. How rigid the local system was is proved by a glory of the Victorian era, represented mainly by its literature, e.g. classics such as Dickens, Austen, Brontë or others. These books, as Sukhdev Sandhu points out in his *London Calling:* "got institutionalized by school curricula, they came to stand for all that was the most valuable about metropolitan culture."[202] Reading such books influenced colonial subjects immensely and it is logical then that their image of England was thus somehow distorted and unreal. No wonder that most of such people were bitterly disappointed when they arrived in England and it was far from their fantasy.

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[200] See the chapter 2.2.4. "Why English?"
[201] Caryl Phillips, *The Final Passage,* (New York: Vintage 1995) 101.
[202]Sukhdev Sandhu, *London Calling,* (London: Harper Perennial 2004) 204.

However it would be a mistake to think that the colonial/postcolonial subjects were only passive recipients who adopted the language and culture without trying to change and utilizing it according to their needs. Let's mention again Rushdie's statement in the "Empire Writes Back" that referred not only to a growing number of colonial and postcolonial subjects writing and expressing themselves in English, but also undermining the very essence of the British culture, too, starting with a transformation of the language as such.

These strategies have been of various kinds, starting with a number of dialectical disruptions that called into question the supremacy of a standard language. One such strategy is to be found for example in famous Sam Selvon's novel *The Lonely Londoners*. It was the very first Caribbean novel published in Britain which incorporated vernacular language, here particularly a creolized form of the language. Selvon originally started to write his novel in standard English, but soon found out, as Susheila Nasta writes in the introduction to his novel, that: "such language would not aptly convey the experiences and the unarticulated thoughts and desires of his characters."[203] His characters use partly the language they know, as Sandhu points out it was as if "his characters brought their language with them together with the luggage."[204]

Selvon used apart from creolized lexicology also a slang by means of which his characters mapped and named the space around them. This approach was indeed pioneering since it was changing the originally sacred space of the colonial centre. As Nasta concludes, Selvon's novel "represented a major step forward in the process of linguistic and cultural decolonization."[205] This disruptive change in the use of the language anticipated the whole change of perception of Englishness as such that was about to come.

Selvon's approach to language functioned indeed in the sense of "Empire Writes Back" since it did not use the standardized form of the language, but its creolized one, thus disrupted form and enriched it by means of a slang or vernacular words that made the understanding much worse, especially for potential "white" English readers. The

[203] Susheila Nasta, "Introduction," Sam Selvon: *The Lonely Londoners,* (London: Penguin Books 2006),vi.
[204] Sukhdev Sandhu, *London Calling,* (London: Harper Perennial 2004) 147.
[205] Susheila Nasta, p. x.

reader needed to get used to a different language, which was sometimes quite demanding.

Together with the use of dialect or Creole there were other ways how to treat the language to suit the best the purpose of postcolonial writers. Their English was sometimes mutilated, simplified, words misspelt, often on purpose, or their English was enriched with many loan-words from mother tongues of particular writers. This strategy turned out to be the most successful one in the course of the time; the writers use a standardized form of English and only "exoticize" it by means of a special lexicology that helps them to make it more true to the space they write about. This strategy seems however to be a certain step back, since it operates within the standard and even helps the potential readers to understand better the text by means of an attached index of foreign words.

The last strategy concerning language and a creative process of writing and a very specific one at the same time is the one of V. S. Naipaul, who, in his own words had a great problem when trying to write that "the language was his but the tradition was not." And as he goes on:

> It is only through the process and reclamation of an authentic language
> for identity that the writer can begin to rescue his/her community from
> the illusory myths of the imperial centre.[206]

Selvon decided to use vernacular language to depict better and more precisely the reality. Naipaul's strategy is much more demanding when he, in order not to be trapped within the language only, tried to handle it in his own way. As already mentioned previously, he learns to see afresh, to forget all the previous habits to be able to describe the migrants' reality as truthfully as possible. It is not so much about the language as such as in Selvon's case, since Naipaul's English is a pure standard without any lexicological or stylistic innovations. His objectives concern first and foremost the work with inspiration and the way how to treat it.[207]

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[206] Paraphrasing V. S. Naipaul, see: Robert A. Lee, *Other Britain, Other British: Contemporary Multicultural Fiction,* (London: Pluto Press 1995) 52.
[207] Closer see the case study on Naipaul´s *The Enigma of Arrival*: chapter 5.2.2. "Too Late to Come: Homing in V. S. Naipaul´s *The Enigma of Arrival*".

3.1.1.3. Identity, Hybridity, Mimicry

As it had been shown in previous chapters, the identity as such is together with diaspora and sense of displacement one of the most fundamental motifs depicted in the works labelled as the postcolonial fiction. Apart from displacement there are more aspects to be pointed out that are vital for categorizing issues of identity, hybridity and mimicry and their reflection in the literature.

As for the identity, hybridity and mimicry, there are several criteria assessing identity and definitions, too. The most common ones speak of a collective quality of identity or of a condition being the same. That means there is a certain norm that is desirable to adopt, some shared superior culture. This concept and interpretation of identity was fundamenental, predominantly for the characters in the works either situated in colonies or after-partition countries still immensely influenced by imperialism, too, or novels of the 1st generation authors who came to a new home with one common goal – to succeed. The only solution for them was to assimilate maximally, i.e. to adopt the culture of the majority as much as possible and cast away the original one.

When returning for a moment to the works dealing with the colonial experience, it would be difficult to find one that didn't portray a character trying to mimic the English in order to succeed in their "white" world and at the same time failing. Most found out as Maria Couto writes in her essay on identity "through dissimilar experiences that an Englishman with a brown skin simply would not do."[208]

The failure of mimicry had already been recorded much sooner in the works of English writers such as Rudyard Kipling and his *Kim* or E. M. Forster and his *A Passage to India* (here particularly the rather discouraging experience of Dr. Aziz). Nevertheless there are numerous works on this topic, mainly the ones that could be classed to a certain way within the category of bildungsroman, where a young Indian hero struggles to find his place in a rather hostile world and his only chance is adopt the western culture and to maximally suppress his own identity.

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[208] Maria Couto, "The Search for Identity,"*The Eye of the Beholder: Indian Writing in English,* ed. Maggie Butcher (London: Commonwealth Institute 1983) 59.

As for the most contemporary works, there is definitively Hari Kunzru's *The Impressionist*. This work bears a strong resemblance to some elementary works on this issue, mainly Paul Scott's *The Raj Quartet* and the classical novel of G. V. Desani *All About Harry Hatter*. At the same this novel differs because it is first and foremost a work of an ironic character, which is something aforementioned these novels lack essentially. Their characters are often members of the Western educated Indian elite. They share the British culture: they have adopted the language, which logically produces certain instability since they are quite significantly separated from the mother tongue and mother culture as well as environment. They are usually educated in British institutions, speak faultless English, play cricket, they "could pass for English boys, if one did not look at them."[209]

Despite all this they are still outcasts, not belonging to any of the cultures. A mere adopting and mimicry does not provide them with a new identity. They are laughed at by both the British who mock their endeavour to resemble the white majority, and they are scorned by their own people, too, since they do not fit into an original environment any longer.

At this point it is necessary to point out there is also another strategy concerning mimicry that is mentioned already in the postcolonial discourse, mainly in Homi Bhabha's *The Location of the Culture*. Mimicry does not have to be necessarily only a passive necessity to survive. It can be of a subversive character, a sort of vengeance or maliciousness, an active response to stereotyped or racist approach of colonizers. We can partly ascribe it e.g. to Kunzru's character of *The Impressionist* or later on analyzed Karim of Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* whose mimicry is partly given by circumstances, but partly it is a mere play.

The level of being Anglicized became in a certain way a criterion for social success and acknowledgement. The more, the better, though it often meant becoming an outcast in one's own culture. Manners and accent, Oxford education, white clothing, inclination to traditionalism and obsession with the 19th century and its rigid values are all attributes common for a majority of such Anglicized subjects. Also there is evident a

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[209] Couto, p. 59.

certain excess; being too much of an Englishman often brought problems and called for mockery. That is why irony is often present in many literary works, especially when portraying such ideal mimic men (e.g. the above mentioned Kunzru). At the same time it is important to stress that this total mimicry, i.e. an endeavour to copy maximally anything British and Western, produced a harsh rejection and resentment from the side of ordinary people of the subcontinent.

Though the mimicry strategy applied in the territory of Indian subcontinent caused many of the aforementioned problems, the subjects still were in their home country and they had many certainties they could rely on –their families, familiar environment, common language and cultural background. Nonetheless, when migrating to a totally strange country, all this safety was suddenly gone and strategies had to be changed. Many members of the 1st generation of migrants logically tried to utilize the same approach – that is the one of a total assimilation. However, as already emphasized, such an approach was doomed to failure. There was too much difference in them and neither perfect command of language nor conforming could change their status of foreigners. There were two basic problems that made migrants' chance to "home in"[210] much worse. First of all it was a prevailing obsession with everything British given to colonial background and education. No wonder then that imitation of their (British) supposed excellence was the first thing to come to mind of migrants. Such an assimilative strategy did not differ from the one of Equiano, the first generally known black inhabitant of the Isles.

> I no longer looked upon (the English) as spirits, but as men superior to me and therefore I had the strongest desire to resemble them, to imbibe their spirit and imitate their manners. I therefore embraced every occasion of improvement, and every new thing that I observed I treasured up in my memory.[211]

The problem however was that such an adoration of everything English was at the same time connected with a certain stiffness (logically influenced by the legacy of

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[210] Refers to the chapter "Homing In" in Susheila Nasta´s *Home Truths – Fictions of the South Asian Diaspora in Britain,* (New York: Palgrave 2002) 172.
[211] Quoted in: Sukhdev Sandhu, *London Calling,* (London: Harper Perennial 2004) 183.

Victorian era still surviving in the minds of colonial and postcolonial subjects). This Englishness that was to be adopted was often far from the reality of 1960s and 1970s and might have seemed strange and comic to the majority. It is clear then that such an identity was, as Homi Bhabha points out: "On the one side a place of identification, but on the other a space of splitting."[212] The migrants identified with the customs and the culture of the majority in such a way and extent they managed and were allowed to, on the other hand this "mimicry" was appreciated by almost none.

There also started to be evident a difference between various groups of migrants, usually related with their education and social position. The ones who had been themselves educated or had their children educated in British institutions did not have so many problems with assimilation. Those from labour or peasant families upon arriving to England became lost and their only chance to manage this indeed stressful situation was clinging to their original traditions, way of living, families and values. They often became more traditional and conservative than they would have ever been in original countries. There were then huge differences between migrants evident, not only handicapping all of them as for settling, but also building a barrier between themselves.

The migrants were soon to decide which identity they would prefer. Being both was an option, but was problematic[213] – choosing just one did not work either. Some of them went even so far that they denied their true self, adopted an English name and pretended they did not understand their mother tongue.[214] Such an attitude is as for the characters of postcolonial fiction pretty rare, especially in the works of authors of the 1st generation, nevertheless we would find some novels that still portray such characters. Apart from the above mentioned Ravinder Randhawa and her *A Wicked Old Woman*, it is first and foremost *The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie, a novel that was due to several provocative passages accused of blasphemy. This accusation totally obscured the fact that *The Satanic Verses* is essentially a book about migrancy and about seeking one's identity. Rushdie's characters, Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta, in spite of

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[212] Quoted in: Simon Gikandi, "Poststructuralism and Postcolonial Discourse," *The Cambridge Companion to Post-colonial Literary Studies*, ed. Neil Lazarus, (Cambridge*:* Cambridge University Press 2004) 205.
[213] See the chapter: 2.3.6."The Failure of Hybridity".
[214] Ravinder Randhawa, *A Wicked Old Woman*, (London: The Women´s Press 1987).

different life experience and background both stagger between the two worlds, one of them putting on different identities as winter coats, the other being a famous Bollywood actor jumping from one role to another. They both will experience a fundamental turning point that will change their life and open their eyes.

3.1.2. Losing One's Self in a Non-existing City: Migrant Identity in Salman

Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*

Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* is one of unfortunate books that regrettably became world-known for a wrong reason. Already its title – referring to a rather problematic original 53rd sutra of Koran (where the Prophet celebrates three pre-Islamic goddesses) which the Prophet himself cast away for its evil character – called for a potential ban in Islamic countries. Nevertheless Rushdie's wilful admittance of atheism and quite an open satire of the Prophet provoked a response that no one, Rushdie himself including, expected. Right after its publication in September 1988 the book was banned in numerous countries, surprisingly not only in the Islamic ones (e.g. South Africa, Thailand or Venezuela); the copies were demonstratively burnt in English Bradford and in February 1989 a fatwa was issued by Ayatollah Khomeini essentially for its evident blasphemy.

The controversy which is responsible for deaths of dozens of people including translators of the book totally overshadowed the true character of the book. There are indeed passages that are minimally provocative and that many critics see as a business calculation of the author who had already experienced similar controversy with his previous book *Midnight's Children* which forced him to flee from India, but gained him a great financial success and a large Western readership. At the same time it is necessary to say that it is only the dream passages of Gibreel Farishta which are controversial. These passages are indeed marginal not only due to the breadth of the book but also due to the original theme of the novel that was intended to be neither religious nor provocative. Let us give a word to author himself who several times expressed annoyance about what happened around *The Satanic Verses* since it obscured the fact that it was primarily a novel about London in the era of high Thatcherism and the one written out of experience of migration dealing with such things as divided selves, doubles and duality:

After having finished *Shame* I thought to myself that I did leave and that my experience is that of a migrant into the West with all the ambiguities and hybridizations that that involved. So I decided I would try to write a kind of hybrid novel, a novel which was about that conjunction of East and West which happens inside me... It is also a novel about all sorts of transformation, whether it be the transformation that comes from moving from one part of the world to another, the changes of the self that involves, or rather more dramatic and surrealist kinds of transformation.[215]

Rushdie admitted in many interviews that "he himself was a mongrel self, history's bastard, much before London aggravated this condition."[216] He ascribes it to his Bombay origin, since both Bombay and London share in his opinion much more than it might seem at first glance. For Rushdie they both are at the same time a reality and a metaphor. Writing about the Indian metropolis in *Midnight's Children*, the West, mainly the Empire was still present hanging over characters "with the full force of English literature and historiography."[217] Yet in Rushdie's fourth novel, the Empire "comes home to roost, it comes to settle in London slowly undermining it from the very basis."[218]

The Satanic Verses is first and foremost a novel of identities and on binaries operating in the world, not to speak of all kinds of racism. It is not only the fight of the Empire and ex-colonies, good and evil, the occidental and the oriental. It is a book full of alternative histories, transformation and mutation that are fundamental for the author who cannot accept anything as a fixed matter and who concentrates on variability and untrustworthiness of a reality around us.

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[215] Salman Rushdie, "An Interview with John Clement Ball," *Toronto South Asian Review*, 10 January 1991:30.
[216] Sukhdev Sandhu, *London Calling,* (London: Harper Perennial 2004) 367.
[217] Peter Childs, *Postcolonial Theory and English Literature Reader,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 1999) 397.
[218] Childs.

3.1.2.1. To Be Born Again First You Have to Die

Despite the complex, fragmentary character of the novel jumping from place to place (Bombay, London), from time to time (present, historical Jahalia standing for Mecca etc.), the very essence of the plot is simple. The whole story begins with a rather supernatural fall of both protagonists from an exploded airplane to place they had been for a long time familiar with but that turned to be something "phantasmagorical, metamorphic, labyrinthine, and nightmarish."[219] It is London, the place dreamt of by millions of people all the world round that will necessarily turn to place of a deep frustration and disillusionment.

3.1.2.2. Dominion of Spoons

Both central protagonists are actors, Gibreel Farishta a well-known Bollywood star, Salahuddin Chamchawala a not very successful one, earning his livelihood as a commercial voice over and a "star" of one show that has in a way outlived itself. Apart from their origin they have nothing in common. Nevertheless they are both chosen by fate to undergo the same experience – the explosion of the plane Bostan which disperses bits of travellers over Britain. This act of fragmentation stands without any doubt for an act of migration, which also disperses bodies over countries leaving them torn apart without any proper contact with past and casting them into a totally strange and hostile world. The debris of the plane can also remind us of famous Rushdie's shards of the mirror[220] of the past that can be never assembled back in the same way:

> There had been more than a few migrants aboard, yes, quite a quantity of
> wives who had been grilled by reasonable, doing-their-job officials about
> the lengths of and distinguishing moles upon their husbands' genitalia, a
> sufficiency of children upon whose legitimacy the British government
> had cast its ever-reasonable doubts – mingling with the remnants of the
> plane, equally fragmented, equally absurd, there floated the debris of the
> soul, broken memories, sloughed-off selves, severed mother tongues,

[219] Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses,* (New York: Henry Holt and Company 1997), p. 6.
[220] See Salman Rushdie,"The Indian Writer in England," *The Eye of the Beholder: Indian Writing in English*, ed. Maggie Butcher, (London: Commonwealth Institute 1983) 76.

> violated privacies, untranslatable jokes, extinguished futures, lost loves,
> the forgotten meaning of hollow, booming words, land belonging,
> home...[221]

Despite the fact, that neither Chamcha, nor Farishta are strangers in Britain, their landing on the coast of Britain stands for a new beginning. Cut off from their past (being logically taken for dead), they start afresh: "To be born again, first you have to die."[222] In *The Satanic Verses* however this death is only symbolic, it is much more a death of their previous lives, identities, their encounter with a true reality which has nothing to do with a previous idyll they lived in.

Let us start with the figure of Salahuddin Chamchawala. Although he had already undergone the experience of migration, it was much different than this time when he was forced to accept everything he had to face without any chance to adapt and to use any of learnt strategies.

When he first arrived in England to study, he faced the typical hostility that greets most foreigners. Upon arrival he decides to change, to become a proper Englishman, too. This process of mimicry nevertheless started long before, due to a colonial legacy, imperial education and surviving the Pax Britannica still influencing the lives of many people in ex-colonies.

> The mutation of Salahuddin Chamchwala into Saladin Chamcha began,
> as it will be seen, in old Bombay, long before he got close enough to hear
> the lions of Trafalgar roar. When the England cricket team played India
> at the Brabourne Stadium, he prayed for an England victory, for the
> game's creators to defeat the local upstarts, for the proper order of things,
> to be maintained…[223]

He dreamt of London, of Britain, he imagined all the places he knew from books:

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[221] Rushdie, *The Satanic* Verse,s p. 4.
[222] Salman Rushdie, p. 4.
[223] Rushdie, p. 37.

He dreamed of flying out of his bedroom window to discover that there, below him, – not Bombay – but Proper London itself, Bigben Nelsonscolumn Lordstavern Bloodytower Queen. But as he floated out over the great metropolis he felt himself beginning to lose height, and no matter how hard he struggled kicked swam-in-air he continued to spiral slowly downwards to earth, then faster, then faster still, until he was screaming headfirst down towards the city, Saintpauls, Puddinglane, Threadneedle-street, zeroing in on London like a bomb.[224]

He dreamt of life in Britain, he fell in love with the country represented in his dream by London which was such a sacred place that he did not dare to pronounce its name fully. If he had done it, the spell would have been broken, if he had stuttered while spelling the name of the city; it would have turned to something strange and hostile, something which would have been nothing like a proper London. Thus London became a whispered and spelt *Ellowen Deeowen London,* something much closer to a muse, a beloved woman than a world known metropolis.

The process of mimicry started at a full speed, when Saladin found out that dreams did not have to be the same as reality. He found out that "England was a peculiar-tasting smoked fish full of spikes and bones, and nobody would ever tell him how to eat it."[225] Being indeed a stubborn person he decided to follow the steps of the great William the Conqueror. He wanted to conquer England, to become:

...the thing his father was-not-could-never-be, that is, a good and proper Englishman. He would be English, even if the classmates giggled at his voice and excluded him from their secrets, because these exclusions only increased his determination, and that was when he became to act, to find masks, that these fellows would recognize, paleface masks, clown-masks, until he fooled them into thinking he was okay, he was people-like-us. He fooled them the way a sensitive human being can persuade gorillas to

[224]Rushdie, p. 39.
[225] Rushdie, p. 44.

accept him into their family. To fondle and caress and stuff bananas in his mouth.[226]

He turned from a Salahuddin Chamchawala to Saladin Chamcha, though it brought him a typical schizophrenia, getting in between his original Indianness and his dreamt Englishness. Turning a proper Englishman thus indeed resembled eating a kipper full of bones and spikes. If we take Englishness as defined by Enoch Powell in terms of racial purity, pastoral landscape and metaphysics of national belonging[227], Chamcha had to undergo a process of metamorphosis, through mutation and first of all self-denial.

As John Berger said in his *Seventh Man*: "To migrate is certainly to lose language and home, to be defined by a list or become invisible or even worse, a target. It is to experience deep changes and wrenches of the soul."[228] Having alienated himself from his father, having lost affiliation with fellow-country men and adopting habits, culture and language of the new home Saladin Chamcha became maybe a proper Englishman (as he had at least assumed till he later found how this belief was false), but first and foremost he became an example of a mimic man. No wonder Rushdie bestowed him with an expressive name, *chamcha* which first appeared already in Rushdie's renowned essay "The Empire Writes Back with Vengeance"[229].

Being it a word for a very common thing, a spoon, it has also a second meaning labelling chamcha as a person "who sucks up to powerful people, a yes man, a sycophant."[230] As Rushdie states in this essay: "The British Empire would not have lasted a week without such collaborators, in fact the Raj grew fat by being spoon-fed."[231] His Englishness becomes for him something, which not only helps him to survive in his new home country, but which actually turns out to be the very essence of his being. As his English wife, Pamela, quite bitterly realizes:

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[226] Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses,* (New York: Henry Holt and Company 1997) 43.
[227] See Simon Gikandi, "Poststructuralism and Postcolonial Discourse," *The Cambridge Companion to Post-colonial Literary Studies*, ed. Neil Lazarus, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004) 208.
[228] See: Salman Rushdie *on The Satanic Verses* with W. L. Webb. *Guardian Conversations*. 1988. Video recording. http://ftvdb.bfi.org.uk/sift/title/431919?view=cast
[229] See Salman Rushdie, "The Empire Writes Back with Vengeance," *The Times*,3 July 1982: 8.
[230] Rushdie, "The Empire Writes Back with Vengeance".
[231] Rushdie, The Empire Writes Back with Vengeance".

Chamcha was not in love with her at all, but with the voice stinking of Yorkshire pudding and hearts of oak, that hearty rubicind voice of ye olde dream-England which he so desperately wanted to inhabit.[232]

Even Farishta makes fun of Saladin, not only for his behaviour, but particularly the name he had chosen for himself realizing bitterly that Chamcha had become a prototype of a person most Indians despised the most:

Spoono. Like Zeenat Vakil, Gibreel had reacted with mirth to Saladin's abbreviated name. "Bhai, wow. I'm tickled, truly. Tickled pink. So if you are an English Chamcha these days, let it beam Sally Spoon. It will be our little joke." Gibreel Farishta had a way of failing to notice when he made people angry. Spoon, Spoono, my old Chamcha. Saladin hated them all. But could do nothing. Except hate.[233]

Nevertheless, as already suggested, this mimic strategy turns, at least in Saladin Chamcha's case a false one. After explosion of the plane and landing once again in Britain, he changes from a relatively respected man to one of millions, a strange and suspicious immigrant and has to face in person a humiliating approach of authorities and people around him. As Robert Lee writes, "he finds that his fragile pale face masks, his accent, face and his new name are powerless to prevent the dominant imperialist discourse of England from transforming him into a smelly Paki devil."[234] His transformation is also accelerated by his return to India after 15 years where he has to face the fact he is not able to control the face and behaviour and his accent he had taken so long to adopt.

After having been arrested considered an illegal immigrant, his body quickly mutates and transforms into the very thing the police described him. Into a "horned Satan of racist discourse"[235].

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[232] Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses,* (New York: Henry Holt and Company 1997) 186.
[233] Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*, p. 84.
[234] Robert A. Lee, *Other Britain, Other British: Contemporary Multicultural Fiction,* (London: Pluto Press 1995) 12.
[235] Lee.

> Saladin Chamcha... raised his hands to his forehead, and he knew that he had woken into the most fearsome of nightmares, a nightmare that had only just begun, because there, at his temples, growing longer by the moment, and sharp enough to draw blood, were two new, goaty, unarguable horns.[236]

This imposed identity can be best illustrated by means of the words of the Manticore Chamcha meets: "They describe us, that's all. They have the power of description and we succumb to the picture they construct."[237] Englishness seems not to play any role any more, any previous life, career, family, everything ceases to exist. Chamcha is forced to accept what he had for long rejected – he must seek a refuge with his own people, a Bangladeshi family. Not only is he again confronted with the world he had avoided so much, he must also "dissolve his old certainties" and come to terms with the fact he is not in his dream London, in that Ellowen Deeowen beauty, that "he had been cast from the gates of this city finding himself in the very centre of the multiplicitous newness of the city that, like his out-of-control body, is continually becoming."[238]

His own abdication of identity is equal to his incapacity to resist the stereotype. At the same time, he must accept the fact that England is far from that Dick Whittington's Promised Land, not any place of dream fulfilment but a place of "unclarified beginnings, a locality in which binaries and definitions are set askew."[239] He sprouts devilish horns, his body is covered with thick animal hair, his breath becomes stinkier than it had ever been supporting only the prejudice that all Pakis smell of curry and are dirty. He represents indeed the very essence of all racist discourses. He is that "irredeemable alien", always belonging into "they" group rather than "we" one."[240]

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[236] Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses,* (New York: Picador 2000) 145.
[237] Rushdie, p. 174.
[238] Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses,* (New York: Henry Holt and Company 1997) 267 resp. 265.
[239] Simon Gikandi, "Poststructuralism and Postcolonial Discourse," *The Cambridge Companion to Post-colonial Literary Studies*, ed. Neil Lazarus, (Cambridge*:* Cambridge University Press 2004) 205.
[240] John Clement Ball, *Imagining London: Postcolonial Fiction and the Transnational Metropolis,* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press 2004) 204.

First he becomes outcast due to his appearance, a monster that must be only locked high above the world. After having reluctantly acknowledged his South Asian origin, he turns into an icon admired by gangs of youths. He gradually casts away not only his obsession with Englishness as such, but mainly "the pedagogical version of England and London. Once finding himself excluded from that national narrative, he reorientates himself towards an emergent, street level activity of the performative user who can, with a crowd of others begin transforming of the spaces and narratives of the city and nation."[241] And for the crowd he becomes a symbol they had missed for so long, something most of the people of his own kind can identify with:

> "Chamcha," Mishal said excitedly. "You are a hero. I mean, people can really identify with you. It's an image white society has rejected for so long that we can really take it, you know, occupy it, inhabit it, reclaim it and make it our own. It's time you considered action."[242]

Nevertheless it is not his choice. It is another imposed identity he has to come to terms with. He is forced to identify with the crowd, with values he does not share. For him it does not bring any change in his situation; it is only another role he plays.

3.1.2.3. Rebirth of an Unreal City

The Satanic Verses is predominantly a metaphorical novel on migration, at the same time it is a novel about migrant transformation. They are not only passive recipients but active participants, too. Rushdie does not want to locate his migrant characters merely into a static place where they would experience only loneliness and frustration, London, the originally proper London, stable and constant value "is dissolved and demonised by the power of description."[243]

To survive and begin to live again means to cast away the past first. To be born away you must die first. However, it does not concern only Chamcha and his customs and habits, it concerns his perception of city of London as such that must change from a

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[241]John Clement Ball, *Imagining London: Postcolonial Fiction and the Transnational Metropolis,* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press 2004) 206.

[242] Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses,* (New York: Henry Holt and Company 1997) 296.

[243] Robert A. Lee, *Other Britain, Other British: Contemporary Multicultural Fiction,* (London: Pluto Press 1995) 12.

rigid paradigm into a living and breathing organism. He must accept the fact that it is "the most protean and chameleon of cities."[244]

Saladin is forced to change due to rather nightmarish circumstances, to transform from a neat man in a buttoned suit who leads a happy, middle class life in a comfortable house in the suburbs into a member of the crowd. He had been always influenced by the historical city, its monuments, buildings and other immobile sights that have always provoked an illusory feeling. It was permanent and constant promising infinite stability and reliability.

Nevertheless, as stated several times before, Rushdie never liked fixed realia; he never made use of a static and rigid realism. Instead of that he mixed realism with a magic, the real with a fantasy and hyperbole. By means of this style he has managed to portray a city that is far from a text book icon; the past and history melt down in this city, feather away, sharp outlines get blur disabling characters to find their own place in it. Yet volatility of such a place is a direct reflection of unstable migrant condition.

London is in *The Satanic Verses* paralleled with a schizophrenic city of Gibreel Farishta's dreams, Jahilia, a version of Mecca approximately 600AD. Since it is a city built entirely of something as unstable as sand, it necessarily rouses a feeling of instability, of a constant movement and potential change. Every blast of wind brings something new; however this newness is always based on changing past. This finding is rather fundamental; there are no certainties in the postcolonial world, especially for those who dwell in modern cities. As John Clement Ball paraphrases Elizabeth Wilson: "Life and its certainties slither away underfoot. The continual flux and change is one of most disquieting aspects of modern city. We expect permanence and stability from the city."[245]

One of characters of *The Satanic Verses* is even more particular when describing the modern city as such:

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[244] John Clement Ball, *Imagining London: Postcolonial Fiction and the Transnational Metropolis,* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press 2004) 202.
[245] See: John Clement Ball, *Imagining London: Postcolonial Fiction and the Transnational Metropolis,* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press 2004) 204. Originally to be found in: Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women,* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 1991) 3.

(Otto Cone): "The modern city is the locus classicus of incompatible realities. Lives that have no business mingling with one another sit side by side upon omnibus. One universe, on a zebra crossing, is caught for an instant, blinking like a rabbit, in the headlamps of a motor-vehicle in which an entirely alien and contradictory continuum is to be found. And as long as that's all, they pass in the night, jostling on Tube stations, raising their hats in some hotel corridor, it's not so bad. But if they meet! It's uranium and plutonium, each makes the other decompose, boom."[246]

The ungraspable character of a modern city is augmented by the fact that it is in a direct antithesis with the country. Countryside as such has been always a synonym for an idyll, morality and purity, mainly the British one. Imperial past present in minds and memories of most literary characters of postcolonial fiction is logically based on such an idyll. The British countryside so often sung about in literary classics, influenced deeply postcolonial subjects and especially their dreams about Britain. The fictive quality of such images and direct discrepancy with reality of post war industrial Britain only aggravated problems that migrants had after their arrival to their new country.

Nevertheless it was not only a non-existence of green meadows and romantic countryside coves inhabited by gentle people but first of all a principle difference concerning the very essence of imperial dreams – the city of London that the migrant protagonists in *The Satanic Verses* both have to face. They must accept the fact that the city as such is not what they expected. Their London is only an imagined city.

As John Clement Ball writes in his *Imagining London* London novels of postcolonial writers portray always:

...a white city through brown eyes. Their migrant characters also discover a city in which racial divisions are spatially inscribed, despite the mobility urban space enables and the mingling of differences it necessitates… As Indian writers and their protagonists articulate the disjunction between an imagined, desired and liberating London and a material, constraining London, they are often inspired to question its

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[246] Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses,* (New York: Henry Holt and Company 1997) 325.

reality. Even as it presents concrete obstacles and barriers, the metropolis in Indian fiction is repeatedly figured as a place of unreality and artifice, a world characterized by the ephemeral, the metamorphic, and the immaterial.[247]

The migrants are forced to live in between two imaginary worlds, an imaginary India of their memories, and an imaginary England of their dreams and education. Both these worlds, fundamental for migrants but tricky at the same time, are according to many theoreticians, only a version of the *Maya*: in Hindi religion an illusion based on the principle that holds we do not experience the world around us as such, but only a projection of it, created by ourselves. It is only a replica of reality that substitutes for a "real" world around.

The migrants have mostly perceived London as a flat cartographic image, the *A to Z Geographers London* due to a notoriously known map books that all visitors use. They imposed upon it the very same totalizing approach as colonizers did when arriving in India. They wanted to seize it, depict it, make it familiar; usually on the basis of false images they had brought with them from their homelands. Similarly to Gibreel they wanted to adapt the city according to their wishes. However, the city underwent a vital change. Chamcha's Proper London had been "tormented and tortured"[248]. The A-Z geographers London is now a dog-eared metropolis, ragged and shabby. It had lost its imperial greatness; it had become a new Babylon with mingled languages. "Babylondon"[249] as Rushdie calls it in the novel. Place that might be a raceless chaos for some, a place of unlimited liberty and possibilities for other. The only thing must be accepted by all. The city was reborn. It is not a place which can be found in the maps any longer, it is a place that is gradually and organically changing.

3.1.2.4. Gibreel the Saint

The second male protagonist of *The Satanic Verses*, Gibreel Farishta is probably one of the most complicated figures Rushdie has ever created. Despite many similarities

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[247] See John Clement Ball, *Imagining London: Postcolonial Fiction and the Transnational Metropolis,* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press 2004) 176.
[248] Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses,* (New York: Henry Holt and Company 1997) 331.
[249] Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses,* (New York: Henry Holt and Company 1997) 474.

with his fellow-country men and fellow-traveller Saladin Chamcha – both are actors, both come from India, both have fled India in a hope to start afresh – his past and presence are much more confused contrary to the ones of Chamcha whose life is influenced primarily by his obsession with England and idealized Englishness.

Gibreel's attitude towards England and Englishness is more or less ambivalent; he is confronted with it in full force as late as after the explosion of Bostan – the catastrophe, as Simon Gikandi writes that "plummets Gibreel into the sacred spaces of Englishness."[250] Gibreel Farishta's life right before the catastrophe is, as many theoreticians agree, associated primarily with blasphemy and insurgency. Gibreel is not a mimic man as Saladin, he is first and foremost a performer. His Indianness is performative, his religion, too, his life had melted down with the one of his great national characters. As Rushdie points out in *The Satanic Verses*: "For many of his fans, the boundary separating the performer and his roles had long ago ceased to exist."[251] He is for the whole nation an incarnation of the national spirit. No one can imagine "what would happen if India lost this icon."[252] No wonder then a sort of insurgence comes, not only in the form of ostentative blasphemy of a public ravening of pork[253], but also following his life love to England and leaving behind his career.

His arrival to England has thus nothing to do with the archetypal migrant dream, it is unexpected and quick. He is cast into this new situation and therefore it becomes a worst of nightmares. He undergoes a typical journey of most foreigners, from Dover to London, the one, as Gikandi again points out "when colonial desires are supposed to be fulfilled"[254]. It should be the very beginning of the process when the migrants should turn, in Chamcha's words into proper Englishmen. Nevertheless Rushdie prepared for Gibreel a completely different fate; he will be confronted with everything what he had rejected in his life. A person who he hurt most, his ex-lover Rakha Merchant, but also with God, whom he so publicly renounced and who will punish him.

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[250] Simon Gikandi, "Poststructuralism and Postcolonial Discourse," *The Cambridge Companion to Post-colonial Literary Studies*, ed. Neil Lazarus, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004) 205.
[251] Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses,* (New York: Henry Holt and Company 1997) 17.
[252] Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses,* p. 29.
[253] Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses,* p. 30.
[254] Simon Gikandi, "Poststructuralism and Postcolonial Discourse," *The Cambridge Companion to Post-colonial Literary Studies*, ed. Neil Lazarus, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004) 218.

> Mr. Gibreel Farishta in the railway train to London was once again seized as who would not be by the fear that God had decided to punish him for his loss of faith by driving him insane… The terror of losing his mind to a paradox, of being unmade by what he no longer believed existed, of turning his madness into the avatar of a chimerical archangel, was so big in him that it was impossible to look at it for long: yet how else was he to account for the miracles, metamorphoses and apparitions of recent days?[255]

He is a completely alienated figure, he has broken away from Indianness, yet he does not want to adopt a mimic Englishness either. He is the one who is completely uprooted. Neither does the city London, he is cast into, help him. He tries to grasp it somehow, but is slips away. The city becomes a representation of his abjection, of his unrequited love, of his insecure, rather bleak future:

> The city streets coiled around him, writhing like serpents. London had grown unstable once again, revealing its true, capricious, tormented nature, its anguish of a city that had lost its sense of itself and wallowed, accordingly, in the impotence of its selfish, angry presents of masks and parodies, stifled and twisted by the insupportable, unrejected burden of its past, staring into the bleakness of its impoverished future.[256]

Having encountered the hostility of the city, he imagines himself to have unnatural powers, the ones of Angel Azrael, and wants to transform the city completely from above. He has a megalomaniac feeling of omnipotence, similar feeling, as Ball states, "that British colonizers imputed themselves in India."[257] His attitude based on similar binaries the ex-colonizers had imposed upon his home country, he, perceiving the coldness of the places, decides to "warm it up". To show "them", to punish "them". Quoting Fanon he would turn from an oppressed person to a true persecutor:

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[255] Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses,* (New York: Henry Holt and Company 1997) 195.
[256] Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses,* p. 330.
[257] See John Clement Ball, *Imagining London: Postcolonial Fiction and the Transnational Metropolis,* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press 2004) p. 208.

He was hovering high over London! – Haha, they couldn't touch him now, the devils rushing upon him in that Pandemonium! – He looked down upon the city and saw the English. The trouble with the English was that they were English: damn cold fish! – Living underwater most of the year, in days the colour of night! – Well, he was here now, the great Transformer, at this time there'd be some changes made – the laws of nature are the laws of its transformation, and he was the very person to utilize the same![258]

He imposes upon the city similar violence as the colonizers did when trying to westernize the colonies. Convinced of his definite truth Gibreel, power drunk, armed only, as Sukhdev Sandhu notes, "with his celestial powers and a London map"[259], that is due to its "fixity" supposed to help him in this salutary task set on his missionary journey. He opines that the main problem with the English is their weather. It needs to be heated, only then the behaviour of people would change, the street life would be improved. There is a whole set of advantages it would bring for the city and its citizens, disadvantages being only few: "cholera, typhoid, legionaries' disease, cockroaches, dust, noise, a culture of excess"[260].

Gibreel Farishta floating on his cloud formed the opinion that the moral fuzziness of the English was meteorogically induced. When the day is not warmer that the night," he reasoned, "when the light is not brighter than the dark, when the land is not drier than the sea, then clearly a people will lose the power to make distinctions, and commence to see everything – from political parties to sexual partners to religious beliefs – as much-the-same, nothing-to-choose, give-or-take. What folly! For truth is extreme, it is so and not thus, it is him and not her, a partisan matter, not a spectator sport. It is, in brief, heated. City," he, cried, and

[258] Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses,* p. 363.
[259] Sukhdev Sandhu, *London Calling,* (London: Harper Perennial 2004) 368.
[260] Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses,* p. 366.

his voice rolled over metropolis like thunder, "I am goin to tropicalize you![261]

Though he succeeds partially with tropicalization from a weather point of view, the sociological aspect of his action fails. One reason of such a failure is given by a binary character of his attitude to the British and the city, too. He does not admit the right of the city/people to difference; he strives for the oneness, for ultimate sharing," for one true self". He acknowledges only a collective identity, not the postcolonial one "which can be at the same time similar and different."[262] Using similar prejudice that the British had as for colonies, only upside down, his endeavour to "enliven London by the extremes of an Indian climate"[263] is necessarily doomed. He wishes to enrich the British with "better cricketers, spicier food, improved street life, institution of national siesta, higher quality popular music, new birds in the trees, no more British reserve etc." However it is not the objective of his efforts that is condemned to failure. As Rushdie points out, social transformation cannot happen overnight, it is not a quick and violent process, but a gradual and communal one, it cannot happen instantly and unilaterally as Gibreel strives for it.[264]

Another mistake Gibreel makes is his rather schematic attitude towards city. He is the one who by means of an assumed personification of a real city, the street map, wants to redeem the place. Not realizing that London that stretches in front of him is the Maya, a palimpsest of its own, an imaginative place. Gibreel is not able to perceive the change happening in the city, there is no chance succeeding in chronological and systematic changing it by means of fixed images. His attitude is again colonization in reverse; he adopts similar totalizing practice as the colonizers did when arriving in colonies. As Sandhu points out in his *London Calling*, "to map the city, one must first

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[261] Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses,* p. 365.
[262] See Stuart Hall´s classification of cultural identity, part. in the chapter 2.3.1 "Introduction." Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader,* eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf 1993) 393.
[263] John Clement Ball, *Imagining London: Postcolonial Fiction and the Transnational Metropolis,* (Toronto, Buffalo and London, University of Toronto Press 2004) 205.
[264] See Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses,* p. 205.

dispense with real maps."[265] The city, changing, transforming all the time, thus slippery, resists Gibreel's obstinate attempt, in a way it defeats him.

> But the city in its corruption refused to submit to the dominion of the cartographers, changing shape at will and without warning, making it impossible for Gibreel to approach his quest in the systematic manner he would have preferred. Some days he would turn a corner at the end of a grand colonnade built of human flesh and covered in skin that bled when scratched, and find himself in an uncharted wasteland, at whose distant rim he could see tall familiar buildings, Wren's dome, the high metallic spark-plug of the Telecom tower, crumbling in the wind like sand castles.[266]

The only definite thing that is invoked by his imperative endeavour is another break down he experiences. Seeing once again in his mind a horned and goat like figure of Saladin Chamcha who is the second person in his life Farishta harmed because of his cowardice and selfishness, he collapses again ending once again in front of the door of his British lover.

3.1.2.5. Final Controversy

Leaving Gibreel in his demented condition let us return to Saladin Chamcha who is the character that undergoes in the novel an indeed fundamental development. Having given up his false identity, newness comes in his life. By accepting what he has become, at that moment Chamcha realizes he could make use of his new condition and powers to act:

> Newness: he had sought a different kind, but this was what he got.

> Bitterness, too, and hatred, all these coarse things. He would enter into his new self; he would be what he had become: loud, stenchy, hideous, outsize, grotesque, inhuman, powerful. He had the sense of being able to

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[265] Sukhdev Sandhu, *London Calling,* (London: Harper Perennial 2004) 369.
[266] Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company 1997) 337-338.

stretch out a little finger and topplechurch spires with the force growing in him, the anger, the anger, the anger. Powers.

He was looking for someone to blame. He, too, dreamed; and in his dreams, a shape, a face, was floating closer, ghostly still, unclear, but one day soon he would be able to call it by its name.

I am, he accepted, that I am.[267]

Only after deciding to accept his true self and act accordingly, he loses his ghostly appearance; he restores his old self and gets humanized once again. This acceptance of his present condition is also connected with another experience he undergoes, i. e. coming to terms with hybridity as such and appreciation of such a condition and its merits. Having been shown a picture of a tree called "a chimeran graft", he finds out that this hybrid tree has a lot in common with himself. That this might be a way how to survive and succeed in his life:

> The tree itself made him sit up and take notice. There it palpably was, a chimera with roots, firmly planted in and growing vigorously out of a piece of English earth: a tree, he thought, capable of taking the metaphoric place of the one his father had chopped down in a distant garden in another, incompatible world. If such a tree were possible, then so was he; he, too, could cohere, send down roots, survive.[268]

After having followed Gibreel Farishta's steps and Saladin's gradual casting aside his mimic character and accepting hybrid condition of a postcolonial subject, Rushdie essentially problematizes everything he had written in the very last section of his novel. He questions issues of identity and belonging fundamentally underming their fixed perception and revealing their unreliability and versatility. Gibreel returns to Bombay in vain efforts to pick up his fading career. However he is no more the irresistible Gibreel as before; he remains a haunted man as in London who comes to face for the last time his fate. Saladin's journey back is much more complicated and

[267] Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company 1997) 298.
[268]Salman Rushdie, p. 420.

dangerous. He returns back to a place he voluntarily left long ago, to a place that was a starting point of his pursuing of an imagined Englishness.

The way how Rushdie deals with Chamcha's return can be indeed perceived, as numerous critics did, as a total negation of everything he had previously achieved in *The Satanic Verses*. This return is in truth a very conservative one. He reconciles with his father and reestablishes old relationships. As Gikandi writes: "Saladin's life has been an attempt to escape from inherited ideas of the Heimat. However, at the end of the novel we see him embracing this inheritance."[269] He gives himself another chance, adopts once again his old name, reconciles with Bombay accepting both his own past in it and future, too. Standing at the window of his old bedroom, he decides to forget childhood, and start afresh once again. He is getting another chance. By means of imaginary bulldozers, he casts away an old and sentimental echo. "If the old refused to die, the new could not be born."[270]

Rushdie seemed to advocate the whole novel for the in-between, hybrid identity perceived as something changing, not the one of a fixed character, for any oneness, singularity. Yet it seems that the very conclusion of the novel sides much more with the "either-or" strategy. Chamcha turned to Chamchawala once again and survives. He picked his old self. It is then that Rushdie suggests that identity can be changed in accordance with circumstances? That it is not anything permanent that should be followed once forever? Or is it a mere return to roots, to "old" good traditions, to one's past that are the only certainty one has in the postmodern world?

Be it as it may, the answer cannot be easily reached. *The Satanic Verses* stands first and foremost for a disorganized mixture of plots, themes and characters skipping from present to past, reality to imagination. In the first case, it is though one of the first novels of postcolonial writers that openly spoke from a position of not belonging. He described it as follows:

> If *The Satanic Verses* is anything, it is a migrant's eye of the view of the
> world. It is written from the very experience of uprooting, juncture and

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[269] Simon Gikandi, "Poststructuralism and Postcolonial Discourse," *The Cambridge Companion to Post-colonial Literary Studies*, ed. Neil Lazarus, (Cambridge*:* Cambridge University Press 2004) 223.
[270] Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company 1997) 561.

metamorphosis (slow or rapid, painful or pleasurable) that is the migrant condition, and from which, I believe, can be derived a metaphor for all humanity.[271]

Rushdie wants by means of his novel to disrupt deep-rooted binaries. He disclaims such fixed binaries as the centre and periphery, gives voice to otherwise marginalized people. He challenges English/Western sense of identity and pulls down from pedestals long time uncontradicted models and values. In this sense, he makes London the third character of the novel and makes it absent from white people and instead swarming with immigrants of all kinds who slowly transform it.

As for identity Rushdie seems to reject any mimicry and fake identity and advocate for anything new that would not be based on traditional stereotypes associated with surviving historical empire legacy, anything that could be same and at the same time different. Similarly to many other issues, Rushdie's attitude to identity is based upon refusal of absolutes of any kind and questioning of traditional assumptions. Each person is a founder of his/her own fortune. It cannot be enforced by circumstances of any kind, history, politics or religion. Violence and pressure are always bad. And migration may be in some cases, apart from all the negative circumstances that it brings, also positive experience enabling the subject to set a fresh and leave behind all that binds him. It can be a liberating process that can help the subjects to cast away everything they were forced to adopt or that can give them a lesson which may open their eyes and bring them back to their roots.

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[271] Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*: *Essays and Criticism 1981-1991,* (London: Granta Books 1991) 394.

3.2. Hybridity in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*

3.2.1. Introduction

3.2.1.1. River of Blood

When speaking of Hanif Kureishi, especially in comparison with Salman Rushdie, there are several crucial aspects that must be stressed. Despite contemporaries writing in a similar period they belong to totally disparate generations. Salman Rushdie having personally experienced migrancy dealt in his novels apart from exclusively Indian themes in a large extent with issues closely related with migrancy, such as imaginary X real homeland, process of migration as such and succeeding settling, etc. Kureishi having been born in England, having spent his youth in suburbs and having attended British schools had to face completely different problems related with assimilation and identity doubts. He also grew up in the period when coexistence of an original population and newcomers worsened significantly and legislative changes were made to prevent further immigration and hasten the assimilation of those already in Britain.

The authorities never admitted that the main reason for the legislative changes was xenophobia and racism. They were referring to a lack of job positions and insufficient food supplies of the island for all the arriving people together with worsening living conditions of those "whites" who had to share the space with new arrives.

In contrast to black immigrants from the Caribbean, the South-Asians were not usually Christians and did not speak English at home. Their desire to assimilate with the dominating culture has thus been much more problematic, especially when the country in some aspect tried to impose upon them some of deep-rooted imperial principles.

Till the time when the figures of newcomers were not still so high and when they were dispersed in industrial areas of the United Kingdom, the reactions of the white population were disdainful but not fully hostile and violent. The situation got worse when whole communities of "different ethnic minorities" started moving to the suburbs originally inhabited by a white low or lower-middle class. Especially their tendency to cling to each other and nuclear type of families backed up a spreading of ghetto like ethnic agglomerations within big cities that were being perceived with growing worries.

It was the time in England when the white attitude towards the dark-skinned foreigners was just beginning to go from I don't want to see them or work next to them to I don't mind working next to them if I'm forced to, as long as I don't have to speak to them, an attitude that would change again within the next 10 years to I don't mind speaking to them when I have to in the workplace, as long as I don't have to talk to them socializing in the same place as if they must, as long as I don't have live next to them. But then it was the 1970's and because the immigrant families had to live somewhere and were moving in the next door to the whites, there were calls for a ban on immigration and the repatriation of the immigrants who were already here.[272]

Avtar Brah describes a rather ambiguous attitude of the majority to migrants as follows:

...Their (immigrants') gardens are filth, they overran all the shops, but if they left there would be no one to run the buses or hospitals...[273]

When they applied for the jobs the whites loathed, there were not any harsh protests. Only later, when immigrants advanced and divided more of the labour market with the British, did there arise first riots and racist protests. One of the first was aimed against the Caribbean population, and it took place in Notting Hill, in September 1958. It was soon followed by others, e.g. 1961 Middlesbrough one against the Pakistanis. The riots were mostly connected with a police brutality and were enthusiastically and frantically supported by all the media. The TV and newspapers played a central role in a perpetuation of racism. They advanced formalization of set stereotypes concerning particular ethnic groups and unobtrusively sided with racist attackers which more and more originated from supporters of two major racist organisations in the UK (1970s National Front or 1990s The British National Party) or from newly founded skinhead groups.

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[272] Nadeem Aslam, *Maps for Lost Lovers,* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 2005) 11.
[273] Avtar Brah, "The Scent of Memory: Strangers, Our Own and Others," *Hybridity and Its Discontents,* eds. Avtar Brah and Annie E. Coombes, (London & New York: Routledge 2000) 273.

The surge of racist attitudes among the British population only mirrored the attitude of political representatives who openly declared their xenophobe positions as early as in 1960s. In connection with legislative changes and an unprecedented arrival of tens of thousands of African Asians in 1967, resp. 1971, an organized dispersal of immigrants was initiated dividing whole Britain into green and red zones to avoid their settling in areas of high Asian concentration (in red zones the size of an Asian population was deemed to be too high which meant that newcomers were dispersed within other areas).

Among the most "famous" politicians, there was Enoch Powell. An ex-soldier and down-the-line poet who left army just one year before the Indian Independence drew heavily from his colonial experience in India. He was the one who exasperated resentment against immigrants having made blunt statements which later lead to his expulsion from the Conservative Shadow Cabinet in 1968. His egregious 1968 speech where he forecasted an apocalyptic future for the United Kingdom openly revealed what some of the British citizens had felt long before and it in fact acknowledged their personal opinion on the subject.

Even Hanif Kureishi quotes in his "Rainbow Sign" some passages of Enoch Powell's speeches in connection with the impact it had upon immigrants and their families:

> (1965) We should not lose sight of the desirability of achieving a steady
> flow of voluntary repatriation for the elements which are proving
> unsuccessful or inassimilable.

> (1967)...Because of Pakistanis, this country would not be worth living in
> for our look ahead I am filled with foreboding. Like the Roman, "I seem
> to see the River Tiber foaming with much blood."[274]

Powell was not in his hatred as for immigrants a rare case. One of his followers, the conservative politician Duncan Sandys went even further:

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[274]Hanif Kureishi, "Rainbow Sign," *My Beautiful Laundrette,* (London: Faber and Faber 1986) 11.

(1967) The Breedings of millions of half-caste children would merely produce a generation of misfits and create national tension.[275]

An impact of such proclamations upon the British majority was considerable. Powell was either worshipped or totally rejected. Nevertheless such a political support of a racist prejudice and intolerance was highly influential and unfortunately not exceptional. Even the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher when asked about her opinion on a growing flow of immigration to the country answered in her Granada TV Interview as follows:

> ...There was a committee which looked at it and said that if we went on as we are then by the end of the century, there would be four million people of the new Commonwealth and Pakistan here. Now, that is an awful lot and think it means that people are really afraid that this country might be rather swamped by people with a different culture and, you know, the British character has done so much throughout the world that if there is any fear that it might be swamped people are going to react and be rather hostile to those coming in.[276]

Practical result of such an attitude of authorities was clearly evident at difficult time right after the publication of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses.* There was anger from the side of British Muslims; there were riots and public burnings of the books. The government indeed rejected the call for the novel's ban while at the same time it warned Muslims not to isolate themselves from the "host" society. The reaction of the British government and authorities was certainly righteous; nevertheless it was soon to be accompanied by several public speeches that revealed openly at least very conservative persuasion of some politicians. John Patten's "On Being British"[277] has become the most famous one. It was published in several news media as an opened letter addressed to leaders and representatives of the British Muslim community. Plainly

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[275] Kureishi, "Rainbow Sign".
[276] Margaret Thatcher, *TV Interview for Granada "World In Action,"* 27 January 1978, 23 February 2012, http://www.margaretthatcher.org/speeches/displaydocument.asp?docid .
[277] John Patten was a Home minister for race relations who right after Rushdie´s affair wrote a document lecturing Muslims and the general public "on being British". A crucial aim of this document was to delineate a common national culture. Closer see e.g.: Peter van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in Indian and Britain*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2001) 30.

said it dealt in detail with essential Englishness that was for the most immigrants desirable to reach.

The tone of the whole address was of a fatherly government turning to the leaders of the alien community:

> ...There are various things immigrant children really must learn if they are to make the most of their lives and opportunities as British citizens. This includes, according to Patten, a fluent command of English and clear understanding of British democratic processes, of its laws, the system of government and the history that lies behind them. The remarkable thing about these demands is that they are skills and knowledge that very few white Britons can claim confidently to possess.[278]

"On Being British" in fact forced the minorities to aspire a norm. The members of an "alien "population must in his view participate in Britishness. It as he says doesn't mean forgetting one's cultural roots. Yet he speaks more or less about the role of an individual and omits the fact that immigrants are not isolated individuals. He further adds:

> Whether our backgrounds are Pakistani, Polish, Vietnamese or whatever, we all need to know our particular background and to cherish our own history and special traditions.[279]

In his point of view, it is unfortunately only the "major" culture that is to be taught and shared. He did not realize that the time of 5 o'clock teas and sheep pastoral had gone. That the immigrants had changed contemporary Britain once forever and in a way enriched it, too. The immigrants could no longer be seen merely as foreigners and intruders. They were already there and there was nothing to do with that only to accept it as the fact.

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[278]Talal Asad, "Multiculturalism and British Identity in the Wake of the Rushdie Affair," *Politics and Society,* 18/1990: 458.
[279] Talal Asad, "Multiculturalism and British Identity in the Wake of th Rushdie Affair," *Politics and Society,* 18/1990:455-480.

3.2.1.2. Imposed Identity

As it had been already mentioned, the authorities indeed contributed greatly to a rise of hostile feelings towards newcomers, first and foremost after the ill-famous speech of Enoch Powell in 1968. Though it may seem rather marginal, being it only one speech of an overtly conservative politician, the impact was immense. As Kureishi remarks in his "Rainbow Sign":

> Powell allowed himself to become a figure head for racists. He helped to create racism and was directly responsible not only for the atmosphere of fear and hatred, but through his influence, for individual acts of violence against Pakistanis.[280]

The reason of all this was obvious. The British were afraid of losing their alleged superiority and were afraid of being "flooded". The new racism that emerged was not however based any more upon cultural difference so much, but upon, as Vijay Mishra states in his essay "Diasporic Narratives of Salman Rushdie" a racial, linguistic difference:

> The "difference" however had to be anchored somewhere, and the easiest means of doing this was by stipulating that nations were not imagined communities constructed historically but racial enclaves marked by high levels of homogeneity. Thus race had a nation to which it belonged.[281]

Nonetheless, it is a defensive aspect of this kind of racism that was to protect the "true" Britishness which is much more important. "The new racism was used to defend Britishness itself, to argue that multiculturalism was a travesty of the British way of life, which was becoming now extremely vulnerable. The only good immigrant was one that was totally assimilable, just as the only good gay or lesbian was someone who led a closet life." [282]

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[280] Hanif Kureishi, "Rainbow Sign,"*My Beautiful Laundrette,* (London: Faber and Faber 1986) 12.
[281] Vijay Mishra, "Postcolonial Difference: Diasporic Narrative of Salman Rushdie," *Postcolonial Theory and English Literature Reader,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999) 431.
[282] Mishra, p. 432.

The defensive strategy of the majority was often based upon incorrect stereotyping, drawing frequently from misunderstandings of the culture of the newcomers. One character of Caryl Phillips' *A Distant Shore* sees the migrants and multiculturalism as follows:

"I am an old traditionalist, Salomon. I want fish and chips, not curry and chips. I am not prejudiced, but we'll be soon living in a foreign country unless somebody puts an end to all that immigration. These Indians they still make their women trail after them, and they have their mosques and temples, and their butcher shops where they kill animals in the basement and do whatever they do with the blood. I mean, they are peasants. They come from the countryside and most of them have never seen a flush toilet or a light switch. It's too much for them. And for us. There ought to be some training or they should go back."[283]

The requirement of a total assimilation was crucial. Regardless the fact that one hundred percent assimilation is not possible (and at the same time was not really desired by the majority, either), the ideal was a perfect mimic man who would copy the British gentleman in every aspect. Kureishi is at this point very precise as for assimilation and the British attitude to it:

The British complained incessantly that the Pakistanis would not assimilate. This meant they wanted the Pakistanis to be exactly like them. But of course even then they would have rejected them.[284]

It was not only self-protection of the majority, but often a hostile and violent approach towards the migrants starting with abusive language and ending with a rather superior and discriminatory attitude excluding everyone of a different origin from a common life. Though being aware of unreasonability of such an attitude and insularity of such people, the subjects, often children or adolescents started sharing this perception, internalizing it. Kureishi himself writes about his growing incertitude as for

[283] Caryl Phillips, *A Distant Shore,* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 2003) 258.
[284] Hanif Kureishi, "Rainbow Sign," *My Beautiful Laundrette,* (London: Faber and Faber 1986) 12.

his own Pakistani identity. He was ashamed of being Pakistani and started wondering whether some of the prejudice was not true:

> When I was nine or ten a teacher purposefully placed some pictures of Indian peasants in mud huts in front of me and said to the class: Hanif comes from India. I wondered: did my uncles ride on camels? Surely not in their suits? Did my cousins, so like me in other ways, squat down in the sand like little Mowglis, half-naked and eating with their fingers?[285]

The logical result was to come. The subjects started rejecting their origin; often the background and their own families in order to fit better into the major society. "I tried to deny my Pakistani self," Kureishi admits, "I was ashamed. It was a curse and I wanted to be rid of it. I wanted to be like everyone else."[286] No wonder when he was, despite his white mother and educated Pakistani father, still perceived as a "dirty, ignorant and less than human, worthy of abuse and violence."[287] At school teachers mocked Indian accents, even though Kureishi's English was faultless, television was full of political jokes attacking Pakistanis and distributing racial hatred. For Kureishi and his parents, it was embarrassing and degrading to watch it and it became intolerable.

Hanif Kureishi's personal example only proves how an individual had to face up to such a situation and it provides a reader with several strategies adopted by postcolonial subjects, mainly being it the migrants of the second generation. It will be analyzed much more thoroughly in the subsequent case study dedicated to Kureishi and his novel *The Buddha of Suburbia*. Most aspects depicted in this book are related to identity issues, including the question of mimicry, hybridity and self-stereotypes and potential assimilation. At this point it is significant to stress that Kureishi tries in his works to disrupt the binary logics operating and due to a constant shifting, movement of his main character, Karim, he showed one potential way how to escape stereotyping – the hybridity arising from the position in-between. His attitude is active, it gives a hope, contrary to e.g. Ravinder Randhawa's one who is primarily concerned with exploring a

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[285] Hanif Kureishi, "Rainbow Sign," *My Beautiful Laundrette,* (London: Faber and Faber 1986) 9.
[286] Kureishi, "Rainbow Sign," p. 9.
[287] Kureishi, "Rainbow Sign," p. 12.

difficulty to escape the stereotyping imposed by the major society and who presents rather passive subjects who similarly to martyrs accept their burdensome fate.

The discriminatory strategies could celebrate a victory then. Most of the migrants, especially the younger ones, dreamt of a total assimilation, of getting rid of all difference. Irrespective of the main reason for their difference, whether it was a proper command of language, humble origin or different colour of skin, they adopted it and it became a part of their identity and how they perceived themselves. Of course that relative blackness was the most visible attribute pointed out the most.

The character of Buchi Emecheta' s novel with a symptomatic name *Second Class Citizen* describes the conflict with such an internalization of the prejudice as follows:

> Adah knew that his blackness, his feeling of blackness, was firmly established in his mind. She knew that there was a discrimination all over the place, but Francis's mind was fertile ground in which such attitudes could grow and thrive.[288]

To overcome such a problem required a lot of energy and skill. Their struggle also often came in vain when they realized that all the efforts had been fruitless since the majority would never accept them. They realized they would always remain outsiders in England and often adopted a strategy of excess, either secluding themselves into their own world, ghetto-like and inhibited by people they were familiar with, or another one of total rejection of their original identity which made them rootless and suffering, as to be found in Kamala Markandaya's novel:

> "The people will not allow it," he said. "It was my mistake to imagine." They will not, except physically, which is indisputable, have me enter. I am to be driven outside, which is the way they want it. An outsider in England. In actual fact, I am, of course, an Indian."[289]

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[288] Buchi Emecheta, *The Second Class Citizen,* (New York: George Braziller 1975) 58.
[289] Kamala Markandaya, *The Nowhere Man*, (New York: The John Day Company 1972) 242.

3.2.1.3. First vs. Second Generation

A struggle of this character goes even so far that she denies her true self, adopts an English name and pretends she does not understand the mother tongue. However such an attitude is for the characters of postcolonial fiction pretty rare, especially in the works of authors of the 1st generation. The second generation nevertheless brought significant changes into the literature. Not only were there novels about settling, assimilation or adopting, they primarily depicted clashes between parents and children, who having been already born in England frequently rejected all the values the parents tried to keep and who felt themselves as true Englishman.

Let us start with the first lines of the most fundamental work on this issue, Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*. The main character, Karim says at the very beginning of the novel:

> My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost. I am often considered to be a funny kind of Englishman, a new breed as it were, having emerged from two old histories. But I don't care – Englishman I am /though not proud of it, from the South London suburbs and going somewhere. Perhaps it's the odd mixture of continents and blood, of here and there, of belonging and not, that makes me restless and easily bored.[290]

His proclamation is indeed fundamental, since he openly speaks about his in-between position and not belonging. Apart from Hanif Kureishi's novel, there is another one that also depicts a life strategy of the 2nd generation of migrants, Ravinder Randhawa's *Wicked Old Woman*. Similarly to Kureishi, she tried to escape the binary perception of this issue that is a movement of subjects on the line between a total mimicry and adoption of the new culture, or persistence in the traditionalism and original culture. Both Kureishi and Randhawa choose a different literary way. They concentrate primarily on a "mixture character" of their protagonists and they try to portray people on the crossroad, that is, as Roger Bromley writes in his *Narratives for a*

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[290] Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia,* (New York: Viking/Penguin1990) 3.

New Belonging, those who are torn internally by a "hidden Bakhtian polemics"[291]. Their strategy is to "escape the binarism, to be constantly on the move, there is constant positioning and repositioning. The identity then cannot be anything settled, but it is a cultural, historical and political contestation."[292]

The whole Randhawa's novel is primarily concerned with pointing out how difficult it can be to escape fixed identity stereotypes imposed on the migrants and their offsprings by the majority. The main character of her novel, Kulwant, however, contrary to Kureishi's Karim, does not find any pleasure in changing identity, she is very sceptic. Similarly to Karim she tries on series of roles and disguises. As Robert A. Lee depicts in his study on this novel, first she accepts the identity defined as the "other", and then she turns to the one which asserts her belonging within the Indian community and even becomes very traditional, even, e.g. demanding an arranged marriage. Only as late as in her old age she realizes that both her attempts had been doomed for failure and she then takes a third identity, the one of a victim. What is important, she envies the generation of her parents "the singleness of identity", since they knew who they were. [293] Besides let us give word to her character personally:

> She felt as if she'd been turned inside out and forced to choose. No more trying to walk in the middle. There were too many pot-holes and she was like a blind woman without a stick. Safer to stay in territory that she knew. If she'd stuck to her Indian way Michael wouldn't have been so hurt, wouldn't have chucked in his studies and left school, and she would have been free of all the pain that she lugged around like a cross. She'd messed it all up because she had wanted everything, wanted to be Indian and English, wanted to choose for herself what she wanted out of both. Couldn't be done. Thinking of all that, she rubbed the colour on her skin, which wasn't ever going to rub off, and made her decision.[294]

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[291] See: Roger Bromley, *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2000) 148.
[292] Bromley.
[293] See: Robert A. Lee, *Other Britain, Other British: Contemporary Multicultural Fiction,* (London: Pluto Press 1995) 31.
[294] Ravinder Randhawa, *A Wicked Old Woman,* (London: The Women´s Press 1987) 29.

Such deterioration of a character only shows how the identity of the second and third generation of migrants was split and hybrid. Let us remember the previously mentioned Bhabha's statement that it is not only about identification, but mainly about splitting. Nevertheless, since they miss the singleness, confidence, since their identity is being permanently questioned and challenged, there is often a tendency to traditionalism and extremism to be seen, let us mention, as for literary references, young characters of Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for the Lost Lovers* or street gang identity of characters of Gautam Malkani' s *Londonstani*.

Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* has been already analyzed pointing out some essential issues regarding identity of the 1st generation migrants. Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* brings one type of assimilation strategy, i.e. hybridity that seemed in that particular period as the only successful and functioning one, but as it turned out, according to some theoreticians, it was a false hope.

3.2.2. An "Almost" Englishman: Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*

Hanif Kureishi was born in Kent in 1954, attended British schools and read philosophy at King's College Oxford. Although it may seem rather insignificant being it a typical life path of many authors, for Kureishi it was an immensely formative matter. Coming from a mixed family (father of a Pakistani origin, mother a typical middle class Englishwoman) he had a totally different position than other authors who came from Indian subcontinent and who had themselves undergone the journey from their home country to Britain. Kureishi is indeed an exemplary of the so-called 2nd generation author whose objectives differed to a great extent from those of the 1st generation writers concentrating primarily upon the "homing in"[295] and new identity issues.

The situation changed dramatically. The binary logics of colonialism did not cease operating though, but it weakened. The subjects of the first generation torn between "the conflicted diasporic self and the collective"[296] made way to new,

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[295] See the chapter "Homing In: Opening Up Asian Britain in Hanif Kuresihi and Ravinder Randhawa" of Susheila Nasta´s *Home Truths – Fictions of the South Asian Diaspora in Britain,* (New York: Palgrave 2002) 173-211.
[296] Roger Bromley, *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2000) 2.

"hyphenated identities, living hybrid realities" [297]. Margins have in Susheila Nasta's words paraphrasing Robert A. Lee: "moved to what had been called the frontline."[298] And hybridity, something previously negative signifying predominantly misgenation and contamination suddenly acquired a new meaning. It was a solution how to escape settled hierarchies, something which operated beyond existing political, social, cultural and geographical binaries, something "organically hegemonizing, creating new spaces, structures, scenes, intentionally diasporizing."[299]

Although it is *The Buddha of Suburbia* which is Kureishi's masterwork as for identity and namely hybridity, some of issues analysed in this novel had appeared already in Kureishi's famous non-fiction work, an autobiographical preface of his theatre play *My Beautiful Laundrette* called "Rainbow Sign". He describes there his family story, the clash between his father's colonial past and Pakistani self and his own "anglicized" one. He mentions several fundamental issues of postcolonial literature, mainly the second generation one, e.g. British reluctance to accept newcomers and their already assimilated children, impact of Enoch Powell's statements in television, rising of the secondary racism of Pakistanis and Indians secluding voluntarily from the white majority. Kureishi's journey back to Pakistan which made him even more torn is interesting, too. Despite having been greeted warmly by all relatives and fallen in love with the place, he realized that his confidence in being an Englishman was weak. He was different and did not belong anywhere:

> As someone said to me at a party, provoked by the fact that I was wearing jeans: we are Pakistanis, but you, you will always be a Paki – emphasizing the slang derogatory name the English used against Pakistanis, and therefore the fact, that I couldn't rightfully lay claim to either place.[300]

[297]Bromley, p. 5.
[298] See Susheila Nasta, *Home Truths – Fictions of the South Asian Diaspora in Britain,* (New York: Palgrave 2002) 180.
[299] Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race*, (New York: Routledge 2005) 25.
[300] Hanif Kureishi, "Rainbow Sign," *My Beautiful Laundrette,* (London: Faber and Faber 1986) 16.

He speaks also of evergreens of the second generation reality: relics of the Raj, impact of an imperial education, contradiction between the ideas of the Eden called Great Britain and the reality, which was, according to many, not far from decline and decay. However, first of all, he asks himself, what it is to be British? How the perception of the Britishness had changed, what role did the minorities play in that? Some of these issues he then further develops in *The Buddha of Suburbia*.

3.2.2.1. Clash of Generations

Kureishi's novel is based on binaries, however they are not the traditional ones, e.g. West X East, colony X Mother country et al., but he constitutes new ones, mainly those originating from clashes between the first and the second generation. There are pairs of characters that to a certain extent stand against each other: Karim and his father Haroon, Jamila and her father Anwar and Anwar and Haroon opposing each other in some points of view – though contemporaries, still disparate, and last but maybe the most significant pair is represented by Karim and his contemporary Changez. The conflicts between these characters are caused mostly by their different life experience, namely whether they had been or not born in Britain and what experiences they had with the Indian subcontinent. The most fundamental is the issue of their belonging that is how much they are concerned with their identity and how much they seek their home, "this total belonging where they will be peace."[301]

As Roger Bromley points out, "Kureishi is trying to establish a different logic of difference to the one which is based upon the binary such as "Black" or "British"[302]. And as Sukhdev Sandhu pregnantly remarks: "He takes a palpable delight in collapsing polarities..." and what more: "He is not interested at all, as Naipaul was, in "finding" the centre, the reality for the 1st generation authors who had grown up believing and being taught that they were on the outskirts, margin of English culture."[303] The centre had been that is to say conquered, now it is time to find one's place in it.

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[301] Hanif Kureishi, *The Black Album,* (London: Faber and Faber 1995) 100.
[302] Roger Bromley, *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2000) 150.
[303] Sukhdev Sandhu, *London Calling,* (London: Harper Perennial 2004) 268.

3.2.2.2. "Old Dogs"

Such characters are two representatives of the first generation; Karim's father Haroon and their uncle, Haroon's best friend Anwar. They bear some similarities sharing both migrant experience, being similarly stubborn and in a way conservative – typical "old dogs" who in a way cling to their past. Nevertheless Haroon is a typical immigrant of the post war era, though not an illiterate one and a labourer. Having been born to a relatively rich family he differed from the majority of immigrants who "came to Britain in the 1950s and the 1960s, and of whom it was said they were not familiar with cutlery and certainly not with toilets, since they squatted on the seats and shat from on high."[304] There was no confusion with that. Haroon had a vivid colonial memory. Due to a certain standard given by Haroon's background (father a doctor), he and Anwar went to school in a horse drawn rickshaw, at weekends they played cricket, there was tennis on the family court. He never cooked before coming to Britain, never washed up, never cleaned shoes or made a bed. He had servants for everything and as he admitted he had never been to kitchen back in Bombay.[305]

Having been nurtured by the imperial England myth, he comes with Anwar both to succeed and to fulfil a dream of a better life in the best country ever. As for many immigrants before and thousands to come the clash between the reality and the dream could not have been more immense:

> London, the Old Kent Road, was a freezing shock to both of them. It was wet and foggy; people called you "Sunny Jim"; there was never enough to eat, and Dad never took to dripping on toast. "Nose drippings more like," he'd say, pushing away the staple diet of the working class. "I thought it would be roast beef and Yorkshire pudding all the way." But rationing was still on and the area was derelict after being bombed to rubble during the war. Dad was amazed and heartened by the sight of the British in England. He had never seen the English in poverty, as road sweepers, dustmen, shopkeepers and barmen. He had never seen an

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[304] Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia,* (New York: Viking, Penguin 1990) 24.
[305] Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia,* (New York: Viking, Penguin 1990) 23.

Englishman stuffing bread into his mouth with his fingers, and no one had told him the English didn't wash regularly because the water was so cold – if they had water at all. And when dad tried to discuss Byron in local pubs no one warned him that not every Englishman could read or that they didn't necessarily want tutoring by an Indian on the poetry of a pervert and a madman.[306]

Also the expectations Haroon has as for his own prospects turned false. Being an anonymous employee of the civil service he is one of millions, a relatively poor representative of the middle class living in an anonymous suburb with his ordinary white middle class wife and children. Despite having tried to assimilate as much as possible, overdoing his British accent, leaving behind most Indian habits (contrary to Anwar and his wife Jeeta who stay in a partial seclusion but keep their traditions and habits), despite turning into a mimic man, he cannot succeed. He still is in the middle of the journey – not being English enough, but having lost most of Indianness for his fellow people. Even Karim comments on this:

> Dad had been in Britain since 1950 – over twenty years – and for fifteen of those years he'd lived in the South London suburbs. Yet still he stumbled around the place like an Indian just off the boat, and asked questions like, "Is Dover in Kent?" I'd have thought, as an employee of the British Government, as a Civil Service clerk, even as badly paid and insignificant a one as him, he'd just have to know these things. I sweated with embarrassment when he halted strangers in the street to ask directions to places that were a hundred yards away in the area where he'd live for almost two decades. But his naiveté made people protective, and women were drawn to his innocence. They wanted to wrap their arms around him or something, so lost and boyish did he look at times.[307]

However after several decades spent in Great Britain something changed. As Karim points out: "For years they (Haroon and Anwar) were both happy to live like

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[306] Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia,* (New York: Viking, Penguin 1990) 25.
[307] Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia,* p. 7.

Englishmen. Anwar even scotted pork pies as long as Jeeta was not looking."[308] However, in their middle age they found out that the dream they were living had not come true. A logical reaction then came; either returning to their youth, being tired of pretending and losing one's roots, they both make a radical change in their life. Haroon explains it once to Karim: "We, old Indians come to like this England less and less and we return to an imagined India."[309] With Haroon this disillusionment leads to a radical denial of his previous life. He finds a mistress, leaves his family and starts anew. As a sort of spiritual guru, he starts organizing lectures and yoga classes dressed in an Indian costume and overdoing – to Karim's disgust – his Indianness.

> He was certainly exotic, probably the only man in southern England at that moment (apart from George Harrison of course) wearing a red and gold waistcoat and Indian pyjamas. He was also graceful, a front room Nureyev beside the other pasty-faced Arbuckles with their tight drip-dry shirts glued to their guts and John Collier grey trousers with the crotch all sagging and creased. Perhaps Daddio really was a magician, having transformed himself by the bootlaces (as he put it) from being an Indian in the Civil service who was always cleaning his teeth with Monkey Brand black toothpowder manufactured by NogiandCo. of Bombay, into the wise adviser he now appeared to be. Sexy Sadie! Now he was the centre of the room. If they could see him in Whitehall![310]

The mock British identity is nothing surprising, yet this transformation back to a mock Indian is for many even more shocking since it is to a certain extent a denial of everything for which Haroon had struggled for. The best it can by illustrated by means of a language, namely accent that, as it had been pointed out several times before in this dissertation work, played a fundamental role both in colonial life and later on in the assimilation process. That is why Karim cannot understand why his father suddenly does exactly what he had always despised.

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[308]Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia,* p. 64.
[309] Kureishi, p. 74.
[310] Kureishi, p. 31.

Yes, God was talking to himself, but not intimately. He was speaking slowly, in a deeper voice than usual, as if he were addressing a crowd. He was hissing his s's and exaggerating his Indian accent. He'd spent years trying to be more of an Englishman, to be less risibly conspicuous, and now he was putting it back in spadeloads. Why?[311]

Karim cannot understand at this point how his father could have cast away so freely all his previous achievements. It seems bizarre and unnatural, funny and embarrassing at the same time. It is true that Haroon practically repudiates his previous life and in a way returns to his roots. Nevertheless, this transformation is only partial and much more feigned than real. Beyond his lectures, he behaves the same leading a normal life with his new partner. He also clearly differentiates between the two worlds, keeping strict boarders. There is also one aspect of his behaviour that Karim cannot see; having left a binding environment of suburbs and having found a new home in central London, Haroon manages finally to free himself of all restraining bonds. Surprisingly enough his long time friend Anwar is one of those bonds.

Though having had a similar starting position as Haroon, Anwar's life path is fundamentally different. He and his family have a relatively successful business that provides them financially enough. Anwar's disillusionment with the British reality is demonstrated by his voluntary seclusion and rejection of assimilation. Karim often makes fun of his ignorance and helplessness in the English everyday reality.

They (Anwar and Jeeta) knew nothing of the outside world. I often asked Jeeta who the foreign secretary of Great Britain was, or the name of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but they never knew, and did not regret their ignorance.[312]

Though funny, this life approach represents one side of diaspora in Britain that logically lead to deepening problems between the majority and various minorities. Some part of the South Asian minority (surprisingly more often representatives of the second and third generation) tired of never ending struggle to "settle", turned their back

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[311] Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia,* p. 21.
[312] Kureishi, p. 51.

on Britain as such and clung, many times feverishly and fundamentally, to their roots and traditions rejecting everything British. Anwar undergoes a similar development. Out of the blue he contacts his relatives and starts organizing an arranged marriage for his fully westernized daughter Jamila which she logically rejects. His friends, first and foremost Haroon react negatively, too. Nevertheless, as most things in Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*, even this inter-generational conflict turns to a farce. Anwar on a hunger-strike finally wins when Jamila gives in. However all hopes that Anwar invested into this marriage turn to be false at the end. The groom is far from Anwar's ideal son in law who would keep his due to Western life style corrupted daughter in line and who would become his henchman in business.

> Through these calls Anwar's brother in Bombay had fixed up Jamila with a boy eager to come and live in London as Jamila's husband. Except that this boy was not a boy. He was thirty. As a dowry this ageing boy had demanded a warm winter overcoat from Moss Bros., a colour television and mysteriously, an edition of complete works of Conan Doyle. Anwar agreed to this, but consulted Dad. Dad thought the Conan Doyle demand very strange. "What normal India man would want such a thing? This boy must be investigated further – immediately.[313]

Though seemingly an exclusively comic figure, the groom, Changez, turns a rather crucial character, a sort of mediator between both generations and also between Karim and Jamila to a certain extent. Leaving aside Changez for a while let us return to the inter-generational clash, mainly the one between Jamila and Anwar. As John Clement Ball concisely points out:

> Their relationship reflects a real pain and crisis of a physical migration that did not coincide with psychic migration. Anwar constantly returns internally to India as a way of resisting the English here, he combats daughter's assimilation.[314]

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[313] Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia,* p. 57.
[314] John Clement Ball, *Imagining London: Postcolonial Fiction and the Transnational Metropolis,* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press) 234.

Despite of all the struggle, he fails. First of all his return to roots and tradition is much more "furious" than Haroon's, he is also more "pushy" and radical than his friend and last Jamila is much more stubborn and conscientious than Karim. She yields, marries Changez but does not change her life a bit and it is Changez who has to either accept her rules or go.

Still Haroon's and Anwar's identity crises are to a certain extent simple ones. There is a "mere" clash between the past and present, the dream and the reality that can be easily named and faced. The identity crisis that the representatives of the second generation had to face was of a more complicated manner.

3.2.2.3. An "Almost" Englishman

Kureishi's second generation immigrants know very well that in some places they are not welcome, that they are seen as filthy and verminous. Karim's dilemma is simple: despite being a natural born English subject and having an English mother, he is abused in streets, because "as a non-white person it is assumed that he is a part of the alien swamp that is threatening the purity of Englishness."[315] However then certain schizophrenia comes. On the one hand he tries to seclude himself, to have nothing to do with the aliens that the majority despises so much.

> I was desperately embarrassed and afraid of being identified with these
> loathed aliens. I found it almost impossible to answer questions about
> where I came from. The word "Pakistani" had been made an insult. It was
> a word I did not want used about myself. I could not tolerate being
> myself.[316]

He thus refuses to be identified with the Pakistani majority, nevertheless, at the same time he feels not to belong to the white majority either. Let us quote once again crucial parts of his famous statement at the very beginning of the novel that indeed pregnantly names his feelings:

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[315] Simon Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness: Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism*, (New York: Columbia University Press) 202.
[316] Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, (New York: Viking, Penguin 1990) 272.

My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost... a funny kind of Englishman, a new breed as it were, having emerged from two old histories... Perhaps it is the odd mixture of continents and blood, of here and there, of belonging and not, that makes me restless and easily bored.[317]

In spite of all the endeavour, attending British schools, behaving as anyone else, his mimicry is doomed to fail. He himself is aware of being only an "almost" Englishman, being a new breed, a mixture. When listening to Enoch Powell's speech he however realizes that such a strategy does not work, that this "almost" is far from being a 100 percent Englishman. That perfect accent and behaviour are nothing for some people who have been infected by racist proclamations of conservative politicians. These white people will always perceive all immigrants as niggers, Pakis or wogs.

Even though behaving in the same way as all young people in neighbourhood, Karim experiences a rather harsh linguistic attack from the side of the father of his girlfriend who openly admits his liking as for Powell's feelings:

And then I went white, but obviously not white enough, because Hairy back let go the dog he was holding...

"You can't see my daughter again, she doesn't go out with boys. Or with wogs."...

"We don't want you blackies coming to the house."...

"However many niggers there are, we don't like it. We're with Enoch. If you put one of your black 'ands near my daughter I'll smash it with a'ammer!"[318]

Karim realized that the Englishness he has so far achieved was not sufficient, however hard he would try, he would never be accepted by the majority.

The thing was, we were supposed to be English, but to the English, we were always wogs and nigs and Pakis and the rest of it.[319]

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[317] Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia,* (New York: Viking, Penguin 1990) 3.
[318] Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia,* p. 40.

Identity confusion is completed when he realizes he is not Pakistani or Indian enough to fit their community either. He, as Sandhu reminds us, "begins to feel ashamed and incomplete, because he is not sufficiently Indian. He makes a resolution. "If I wanted the additional personality bonus of an Indian past, I would have to create it."[320]

3.2.2.3. Identity on the Move

As said above Kureishi comes with a new strategy, new hybridity, which is not just a mixing and mingling, but first of all a place for new reality to be born. Karim who of course shares Kureishi's own feelings of "double strangeness"[321], who feels ashamed, restless and incomplete because he isn't sufficiently Indian but at the same time who feels only an "almost" Englishman, breaks, in Bromley's words:

> ...down conceptional boundaries between outside and inside. He is constantly moving, positioning and repositioning himself, negotiating spaces. Identity for Karim is a continuous and never settled cultural, historical and political contestation.[322]

There is something which helps him immensely, something which had never been used in such a way in postcolonial literature before. It is the role of metropolis, city as such, mainly the negative connotation of the suburb. Karim leaves similarly to his father and uncle, but he does not leave India or Pakistan, but the suburbs. Suburb, which had been, as John Clement Ball points out, "a hybrid space between nature and community, country and city, where "country" connotes the past, colonial India, old England. He (Karim) describes himself as someone from "South London suburbs and going somewhere".[323] Leaving behind all bonds and prejudice of the suburbs, he sets on a one-way journey, for an urban space. To the city he goes, to that "space of discovery,

[319]Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia,* (New York: Viking, Penguin 1990) 53.
[320] Sukhdev Sandhu, *London Calling,* (London: Harper Perennial 2004) 252.
[321] Roger Bromley, *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2000) 133.
[322] Bromley, p. 151.
[323] John Clement Ball, *Imagining London: Postcolonial Fiction and the Transnational Metropolis,* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press) 231.

experience, indulgence and consumption called London."[324] Only there he finds a true freedom.

The first generation could never be deemed as an urban one. Its representatives usually came from the Indian or Pakistani country themselves. They settled in suburbs, partly for its position near the factories they worked in, but partly also because they, as Sandhu opines: "have traditionally seen the suburbs as a promised land, light at the end of the industrial tunnel."[325]

Their children were nevertheless influenced by the environment they grew up in, television and significantly by music, pop icons such as David Bowie that elevated the city to a sort of spiritual home. As John Clement Ball points out:

> Kureishi's London is cosmopolitan space not fully attached to British
> nation. Kureishi makes London a site of romanticized urban rituals and
> showy events. The central characters parade through these with an eerie
> detachment and sense of normality.[326]

There is also a sense of artifice and theatricality that Kureishi stresses. No wonder then that it is a pop idol like figure of Charlie that becomes the most formative person for Karim. Irrespective of a homosexual attraction in their relationship, it is primarily artificiality, exaggeration, playfulness and rebelliousness that charm Karim so much. He sees someone who despite having experienced family crisis too chose a free-minded life. Charlie opened for Karim a new world of parties, shows, gigs and theatre where no one is interested in race, colour of the skin or accent.

True identity crisis however emerges with the first professional success of Karim's. He manages to get a title role in Kipling's *Mowgli*. At the very beginning it seems pretty easy, just playing a little boy covered in mud. However what turns up later is much more serious problem which interferes with his own personality. First and foremost the director of the show is surprised that Karim does not speak and understand any Urdu and Punjabi. He then comments on Karim's identity:

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[324] Ball.
[325] Sukhdev Sandhu, *London Calling,* (London: Harper Perennial 2004) 236.
[326] John Clement Ball, *Imagining London: Postcolonial Fiction and the Transnational Metropolis,*
(Toronto: University of Toronto Press) 227.

What a breed of people two hundred years of imperialism has given birth to. If the pioneers from the East India company could see you. What puzzlement there would be. Everyone looks at you, I'm sure, and thinks: an Indian boy, how exotic, how interesting, what stories of aunties and elephants we'll hear from him. And you are from Orpington.[327]

Something strange happens. Karim is laughed at not because of his not being English enough, but because of his being English too much. Everyone expects him to be Indian and he is more English than they appreciate. Karim is thus forced into a mimicry, very different than the one his predecessors adopted. Despite himself laughing at his father and his playing at Indian guru, Karim finally does exactly the same when overdoing Mowgli's accent. It is the language again that plays the role of the mediator and that distinguishes reality and pretence. He does not realize though that as for his father it was just a costume that he could easily take off. Haroon did not play with his identity nor did he mock anyone. No wonder then that he met with a refusal from the side of his father:

"Bloody half-cocked business," father said. "That bloody fucker Mr. Kipling pretending to whity he knew something about India! And an awful performance by my boy looking like a Black and White minstrel."

His best friend Jamila is even more critical:

"It was disgusting, the accent and the shit you had smeared over you. You were just pandering to prejudices...and clichés about Indians. And the accent – my God, how could you do it? I expect you are ashamed, aren't you?"[328]

With Mowgli it was just a rather innocent playing with accents and half naked costume. Nevertheless, it is the next theatre play, based on improvisation, that makes Karim take sides, i.e. decide whether he praises more his own culture, family and background or to prove whether he has indeed managed to leave everything behind.

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[327] Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia,* (New York: Viking, Penguin 1990) 141.
[328] Both Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia,* p. 157.

He bases his character first on Anwar, mainly his hunger strike. Surprisingly he gets the most negative reaction from Tracy, another actor from the play group. She is worried at the way Black /Indian people get shown thanks to Karim. She reminds him of all the prejudice that he, in her opinion, only strengthens:

"I am afraid it shows black people..."

"Indian people..."

"Black and Asian people..."

"One old Indian man..."

"As being irrational, ridiculous, as being hysterical. And as being fanatical... And that arranged marriage. It worries me Karim. With respect. It worries me..."

"How can I even begin? Your picture is what white people already think of us. That we are funny, with strange habits and weird customs. To the white people we are already people without humanity, and then you go and have Anwar madly waving his stick at the white boys. I can't believe that anything like that could happen. You show us as unorganized aggressors. Why do you hate yourself and black people so much, Karim?"[329]

He has to start afresh and decides to base his next character on Jamila's arranged husband and now his good mate Changez. However, it is Changez, this plump, sober waster, who turns out to be the most complex character of all despite of his background, origin and an indeed unenviable position. Contrary to Karim he has no freedom to make choices, when arriving to London, he must either conform or resist, as Sandhu opines, "limited options Anwar and Jamila resentfully place on his sloping shoulders."[330] Being a loser both in his own community and the new one, too, experiencing similarly to young Anwar and Haroon years ago a true crisis of identity he has to find a true place in the new world. Karim's seeking of identity is more of a perverse game than life necessity. Changez has to leave behind all that he has been brought up in. He has to put

[329] Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia,* (New York: Viking, Penguin 1990) 180.
[330] Sukhdev Sandhu, *London Calling,* (London: Harper Perennial 2004) 243.

up with the fact that his marriage will never be consummated. He has to tolerate lovers of Jamila and later on also her illegitimate child. However it is his deep love for her which makes him stay and endure all of it, even Karim's falsity. Changez is the only character in *The Buddha of Suburbia* who succeeds totally in finding himself, though this process may be sometimes comic and bizarre. He does not play with his life, he only tries to survive and find some happiness.

Especially when confronted with Changez, Karim does not stand for an exclusively positive character. Changez and Jamila perceive some rather negative aspects of his character and life, problems arising from his uncertainty. Even he, at the very end of the books admits: "I could think about the past and what I had been through as I'd struggled to locate myself and learn what the heart is. Perhaps in the future I would live more deeply."[331] He is aware of his emotional instability, of not belonging. Even though hybridity at first might have seemed as good choice, this endeavour turns out a vain hope. Karim's problem is that he does not take sides, does not make choices. All characters around him make choices, his father, mother, brother, Jamila and Changez, even his auntie Jeeta whom Karim mocked for her passivity. Karim stumbles from nowhere to nowhere on the search for his true himself. As an actor he succeeded, he also managed to free himself of his fascination by wrong people (such as Pyke or Charlie Hero). But otherwise he gropes. First he is not fully sure of his sexual orientation, even his boss, theatre director Pyke, comments on this sexual ambivalence. When quoting from his notes on actors he had made before starting to rehearse, he describes Karim as follows: "Karim is obviously looking for someone to fuck. Either a boy or a girl: he does not mind and that's all right." [332]

At the same time Karim is not able to make a particular decision when needed. When asked to support a good thing and attend a political meeting against racism and violence, he seems more interested in trivial matters. This is something that his closest friends, i.e. Jamila and Changez cannot forgive him. "Where are you going as a person, Karim,"[333] Jamila asks him disappointed at his lack of interest. Nevertheless it is

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331 Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia,* (New York: Viking, Penguin 1990) 284.
332 Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia,* p. 245.
333 Kureishi, p. 232.

Karim's ambivalence that influences his life most of the time. He is not able to stir himself regardless the fact the time came when it was necessary to take sides and stop changing coats.

This final interpretation of Karim partly contradicts all previous development of this character. If the novel asks the fundamental question: which direction should subjects with a similar experience take? – there does not seem to be an answer. The so much celebrated hybrid in-between identity seems to have lost its indefectibility. In the novel, there are characters such as Haroon (and paradoxically also long disdained Allie) that appear to have found a solution, though it can be just adoption of a ready-made or performed identity. In general the answer might be in accepting fluid, unstable character of the postcolonial identity, not in clinging to one particular that cannot in this case work properly. The best is to accentuate one's talent and virtue, regardless if the subjects are of British/western or of South Asian origin.

3.2.2.4. Conclusion

There are many pioneering aspects in *The Buddha of Suburbia*. Kureishi was indeed one of first authors who managed to free himself from restraining bonds of migration and colonial heritage and who wrote about the new reality around him. He brings characters with a new identity. He truly incarnates Stuart Hall's "the third scenario" of identity in practice and creates a third space narrative.[334] His main characters are far from passive. There is also unusual disrespect to authorities and parents to be found in the work that ultimately promotes a certain assimilation of characters and their adoption of western "values". Young characters, mainly Karim in *The Buddha of Suburbia* are also first literary figures of the postcolonial fiction that are directly influenced by a metropolitan life and the pop culture as such. Kureishi thus paved a journey for many postcolonial and diasporic authors to come who could leave behind traditional and slightly outworn themes and could depict the immigrant or postcolonial reality of their characters from a new angle. Kureishi also demonstrated that a different origin and colour of skin do not have to be necessarily discriminating

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[334]See: Roger Bromley, "Introduction: The Third Scenario," *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2000) 1.

factors as for potential literary success. On the contrary. *The Buddha of Suburbia* became a best-seller, was awarded the Whitbread Prize and was shortlisted for many other prizes. Above all it aroused an immense interest for a type of fiction which is labelled often as postcolonial, multicultural or ethnic one. This popularity has been going on so far.

4.   Place and Displacement

Homelessness is coming to be the destiny of the world.

Martin Heidegger: "Letter on Humanism"[335]

The past is a foreign country..., they do things differently there.

Salman Rushdie: "The Indian Writer in England"[336]

4.1.   Introduction

The whole history of the postcolonial literature is the history of the journey and subsequent effects it had on postcolonial subjects. The migration, in other words displacement, was not pure movement of individuals from one place to another place, but it was at the same time a translation of one culture that had been major in the original place, to a new reality where it had to adopt a position of a minority. As for postcolonialism, as it will be pointed out in the chapter to come on diaspora[337], the migration was not so much of a forced character, as the Jewish one in the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century and certainly around the WWII, but rather of a voluntary form, being it brought forth by economic reasons.

Nevertheless, it does not mean that this "optional", economic migration, after several decades gone, has not created several millions of immigrants in dozens of countries all the world round. For those who have undergone such a journey the experience has not been utterly positive. On the contrary, given the form of migration (being it first only single men and much later whole families), the new situation stigmatized the newcomers immensely. Having been forced to experience an identity crises, the sense of homelessness, of being "in between" and not belonging intensified their longing for homeland, it stirred in them a strong holding to memories and the past which was later to represent one of the most fundamental features of postcolonial literature.

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[335] Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," *Basic Writings,* (New York: Harper and Row 1977) 219.
[336] Salman Rushdie, "The Indian Writer in England," *The Eye of the Beholder: Indian Writing in English,* ed. Maggie Butcher, (London: Commonwealth Institute 1983) 75.
[337] See the chapter 4.3. "Diaspora".

Since the migration is based on the movement, i.e. the shift from place to place, the concept of place as such is quite important. Apart from the notion of diaspora, one of the key features in postcolonial theory, and everything which it brings forth, a considerable focus will be made as for the identity of the migrants/immigrants, namely the issues concerning their displacement, searching of home and problems arising during their assimilation in the new environment. As I outlined in the chapter on identity[338], most of the problems are caused by ideological binarism operating since the time of colonialism and adopted by postcolonialism, too. Thus the whole displacement cannot be perceived in a similar way as say the most recent economic migration at the beginning of the 21st century, when the issues of nationality and race do not play such an important role. However having been the whole migration in progress right after the fall of the British Empire when the imperial dream was still in operation, the whole process was logically interpreted in the binary logic, too, particularly as the one from a periphery to a centre, i.e. from a savage margin to a civilized Mother Country.

Since most of the postcolonial subjects who decided to undergo the journey and settle in "Mother England" had been brought up in former colonies (mainly in South Asia, Africa or the West Indies), they were strongly influenced by the mother culture and its language (see the chapter "Epistemic violence"[339]). They came to England with many expectations, usually false ones. Even though England was the same country as depicted in popular Austen's and Dickens's novels, it was far from the romantic heaven of green meadows and beautiful manors most immigrants imagined. The welcome they received was far from warm, too.

The clash between immigrant illusions, hopes and dreams and the harsh reality during their settling and assimilation represents another fundamental issue of postcolonial theory and literature. Constant reassessing of the everyday reality, omnipresent memories and past and disillusion given to gloomy present and uncertain future caused the immigrants (voluntarily or involuntarily) to shut themselves away in their communities and sometimes in modern ghettos which even more aggravated their co-existence within the British majority.

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[338] See the chapter 2."Identity in Postcolonial Discourse".
[339] See the chapter 2.2. "Language, Textuality and Epistemic Violence".

4.2. Place Concepts: Cartography, Empty Places etc.

It is necessary to point out that colonized subjects had been influenced by displacement long before any real migration started. Their identity had been always formed on the ground of their experience which was based on their language, history and environment. Space and location played quite a significant role in their life being it in most cases one of few certainties in their often difficult lives. As for significance of the place and its relevance for perception of "home" or "homelessness" nothing can serve better than a following quote by David Wood:

> A place is a site of both public and private memory. To dwell in the place is to engage in a continuing exchange of meaning through which one's identity becomes, at least in part, a kind of symbiotic relationship with where one dwells. This is true not just in those places of which people speak fondly, but of bleak, inhospitable places too. Place here is another way of talking about past and future, about opportunities for action and interaction. The more we accept the importance of place (and correlatively "home") for the construction of identity, the more we will grasp the full significance of "homelessness", loss of nationality, the problems of refugees.[340]

The sense of place may get disrupted in several ways. In the case of colonialism the large population of colonized peoples experienced a physical alienating because new culture was forced on them, usually by means of an imposed language. Nevertheless, though the language might have disrupted their sense of belonging, another thing happened that had much worse impact upon their perception of place, location and home, too. In pre-colonial times time did not play any significant role, there were no markers of time and it was always related predominantly to places. When having encountered Western civilization, the local people started being shaped by social

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[340] David Wood, "Identity and Violence," *Cultural Readings of Imperialism: Edward Said and the Gravity of History,* eds. Keith Ansell-Pearson, Benita Perry and Judith Squires, (London: Lawrence and Wishart 1997) 198.

influence dissimilar to theirs, mainly "by the very conception of the place that the new languages came to transmit."[341]

When the Western conquerors started invading remote parts of the world, discovering "new" countries and regions, they often interpreted these locations as an "empty space", so-called "terra nullius", something which had waited for their arrival and educated approach. As already mentioned, the colonizers perceived the colonized space as totally ignorant and in many aspects non-existent. At this phase, one of the major tools of colonialism was cartography. The Westerners and their maps started "textualizing the spatial reality of the other, renaming spaces in a symbolic and literal act of mastery and control."[342] They imposed their own perception of space and their own hierarchies. No wonder that the colonized subjects became lost in their own homelands unable to adopt a new interpretation of their own, long known reality. The places also got new names, "the whole lands were literally reinscribed, written over."[343]

In colonialism, native subjects had still a chance to rely on each other; they shared a common experience, culture and collective memory. However, when undergoing an act of migration, this fatal trip which deprives a being of his/her home forever, the migrants had to face a totally new space for which they were not ready. They could draw from literature, from rumours passed by others who had already undergone similar experience. Last but not least they relied on maps, the "true" representations of the space. How tricky all these steps could be for migrants, they were soon to find out:

> A map can tell me how to find a place I have not seen but have often imagined. However, when I get there following the map, faithfully, the place is not the place of my imagination. Maps, growing even more real, are even much less true.[344]

Not only entered the migrants a strange space full of strange people, they had to fight off the space hostility and void as such. Generally the migrants did the only thing

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[341] See the entry "place", Bill Ashcroft, et al., *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies,* (London: Routledge 2000) 177.

[342] See the entry "cartography", Bill Ashcroft, et al., *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies,* p. 31.

[343] Ashcroft et al.

[344] Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity,* (London and New York: Routledge 1994) 16.

they could – they shut themselves away, both literally and metaphorically, protected themselves from the strange world around and clung to everything they knew so dearly, their fellow countrymen, families, habits, culture.

4.3. Diaspora

Migration is a one way trip; there is no "home" to go back to.

Stuart Hall: "Minimal Selves".[345]

The term diaspora originally comes from the Greek and it is a combination of two words. "Speiro" meaning to sow, to scatter and "dia", that is over. However for ancient Greeks, the diaspora was mainly related to migration and colonialization. Later on this term was connotated predominantly with the Jewish people; it signified "a collective trauma, a banishment, where one dreamed of home but lived in exile."[346] Conventionally the term is used for describing a dispersion of the Jewish peoples in the centuries after destruction of Jerusalem and specifically to an existence of the Jewish people outside Palestine.

Nevertheless as Avtar Brah stresses in his *Cartographies of Diaspora*[347], it is vital to distinguish diaspora as a theoretical concept from the historical experience of it, such as the Jewish or say Armenian ones. For the purpose of this work, the American definition from the Webster dictionary USA would be more relevant that speaks of diaspora as a "dispersion from"[348], which means that the term is based upon such notions as centre, locus, at "home" from where the dispersion occurs.

As it will be analyzed in one of the following chapters, diaspora problematizes first of all an issue of home. Where is home? it asks. As Brah again states in the diasporic imagination the home is "a mythic place, the place of no return, even if it is possible to visit geographical territory that is seen as the place of origin."[349]

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[345] Stuart Hall, "Minimal Selves," *Identity, the Real Me Postmodernism and the Question of Identity, ICA Documents* 6, ICA 1987: 44.
[346] See e.g. Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, (London and New York: Routledge 2008) ix.
[347] Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora,* (London and New York: Routledge 1996).
[348] See: http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/diaspora, 12 April 2009.
[349] Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora,* (London and New York: Routledge 1996) 192.

It is logical then when we speak about such dispersion, the diaspora must be essentially bound with the notion of a journey. Even though journey from an original home to a new one plays evidently a significant role, it is not as important as it might seem. The subsequent settling down, putting roots elsewhere is then a key issue for diaspora. In fact the whole matter of diaspora is much more complicated than a mere transfer from one place to another place. As conveniently compiled by Silvia Mergenthal, it obviously encompasses a notion of journey or multiple journeys that are "neither casual travels, nor do they imply a temporary sojourn, but that evoke putting roots elsewhere."[350] Another definition by Avtar Brah could be even more illustrative, describing diaspora as a "process of multilocationality across geographical, cultural and psychic boundaries"[351].

In order to make any diaspora possible it is first of all important to disrupt to a certain extent the borders that divide individual places, but also realities and that help to create fixed identities that very postcolonial and predominantly diasporic discourses tend to criticize. Brah interprets such borders as:

> arbitrary dividing lines that are simultaneously social, cultural and psychic, territories to be patrolled against those whom they construct as outsiders, the Others, forms of demarcation where the very act of prohibition inscribes transgression; zones where the fear of the Other is the fear of the Self; place where the claims of the ownership – claims to "mine", "yours" and "theirs" – are staked out, contested, defended, and fought over.[352]

Diasporas describe generally a displacement and dislocation, being it of identities, persons or even meanings. However, the whole concept problematizes mainly a cultural and historical mechanics of belonging, i.e. the notion that is again fundamental for identity issues of postcolonial subjects. As Brah's statement on boundary points out, the whole world is organized by means of binary boundaries of the Self against the Other, that the migrants had to fight against when they trespassed these

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[350] Silvia Mergenthal, "Contemporary English Fiction as Diasporic Space," *Litteraria Pragensia*, vol. 13.26 2003: 41.
[351] Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora,* (London and New York: Routledge 1996) 194.
[352] Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora,* (London and New York: Routledge 1996) 198.

borders and entered the domain of the Self. It is one of the reasons why their settling down, this putting roots elsewhere was often so problematic. The whole settling down was to become "a meeting of different cultures, with different histories and different trajectories, their intersection, overlaying, fragmenting and mainly producing hybrid forms within geographical space."[353]

If we return to the concept of diaspora in a more particular way, they may be according to the newest definition to be found in Makarand Paranjape's "Writing Across Boundaries"[354] divided into three categories:

1: Relatively homogeneous, displaced communities brought to serve the Empire (slave contract, indentured etc.) co-existing with indigenous other races with markedly ambivalent and contradictory relationship with mother land). For example: Indian diasporas of South Africa, Fiji, Mauritius, Guyana...

2: Emerging new diasporas based on free migration and linked to the late capitalism: post-war South Asian, Chinese, Arabic.

3: Any group of migrants that sees itself on the periphery of power or excluded from sharing power.

However, another problem when defining diaspora in such a wide way arises since then the diaspora can be equated with any form of migration or with every perception of powerlessness. Fundamental feature of diaspora then is that it must "involve a cross-cultural or civilizational passage."[355]

4.4. Migrant's Identity

Apart from the above stated distinction of diaspora on the basis of an original purpose of the migration (being it political or racial one and later on economical) there is another criterion that is closely related to this distinction but that concentrates on identity issue, i.e. particular feeling of the migrants. In this theory there are two types of

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[353] Makarand Paranjape, "Writing Across Boundaries: South Asian Diasporas and Homelands," *Diaspora and Multiculturalism: Common Traditions and New Developments,* ed. Monika Fludernik, (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi B. V. 2003) 243.
[354] To be found in: "Writing Across Boundaries: South Asian Diasporas and Homelands," *Diaspora and Multiculturalism: Common Traditions and New Developments,* ed. Monika Fludernik, (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi B. V. 2003) 236.
[355]Paranjape, p. 239.

diaspora, the old one that is characterized by a break with the Motherland, where a distance plays a significant role, not only physical one but mainly a psychological one. In this case "the subject remained in a certain way frozen, the Motherland became in his/her imagination a sacred site or a symbol, nearly an idol of memory and imagination."[356] The subject stopped seeing the original place truly but in a slightly distorted way. Since the return was virtually impossible, the "poverty of the original place was forgotten and overwritten with the feeling that it was home."[357]

This diaspora was markedly different. First of all it was not merely a diaspora of subaltern and underprivileged people but often of higher and more educated classes; second this diaspora was not cut off in such a way from the native land. The migrancy as stated above was a matter of a free will, choice of the subjects. Since their motivation was often economic, there arose a certain guilt concerning their homeland. That is why their memories of the home bear often an elegiac tone; it is not an uncritical longing for the lost home but wailing over the harsh conditions of the diaspora or failure of the dreams.

The experience of immigration fundamentally undermined the perception of the postcolonial subject as for his/her own identity: "Relation between self and place may have been eroded by dislocation resulting from migration, the experience of enslavement, transportation and cultural denigration."[358] The principle feeling that all the subjects had sooner or later experienced was a displacement, the fundamental attribute of the postcolonial condition. The postcolonial theory works as for this aspect with a Heideggerian term of "unheimlichkeit"[359], the not-at-homeness which was to be experienced by the original residents of their new homelands as well as the immigrants themselves.

Nevertheless, it is vital to stress that postcolonial theory refuses to perceive the migrant as a mere passive object. It is not merely about assimilation with the majority and adoption of its culture, habits and rules. As it has been further analyzed in the

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[356] Paranjape, p. 243.
[357] Paranjape, p. 243.
[358] Bill Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back,* (London and New York: Routledge 2003) 9.
[359] See e.g. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, (New York: State University of New York Press 2010)

special chapter on identity[360], the identity of the migrant is in many ways contradictory. As Andrew Smith points out by means of Homi Bhabha's theory "the presence of the migrant, or the so-called borderline community, shows us how, despite the attempt to fix others (and ourselves) with stereotypes of sameness and essence, cultures are not close and complete in themselves, but split, anxious and contradictory."[361] As he later states, the migrants became rather "emblematic figures" in postcolonial literary studies "because they represent a removal from "old" foundations and from previous "grounded" ways of thinking about identity."[362]

Due to diaspora experience migrants had to accept a "provisional nature of all truths"[363], they learnt also how to transform their reality in order to live better. Let us use once again Bromley's famous statement about migrancy, "migrants have not been merely passive travellers, but have actively transformed the worlds into which they have entered."[364] The whole process of assimilation became then a dialogue, in a Bakhtinian way never finalized interactivity. The migrant transformation of a long time fixed reality of the "motherland" became the "means of challenging the oppositional presumptions of the border, division, exclusionary thought and absolute difference".[365]

Since the everyday life of the migrant was mainly at the beginning rather provisional, they struggled very much to find any kind of order. In respect with the place to reterritorialize, since, as Bromley points out, they have "no territory of belonging as such, their belongings are always carried with them decentered and deracinated."[366]

Deleuze and Guatarri do not speak explicitly about modern migrants, but they use an example of a nomad "whose life is the intermezzo, who leaves often behind what

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[360] See the chapter 2. "Identity in Postcolonial Discourse".
[361] Andrew Smith, "Migrancy, Hybridity, and Postcolonial Studies," *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Studies,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004) 249.
[362] Smith.
[363] See Salman Rushdie, "The Indian Writer in England," *The Eye of the Beholder: Indian Writing in English,* ed. Maggie Butcher, (London: Commonwealth Institute 1983) 75-84.
[364] Roger Bromley, *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2000) 182.
[365] See Bromley, p.2.
[366] Bromley, p. 27.

is significant."[367] They also remind us of the significance of the path as such "that is always between two points, but the in-between has taken on all the consistency and enjoys both an autonomy and direction of its own."[368]

The migrant novelist's strategy is then clear, to read and rewrite the reality of the new place, "to open it to a new difference."[369] Since they often settle in the city, it is the city they start rewriting, reoccupying in a new and complex way, usually by means of a mapping. "They are opening the spaces to a new difference, mapping another land of belonging, for example another image of Englishness."[370] Particularly they start to transform the original same, inject it with their own otherness, they produce in the famous "third space of enunciation."[371]

4.5. Making Home in Britain

4.5.1. Settling

Since the most vital facts on immigrancy and particular aspects concerning settling in Britain have been already discussed in the particular chapter on the history of immigration, only a few relevant issues will be mentioned again to support further comments on notions of settling and home perceived from the place and displacement point of view. It is necessary to point out that most of the immigration took place after WWII, respectively after the fall of the Empire (the previous immigration from colonies to the Mother Country had been irrelevant due to relatively small numbers of oncomers and their dispersal). It is also significant to mention that the South Asian diaspora was mainly economically motivated given Britain's demand for unskilled labour power after the WWII. Since most immigrants came as soon as in 1950s and 1960s being it only few years after gaining independence the heritage of colonialism was still very strong and surprisingly remained so also for many decades to come. The immigration and mainly settling and homing experience of the post colonial subjects was much more

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[367] Gillies Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd.; New Edition) 419.
[368] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus.*
[369] Roger Bromley, *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2000) 120.
[370] Bromley, p, 140.
[371] See: Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* (New York: Routledge 1994) 56.

complicated due to the fact that it concerned in most cases only single male individuals who at the very beginning did not think about staying in Britain and who perceived themselves only as temporary visitors. This was also one of the reasons why they did not try to assimilate in the first years and clung to their fellow countrymen inadvertently creating ghettos that stood aloof from the major society. However a later arrival of women and a nascence of "normal" families did not improve the situation, in fact it intensified the problem.

Nevertheless, the troublesome settling started already in the ex-colonies before the very arrival of the migrants to Britain. As analyzed further in the chapter on the English language, England or the British Empire represented for most of colonial subjects a sort of icon, unattainable, distant dreamland the beauty and transcendency of which was being nurtured by literature imported to colonies and by British colonialists themselves and their very specific life style that differed significantly from the habits of the locals. Even after partition, England was much on the minds of the inhabitants. As Hanif Kureishi points out in his *Rainbow Sign* essay: "England just would not go away. Relics of Raj were everywhere: buildings, monuments, Oxford accents, libraries full of English books, newspapers. Many Pakistanis had relatives in England, thousands of families depended on money sent from Britain..."[372] Apart from the material prospect there was still an idea of England as the land that represented a "dubious fulfilment of the colonial dream."[373]

Logically then disillusionment had to come after the arrival to Britain when all the previous dreams had to be confronted with a harsh everyday reality. Virtually everything was different. Houses, landscape, weather, winter as something heard of but unfamiliar, people and even London as such that had stood in the centre of migrants' fantasy of England. The migrants came to Britain with a specific and very special idea of Britain. The houses were supposed to be grand and luxurious, the landscape bright green and lush, the cities spectacular and people similar to the ones who had lived in colonies, that is noble, dignified and classy. Since most of the migrants ended in

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[372] Hanif Kureishi, "Rainbow Sign," *My Beautiful Laundrette,* (London: Faber and Faber 1986) 37.
[373] Susheila Nasta, *Home Truths – Fictions of the South Asian Diaspora in Britain,* (New York: Palgrave 2002)147.

industrial agglomerations far from any nature or nobility, their illusions as for Britain had to necessarily end up in shatters, too. The newcomers brought with them from their homelands a respect and insecurity in the face "of the great weight of imperial history and culture"[374] and now they were forced to forget everything they had been brought up in, to reassess everything. The fairytale England nurtured by a colonial education ceased existing. The postcolonial subjects were now confronted with a discrepancy between "a decaying imperial past and distant reality of their birth country and complex, ambivalent realities of a diasporic and postcolonial present."[375]

First of all they were confronted with the fact there was nothing like an imperial ideal, nothing like a common British identity. Also their beloved Britain was an invented nation. In the colonies the division, the boundary between the colonizer and the colonized was clear, there was this WE and THEY, the Same and the Other and the attributes used for distinction were numerous, clothing, class, education etc. All these however disappeared when in Britain. The migrants found themselves in an alien landscape; everything they thought to have known did not work now, everything was blurring. The houses were shabby, cold and substandard; everything was grey, cold and depressive, winter was far from any fairytale romance and as for the pastoral idyll depicted so often in novels and poems of English classics, there was nothing like that in Bradford, Sheffield or Hounslow. Also the people the newcomers met were dissimilar to those dignified ladies and gentlemen that the postcolonial subjects knew from their home countries. Often they were underqualified, non-educated and to a certain point primitive individuals who still looked down on the newcomers only due to colour of their skin or a generally shared opinion of British supremacy.

In this situation there were not many strategies how to survive in such a hostile environment. One of them was a rather problematic one being it preserving of the colonial dream. Nevertheless there was one merit in all this. The crash of the dream woke in the migrants one new capability, it gave them the virtue to see beyond all the disorder, decay, and it taught them how to see properly. Among all those false illusions

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[374] Robert A. Lee, *Other Britain, Other British: Contemporary Multicultural Fiction,* (London: Pluto Press 1995) 7.

[375] Susheila Nasta, *Home Truths – Fictions of the South Asian Diaspora in Britain,* (New York: Palgrave 2002) 124.

and fantasies about England the fumbling stranger had to find his/her way, had to come to knowledge. The most obvious it is then in the works of the first generation authors who were personally confronted with this false fantasy and untrue dreams and illusions and who had to learn to live with it.

Salman Rushdie was one of them, however due to his higher social class, background, relevant fairship and "English" English accent it was an easier ride for him. As he points out, "take away any of these, and the story would have been very different."[376] That is why V. S. Naipaul's depiction of settling in Britain will be a significant one, being it the most illustrative example of the clash of dream and reality. It will be analyzed in detail in the final part of the thesis dealing with particular allusions of the place and displacement in the contemporary postcolonial fiction.[377]

4.5.2. The Homing of Diaspora, the Diasporizing of Home

Having borrowed this title from Avtar Brah's fundamental essay on diaspora[378] we are getting to the last term related to the place and displacement theory, particularly the notion of home, its meaning and relevance to postcolonial subjects. As it had been analyzed above the migrants' settling and assimilation were handicapped to a certain extent by the very nature of migration and also by the fact that migrants were too much burdened with their past, respectively their memories and relation to the place of their origin. The experience of migration to a foreign country irrespective it was Britain, the Mother Country and the land of their dreams, brought them to a permanent tension. In Naipaul's words they "were trapped in the dream of wholeness and fulfilment."[379]

First of all it is necessary to answer an elementary question. Where is the home for the migrants? As it seems there exist two potential homes: the one of the past, related to the fixed origin and substantially problematic due to distance, broken bonds, but at the same time the only thing, the only certainty to which the migrants could cling.

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[376] Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands,* (London: Granta Books 1992) 18.
[377] See the chapter: 5.2.2. "Too Late to Come: Homing in V.S. Naipaul´s *The Enigma of Arrival*".
[378] See Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora,* (London and New York: Routledge 1996).
[379] Susheila Nasta, *Home Truths – Fictions of the South Asian Diaspora in Britain,* (New York: Palgrave 2002) 120.

Then there is the second one, new one, strange, unknown and once again more illusory than anything else.

Using the rhetoric of the postcolonial discourse "home is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination; it is the place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of origin."[380] It is also significant that the home is closely related "with the lived experience of locality: it sounds, smells, there is its dust and heat... in other words the varying experience of the pains and pleasures, the terrors and contentment."[381]

Home itself is just a memory; it is the place to be dreamt of. When we read these two statements we must logically come to a conclusion that there is nothing like home, particularly in its imaginary, illusory and rather abstract character. No wonder that the term "imaginary homeland" has become since its inception at the beginning of 1990s one of the most crucial in the whole postcolonial theory, respectively in postcolonial fiction. The idea was originally coined by Salman Rushdie in order to describe a fragmented vision of the migrants. As he says: "Home is not necessarily a real place but a mythical construct built on the discontinuous fragments of memory."[382] He also operated with the so-called "Indias and Englands of mind", i.e. the non-existing ones coming in existence in the minds of the subjects that have nothing to do with the real ones but that nevertheless significantly influence the lives and identity of the migrants. He later on depicts the fragile position of the migrants as follows:

> Our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will
> not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost, that we
> will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible
> ones, imaginary homelands, Indias.[383]

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[380] Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora,* (London and New York: Routledge 1996) 192.
[381] ibid.
[382] Susheila Nasta, *Home Truths – Fictions of the South Asian Diaspora in Britain,* (New York: Palgrave 2002) 9.
[383] Salman Rushdie, "The Indian Writer in England," *The Eye of the Beholder: Indian Writing in English,* ed. Maggie Butcher, (London: Commonwealth Institute 1983) 83.

Seeing this we may try to understand how hard it must have been for the migrants to settle. There were only two strategies possible: either to return repeatedly to "the ever receding dream of the lost homeland" or to "try to assimilate into the English canon"[384] which was made worse by a rather rejective approach of the majority and sometimes by rather discriminatory practices of the authorities. As (in Susheila Nasta's words) "England as the colonial motherland, the illusory heaven that beckoned the immigrants so much, often betrayed them"[385], they usually opted for the first strategy, the one of a constant return to the past, memories and imaginary homelands. Very illustrative can be as for this painful "unheimlichkeit" the quotation from famous Kureishi's *Rainbow Sign* where he depicts his own experience with this issue (disregarding his not being the first generation migrant himself):

> Pakistanis and Indians born and brought up here who consider their position to be the result of a diaspora, they in exile awaiting return to a better place, where they belong, where they are welcome. And there the "belonging" will be total. There will be home and peace.[386]

4.6. Diaspora Fictions – Common Settings and Central Themes Summary and Chart[387]

Before analyzing particular works concerning displacement, settling, homelessness and other issues relevant for this thesis, it might be helpful to make use of Monika Fludernik's classification of migrant fiction that is not based on traditional categories operating with migrant generations but predominantly on particular themes and objectives that might enable us to find common features in otherwise rather dissimilar deluge of postcolonial fiction. She uses four main categories:

1. The traditional immigration and assimilation story, the common features being flocking together for safety reasons, having idealized memories of their home

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[384] Nasta, p. 97.

[385] Nasta, p. 1.

[386]Hanif Kureishi, "Rainbow Sign," *My Beautiful Laundrette,* (London: Faber and Faber 1986) 36.

[387] See: Monika Fludernik, "Imagined Communities as Imaginary Homelands: The South-Asian Diaspora in Fiction," *Diaspora and Multiculturalism: Common Traditions and New Developments,* ed. Monika Fludernik, (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi 2003) 261-285.

country and maintaining the contact with subcontinent. Usually typical for 1st generation authors, nevertheless to be found also in works of the youngest generation, usually when depicting their family experience with migrancy and homing in.

2. <u>The multicultural novel</u> – the native community is conceived as more open and flexible, the older generation still trapped within the old immigration and assimilation plot X the younger generation tends either to interrelation with the majority or toward the fundamental conduct.

3. <u>The diasporic novel</u> – the protagonists should be at least the 2nd generation immigrants who have established themselves in a new home abroad, at the same time they are members of functioning community within the host society that obstinately maintains contacts with other members of the same ethnic groups, with the original country and best of all with all South Asians across the globe. Simultaneously, the community preserves the idealized image of their home.

4. <u>The cosmopolitan novels</u> - the South Asian expatriates are portrayed not as members of the community, but as individuals outside of it, usually they are successfully assimilated. It is not built upon the binary subcontinent X Britain. It is interesting that with some authors it concerns their second and other works. Their debuts were usually typical traditional or diasporic fictions by means of which they wanted to make do with their own experience or the one of their parents or relatives, e.g. Hari Kunzru, Amitav Ghosh et al.

These categories never exist in a pure form, most of authors use the themes from different categories at the same time that they mingle in order to represent the best the developing nature of the diasporic life. Notwithstanding, such a classification is useful because it follows the development and transformation of the migrant society and their literature within 50 years of its existence in the UK.

Common Setting and Theme Chart

Common setting	Immigration novel	Multicultural novel	Diasporic novel	Cosmopolitan novel
Individual focus	X			X
Group focus		X	X	
Nostalgia for homeland	X		X	
Expatriates X host society	X	X		(X)
Expatriates X other minorities		X	X	(X)

5.   Reflections of Diaspora and Displacement in the Postcolonial Literature

> I've spent a lot of time trying to define why one felt out of it, why one felt one did not belong to this tradition of English letters. It was because my assumptions about the world were assumptions I could never make myself.

> V. S. Naipaul: "Without a place" 388

5.1.   Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*

5.1.1. Introduction

It is logical that the experience of a diaspora and sense of displacement are the most often used themes in the so-called postcolonial literature. Apart from the works of the youngest generation that tries to chose its own creative way dissimilar to the generation of their literary fathers, that avoids such topics as journey, settling, clash of the reality and dreams and that depicts most often very contemporary issues such as urban ghettos, globalization or any other totally non-postcolonial issues, most of authors classed with the postcolonial literature sooner or later felt a need to give their opinion to this theme. That is one of reasons why many critics perceive the whole and rather inhomogeneous genre of the postcolonial literature as one, drawing predominantly from similar motifs to be found in particular works and ignoring often the fact that the novels come from different periods, were written by authors of different origin and experience and first of all that there exist two totally separate streams of the literature, being it the one of authors living and writing in ex-colonial countries whose background and motivation are totally different, and the one of authors who either personally or whose parents underwent the whole process of migration, settling and assimilation.

As it had been already pointed out in previous sections depicting particular theoretical issues regarding diaspora and migration issues[389], there are few themes that

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[388] See the interview of V. S. Naipaul with Ian Hamilton, *The Times Literary Supplement*, 30 July 1967: 20.

repeatedly appear in most of works of post-colonial writers irrespective of their origin, generation classification or particular motivation of their work. As Monika Fludernik points out in her classification of the literature, the so-called "diasporic novel" is usually focused on nostalgic feelings, clash between expatriates and minorities and there is a strong group focus present.[390] Since identity issues of characters will be analyzed in a particular chapter on these issues, at this point only the motifs regarding the notion of diaspora will be further dealt with, particularly the ones closely connected with the leitmotif of the whole diasporic fiction – place and displacement, such as issues of home, clash between expectations and reality, dream of imperial England and logical disillusionment, the process of settling and specific strategies made by settlers in order to assimilate.

The authors mentioned for illustration in the following passage will be of various types. First it is fundamental to say, that some do not geographically belong to the group of postcolonial writers of the Indian subcontinent origin, but since their work is rather essential for this theme, they will be used for illustration, too (e.g. Sam Selvon (Trinidad) and his principal work on journey and settling, *The Lonely Londoners*, Caryl Phillips (St. Kitts) and his *The Final Passage*, or Buchi Emecheta (Nigeria) and her *Second Class Citizen*). Similar problem with classing might arise also with the key figure of the diasporic novel, the Nobel Prize laureate of 2001 V.S. Naipaul who came from Trinidad and Tobago, too, but was of an Indian origin, whose novel *The Enigma of Arrival* will be due to its significance for this genre analysed separately.

Apart from the themes mentioned above the diasporic literature can be also perceived in accordance with the criterion whether it presents the rich imperial past (e.g. works of Amitav Ghosh, Kiran Desai, some novels of Salman Rushdie, or it primarily deals with the post-imperial present, which is for the topic analyzed here more relevant). Nevertheless, it is significant to stress that even this category concentrated predominantly on present and events taking place in new "homes" of the migrants is highly stigmatized by the past as such and there are frequently "cuts" and returns to the past (usually a better version of the past).

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[389] See the chapter 4. "Place and Displacement".
[390] See the chapter 4.6." Diaspora Fictions – Common Settings and Central Themes Summary and Chart".

Concerning the specific experience of authors and by extension also of their characters, it matters whether these authors migrated themselves (then issues such as assimilation and sense of loss together with disillusionment are much stronger). If so, when they migrated there is a fundamental difference in migration for educational purposes of privileged classes (such as Naipaul and Rushdie) or a labour migration of poor country people (as Britain saw mainly in the 1960s) whose experience would be totally different. Works of writers of the second or even third generation of migrants are even more diverse and issues such as a sense of loss are used either implicitly or for past recreation (such as Hanif Kureishi, Nadeem Aslam, Kiran Desai and others).

5.1.1.1. Epistemic Violence

Before concentrating on particular themes concerning displacement issues as reflected in literary works of Kiran Desai and V. S. Naipaul, it is necessary to return to an issue of epistemic violence, particularly to language and colonial education, since these are aspects that play a crucial role in majority of postcolonial works. As it had been already discussed in the previous theoretical chapter on Epistemic Violence[391], it was English and English books that became the most powerful weapons of colonialism. These weapons were more effective than any other form of oppression or violence. When being taught in British educational institutions, colonial subjects started to internalize all the values presented by "noble" and "dignified" teachers and officials. This was for them the only way to a better future, to a potential success in the white world. Only when having mastered the language and adopted the culture of the colonized could they think of a career in administration. These values penetrated even into traditional local cultural issues, such as marriages and bringing up of children. Only a girl who mastered English was marriable (apart from having the fairest complexion possible, of course), only such a child had a chance to succeed in his/her life who could play cricket or was able to quote from Victorian classics.

To find illustration of this approach of colonizers and adopting of the system from the side of the colonized is not difficult at all since it is one of evergreens of all postcolonial fictions. Let us choose only a few to back up previous statements. Amitav

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[391] See the chapter 2.2. "Language, Textuality and Epistemic Violence".

Ghosh by means of one of his characters in the novel *Shadow Lines* presents these imposed values as follows:

> My cricket game was the one thing for which my grandmother never grudged me time away from my homework: on the contrary, she insisted that I run down to the park by the lake whether I wanted to or not. You cannot build a strong country, she would say, pushing me out of the house, without building a strong body.[392]

Nevertheless, it was not only a sport that was desirable to master. Colonial subjects went even further in their feverish mimicking of British values. Wearing British clothing and casting away their own traditional ones, powdering their face (such as Kiran Desai's Sai and her grandfather in the novel *The Inheritance of Loss*) were however only the beginning. Proper command of English became not only desirable at the time of the peak imperialism, but also later on a necessity, a criterion of success or failure. For Shilpa, the character of Rupa Bajwa's novel *The Sari Shop*, it was one of the faults that worsened her chances for a good marriage: "She did not have the sharp wit or the talent of some of her cousins. She was not stunningly beautiful. Her hair was slightly thin, and worst of all her English was not good."[393] Similarly to her, another woman character, though from a totally different period and living already in the mother country, regards her potential husband in a similar way:

> I could not marry a man who did not speak English, or at least who did not want to speak English. To want English was to want more than you had been given at birth; it was to want the world.[394]

Language command, particularly faultless and accent-less English became then a certain criterion of a potential success or failure. Yet, language was only one thing; the other was the British culture that was to be adopted by the colonial/postcolonial subjects. Apart from the above mentioned clothing, which played a significant role in simple and quick turning subjects into mimic men, it was primarily the literature as the easiest way for spreading of British values. As mentioned in the chapter on language

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[392] Amitav Ghosh, *The Shadow Lines,* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing 1988) 8.
[393] Rupa Bajwa, *The Sari Shop,* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company 2005) 162.
[394] Bajwa.

and writing in English, it is rather interesting that first of all this strategy still works, that mainly the British classical literature, namely the Victorian one still forms and shapes the identity of individuals. It is rather surprising that to a certain extent Macaulay's notorious statement on the superiority of British classics and literature as such has survived up to now and it still has a sort of formative influence upon the people not only in the subcontinent, but in Britain, too.

One of rather symptomatic illustrations is to be found in Kamala Markandaya's *The Nowhere Man*. The main protagonist of the novel, Srivanas, gets a copy of Macaulay's work as a reward for his schools results. The book of a man whose discriminatory and prejudicial attitude towards India changed the life of the whole subcontinent so much. In the same quotation there is another, similarly influential book mentioned that was being distributed at that time among the population of the subcontinent with the same goal:

> He passed with distinction in seven subjects, and they gave him a copy of Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* as his prize.

> His father was pleased by the book, with its inscribed fly leaf and morocco binding. In his day, for a similar achievement, they gave him a Bible, an equally baffling choice, which he courteously kept, approving Hindu precepts and principles, which he found in New Testament, though mildly dubious about Genesis.[395]

As Caryl Phillips writes in his *The Final Passage*, England indeed "became a college"[396] for the citizens of the British Empire. Whether educated or not in British institutions, most of citizens deeply admired the distant "Mother Country" and praised its culture. Rigidness of the local system can be however proved by a prevailing glory of the Victorian era, represented mainly by its literature, e.g. classics such as Dickens, Austen, Brontë or others. These books, as Sukhdev Sandhu points out in his *London Calling* "got institutionalized by school curricula, they came to stand for all that was the

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[395] Kamala Markandaya, *The Nowhere Man,* (New York: The John Day Company 1972) 109.
[396] See Caryl Phillips, *The Final Passage,* (New York: Vintage 2004) 101.

most valuable about metropolitan culture."[397] Reading such books influenced the colonial subjects immensely and it is logical that their image of England was then somehow distorted and unreal. No wonder that most of such people were bitterly disappointed when they arrived in England and it was far from their fantasy. Naipaul's character of *The Enigma of Arrival* encounters the reality by means of dilapidating manor house representing to a certain extent a falling empire itself, Kiran Desai's grandfather of *The Inheritance of Loss* is shocked by coldness and shabbiness of English suburbs which have nothing to do with cosy and homely places he had read about in classics.

None the less, even several decades after the Partition, the dominance of English classics still prevailed. Though two generations younger and having totally different experience Desai's character of Sai is still trapped in such a non-critical admiration of England. For instance, she celebrates Christmas. This only worsens the conflict with her boyfriend who (after having joined a radical movement) totally rejects everything colonial and Western.

> "I am not interested in your Christmas!" he shouted. "Why do you celebrate Christmas? You are Hindus and you do not celebrate Id or Guru Nanak's birthday or even Durga Puja or Dussehra or Tibetan New Year."
>
> She considered it: Why? She always had. Not because of the convent, her hatred of it was so deep, but...
>
> "You are like slaves, that's what you are, running after the West, embarrassing yourself. It is because of the people like you we never get anywhere."[398]

Yet it is not only a problem of people in ex-colonies. Even migrants who decided to undergo a whole process of migration brought with them this fascination by all things "British", especially Victorian. A typical example of such an affected person is a character in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia,* a fat and apparently totally hopeless man Changez who arrives to "save" Karim's cousin Jamila from being too

[397] Sukhdev Sandhu, *London Calling,* (London: Harper Perennial 2004) 204.
[398] Kiran Desai, *The Inheritance of Loss,* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press 2006) 163.

independent and westernized. Not only does he want as a dowry collected works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, which everyone takes as a strange requirement, but he speaks all the time about classical literature and is influenced by it much more than he realizes:

"What do you like to read?"

"The classics," he said firmly. I saw that he had a pompous side to him, so certain he seemed in taste and judgement.

"You like classics too?"

"You don't mean that Greek shit? Vergil or Dante or Homo or something?"

"P. G. Woodhouse and Conan Doyle for me! Can you take me to Sherlock Holmes's house in Baker Street?"[399]

However it would be a mistake to think that the colonial/postcolonial subjects were only passive recipients who adopted the language and culture without trying to change it according to their needs. Let's mention again Rushdie's statement on the "Empire Writes back" that referred not only to a growing number of colonial and postcolonial subjects writing and expressing themselves in English, but also undermining the very essence of British culture, too, starting with a transformation of the language as such.

These strategies have been of various kinds, starting with disruption of the supremacy of a standard language and incorporation of varieties, namely dialects, such as in Sam Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners*. It was the very first Caribbean novel written totally in dialect and as Sandhu again points out it was as if "his characters brought their language with them together with the luggage."[400] Such a change in the use of the language anticipated the whole change in Englishness as such that was later to come.

Together with the dialect there were other ways to treat the language to best suit the purposes of postcolonial writers. Their English was mutilated, simplified, words

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[399] Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia,* (New York: Viking/Penguin 1990) 83.
[400] Sukdev Sandhu, *London Calling,* (London: Harper Perennial 2004) 147.

misspelt, often on purpose; the English was enriched with many loan-words from mother tongues of particular writers. (The books of such authors have to be often supplied with an index of foreign words that help the reader to understand better the text). To summarize, the language was being changed similarly to the reality in the mother country, non-reversibly and forever.

The last strategy concerning the language and a creative process of writing and a very specific one is the one of V. S. Naipaul, who, in his own words had a great problem when trying to write when "the language was his but the tradition was not". And as he goes on "it is only through the process and reclamation of an authentic language for identity that the writer can begin to rescue his/her community from the illusory myths of the imperial centre."[401]

Selvon chose to use vernacular language to depict better and more precisely the reality, Naipaul's strategy is much more demanding when he, in order not to be trapped within the language, tried to handle it in his own way. As already mentioned previously, he learns to see a fresh, which means he has to forget all the previous habits to be able to describe the migrants' reality as truthfully as possible. (Closer see Case study on Naipaul's *The Enigma of Arrival*).

5.1.1.2. Haunted by Loss – Past is a Different Country

As it had been already stated most of diasporic novels are to a certain extent situated in the past. They either deal with colonial or post-colonial events in particular, or – when being diasporic works and depicting a migrant's journey and subsequent settling – they focus on such characters who are obsessed with the past and whose everyday life is markedly stigmatized by omnipresent memories. As Bromley[402] points out, it is not so much of a nostalgia but anamnesis. These journeys to the past he also perceives as a specific "process of fabulation in which a particular time or place is not so much recovered, or even discovered, but brought into being, invented, made and

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[401]Both to be found in: Robert A. Lee, *Other Britain, Other British: Contemporary Multicultural Fiction,* (London: Pluto Press 1995) 52.
[402] See Roger Bromley, *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2000).

unmade."[403] The subjects are not thus in an in-between position due to their geographical not-belonging, but also temporarily when not being able to live in the present and returning repeatedly to a non-existent past. Due to this impossible and rather unbearable condition, the migrants are permanently haunted by some sense of loss.

Most of the writers and theoreticians too draw as for this issue from Rushdie's legendary book of essays on this topic, *Imaginary Homelands*. Especially one of them, "The Indian Writer in England", has become a kind of textbook example of such a loss felt by one of the migrants.

> An old photograph in a cheap frame hangs on a wall of the room where I work. It's a picture, dating from 1946, of a house into which, at the time of its taking, I had not yet been born. The house is rather peculiar – a three-storied gabled affair with tiled roofs and round towers in two corners, each wearing a pointy tile hat. 'The past is a foreign country,' goes the famous opening sentence of L.P. Hartley's novel *The Go-Between*, 'they do things differently there.' But the photograph tells me to invert this idea: it reminds me that it's my present that is foreign and that the past is home, albeit a lost home in a lost city in the mists of lost time.

> A few years ago I revisited Bombay, which is my lost city, after an absence of something like half my life. Shortly after arriving, acting on an impulse, I opened the telephone directory and looked for my father's name. And, amazingly, there it was; his name, our old address, the unchanged telephone number, as if we had never gone away to the unmentionable country across the border. It was an eerie discovery. I felt as if I were being claimed, or informed that the facts of my faraway life were illusions, and that this continuity was the reality. Then I went to visit the house in the photograph and stood outside it, neither daring nor wishing to announce myself to its new owners. (I didn't want to see how they'd ruined the interior.) I was overwhelmed. The photograph had naturally been taken in

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[403] Bromley, p.123.

black and white; and my memory, feeding on such images as this, had begun to see my childhood in the same way, monochromatically. The colours of my history had seeped out of my mind's eye; now my other two eyes were assaulted by colours, by the vividness of the red tiles, the yellow-edged green of cactus-leaves, the brilliance of bougainvillaea creeper. It is probably not too romantic to say that that was when my novel *Midnight's Children* was really born; when I realized how much I wanted to restore the past to myself, not in the faded greys of old family-album snapshots, but whole, in CinemaScope and glorious Technicolor.[404]

Similarly to Rushdie most of the characters in fiction try somehow to restore the past they were robbed of due to the process of migration. Usually they fail to be able to restore it truly and fully. Then there is either idealization of it together with idealization of the native country or there is a frustration, depression and a strong feeling of loss that can never be healed. The new homeland cannot help in any way being usually hostile and cold, though perfect as for material provision. The binary past x present becomes thus another in-betweenness that the post-colonial subjects are trapped in.

Remaining with Rushdie we may find a good example in his late novel *Shalimar the Clown* that deals with such feelings of one of the characters.

"As to myself," she insisted on informing the ambassador, "I live neither in this world nor the last, neither in America, nor Astrakhan. Also I would add neither in this world nor the next. A woman like me, she lives some place in between. Between the memories and the daily stuff. Between yesterday and tomorrow, in the country of lost happiness and peace, the place of mislaid calm. This is our fate."[405]

This quotation shows a typical ambivalence of most migrants, irrespective of their origin and migrant experience. The people are trapped not belonging anywhere, the past is too distant for them, the present difficult to grasp. Memories have become the only way to escape to something familiar, however such returns can be, similarly to

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[404] Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands,* (London: Granta Books 1992) 9.
[405] Salman Rushdie, *Shalimar the Clown,* (New York: Random House 2005) 9.

Rushdie's return to Bombay tricky, since nothings remains the same as they remember it. They are obsessed often with something which is a mere illusion.

5.1.1.3. Imaginary Homelands

One of crucial feelings concerning the migration is indeed a sense of loss. As Salman Rushdie explains: "Having experienced several ways of being, the migrant subject suspects, and thus writes against, reality: to be a migrant is to be compelled to establish a new relationship with the world, because of the loss of familiar habitats."[406] The home as such together with memories logically became for migrants the issue number one. Nevertheless, as Rushdie points out further on, "it is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation."[407] This something is predominantly the contact with the past, with the memories, relatives and known places. And this loss necessarily brings frustration, sorrow and depression:

> Thinking of home is often accompanied by nostalgia, the absence, loss of loved ones, the remoteness of the home we are cut off from our childhood home are Exiles. And the rest of us can perhaps understand that we are all "exiles" from our past, our childhood, that universal "home"[408].

The migrants are trapped in the world of memories and they try to recreate the past that was familiar for them. When returning to Rushdie and his famous *Imaginary Homelands*, we will find a theory about the irrevocability of such a past. He speaks about "unlocking of the gates of lost time", an attempt to make the past reappear as it had been. However he (and others) only brings into life his past, his own version of it, one of many possible versions. Then it is logical that he makes mistakes, due to a fallible character of memory but also due to fragmentary vision: "When reflecting the world, he (the author) is obliged to deal in broken mirrors, some of whose fragments

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[406] Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands,* (London: Granta Books 1992)124 - 5
[407] Rushdie, p.17.
[408] Jermone Beuaty and Paul Hunter, *New Worlds of Literature,* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company) 1.

have been irretrievably lost."[409] The past is in potsherds and the migrant has to try to fold it once again. However, the final picture will be stigmatized. It will not be as perfect as before; some parts can be missing, the final image can be also distorted due to mistakes and the advance of time.

Before dealing with the notion of home as such, one of the keystones of the whole diasporic novel, let us illustrate this persistent feeling of being lost, of no return, by means of a quotation from the "guru" of the diasporic fiction, V. S. Naipaul. In one passage of his legendary novel *The Enigma of Arrival* he depicts the painting of the same title by Giorgio de Chirico and the mission of a foreigner in following words:

> Gradually there would come to him a feeling that he was getting nowhere; he would lose his sense of the mission; he would begin to know only that he was lost. His feeling of adventure would give away to panic. He would want to escape, to get back to the quayside and his ship. But he wouldn't know how. I imagined some religious ritual in which led in by kindly people, he would unwittingly take part and find himself the intended victim. At the moment of the crisis he would come upon a door, open it, and find himself back on the quayside of arrival. He has been saved; the world is as he remembered it. Only one thing is missing now. The traveller has lived out his life.[410]

This extract shows that migration brings usually an inevitable toll that the migrant has to pay. All potential assets are redeemed by everything the migrant had to leave behind. Edward Said in his essay "Reflections on Exile" pointed out:

> Exile is the unhealable rift between a human being and native place, between the self and true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted; the achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left forever.[411]

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[409] Both to be found in: Salman Rushdie, "The Indian Writer in England," *The Eye of the Beholder: Indian Writing in English*, ed. Maggie Butcher, (London: Commonwealth Institute 1983) 76.
[410] V. S. Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* (London: Picador 2011) 107.
[411] Edward Said, *Orientalism,* (London: Penguin 2003) 101.

Salman Rushdie also speaks of exile as of "a dream of glorious return"[412]. The migrants permanently return, though in most cases only theoretically, inwardly, trying to revive what had been lost due to migration. However, as Rushdie later points out:

> Our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost, that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind.[413]

This return seems then to be unreal, since the original homeland ceased existing. However, the dream persisted. As one of the characters of Kamala Markandaya's *The Nowhere Man* says: "So long, as they were mobile, he liked to believe the way back to India, from which events and people had driven them, lay open."[414] Unfortunately, most of the migrants realize bitterly that this return to home is only an illusion, that the journey they had undergone turned them to "nowhere", rootless people.

> There is no place like home, but rather, that there is no longer such place as home: except, of course, for the home, we make, or the homes, that are made for us, in Oz, which is anywhere, and everywhere, except the place from which we began.[415]

Rushdie's conclusion is not much encouraging for a migrants' psyche. There are few possibilities to accept, either to acknowledge there is nothing like home, which makes the assimilation and life in a new environment even worse, or accept the "imaginary homelands" and from time to time to deceive oneself:

The notion of home is indeed a very problematic issue for migrants, since it brings a necessary sense of loss and depression. But first of all there is also a certain feeling of confusion that makes their settling in the new country much more problematic. It brings once again a clash between the two worlds, the old one of the country of origin and the new one, the dreamt of and legendary. The migrants experience another trauma: apart from becoming rootless, homeless and in-between,

[412] See Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses,* (NewYork: Picador 2000) 205.
[413] Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands,* (London: Granta Books 1992) 76.
[414] Kamala Markandaya, *The Nowhere Man,* (New York: The John Day Company 1972) 21.
[415] Salman Rushdie, "Out of Kansas," *Step Across the Line,* (New York: Random House 2002) 25.

their expectations often fail and reality is much harsher and disappointing that they had ever thought.

In the case study to come on Kiran Desai's The Inheritance of Loss all the above mentioned themes are closely analyzed, mainly the impact of epistemic violence in practice and an omnipresence of colonial past that interferes lives of majority of characters significantly. As for issues of home as well as the clash of expectations typical for traditional diasporic novels the second case study of this part of the dissertation work will be more illustrative, i.e. the study on V. S. Naipaul's *The Enigma of Arrival*. In Desai's novel these key motifs indeed play a significant role, nevertheless it is in Naipaul's work where they are treated in a quite unique and unprecedented way.

5.1.2. Wounded by the West: Displacement and Homelessness in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*

5.1.2.1. Introduction

Despite the Booker Prize Award that Kiran Desai received in 2006, we can undoubtedly find much better works in postcolonial fiction, that would both illustrate more pregnantly the discussed issues and that would at the same time show more literary value. After the award results were announced there was a heated debate whether this indeed was the right choice. At the same time many readers criticized Desai's work on net discussion forums denouncing her literary style and first of all a certain historical inaccuracy and exploitation of real figures and events.

Be that as it may, there is one significant fact – there is hardly any other book in the so-called postcolonial literary canon that manages to cover all major postcolonial issues usually scattered through the works of various authors.

Pankaj Mishra in his review in *The New York Times* called her "a modern postcolonial author" and as of her novel he said:

> Although it focuses on the fate of a few powerless individuals, Kiran
> Desai's new novel manages to explore, with intimacy and insight, just

about every contemporary international issue – globalization, multiculturalism, economic inequality, fundamentalism and terrorist violence. [416]

Desai indeed managed to compile in a single book all fundamental topics that had been analysed in previous theoretical chapters of this dissertation work. When writing *The Inheritance of Loss*, Desai was no beginner; she had already come through with a debut *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* from 1998. Even though it was a "mere" product of creative writing courses in America (as she called it in numerous interviews) and a comic book on things that she remembered from her childhood, she decided when writing her second work to chose a different path. It took several years and immense editing to finish *The Inheritance of Loss*. It is still partly autobiographical novel making use of an experience Desai had with Kalimpong area from her childhood. Nevertheless contrary to her literary debut it tries at this time to incorporate all these events and memories into a broader context, both historical and theoretical one.

5.1.2.2. Classification of Characters

In short it is a story of a retired court magistrate Jemubhai Patel and his orphaned granddaughter Sai who both live in a dilapidated manor house Cho Oyu on the slopes of the Himalayas. Patel is symptomatically trapped in past returning repeatedly to his youth and mainly to his only real experience with the West – the study stay in Oxford. Sai is obsessed both with her fated childhood but also with a sort of not-belonging given by her education and lack of contacts with a real life around. Their fates give way to a completely different story of Biju, the son of their cook, who left for the USA hoping to find a better life and escape hopelessness of the life in Kalimpong.

As mentioned above the key merit of this novel is a combination of all topics that had been previously to be found only by themselves in the postcolonial fiction, namely English as the cultural and literary language, a colonial life as such and subsequent postcolonial reality, migrancy to Great Britain and the USA et al. Since it

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[416] In: Pankaj Mishra, "Wounded by the West," *The New York Times*, 12 February 2006, 30 September 2006. www.nytimes.com/2006/10/11/arts/11iht-web.1011 bookerreview.3108156. htm/?scp=2&="wounded.

combines both features of a diasporic novel based on a journey experience and treating a settling history of characters and at the same time it handles a life in India, particularly a colonial heritage and postcolonial everyday life in one area of India, it is necessary to divide this analysis into several subchapters classed in accordance with the prevailing issue. For a better illustration a small diagram may be useful that subclassifies 4 central characters according to simple criteria, being it first of all the influence of the West, represented above all by the British education and the English language, and second the diasporic experience itself, i.e. the experience with a journey or not.

	West	East
Jemu	(English)	(Hindu et al.) **Biju**
journey YES		
journey NO **Sai**		**Gyan**
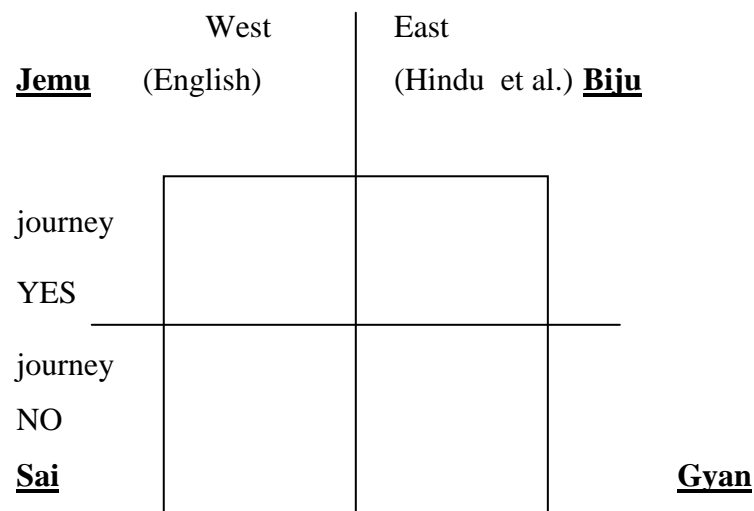
We may see that Jemu(bhai) and Sai share the inclination to the West, due to their educational history and English as the first language. Jemu experienced British education having had a rather rare chance to study law in Oxford. Sai spent most of her childhood in a convent Indian school working on colonial principles that only increased her "not belonging" and in-between identity. As for English, Jemubhai chose voluntarily to prefer English as for him it was the language of the superior nation on one side, on other it was sort of *lingua franca* enabling him an easier communication with different people of different nationalities in places he was sent on business. Sai did not have to decide which language to use, since for her English was a natural choice as it was a language of her educational institution.

The impact of the colonial education and prevailing dominance of English play a significant role in the novel, however, they are depicted in a rather traditional way not revealing anything new that would not be found in dozens of similar literary works. It is the issue of a journey that is much more important in the novel. Despite the fact that

both Jemu and Biju share the same experience, i.e. travelling to the civilized West – place they so much had dreamt of, place that was thought to be a beginning of their new, better life – their experience cannot be more different. Despite all the disappointment of Jemu with Britain, he still travelled there as a privileged student. Having had to overcome numerous difficulties, laughed at for his Indian origin, strong accent and evident visual difference, he still succeeds – he completes his education and returns home as a superstar. Biju comes to America illegally hoping to find a decent job and earn enough to start a new life there. Yet he is nobody in America, one of millions of similar people who had come trying to find their fate and leaving behind gloomy perspectives back home. He is first of all an illegal worker and an underprivileged one whose failure is unavoidable mainly due to his reluctance to change, adopt and assimilate totally.

5.1.2.3. Obsessed with the Past

Let us start with an evergreen of diasporic and colonial/ postcolonial fiction – the past. *The Inheritance of Loss* indeed satisfies fully central criteria of the diasporic fiction, namely the one that describes this genre as a literary work set to a certain extent in past the characters of which are usually obsessed by the past and stigmatized by memories.

Desai's work is not called *The Inheritance of Loss* in vain. The historical inheritance is manifested repeatedly, starting with the colonial, unfortunate one that had influenced the life and cultural development of India fundamentally. Macaulay's "Minute on Indian Education"[417], particularly its tendency to change an educational system and by means of this to form a whole new class of citizens – mediators between the ruling class and illiterate peasants – is evident in Desai's work, too. Two characters are without any doubt – as already outlined above – direct products of this long time struggle, being it first Jemubhai Patel and later on his granddaughter Sai. Since coming from different generations, their personal experience with the British educational system is different, too, on the other hand this re-education had near to similar effect in both

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[417] See: Thomas Babington Macaulay, "Minute of the 2nd February," *Speeches by Lord Macaulay with His Minute on Indian Education.,*(London: Humphrey Milford 1979).

cases. When Jemubhai was sent to study in Oxford, it was a fulfilling of the dream of the Patel family that sent them to money lenders and that married Jemubhai with a dark and ugly daughter of the richest man in their neighbourhood.

Having been charmed by the classic British literature Jemu turned into a typical mimic man already in Britain reciting at exam Scott's Lochinvar wanting to impress everybody and making a true fool of himself due to his strong Indian accent. Later on when starting his magistrate career, he tries to be more English than the English themselves. Powdering his face with a white pulve, taking up hunting (with catastrophic results) and finally refusing to use local languages and sticking exclusively to English he isolates himself from the real life. He despises his wife whom he married for money, not only because he never loved her, but mainly for her not being English enough. He is not only disgusted at her refusal to learn English but mostly at her appearance:

> He did not like his wife's face, searched for his hatred, found beauty and dismissed it. Once it had been a terrifying beckoning thing that had made his heart turn to water, but now it seemed beside the point. An Indian girl could never be as beautiful as an English one.[418]

Before he left for England, he had been already infected by colonial values. After his stay in England he stopped being able to lead an Indian life, only an English one that sped up his isolation and disgust at the people and world around. His fate is logical then. He became a foreigner in his own country and when terminating his professional career he locked himself in a shell living in a solace in his Cho Oyu virtually secluded from the world.

> The judge could live here, in this shell, this skull, with the solace of being a foreigner in his own country, for this time he would not learn the language.[419]

With Sai, his granddaughter, it is a slightly different case. Having spent most of her life in a monastery run boarding school, she was a direct product of the British

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[418] Kiran Desai, *The Inheritance of Loss,* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press 2006) 168.
[419] Desai, p.29.

educational system. Despite several decades had passed this institution remained as it had been in the colonial era.

> There was titillation to unearthing the forces of guilt and desire, needling and prodding the results. This Sai had learned. This underneath, and on a top of a flat creed: cake was better than laddoos, fork spoon knife better than hands, sipping the blood of Christ and consuming a water of his body was a more civilised than garlanding a phallic symbol with marigolds. English was better than Hindi... Any thought that Sai was taught had fallen between the contradictions and the contradictions themselves had been absorbed. "Lochinvar" and Tagore, economics and moral science, highland fling in tartan and Punjabi harvest dance in dhotis, national anthem in Bengali and an impenetrable Latin motto emblazoned on banderols across their blazer pockets and also on an arch over the entrance: *Pisci tisci episculum basculum.* Something of that sort.[420]

This type of education brought up several generations of confused people. People who had been taught that their own culture and past were second rate, that they should preferably cast it away. Nevertheless, it was hardly possible, thus the children had to make a compromise and combine both influences. Make use of everything acceptable from both cultures and create a new identity for them utilizing all of this. Still they had a feeling imposed upon them that they must prefer everything British and suppress everything Indian.

When arriving to her grandfather's, Sai continued a similar life. Secluded from a real life outside, she met only people who either came from the West, who were westernized due to education or who at least looked up to Britain and the USA. Like Lola and Noni, Sai had no chance to escape such a stereotype. After her arrival the cook prepared for her a typical British dish (mashed potatoes modelled into a motorcar, cheese sauce and vegetables and mutton cutlet). Both the cook and her grandfather supported her Englishness as much as they could. For the illustration let us quote a

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[420] Kiran Desai, *The Inheritance of Loss,* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press 2006) 29-30.

highly illustrative passage of the novel. Sai covered in white flour dust comments on her finally white skin that makes her more British:

> Looking at each other covered with white, they began to laugh.
>
> *Angrez ke tarah*. Like the English.
>
> *Angrez ke tarah. Angrez jaise*. (We are English).[421]

She never asked herself whether it was right. It was common in her social class and she never thought of anything else, of not loving British classics and celebrating Western holidays. When having got to know Gyan, a university student, but a local boy of a peasant origin, the clash was ineluctable. Gyan was indeed in love with Sai, but later on, when "poisoned" by revolutionary slogans, he could see the mimicry and falsehood that Sai's life and other like-minded people represented for him. He comments not only on her celebrating Christian holidays, but also on her British accent and furious endeavour to mimic everything British. He is radical, but contrary to Sai he is at least able to see that such a blind mimicking is not a good strategy either.

5.1.2.4. Text as a Weapon

It has been stated several times before that literature has played a significant role in colonial education and in the process of turning colonial subjects into mimic men. Desai's Sai provides us with an excellent example of a literary taste of local people and their obsession with an English myth. It is interesting that they were on the one side well aware of a falsehood of English writers when writing about anything Indian, on the other they were not able to reason sensibly when reading of Britain. They took for granted everything they read in classics and made their impression of this country only by means of literature and similarly misleading reports of their fellow countrymen who were so lucky to start a new life there.

> Of course they had *The Far Pavilions* and *The Raj Quartet* – but Lola, Noni, Sai, and Father Booty were unanimous in the opinion that they didn't like English writers writing about India; it turned the stomach;

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[421] Desai, p. 105.

delirium and fever somehow went with temples and snakes and perverse romance, spilled blood, and miscarriage; it didn't correspond to the truth. English writers writing of England was what was nice: P. G. Wodehouse, Agatha Christie, countryside England where they remarked on the crocuses being early that year and best of all, the manor house novels. Reading them you felt as if you were watching those movies in the air-conditioned British council in Calcutta where Lola and Noni had often been taken as girls, the liquid violin music swimming you up the driveway; the door of the manor opening and a butler coming out with an umbrella, for, of course, it was always raining; and the first sight you got of the lady of the manor was of her shoe, stuck out of the open door; from the look of the foot you could already delightedly foresee the snooty nature of her expression.[422]

As analysed in the chapter 2.2. "Language, Textuality and Epistemic Violence" English classical literature is undoubtedly an evergreen of both colonial and postcolonial fiction. It is mainly the Victorian literature that was so praised by most characters of these books, representing an imperial dream and helping to form ideas as for the Mother country far over the ocean. We have not yet taken into account that similarly to other literary works, these books are fiction not based on reality such as travel literature. Most colonial and later on postcolonial subjects believed in the beauty and idyll presented in these fictive works. This literature represented a transcendence that could not be in any way refuted. No wonder then that when encountering a "grey" reality, the immigrants incurred a shock that not only meant an end of everything they had formerly believed, but totally undermined their faith in present and future and only boosted their already abnormal fixation to past. The postcolonial subjects then were not able to live any more in the present since it only reminded them of their false and inconsolable prospects and thus they repeatedly returned to a non-existent past, usually represented by a shining colonial glory.

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[422] Kiran Desai, *The Inheritance of Loss,* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press 2006) 198.

5.1.2.5. Disillusionment

These "great expectations", regardless whether of the Mother Country or America bring a huge disillusionment that often mars all the previous struggle either to assimilate or settle. As for *The Inheritance of Loss*, there are two characters, as seen in the diagram, who underwent such a journey to fulfil their dreams and who had to face such disenchantment. Let us remind Jemubhai's disappointment when first arriving to Britain and seeing not the grand Victorian manor houses but tiny grey ones, grey streets and people who had nothing to do with those dignified gentlemen and ladies he knew from home.[423]

Biju, the uneducated son of Patel's cook arrives in America in a totally different situation than Jemu decades ago in Britain. As an anonymous labourer, one of many of a similar fate, he experiences on the one hand an absolute freedom that is in America, which however means on the other that nobody cares about him, nobody is interested whether he is alive or not, whether he has enough to eat or has a decent job. His disillusionment is of a different kind. He can see that his awareness of the world had been wrong. There is nothing like social classes, no stratification as for races and nations. Pakis (whom he despises most) are at the same level as himself, not speak of "hubshi" (black people) which is indeed shocking news for him. He was brought up to despise black people and now he got to a place where they are at least equal if not superior to him.

> He remembered what they said about black people at home.... Biju had thought the man from his village was claiming that India was so far advanced that black men learned to dress and eat when they arrived, but what he had meant was that black men ran about attempting to impregnate every Indian girl they saw.[424]

His perception of the world is based on pure prejudice, not only concerning black people, but also white. To his horror he finds out that the world around him uses

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[423] See chapter 2.2. "Language, Textuality and Epistemic Violence".
[424] Kiran Desai, *The Inheritance of Loss,* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press 2006) 76.

the very same prejudice against Indians, against himself. This discovery only makes his life worse, makes his assimilation less possible.

The only thing that matters in New York is money. You either have it or you don't, nothing else matters. He should learn a lesson from his friend Saeed who is the one who can indeed take advantage of all opportunities he has. Biju's character is thus an archetypal diaspora loser, staggering from one low paid job to another, always getting sacked as the first one when immigration control comes, who, similarly to thousands of his fellow countrymen, writes enthusiastic letters home that are read by all the community and that only nourish false ideas that the subcontinent has of America and Britain. Biju is then logically flooded with request letters begging him to help everybody who would love to try his/her luck in this Promised Land.

Even though Desai characters seem at first sight disparate, they are bound, as Mishra says by "a shared historical legacy and a common experience of impotence and humiliation."[425] Nearly all her characters are to a certain extent "stunted by their encounters with the West", they are all influenced by things that seemingly happened long ago but that nevertheless formed them and have still a great impact upon their lives. In Desai's interpretation these characters are all hybrid people, but, as Mishra reminds us several times, she does not share Zadie Smith's or Salman Rushdie's optimism of what they call "hybridity, impurity, intermingling"[426]. On the contrary, for her these are not terms that open a space for something new. She sees hybridity and the legacy of past as something which indeed imprisons her characters, which binds them and prevents them from living fully. All of them are trapped, not only older characters as retired Patel, but surprisingly the young ones who should be theoretically better able to accept the freedom the modern cosmopolitan world offers.

5.1.2.6. On the Move

As stated above, it is the journey as such that is one of vital constituents of the diasporic novel. Desai presents the reader with both types of journey used in the

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[425]Pankaj Mishra, "Wounded by the West," *The New York Times*, 12 February 2006, 30 September 2006, www.nytimes.com/2006/10/11/arts/11iht-web.1011 bookerreview.3108156. htm/?scp=2&="wounded.
[426] Pankaj Mishra.

diasporic fiction. The first one, traditional, is the one in the direction from the colony to Britain. More than prosperity it is a journey of illusions. The subject, nourished by colonial myths, books and hardly credible experience of relatives and friends, sets on a journey predetermined to disillusionment. This disillusionment is also due to binarism operating that the subjects adopted – the one of primitivism and insignificance of their own life and contrary to Westerners undignified background and the one of faultless West. When coming to face reality finally, it is necessary to reassess all former hopes and dreams, which is hardly possible in most cases.

The second type of the journey is the modern one, multicultural and economic travelling to the West with the goal of becoming rich, in this case to America which contrary to Britain has no colonial label of the promised Mother Country. This one however requires a 100 percent assimilation and first of all a sort of amnesia as for the past. Otherwise the prospects were not good. This type of migration is the one that is laughed back in India – let us be reminded of Lola and Noni girding at Mrs. Sen's daughter in America and her faultless American accent. There are also people who Biju saw already at the airport, Indian as for first sight, but Western as for manners and demeanour. Nevertheless this total assimilation and adoption of American life is something which Biju refuses. Since he cannot leave behind his home, habits etc. (including not eating beef which prevents him from a good job in the steakhouse) and cannot accept "Americanness" and everything it brings – he cannot succeed. He struggles, long and hard but in vain.

Nearly all characters in *The Inheritance of Loss* have to face the conflict of the two worlds, the Western, seemingly ideal one, and the life they lead at home. All of them pay dearly for it. Sai loses her illusions and comes of age, her grandfather sours on the world completely, Gyan is torn between revolutionary ideals and his previous life and Biju is robbed of even the little he has earned in America. All of them have to start over again with doubtful prospect.

5.2.   V. S. Naipaul's *The Enigma of Arrival*

5.2.1. Introduction

5.2.1.1. Expectations versus Reality – Heavenly England X Sick Zone

Similar to most works based on journey and succeeding settling experience V. S. Naipaul's famous work on journey to ex-colonial Mother Country is of course also based primarily upon feelings connected with his arrival. Having undergone a typical colonial education (though of a higher and more academic type than usual), he experiences the very same disillusionment as dozens of migrants. His impression of England is not dissimilar to the one of a real and a non-literary migrant who, rather symptomatically, described his original perception of Britain, of the Mother Country, as a Canaan, a place that would fulfil one's dreams.

> I knew that money was slightly better to start with in Britain, but the main thing that attracted me was to see Britain. So much was taught down our throats about the Mother Country and so forth and we really believed that we were going home to a Mother Country, a place that is going to be loving and nice. And I, despite the fact, that I had travelled before, was very, very keen to come to England more that any place else. That was my very first motivation. My very first attraction....[427]

This perception of England as a paradise brings us to another fundamental issue of all diasporic fiction depicting a clash of migrant's expectations with reality, mainly due to their false idealization of England, eventually London as "a welcoming mother land" as faultless and breathtaking, portrayed in the literary works the colonial subjects had so fanatically read. All of this is again one of relics of imperialism that made England the centre of the Empire and London its capital, the largest city on Earth. As Sukhdev Sandhu writes in his *London Calling*, London was the place from where the treaties, curricula and legislative frameworks which shaped their (post-colonial

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[427]Panikos Panayi, *The Impact of Immigration: A Documentary History of the Effects and Experiences of Immigrants in Britain since 1945,* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press 1999) 40.

subjects') lives were established."[428] At the time of the first larger migration at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century the Indians were then logically "haunted by the fear that they were somehow illegitimate, that their presence in the capital was unlicensed or likely to be penalized. England was not so much of a home of Englishman, but of imperialism, liberation and human freedom.... of all races."[429] This fairytale character of England or London was then nurtured for many decades by a colonial education[430] and it survived many years after the fall of the Empire and in a way has still been forming and shaping an everyday reality of many subjects on the Indian Subcontinent and elsewhere in the Commonwealth.

As the Nigerian writer Buchi Emecheta writes in her *The Second Class Citizen*: "Going to the United Kingdom must be surely like paying a God a visit. The United Kingdom, then, must be like heaven."[431] In a similar tone one of the characters of Caryl Phillips's fundamental work on diaspora *The Final Passage* concludes: "I do not care what anyone tell you, going to England be good for it going raise your mind."[432]

It is important to point out that most of the illusions of England were from their very origin false ones. Such is the idea of one character in Nadeem Aslam's novel:

> Once, marvelling at the prosperity of England, a visitor from Pakistan
> had remarked that it was almost as though the Queen disguised herself
> every night and went out into streets of her country to find out personally
> whether subjects most needed and desired in life, so she could arrange for
> their wishes to come true the next day.[433]

It would be a mistake to leave out at this point a highly illustrative quotation from the book the analysis of which precedes this introduction, Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*. Despite not having experienced the migration as such herself, Desai depicts the migrant subject's illusions and later on disillusionment masterly. Jemubhai Patel arrives in England having been nurtured all his previous life with

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[428] Sukhdev Sandhu, *London Calling,* (London: Harper Perennial 2004) 100.
[429] Sandhu, p. 110.
[430] See the chapter 2.2. "Language, Textuality and Epistemic Violence".
[431] Buchi Emecheta, *The Second Class Citizen,* (New York: George Braziller 1975) 8.
[432] Caryl Phillips, *The Final Passage,* (New York: Vintage 2004) 101.
[433] Nadeem Aslam, *Maps for Lost Lovers,* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf) 5.

images of green meadows, little gardens and a picturesque countryside, capital grandness and monumentality. After having landed he experiences the very opposite:

> He continued to be amazed by the sights that greeted him. The England in which he searched for a room to rent was formed of tiny gray houses in gray streets, stuck together and down as if on a glue trap. It took him by surprise because he had expected only grandness, had not realized that here, too, the people could be poor and live anaesthetic lives.[434]

In a certain way such a representation of England and London resembles a popular fairytale about Dick Whittington and his London paved with gold. Nevertheless, Dick Whittington's tale was only a tale and his personal achievement was unfortunately succeeded by newcomers in England.

In most cases it is London that is in Roger Bromley's words the "metaphor of the colonial migrant's fantasy of England."[435] This fantasy has influenced many authors, such as Naipaul in many texts, as well as Sam Selvon, George Lamming and G. V. Desani who particularly wrote about journey, illusions and finally about the disillusionment. In these texts "the migrant experiences the loneliness and joylessness of the life in the city whatever other outcomes also befall him."[436]

If some of authors speak only of disillusionment, there are some who do not hide their disgust and repulsion, too. There are some key symbols to be found in more works that are to illustrate strangeness, the alienation and hostility of England, first and foremost a house, usually a manor house as a former symbol of colonial perfection, and seasons, namely winter that became for most of the migrants the true embodiment of horror.

> But have you noticed? The light in England is very weak. It depresses me. They have taken the sun out of sky.[437]

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[434] Kiran Desai, *The Inheritance of Loss,* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press 2006) 38.
[435] Roger Bromley, *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2000) 12.
[436] Bromley, p.12.
[437] Caryl Phillips, *A Distant Shore,* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 2003) 71.

English weather was really the first thing that most migrants commented on. There were no seasons, the weather was rather depressive, not bringing any changes, any hope. It was especially harsh for migrants who came from either subtropical or tropical countries, who were used to rapid changes in weather.

> Among the innumerable other losses, to come to England was to lose a season, because in the part of Pakistan that he is from, there are five seasons a year.[438]

Caryl Philips's Leila arrives in England only to find out that it has nothing to do with colonial colourfulness and vividness she expected. Naively she imagined it to be similar to her birth island, the English she expected to be the same as the ones she used to meet back home:

> Leila looked at England, but everything seemed bleak. She quickly realized she would have to learn a new word, overcast. There were no green mountains, there were no colourful women with baskets on their heads selling peanuts or bananas or mangoes, there were no trees, no white houses on the hills, no hills, no wooden houses by the shoreline, and the sea was not blue and there was no beach, and there were no clouds, just one big cloud, when they had arrived.[439]

Nevertheless, this disillusionment stems primarily from the character's ignorance or lack of experience. The one to be found in Naipaul's novel turns out to be much deeper, since it shows how much rooted the stereotypes of the grandness of the empire were. It shows how this false illusion imposed by education, literature etc. started slowly to fade and fall apart when the migrants found out due to their arrival to England there was nothing like a real heart of the Empire, the embodiment of everything perfect, the only certainty they had.

> So I grew to feel that the grandeur belonged to the past, that I had come
> to England at the wrong time, that I had come too late to find England,

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[438] Nadeem Aslam, *Maps for Lost Lovers,* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 2005) 5.
[439] Caryl Phillips, *The Final Passage,* (New York: Vintage 2004) 142.

the heart of Empire, which (like a provincial, from a far corner of the Empire) I had created in my fantasy.[440]

5.2.1.2. Settling

When having arrived in England, the migrants experienced not only a certain disillusionment as for the visual appearance of the Mother Country and everyday life, but there was also in many cases a strong resentment as for British culture in general. Having been brought up in utmost adoration of the imperial culture and its bearers, any divergence from this ideal was then perceived very negatively. The problem was partly caused by the fact that the British citizens they had met before in their native country were usually of a higher class origin – administrators, missionaries, soldiers etc

They had no experience with lower classes and the first encounter with the truth, i.e. that the lower class population of Britain was not only similar, but sometimes in some aspects even worse than the one they knew from their own country, was a shock. Jasmine, a character in Bharati Mukherjee's novel *Jasmine*, describes a frustration of her mother in a very detailed way:

> Mama shot a knowing look and explained that all this garden frippery, gnomes, wells and the like was an English thing. "They have to mark out their territory..." It was on the tip of the tongue to add "...like dogs!", but the Aunties recognized their cue and launched into their own collected proverbs on English behaviour. "They treat their dogs like children, no, better than children..." "They expect their kids to leave home at sixteen, and if they don't, they ask for rent! A rent from their own kids!" "They don't like bathing, and when they do, they sit in their own dirty water instead of showering..." "The way they wash up. They never rinse the soap off dishes..."[441]

She continues in a similar way:

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[440] V. S. Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* (London: Picador 2011) 120.
[441] Bharati Mukherjee, *Jasmine,* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld 1989) 33.

My mother sighed and ruffled my hair. "I will never understand this about the English, all this puffing up about being civilised with their cucumber sandwiches and cradle of democracy big talk, and then they turn round and kick their elders in their backside, all this It's My Life, I Want My Space stupidness, You Can't Tell Me What To Do cheekiness, I Have To Go To Bingo selfishness and You Kids Eat Crisps Instead of Hot Food nonsense."[442]

The migrants expected dignity and gentleness; instead they met ordinariness and often even vulgarity. And this was the world the principles and culture of which they were supposed to adopt totally!

When having had to deal with all kind of disillusionment, there was only one way how to survive the assimilation and settling – to find a particular strategy how to succeed in an alien and often hostile environment and to lose only a minimum of one's identity. There were only a few strategies that worked. As for identity there was the issue of hybridity and mimicry[443] that not only helped the postcolonial subjects to find their place in the new culture but that also started transforming the one of the ex-Mother Country.

However, when reading diasporic fiction some other aspects become quite clear. First of all, in most areas populated predominantly by migrants a kind of ghetto was formed. The reasons were various, whether it due to industrial agglomeration or the character of the area where many labourers were needed, due to strong bonds between families of the migrants and their conscious tendencies to form single ethnic communities, finally also due to a certain disgust of the "white" population that started to leave the ghetto as a higher density of an ethnic population. The result of such a segregation was then logically a much worse assimilation of migrants with the major society and often, concerning women predominantly, an absolute isolation from the British culture and reality. Most frequently this isolation was demonstrated by no command of English and a total ignorance as for the functioning of the British everyday life (shops, transport, administration, educational system etc.) Nadeem Aslam's

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[442] Mukherjee, p. 58.
[443] See chapter 2.3. "Identity, Difference and Hybridity".

succeeding passage only proves how much most of migrants were outsiders, often, of course voluntarily, and how hopeless they were when expected to function in the "white" world.

> Someone ran into the blue kitchen with its yellow tables and chairs to call 999 in rudimentary English, speaking to a white person for the fourth time in her life, wondering whether she should add the word "fuck" into her speech now and then to sound more like a person who belonged to this country, because she had seen her English-speaking children use the word with the great confidence whatever it meant.[444]

Another interesting strategy of migrants was to become the remapping process, i.e. a renaming and reterritorialization of a new space. Similarly to former colonists who did the same thing with colonial lands, the migrants started to map the new space and slowly to transform it geographically, too.

As it has been already shown, London, respectively England was deemed to be sacred geography. As Sandhu stresses: "Going there was like entering the laboratory against whose glass windows they had previously only been able to press their noses."[445] The only help for the migrants was the literature and then maps, the already set picture that was though often very far from reality and that, as Naipaul comments, "seemed to stress our smallness and isolation... The capital served as a master text, the standard work of reference."[446]

Nevertheless, this long-ago mapped city (or any other geographical space) was for the post-colonial subjects only hard to grasp. There is nothing like a proper or cartographic space, it is always an unstable terrain that must be stepped on cautiously. Let us remind once again the already mentioned Gibreel's attempt to redeem the city of London in Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*:

> Gibreel, deludedly power-drunk, believes he can go forth and redeem the city armed only with celestial powers and a London map which, authoritative in its reputation, dotted with illustrations of established

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[444] Nadeem Aslam, *Maps for Lost Lovers,* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 2005) 268.
[445] Sukhdev Sandhu, *London Calling,* (London: Harper Perennial 2004) 188.
[446] Sandhu, p. 197.

landmarks, and listing thousands of street names in alphabetical sequence, will help him to perform the task.[447]

As Rushdie suggests in this novel, to map the city, one must first dispense with real maps, to try to seize the space by means of one's own strategy. One of them could be renaming, remapping of the space, to make it more familiar and home-like, such as in Aslam's novel:

> As in Lahore, a road in this town is named after Goethe. There is a Park Street here as in Calcutta, a Malabar Hill as in Bombay, and a Naag Tolla Hill as in Dhaka. Because it was difficult to pronounce the English names, the men who arrived in this town in the 1950's had re-christened everything that they saw before them. They had come from across the Subcontinent, lived together ten to a room, and the name that one of them happened to give to a street or landmark was taken up by the others, regardless of where they themselves were from. But over the decades, as more and more people came, the various nationalities of the Subcontinent have changed the names according to the specific country they themselves are from – Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan. Only one name has been accepted by every group, remaining unchanged. It's the name of the town itself. Dasht-e-Tanhaii. The wilderness of Solitude. The desert of Loneliness.[448]

One of the most interesting strategies as for settling is provided by Naipaul who being aware of an unreliable and tricky character of his own vision and the world around him decides he must first of all learn to see afresh. Naipaul, similarly to Rushdie, knows how mobile the notion of home can be, that it is, as Susheila Nasta states: "Both blessing and a curse, an illusionary place constructed through myths and fragments of migrant's imagination."[449]

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[447] Sandhu, p. 368.
[448] Nadeem Aslam, *Maps for Lost Lovers,* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 2005) 29.
[449] Susheila Nasta, *Home Truths – Fictions of the South Asian Diaspora in Britain,* (New York: Palgrave 2002) 1.

Due to the above mentioned romance of England, due to "the great weight of imperial history and culture contrasted with the ridiculous and disorderly existence of the half-made places of the world"[450] the post-colonial migrants feel uncertain, fragile: "It takes some time, till his vision clarifies, becomes sharper, declines and delivers more precise knowledge. Only then can the traveller see what was always there, but what he could not with his untrained eye see clearly." [451] Only when getting rid of all colonial romance can the post-colonial subject settle and appreciate what the ex-Mother country can offer.

5.2.2. Too Late to Come: Homing in V.S. Naipaul's *The Enigma of Arrival*

5.2.2.1. Introduction

Contrary to the previously analyzed Kiran Desai's novel, which was not a debut, but still a work of a novice, V. S. Naipaul when writing his novel *The Enigma of Arrival* was a highly established and acknowledged author of both fiction and non-fiction, mainly travelogues. Born in 1932 in Trinidad as the eldest son of a second generation Indian, he was privileged enough to study at Oxford University. Not yet 18 years of age he underwent a journey of thousands of his predecessors from a still colonial space to the Mother Country. Though originally meant to return, he stayed in Britain and never returned back home for longer than a few days.

When starting to work on this rather unusual literary piece of work, Naipaul had published apart from numerous non-fiction books three highly acclaimed comic portraits of Trinidad society, *A Mystic Masseur* (1957), *Miguel Street* (1959) and *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961) that won several renowned literary prizes and more importantly provided for the author financially. The 1967 novel *The Mimic Man* was of a more serious kind. It dealt primarily with identity issues and a necessary strategy of migrants when wanting to assimilate in Britain successfully. Naipaul's shift towards serious themes was then crowned with the 1987 novel *The Enigma of Arrival* that had remained so far a rather unique phenomenon in both British and postcolonial fiction.

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[450] Roger Bromley, *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2000) 6.
[451] Bromley, p. 5.

Difficult to read, difficult to class within any literary category, it is nevertheless a fundamental work of a modern diasporic novel that, contrary to dozens literary works dealing with similar topic, chose a pioneering way of treating the theme.

When reading period reviews, usually negative ones, there are few common perceptions. Most authors comment on a non-literary form of the novel, on its meditative character, on its lack of literary characters, events, dialogues. As they agree with Salman Rushdie's statement in *The Guardian*: "The very subject of the novel is the author's consciousness, its reformation by the act of migration."[452] Staying with Rushdie, we will get another commentary, a rather unusual one that will help us to make a picture of the book without any further knowledge. In his review in *The Guardian* he wrote: "It is one of the saddest books I have read in a long while." He commented also on "its tone of unbroken melancholy" [453].

Naipaul's novel is divided into five parts, "Jack's Garden", "The Journey", "Ivy", "Rooks" and "The Ceremony of Farewell". The second one, "The Journey", is an exception, since it is unlike the rest of the book more epic depicting his journey to England, beginning of his literary career and everything which preceded his long stay in his Wiltshire cottage. It is logically debatable to what extent *The Enigma of Arrival* is autobiographical. If it can be a question of controversy in other literary works, *The Enigma of Arrival* provides the reader with so many parallels to author's real life and circumstances that any attempts to deny author's role as both the narrator and only protagonist must go in vain.

5.2.2.2. Going There

The narrator arrives in Britain to study and to start a literary career. It is an intellectual migration rather than an economic one, which, as the narrator admits "had given me the English language as my own, a particular kind of education. This had partly seeded my wish to be a writer in a particular mode and had committed me to the literary career I had been following in England for twenty years."[454] In spite of a rather

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[452] Salman Rushdie, "A Sad Pastoral," review of the novel, *The Guardian,* 13 March 1987, 25 March 2012: http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/1987/mar/13/fiction.vsnaipaul.
[453] Both Rushdie, "A Sad Pastoral".
[454] V. S. Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* (London: Picador 2011) 55.

unusual motivation of the narrator to come to Britain there is a common background, common fate that he shares with most migrants. It is a "smallness" of his previous life in Trinidad, limits of his education and knowledge that as he realizes will necessarily make his homing-in in Britain more difficult.

> He knew little about his community in Trinidad, he knew nothing of other communities. He had only prejudices of his time, in that colonial, racially mixed setting. He was profoundly ignorant. He hadn't been to a restaurant, hated the idea of eating food from foreign hands. Yet at the same time he had dreamed of fulfilment in a foreign country.[455]

Wishing to succeed in a new world he decides to break away from an old life, old world: "A family farewell in the morning, thousands of miles away: a farewell to my past, my colonial past and peasant Asiatic past."[456]

Nevertheless after several hours, he quite essentially realizes that he left with too great expectations, underestimating the isolation he lived in, being divided from a great world both geographically and culturally. After just 24 hours he finds out that even well-known places and objects are suddenly unfamiliar and remote. He buys a copy of *The New York Times*. Reading it for the first time, he feels to his great shock that to be able to read it, to understand, you must first have the knowledge. There was only one story in the whole newspaper to which he could respond; because it dealt with an experience he was sharing: unreasonably cool and grey weather for the end of July in NY. The rest was a mystery. Something, as he admits, which "made me feel a stranger."[457]

Similar feeling he experiences when coming somewhere he has always dreamed of – a real bookstore. However he is forced to admit the imperfections of his education and reading experience. There were only a few books he had read, a few he had known about. He looks for something familiar, but recognizes only a few then.

> To enter this New York bookshop was to find myself among unhallowed names. I was travelling to be a writer, but this world of modern writing

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[455] Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* p. 120
[456] Naipaul, p. 122.
[457] Naipaul, p. 125.

and publishing I had walked into was not something I was in touch with. And among all these unfamiliar, unhallowed names, I looked for the familiar, the classics, the uniform series, the very things I had looked at in the dark colonial emporia of Port Spain.[458]

He finds one book that was recommended to him by an English teacher. He fails to be able to understand it. He realizes that his education had been abstract, that he was studying things too remote from his reality, such as French classical drama, without having any idea of the country. He finds all the things he dealt with so feverishly at school are alien, they don't have any connection with the reality.

> *South Wind*! But it remained unread. My first attempt to read it was like all attempts I made later: it showed me that – like the books of Aldous Huxley and D. H. Lawrence and certain other contemporary writers whose names had come to me through my father or through teachers at school – this book with a young man called Denis and a bishop, and an island called Nepenthe, was alien, far from anything in my experience, and beyond my comprehension. But the alienness of a book, though it might keep me from reading it (I never read beyond the first chapter of *South Wind*), did not prevent me from admitting it. The very alienness, the inaccessibility, was like a promise of romance – a reward, some way in the future, for making myself a writer.[459]

5.2.2.3. The Language Was Mine, the Tradition Wasn't[460]

At this point it is necessary to mention once again the epistemic violence, represented mainly by language and literature and their impact upon colonial/postcolonial subjects. The colonial obsession with classical literature and masterful command of language has been already analyzed; Naipaul nevertheless points out a fundamental consequence of this colonial practice along with blind adoption of someone else's culture and values. In his essay "Jasmine" which provides a critique of

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[458] Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival*, p.128.
[459] Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* p.129.
[460] See: V. S. Naipaul, *The Overcrowded Barracoon* (London: Penguin Books 1976) 26.

formal practices of the study of literature and which, in Fawzia Mustafa's words shows "the alienating effects he believes they achieve"[461] he tries to explain a "built-in alienation that a writer from a colony must overcome in order to bridge the experiential separation bred by colonial marginality."[462]

Mustafa also mentions a rather essential strategy of colonial subjects when dealing with their beloved classical literature, their quite absurd transposition into a well known setting which should make them more familiar.

As of Naipaul he says:

> As a young colonial in Trinidad reading novels of the English literary tradition, he (Naipaul) developed the habit of imaginatively transposing the stories into a Trinidadian setting, thereby engaging in the literature without the interference of knowing about England or its parochial concerns.[463]

In *The Enigma of Arrival* Naipaul admits the kind of strategy he applied when he read Dickens. On the one side it helped him and enriched his fantasy, on the other it made his settling in Britain worse since he had to face another clash of his fantasy world, fantasy England and a reality.

> I think I transferred the Dickens characters to people I knew. Though with a half or a quarter of my mind I knew that Dickens was all English, yet my Dickens cast, the cast in my head, was multi-racial.) That ability to project what I read on to Trinidad, the colonial, tropical, multiracial world which was the only world I knew, that ability diminished as I grew older. It was partly as a result of my increasing knowledge, self-awareness and my embarrassment the workings of my fantasy. It was partly also because of the writers. Very few had the universal child's eye of Dickens. And that gift of fantasy became inoperable as soon as I came to England in 1950. When I was surrounded by the reality, English

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[461] Fawzia Mustafa, *V. S. Naipaul,* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press 1995) 88.
[462] Mustafa, p. 89.
[463] Ibid.

literature ceased to be universal, since it ceased to be the subject of fantasy.[464]

Naipaul had already expressed this doubtful approach towards literature and its representation of reality for similar people as himself in his fundamental essay on literature and literary tradition "Jasmine". Similarly as here with Dickens, he treats in this essay a simple object, a flower – the daffodil[465]. Quite a common thing for some, for him something alien and unknown which required fantasy to imagine and which is often bound with a false interpretation: "A pretty little flower, no doubt. But we have never seen it. Could the poem have any meaning for us?"[466]

What this all stands for is obvious: it is the distance, geographical, but mainly cultural one that alienates the narrator from the world that he wishes to enter. Literature can serve on the one hand as the source of knowledge, but in this case it has a totally opposite effect. It only deepens his insecurity since he logically has to ask if all the interpretations of the world and reality depicted in the books are so unreal and misleading. Is not everything recorded in the literature a mere fantasy?

Nevertheless it did not concern only literature and its influence. Everything he experienced in Trinidad, everything he thought had a clear connection with the life over the ocean, turned finally to be a mere fantasy, too, or something so outdated that it was worthless his imagination. He mentions at this point popular enamelled signs and advertisements that were used as decorations in the shops. However, they were pre-war, thus had no connection with after war goods offered to sale. These signs were symbols standing for the world in the distant heaven.

> So I was used to living in a world where the signs were without meaning,
> or without the meaning intended by their makers. It was of a piece with
> the abstract, arbitrary nature of my education, like my ability to study
> French and Russian cinema without seeing a film, an ability which was,

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[464]V. S. Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* (London: Picador 2011) 186.
[465] It is related to William Wordsworth´s famous poem "Daffodils:or, I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud".
[466] V. S. Naipaul, *The Overcrowded Barracoon,* (London: Penguin Books 1976) 23.

as I have said, like a man trying to get to know a city from its street map alone.[467]

As mentioned several times in this thesis, the migrants idealized the most the metropolis (indeed predominantly due to its representation in literature) and at the same time also the British countryside. Both became, in the dreams of the subjects, a modern Canaan. London was a city full of opportunities, full of dignified, educated gentlemen and beautiful ladies, grand architecture, vast manors and Victorian houses. The countryside was a land of idyll, of Gray, Goldsmith, Hardy, Austen, with flocks of sheep on green meadows, picturesque churches and cemeteries and with countrymen who were inseparable from the land and who loved it dearly.

5.2.2.4. Too Late to Come

Arriving to a new place is always harsh. Naipaul's narrator is no exception. He, as he says "had come to London as to a place he knew very well. But the city was strange and unknown... city as strange and un-read-about as the Englishness of South Wind."[468] The city he dreamt about was again only a concept, something created in his fantasy on the basis of his reading experience, mainly Dickens.

> What did I know of London? There was an essay by Charles Lamb – in a school about going to the theatres. There were two or three lovely sentences – in another school book – about the Embankment, from "Lord Arthur Savile's Crime". But Sherlock Holmes's Baker Street was just its name; and the London references in Somerset Maugham and Waugh and others didn't create pictures in the mind, because they assumed too much knowledge in the reader. The London I knew imaginatively possessed was the London I had got from Dickens. It was Dickens – and his illustrators – who gave me the illusion of knowing the city.[469]

The narrator indeed knows well that such an attitude towards reality is wrong, that it is doomed to failure and disillusionment. Yet his dreams and ideas, though false,

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467 V. S. Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* (London: Picador 2011) 142.
468 V. S. Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* (London: Picador 2011) 146.
469 Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* p. 144.

are the only things he has when he finds courage to set on journey. Contrary to his predecessors he does not idealize his homeland, particularly India. As he comments "I didn't look back to India, couldn't do so; my ambition caused me to look ahead and outwards, to England."[470]

When he was in Trinidad, he held himself back, he was preparing for life at the centre of things. He was looking forward so much to all that grandness. The first encounter with a little gruesome reality was a contrast between the size, power he had expected and later found in the area around Holborn viaduct, the Embankment, Trafalgar Square, and the boarding house in Earls Court. He is not able to find all the glory he had read and heard about, he expected and dreamt about. Where had it gone?

> So I grew to feel that the grandeur belonged to the past; that I had come
> to England at the wrong time; that I had come too late to find the
> England, the heart of empire, which (like a provincial, from a far corner
> of the empire) I had created in my fantasy.[471]

Nothing is as he wished it to be, all his certainty had gone and all his previous life seems to be in vain. He walks about London and finds no joy, he expected the great city to leap out at him and possess him, the city he had longed so much to be in. The only thing he feels however is loneliness, sadness and weariness. All the grandness is over, had gone long ago.

5.2.2.5. Salutary Countryside

Naipaul and his narrator seek refuge in the country, in Wiltshire, a place that is more historical and "English" than any other place in Britain. The narrator could not have chosen a more traditional and literary place indeed. Wiltshire is the place of historical Stonehenge, Salisbury and first of all a location where many literary works were set, e.g. works of Thomas Hardy or Oliver Goldsmith. No wonder that the narrator treats the landscape with a holy respect; it is a place that is for him an embodiment of historical timelessness, that still preserves all the values he could not find in the city.

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[470] Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* p. 142.
[471] Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* p. 141.

As C. C. Barfoot quite correctly points out he could not have found any better place, "nothing more English, more close to the centre of an indigenous culture, more secure, more unsettled by politics of Empire, more undisturbed by the modern world and its decolonizing and ex-colonial violence."[472]

Yet his attitude and blind admiration are rather problematic. As Helen Hayward remarks his response to England "both conforms to and defies at the same time traditional conceptions of it."[473] His perception is also based primarily upon binaries, such as past and present, town and country, idea and reality. The contrast between idea and reality is crucial since it shows a typical approach of migrants towards England. Naipaul's narrator is no exception. He comes to the country that is due a Romance of England still vivid in his homeland and enforced to him by books and education a reincarnation of a true paradise. He retains this false illusion even after staying 20 years there, of living in the reality. As Robert Lee comments, "this colonial image is, at times, more real than anything in front of him."[474]

His perception of the valley is also due to all the literary burden "literary" too. "He reconstructs it in his narrative as a metaphor and fantasy of an essential England, and places himself in it as the stumbling stranger coming to knowledge."[475]

When he first encounters the valley, its life, people, rhythm, he feels uncertain, humble, especially when "his ridiculous and disorderly existence is contrasted with a great weight of imperial history and culture."[476] He feels inappropriate in such a place; he focuses on his strangeness, especially when face to face Jack and similar people who he takes as real natives, rooted and connected with the place and its history.

> I felt that my presence in that old valley was part of something like an
> upheaval, a change in the course of the history of the country.... Jack
> himself I considered to be part of the view: I saw his life as genuine,

[472] C. C. Barfoot, *Shades of Empire in Colonial and Post-colonial literatures,* eds. C. C. Barfoot and Theo D´Haen, (Amsterdam: Rodopi 1993) 252.
[473] Helen Hayward, *The Enigma of V. S. Naipaul: Sources and Contexts,* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2002) 40.
[474] Robert A. Lee, *Other Britain, Other British: Contemporary Multicultural Fiction,* (London: Pluto Press 1995) 9.
[475] Lee.
[476] Lee.

rooted, fitting: man fitting the landscape. I now saw him as a remnant of the past (the undoing of which my own presence portended.)[477]

The narrator wishes to recreate the past in the countryside that seems like the last place preserving old values – a sort of timeless oasis. However the harder he tries the more he finds out that he was wrong, that he has come too late. He is forced to admit as Timothy Bewes remarked: "that England, the country of arrival, is a post-imperial world still coming to terms with its economical decline and loss of cultural influence."[478] He arrived in the world past its peak.

The narrator wishes to find a landscape of Wordsworth, to get unified with the nature, to share a similar experience as the narrator of Thoreau's *Walden*. He dreams of perfection but slowly finds out there is nothing like a paradise, no ideal rural England. England's pastoral heartland is as much subject to decay as its metropolis. Everything he sees is obsolence, temporality. The Wiltshire landscape, to which he relocated

> ...does nothing to alienate the tyrannical unease and dissatisfaction that hobbled him in the capital. He learns that the countryside is not immune to history and that those who live there also have to cope with flux, change, death.[479]

When he looks round he sees only ruins, dereliction, things that have to yield to a progress. It is beehives, stables, gardens of the manor house and first of all the manor in the grounds of which he spent 20 years of his life and a decline of the glory of which he witnessed:

> (Beehives) Abandoned now, unexplained, they grey boxes that were worth no one's while to take away were a little mysterious in the unfenced openness.[480]

> But the sheep-shearing was from the past. Like the old farm buildings. Like the caravan that wasn't going to move again. Like the barn where grain was no longer stored.[481]

[477] V. S. Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* (London: Picador 2011) 19.
[478] Timothy Bewes, *The Event of Postcolonial Shame,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2011) 88.
[479] Sukhdev Sandhu, *London Calling,* (London: Harper Perennial 2004) 388.
[480] V. S. Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* (London: Picador 2011) 10.

The perfection is symbolized by a manor house. This has always represented the very essence of Englishness; the narrator was familiar with it from his favourite classical literature where it was presented to readers as the centre of local life, as something deserving admiration – faultless architecture, flawless gardens, and dignity all around. The narrator expects the manor house he lives nearby to be exactly the same. The reality surprises him. At the same time he, however, realizes that such perfection would have been too much for him; he would not have fitted into it, would have felt even more alien than he felt at that moment.

> It could have been said that the perfection of the house in whose grounds I lived had been arrived at forty or fifty years before, when the Edwardian house was still fairly new, its family life fuller, when the ancillary buildings had a function and the garden was looked after. But in that perfection, occurring at a time of empire, there would have been no room for me. The builder of the house and the designer of the garden could not have imagined, with their world view, that at a later time someone like me would have been in the grounds, and that I would feel I was having the place – the cottage, the empty picturesque houses around the lawn, the grounds, the wild gardens – at its peak, living in a beauty that hadn't been planned for.[482]

He couldn't have lived in a place of a total perfection, but felt familiar with its dilapidated form. He was used to such a view, from his home Trinidad; there was a general uncertainty, a colonial history present but slowly dying.

> That idea of ruin and dereliction, of out-of-placeness, was something I felt about myself, attached to myself: a man from another hemisphere, another background, coming to rest in middle life in the cottage of a half neglected estate, an estate full of reminders of its Edwardian past, with few connections with the present. An oddity among estates and big houses of the valley, and I a further oddity in its grounds, I felt unanchored and strange. Everything I saw in those early days, as I took

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[481] Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* p. 32.
[482] Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* p. 55.

my surroundings in, everything I saw on my daily walk, beside the windbreak or along the wide grassy way, made that feeling more acute.[483]

His surprise at deterioration of the country has another ground, too. Having adored England so much, having taken it as something granted, a constant, having seen it in a similar way as walls of the manor, permanent, durable, solid, he is forced to admit there was nothing like a permanence, neither in solid world around him, nor in people and their values.

The ruined garden, nearly abandoned manor house and its declining landlord are in the same process of change as whole England. They had been on one side a symbol of perfection, on another though also of a binding passivity, rigidity, that froze the land and its inhabitants.

> But that idea of unchanging world was wrong. Change was constant. People died; people grew old; people changed houses; houses came up for sale. That was one kind of change. My own presence in the valley, in the cottage of the manor, was an aspect of another kind of change.... Everyone was ageing; everything was being renewed or discarded.[484]

He replaced "the idea of decay, the idea of ideal which can be the cause of so much grief, by the idea of flux."[485]The valley was not a place of a frozen perfection, of rigid traditions. It was first of all the place of work, not ideas, place where people came to earn their living. The people there were not so much different from him. They were also migrants, most of them came to the valley from a distance and after they had fulfilled their task, duty, they left again. This is the case of the Phillipses, of Pitton the gardener and first and foremost of Jack, the man who was probably the closest to the narrator and whom he admired the most.

Jack was for the narrator a true embodiment of a tradition and old values. The man who tried to preserve old beauty, who seemed to be rooted in the place. As late as after his sudden death the narrator realizes that with Jack everything old had definitely

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[483] Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* p. 12.
[484] Naipaul, p. 32.
[485]Naipaul, p. 304.

gone. All other people's bonds with the place are only tenuous; they are nothing more than labour migrants, whose moral qualities are questionable, too.

5.2.2.6. Learning to See Once Again

The whole novel of *The Enigma of Arrival* is both a piece on the journey experience, on settling and assimilation, but at the same time a book on a rather painful writing process and on literary seeking for oneself.

The narrator/Naipaul starts as a true mimic man and writer, too much influenced by education and literature, which treats the world in an imitative way trying to find a similarity with a familiar reality. When such a strategy fails, he is forced to seek a new one. As Timothy Bewes describes, it is a process, shift from "logic of imitation and mimicry towards logic of becoming, of immanence."[486]

At the beginning his vision is blurred, due to the heritage he bears in him, due to his prejudice. However, all the decline and change deliver more precise knowledge. All the trauma of journey and his own strangeness and inappropriateness open his eyes, his vision gets purified, and it becomes sharper. He attempts to see beyond all the disorder and chaos. "The migrant traveller, by looking fiercely, now sees what was always there but which his untrained eye could not see."[487]

He has to get rid of all his illusions, both of the country, the landscape, and people. Only then he can learn to see, to find a true relationship with it. From seeing and not knowing what was in front of him he slowly gets to a phase when he starts getting to know his surroundings, only after having realized its mutable, unstable character and man-made origin. As Salman Rushdie wrote in his review of the book, "the immigrant must invent the earth beneath his feet."[488]

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[486]V. S. Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* (London: Picador 2011) 94.
[487]Robert A. Lee, *Other Britain, Other British: Contemporary Multicultural Fiction,* (London: Pluto Press 1995) 5.
[488]Salman Rushdie, "A Sad Pastoral," review of the novel, *The Guardian*, Friday13 March 1987, 23 February 2012. http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/1987/mar/13/fiction.vsnaipaul.

My own time here was coming to an end, my time in the manor cottage and in that particular part of the valley, my second childhood of seeing and learning, my second life, so far away from my first.[489]

He once again makes use of the nature, its cycles, to illustrate his coming to knowledge. Having freed himself from all binding connections with his past he is coming to terms with the world around him, flowers, seasons, that start having a meaning for him having ceased to be mere signs, literary images without any connection with reality.

I saw with the eyes of pleasure. But knowledge came slowly to me. It was not like the almost instinctive knowledge that had come to me as a child of the plants and flowers of Trinidad; it was like learning a second language. If I knew then what I know now, I would be able to reconstruct the seasons of Jack's garden. But I can remember only simple things like the bulbs of spring; the planting out of annuals like marigolds and petunias; the delphiniums and lupins of high summer; and flowers like the gladiolus which, to my delight, flourished in both the climate of England and the tropical climate of Trinidad. There were also the roses trained about tall, stout poles, with hundreds of blooms; and then, on those small apple trees, always pruned down, the wonder of the first fruit swelling in the autumn, touched in that cool season with the warmest tints, and looking like the apple trees in a children's book or a school book seen long ago.[490]

5.2.2.7. The Enigma of Arrival

Naipaul borrowed this title from a collection of reproductions of paintings by Giorgio de Chirico he found short shortly after having arrived in the valley. He is impressed especially by one called "The Enigma of Arrival". "He felt, that in an indirect, poetical way, the title referred to something in his own experience:"[491]

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[489] Naipaul, V. S. *The Enigma of Arrival*. London: Picador 2011, p. 93.
[490] Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* p. 30.
[491] Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* p. 105.

There was a wharf, beyond the top of the mast of antique vessel, walls, gateways, otherwise deserted street with only two people, both muffled, one perhaps the person who has arrived, the other perhaps a native of the port. The scene is of desolation and mystery: it speaks of the mystery of arrival.[492]

Right after his arrival to the valley and discovery of the book he planned being inspired by this painting to write a story set in classical times in the Mediterranean. It would be about arrival, initial excitement. However this would gradually make way to a feeling of getting nowhere. The narrator would "lose his sense of mission. His feeling of adventure would give way to panic. He would want to escape, to get back to the quayside and his ship. But he would not know how."[493] Then a miracle would happen. He would come across a door, would open it and thanks God would end up right on the quayside of arrival. Nevertheless something would be wrong. There would be no ship. And his life would be over.

Though it might seem as a mere subject of the novel, it has much more in common with the narrator's life than he is willing first to admit. Nevertheless he had to later accept the fact that this story was in fact the story he had been already writing, his own life story. "It was also an attempt to find a story for, to give coherence to, a dream or nightmare which for a year or so had been unsettling me."[494]

He is worried that all his years in England have not brought any result that his writing career has not made any progress that all the effort had been in vain. That after all that time he would be again at the very beginning having lost though all the connection with home and having wasted 20 years of his life.

For years, in that far-off island whose human history I had been discovering and writing about, I had dreamed of coming to England. But my life in England had been savourless.... And just at once at home I had

[492] Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* p. 106.
[493] Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* p.107.
[494] Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* p.108.

dreamed of being in England, so for years in England I had dreamed of leaving England.[495]

The narrator's life in England is a permanent struggle, for a peace, fulfilment, inspiration, seeking for familiarity and belonging. It is a quest that most of the time seems in vain.

5.2.2.8. Conclusion

Naipaul's novel *The Enigma of Arrival* is indeed a pioneering piece of work in many aspects. First of all in its form, more meditative than epic that is in the genre of postcolonial fiction rather rare. Though he depicts similar themes as many of his literary contemporaries, his contribution is more lyrical, lacking real plot, dialogues, turns. It is, as C. C. Barefoot writes "a meditation in the midst of the most archetypal of English landscapes"[496], "a contemplation of place, time, decay and change – of fateful and fatal interventions of empire, of present lives surviving and arising out of abandoned pasts."[497]

However it was Salman Rushdie who pointed out probably the most striking thing in the novel. Apart from its sadness, obsession with death, decline and decay, there is another thing totally missing in it, love.

There is one word I cannot find nowhere in the text, "love". A life without love, or one in which love has been buried so deep that it can't come out, is very much what this book is about and what makes it so very, very sad.[498]

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[495] Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival,* p.110.
[496] C. C. Barfoot, *Shades of Empire in Colonial and Post-colonial literatures,* eds. C. C. Barfoot and Theo D´Haen, (Amsterdam: Rodopi 1993) 252.
[497] Barfoot, p. 250.
[498] Salman Rushdie, "A Sad Pastoral,"review of the novel, *The Guardian*, Friday13 March 1987, 23 February 2012, http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/1987/mar/13/fiction.vsnaipaul

6. Conclusion

This thesis was originally designed with the objective to present an analysis of works of the so-called postcolonial literary canon[499], particularly of those depicting issues such as diaspora and displacement[500]. As it turned out later on, the place concepts were in both fiction and postcolonial discourse closely bound with issues of identity and possible strategies that colonial/postcolonial subjects had to adopt when undergoing a process of migration and succeeding assimilation in a new country. That is also why a great attention was paid to theoretical background, mainly to development of the postcolonial discourse with respect to key issues as it anticipates the reflection of these issues in fiction and helps to analyze some of elementary works of the postcolonial literary canon.

Motivation and objectives of the thesis have been already addressed in the Introduction[501] together with criteria for selection of both primary and secondary sources. Some pitfalls of this field of study have been also mentioned, mainly a relative ambivalence of classification, particularly of fiction and an astounding number of books which are every year published and can be classed within this genre, both in the Indian subcontinent and Britain, too.[502]

Apart from a fundamental theoretical background that is provided in two theoretical passages of this dissertation, each dealing with one principle concept[503], the work is focused mainly upon a close reading of four novels by authors generally classed within postcolonial literature. Their selection was given both by issues analyzed but also

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[499] The terminological problem of classification of this literary genre is closely analyzed in the introduction of this thesis, predominantly the ambivalence and misleading character of the term "postcolonial". Closer see: 1.2. "Delimitation of the Postcolonial Field of Study, Historical Perspective, New Literature".

[500] See the chapter 4."Place and Displacement".

[501] See the chapter 1.1. "Motivation" and the 1.3. "Structure of the Work, Theoretical and Literary Objectives, Methodology".

[502] The reasons for giving preference to the works coming either from the Indian Subcontinent or by authors of South Asian origin have been already explained. Due to their close connection with England and to a certain extent surviving colonial legacy they seem to be more consistent than say literary works of African or Caribbean authors; they share common themes and issues relevant for this dissertation work are also much more distinct than in works from other regions. Though this selection is of no evaluative character from the literary quality point of view.

[503] See the chapter 2."Identity in Postcolonial Discourse" and chapter 4. "Place and Displacement".

with respect to certain symmetry, since they are works of authors of different literary generations, with totally disparate migration experiences and backgrounds. Though seemingly dissimilar, the reading of these works strives to prove that their classification within the canon is correct: that an extent of common topics is not coincidental and that postcolonial writers indeed share objectives and themes relevant for their work. Apart from fundamental issues of postcolonial identity with necessary questions of belonging/not belonging, the extent to which postcolonial subjects adopt the standards of the majority society, potential strategies making assimilation easier such as mimicry or hybridity theories bound with place have been analyzed, too, e.g. concepts of home, migration as such and an attitude to space in general[504].

When using again Monika Fludernik's classification of the diasporic fictions[505], we might discover that novels selected for particular analyses belong to first two categories primarily. V. S. Naipaul's novel *The Enigma of Arrival* is a typical representative of a traditional or assimilation story meeting most of the criteria. It is the work of an author of the first migrant generation; it primarily focuses upon journey, arrival in Britain and "homing in"[506] together with succeeding assimilation. It brings about an inevitable clash of dreams and harsh reality, supported by idealized perceptions of Britain and false expectations.

Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* is an archetype of a multicultural novel depicting a life within a relatively established and open native community but also clashes between generations and interrelations with the majority. Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* is slightly problematic as for a definite classification since his characters undergo a transformation, a change that affects not only their life as such but their identity, too. Saladin Chamcha would be more of a traditional character facing

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[504] The chapter 4.2."Place Concepts: Cartography, Empty Places etc." might be helpful that provides basic survey of theories and strategies based on place and displacement.

[505] See the chapter 4.6. "Diaspora Fictions – Common Settings and Central Themes Summary and Chart" that presents one of the most helpful classifications of the diasporic fiction not based primarily on authors and their origin and generation but mainly upon themes and objectives, i.e. Fludernik´s classification of diasporic writing. It is based first and foremost on her essay "Imagined Communities as Imaginary Homelands: The South-Asian Disapora in Fiction,"*Diaspora and Multiculturalism: Common Traditions and New Developments,* ed. Monika Fludernik, (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi 2003) 261-285.

[506] Refers to the chapter "Homing In" in Susheila Nasta´s *Home Truths – Fictions of the South Asian Diaspora in Britain,* (New York: Palgrave 2002) 172.

assimilation crisis, Gibreel Farishta's character would be of a more multicultural kind if he were not so much connected with Britain. Nevertheless his mental deterioration makes any definite labelling impossible since he vacillates between two places, past and present, as well as memories, dreams and reality. Since this novel operates still within the binary subcontinent X Britain, it cannot be seen as a multicultural novel since it is too much focused on the journey experience and on characters trapped in between two worlds.

As for Kiran Desai, her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* is to a certain extent beyond any strict classification since it due to variety of characters and places covers more issues at the same time. Jemu Patel would be thought to be classic representative of a traditional assimilation story similarly to Biju (though he undergoes a journey to America and not Britain), his granddaughter Sai undergoes a cosmopolitan assimilation story. It is questionable though how much this criterion of Fludernik can be applied to characters staying exclusively in subcontinent.

As we may see the works selected belong neither to the diasporic category nor the cosmopolitan one. The reason can be that they are either literary debuts (as *The Buddha of Suburbia*) or the works that served the authors as a means to come to terms with their migrant experience or origin (Naipaul, Rushdie and partly Desai, too). When we study this genre closer, we may see a trend that there is usually only one book, mostly the debut, in the particular work of individual authors that directly covers the issues relevant for the identity of the postcolonial subject. If they continue their literary career, the writers often strive to set on a different path, leaving behind all postcolonial experience and choosing more traditional themes. Let us mention the very successful debut of Monica Ali *Brick Lane*, Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* or Hari Kunzru's *The Impressionist* that covered typically postcolonial issues and became very successful, both financially and with the readership and critics, too. Their authors decided later to change their objectives completely. With less established authors such a change was not a happy one, the already well known and

generally acknowledged authors such as Kureishi or Rushdie succeeded, though they were not so successful with these traditional books as with the postcolonial ones.[507]

At this point it is necessary to return to the four novels analyzed in this thesis and primarily to strategies adopted by characters/postcolonial subjects. As it has been already shown the subjects/characters of the novels had to struggle with which assimilation strategy to adopt as they encountered certain hostility in Britain. At first adopting the shared cultural identity concept[508], based on shared location, similarity and unity they had to decide. In order to survive and assimilate they wanted to get rid of their "difference" and adopt the identity of the majority. By means of mimicking a seemingly singular British identity they wanted to become "good and proper Englishmen"[509], to merge with the crowd. After facing harsh rejection by the majority that on the one side called for maximal assimilation of migrants, but on the other pointed out all aspects of their difference such as colour, language command, customs etc. another strategy was applied. After having realized it was impossible just to switch from one identity to another, there was time to accept the fragmented character of the present postcolonial reality. Let us be reminded of Stuart Hall once again:

> It is not possible to speak about one single experience, one identity without acknowledging the other side. It does not perceive identity as a fixed origin to which we can make some final and absolute return, but as something which at the same time exists but also is becoming, coming into being, something which is in progress, something, which can be at the same time similar and different.[510]

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[507] See Monica Ali, *Brick Lane*, (London: Doubleday 2003), Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*, (London: Harper Perennial 2004), Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*, (London: Penguin 2001), Hari Kunzru, *The Impressionist*, (London: Hamish Hamilton 2002). After unprecedented success of these books their succeeding works were affected by false expectations of the readership. Even such authors as Rushdie or Smith had to face a negative reaction irrespective of quality of the particular book when writing more traditional pieces lacking any "ethnic" issues, e.g. *The Enchantress of Florence* or *On Beauty*.
[508] See Stuart Hall´s classification of cultural identity, part. in the chapter 2.3.1 "Introduction," quoting from Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader,* eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf 1993) 393.
[509] See: Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses,* (New York: Henry Holt and Company 1997) 43.
[510] Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader,* eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf 1993) 396.

This new emerging from the in-between position, based on both similarity and difference, seemed to be the response. Not being based on an either-or rhetoric, on binarism prioritizing one and rejecting the other, this hybridity, e.g. something new, neither the one nor the other[511], was in the postcolonial discourse and when reflected in fiction, too, perceived as a definite solution that was based upon an active approach of subjects and was one that was not discriminating in principle.

The authors of the above analysed works have come to terms with this crucial phenomenon of the postcolonial reality to a great extent. All of them criticized directly or indirectly existing binarism: racism, surviving division of the world, a necessity to decide which identity to adopt. They all wrote about not belonging, about seeking a dignified way how to assimilate without losing one's past and memories. They cover a clear development of characters from initial enthusiasm before the journey, to a shock when encountering reality in Britain that was far from that imagined heaven[512] to the decision to adapt maximally usually by means of mimicry[513].

Yet as it is shown in the chapter 2.3.6. "The Failure of Hybridity" the yearned for balance was never to be achieved. Despite aimed originally as a way to escape binarism it still operated within its frameworks; instead of merging and mingling of boarders new norms were adopted, new restrictions came. The former easy solution turned thus as misleading revealing precariousness of postcolonial subjects and providing no definite answer to their seeking and questioning.

This ambivalence is present in all novels analyzed, too. Let us start with the most illustrative example, Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*. We follow development of his protagonist Karim from initial rejecting anything ethic and slight scorn for his father's conscious return to his roots. Nevertheless his personal and emotional instability brings him to the very same approach when he, being forced by his

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[511] See the chapter 2.3.5.3. "Hybridity", resp. Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* (New York: Routledge 1994) 21.

[512] See first of all the chapter 4.5. "Making Home in Britain" where this issue is interpreted from the theoretical point of view. Particular reflections in fiction are to be found first and foremost in the chapter 5.1.2.5. "Disillusionment" where Kiran Desai´s *The Inheritance of Loss* is closely analyzed and in 5.2.1.1. "Expectations versus Reality – Heavenly England X Sick Zone" in the study of V. S. Naipaul´s *The Enigma of Arrival*.

[513] See the chapter 2.3.5.4." Mimicry" where this identity strategy is dealt with thoroughly.

theatre career prospects, adopts the strategy of a perfomative identity – a conscious playing at being Indian. When scolded for overdoing, making fun of his origin, he partly withdraws. Nevertheless this impossibility of distinct taking sides, of being either British or Indian makes him even more insecure. Contrary to Changez, his brother Allie, Jamila or even his father Haroon, he is not able to accept the fragmented character of his personality. His development in the novel is not definite. At the very end he speaks of the future with a certain hope since he expects it to bring an answer which way to set on. From the perspective of the 21st century reader, it is in a way amusing since this better future never comes due to arrival of Margaret Thatcher and the intensifying clashes between the majority on one hand and minority diasporas on the other.

A similar ambivalence is present in Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. The author is strictly against any norms, he openly criticizes mimicry as a strategy that forces to adopt one identity and to suppress the other the result of which is a mere travesty. Rushdie advocates for accepting provisionality of postcolonial reality, he stresses out the process and change, the importance of conscious choice and transformation. However his conclusion is not unambiguous at all. It is far from freedom of choice. Gibreel Farishta, though in a totally deluded condition not being able to accept instability of the world around him commits suicide, Saladin Chamcha makes a surprising compromise and accepts his past reconciling with his father and returning to India.

Neither of the characters seems to have found the desired peace. Karim, Chamcha, but also Desai's Sai or Biju, even Naipaul's writer character are after all experience undergone again at the beginning. They only know they cannot rely on anything, they must accept volatility of the world and try to come to terms with it.

This unambiguity of personal development and lack of any definite answers can be also one of reasons why the postcolonial authors chose a different path with their other works. Rushdie's *The Enchantress of Florence*, Monica Ali's *Alentejo Blue*, Hari Kunzru's *Transmission* and his short stories or Zadie Smith's *On Beauty* are more of a cosmopolitan character where ethnicity plays some role, but usually only a marginal one (if the novels contain any ethnic element at all). Let us mention also Hanif Kureishi's

latest novel, *Something To Tell You*[514] that is often labelled as a sort of sequel to *The Buddha of Suburbia*. The ethnic origin of the main character is just one of the features that however does not bear any greater significance. He is of a South Asian origin, but the main focus is not on his identity, but much more upon his personal failure long time ago. It is about a moral dilemma, a personal crisis of a man in his forties and remorse. Situated once again in London and similarly to *The Buddha of Suburbia*, the novel depicts endless strolls of the protagonist around city, mainly night clubs and parties. It is much closer to say Martin Amis and his urban novels than typical diaspora London fiction.

This dissertation does not strive to present any close survey of contemporary postcolonial fiction as it is quite impossible due to the number of books published and ambivalence of the whole postcolonial literary canon. As explained above, the primary objective was to present some key issues of the postcolonial discourse and their particular reflection in fiction of authors first and foremost of the South Asian origin. It is obvious that the focus on two main areas of interest, identity and place and displacement concepts, brought a logical elimination of what would be analyzed concerning primary sources. Nevertheless the novels selected cover the relevant issues the best being indeed archetypal and immensely illustrative.

With the exception of Kiran Desai, they are works of an older literary generation. The youngest generation, say represented by Hari Kunzru, Gautam Malkani, Nadeem Aslam and many others brought into the genre of the postcolonial literature new topics that older authors consciously avoided. First, it is a harsh criticism, of both their migrant predecessors and the white majority, too, for the growing conservativism and racism[515]. Their works reflect changes in the diaspora, mainly differences and clashes between generations, particularly a growing tendency of the youngest generation to return to the roots, traditions and in many cases to an orthodox religion (which is often perceived negatively both from the side of the British majority but assimilated generation of their parents, too.) In addition the religion as such starts to

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[514] Hanif Kuresihi, *Something To Tell You*, (London: Faber and Faber 2008).
[515] Nadeem Aslam, *Maps for Lost Lovers,* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 2005).

play a significant role in fiction, too[516], together with an accent upon shared identity which can be interpreted, in a way, as a step back. They prefer sharing the identity with their fellow countrymen on the basis of a shared past and location and do not accept the shifting character of the reality.

This change in perception of one's identity would be a great theme for further research in this field of study. It would be interesting to compare e.g. identity issues as reflected in works of authors of the first or second generation with those of the youngest one, mainly the changes in strategies of functioning in the majority society. It would be necessary to answer such a question as why there is at present such an inclination to traditions together with religion, where the roots of growing violence on both sides are etc.

At the same time, it would be interesting for potential researchers to compare postcolonial literature in Britain and the works of postcolonial authors in America. In fact the term postcolonial literature is only rarely applied when speaking of works of authors of non-American origin. There does not exist any clear labelling. The authors, due to the fact they write in English, belong to the same canon as any American writer. Their works also deal with quite different issues than those of their British colleagues. Partly due to a completely disparate life experience and social and cultural climate in the USA, they are more of a cosmopolitan character and cover much more universal themes such as relationship problems, inter-generational conflicts or coming into terms with the American Dream. At this point it would be also suitable to mention that many British writers of ethnic origin (but also theoreticians, both British and of South Asian origin) left Britain and moved for good to America[517].

The events of 9/11 2001 in New York and July 2005 attacks in London public transport forced us to revise our vision of multiculturalism as such and brought a necessity to answer what the British identity at the beginning of the 21 century truly embodied. The approach on both sides in recent years, often heated and not impartial, has shown that not such a great cultural change has occurred since 22nd June 1948 when

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[516] Contrary to works of the 1st and 2nd generation authors whose attitude to religion and its reflection in their novels was mostly very weak.Their characters are usually bound by traditions but not any particular religious restrictions.
[517] E.g. Kiran Desai, Zadie Smith, Caryl Phillips, Salman Rushdie, Sukhdev Sandhu or Robert J.C.Young.

the SS Windrush discharged its Caribbean passengers in Tilbury[518]. It seems most endeavours for removing borders between the two worlds, i.e. the ex-colonial one and the one of the "Mother Country", have gone in vain. The possibility of staying in-between, of making use of both for creating something new seems also less and less probable. The most radical representatives of diasporas in Britain call for a total refusal of any Western values and lifestyle. The authorities, most recently David Cameron and his speech of February 2011 on the failure of multiculturalism quite problematically argued the UK needed a stronger "national identity"[519] which signalled a radical departure from the strategies of previous governments and a quite understandable return to clearly defined norms and rules. In particular, Cameron warned Muslim groups that "if they fail to endorse women's rights or promote integration, they will lose all government funding. All immigrants to Britain must speak English and schools will be expected to teach the country's common culture."[520] He also stated further on that:

> We have failed to provide a vision of society [to young Muslims] to which they feel they want to belong,... we have even tolerated segregated communities behaving in ways that run counter to our values. All this leaves some young Muslims feeling rootless. And the search for something to belong to and believe in can lead them to extremist ideology.[521]

The solution to this rather problematic situation will probably not be found overnight. Nevertheless as many theoreticians and politologists stress Britain is already a multicultural country and it cannot be changed under any condition. Nevertheless as the professor Bhikhu Parekh says when redefining multiculturalism:

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[518] June 22nd 1948, the day that the Windrush discharged its passengers at Tilbury, has become an important landmark in the history of modern Britain; and the image of the Caribbeans filing off its gangplank has come to symbolise many of the changes which have taken place here. Caribbean migrants have become a vital part of British society and, in the process, transformed important aspects of British life and heralded a great wave of immigration that was to impact Britain in years to come. See e.g. 10 March 2011, 22 February 2012,http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/windrush_01.shtml
[519] See full transcription of Cameron´s Berlin speech at http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/the-staggers/2011/02/terrorism-islam-ideology, 5 February 2011, 23 February 2012.
[520] See the commentary in: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/cameron-my-war-on-multiculturalism-2205074.html 5 February 2011, 23 Feburary 2012.
[521] Ibid.

No culture is perfect or represents the best life,… it can therefore benefit from a critical dialogue with other cultures... Britain is and should remain a vibrant and democratic multicultural society that must combine respect for diversity with shared common values.[522]

Rushdie himself would be a perfect example of a postcolonial subject and a writer at the same time who made maximal use of his in-betweenness, especially its potential for creativity. As he said:

Like it or dislike it, it's where we live, and the dream of a pure monoculture is at best an unattainable, nostalgic fantasy, and at worst a life-threatening menace – when ideas of racial purity, religious purity or cultural purity turn into programs of "ethnic cleansing". A polycultural society can flourish, but only if all members play a role in it.[523]

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[522] See Salman Rushdie, "In Defence of Multiculturalism," 19 December 2005, 15 January 2007, http://newsgroups.derkeiler.com/Archive/Uk/uk.politics.misc/2005-12/msg03932.html
[523] Salman Rushdie, "In Defence of Multiculturalism".

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