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Werbner's contribution is an appeal to all sides to engage in dialogue. In a world of ideas and relationships that is becoming ever more interwoven, the development of pluralistically oriented, cognitive interaction is not only welcome but also necessary, even if these demands may sometimes seem utopian under the present circumstances of mutual discrimination and stigmatization.

Werbner's powerful article is led by the hermeneutic

10. These arguments are found in Ruthven's work but have been aired by a number of people. Bhiku Parekh, in a private interview in 1991, paternalistically lamented the absence of an effective and articulate Muslim representation in the West to counter attacks on Islam. The question is: Would somebody listen to them while Muslims and Islam remain objectified without being taken as equal partners in a much-needed debate?

11. I do not agree with the view that the entire agitation over the novel was a mundane affair and the Muslim youths were discussing it in the public houses rather than available institutions. On a rather crucial note, it bridged the gap between two generations.

question what could have been the intention of *The Satanic Verses* and who interpreted what in what way. I wish to concentrate on the migration and its implications as well as on the Islamic mystical tradition.[1] It should, however, be mentioned here that according to the post-colonial critique of the literature Rushdie stands in the tradition of innovative authors who have enriched and molded the postcolonial literatures, those who push for processes of decolonization and decentralization and consciously seek to rid themselves of the ruling thought patterns (Ashcroft et al. 1989).

With this aim in view, *The Satanic Verses* seems to tie into an innovative tradition when it analyzes, according to Werbner from a humanistic perspective, religious—and historical—certainty. The novel would therefore call on faith in people as a source of rational creativity, a faith which should supposedly build the foundations for a religion of freedom. The *cultural translation* necessary for this, which Rushdie himself programmatically calls for and which has been variously debated among Moslem intellectuals for a long time, finds its boundaries in the diverse interpretations of complex symbols and languages, whether they are inspired by Sunna or Mahabaratha, Rabelais or Joyce (al-Azm 1991), or by the mystical reform movement, in which the prophet plays a central role: the ethical concept of the Muhammadan path (Tarîqa Muhammadîya), which goes beyond pure individual mysticism in calling for a mystical reform ("Neo-Tasawwuf") and a Sunnitisation of the existential spheres. Mystical piety is therein replaced by prophetic piety; the individual has moved into the center of social discourse. This concept sprang from a deep skepticism and facilitated the initial stages of liberation from a bond to authority and the overcoming of dogma, thus making possible a social process of individuation. In this way the Prophet becomes the sublimation of the sublime, the perfect individual, a moral and aesthetic ideal (Schimmel 1985). The thus-striven-for *imitatio muhammadi* finally leads via the Muhammadan path (for instance, by means of eternal recitation, dreams) to absolute truth (*dhât muhammadî* or *haqîqa muhammadîya*). Because of this identification, each attack—no matter how small—on the *sublime* appears to be an attack on one's own identity and one's own values, morally and aesthetically:[2] betrayal from the ranks of one's own diaspora that would in addition be taken to the enemy public.[3] Thus Werbner may be right when she makes aesthetic elements responsible for the Moslem reaction. Rushdie, for his part, denies having attacked the Prophet. Werbner subsequently attempts to prove this plausibly with reference to literary methodology.

A central theme of postcolonial literature is the conflict between faith and doubt (Rushdie 1988:35, 92), here exemplified in the state of exile. With this, Rushdie stands in the tradition of the modern in contrast to religious fundamentalism (Rushdie 1988:75ff., 205ff.), which claims perpetual wisdom. Rushdie embeds experience in exile partially in a symbolism of space, especially migration and the processes of individuation connected with it. For this he draws as much from the productive Indo-Pakistani sphere as from the poetic imagination and originality of Islamic mysticism (Brennan 1989:72 ff., 127–28), which, as mentioned above, offered alternatives to the rigid legality of the written law. The catharsis inherent therein (*jihâd fî nafs*) released new values—*ijtihâd* if you will—and aesthetics as well, in accordance with the wishes of the *insân kâmil* or even of the Mahdî. Rushdie thus creates—writes—an alternative world, wholly in the tradition of postcolonial literature.

Werbner ingeniously portrays the Prophet as a perfect individual who experiences humanization in the course of the story in that the author places himself to a certain extent on the level of the Prophet. The tension between the author and the Prophet is produced by means of various characters (three oppositional pairs) who represent negative values: they contrast with the Prophet and at the same time represent the author's alter ego. The oppositional pairs reflect the various problems of exile—identity conflicts and psychological and social changes[4]—operating in different settings and complementing each other:

The first pair—the Anglicized Moslem migrant Chamcha in London/India and the traitor Salman in Mekka/Persia—represents to a certain extent the picture of Saidan Orientalism. Muhammad stands in contrast to these deficiencies as a perfect and thus also forgiving individual who always insists on humanity.

The second pair—the Indian movie star Gibreel in England/India/Mekka and the poet Baal in Mekka—symbolizes creativity. Gibreel, however, becomes an

1. Werbner's article can be subdivided into three parts: (1) The theoretical section criticizes the analyses of *The Satanic Verses* up to now, which interpret the disagreements between Moslem and European receptors and the author as class-specific. The conflict, she claims, is founded rather in equally justified, coexisting aesthetic—religious and secular—attitudes: in an Islamic aesthetic of the *sublime*, which is founded on obsequiousness and lacking self-identity, and in a modernistic dialogistic one, which bases itself on equal rights and autonomy. (2) A semiotic analysis of the novel follows. In general, the result is that *The Satanic Verses* do not have to do with an attack on Islam and Muhammad but rather with a modernistic vision of Islam as a universal, liberal, and tolerant tradition. (3) The third part requires deeper interpretation of the text; only this, Werbner claims, would make possible a fruitful dialogue in a multicultural context and a politics of mutual acceptance.

2. This was the opinion of German Orientalist Rudi Paret: "In case of emergency, the Muslim might deny his faith, but he would never be willing to utter a word of slander against Muhammad or to renounce him, even though he were facing death in case of refusal to do so." And the Canadian W. C. Smith explained, "Muslims will allow attacks on Allah; there are atheists and atheistic publications, and rationalistic societies; but to disparage Muhammad will provoke from even the most 'liberal' sections of the community a fanaticism of blazing vehemence" (quoted in Schimmel 1985:5).

3. Interestingly, the person of the Prophet has a far more central meaning in the so-called Islamic peripheries than in the Islamic heartland.

4. That this does not directly follow from the title might be grounded in the fact that Rushdie wanted to create a shock with it or perhaps was subject to a certain linguistic doubt—that is, could express his experiences and those of the immigrants only through paradox or through, if you will, an ecstatic exclamation (*shathîyât*). On *shathîyât*, see, for example, Ernst (1984).

agent of destruction and Baal a traitor. The poet is the only character whom the Prophet does not forgive, since the Prophet cannot tolerate the alternative order which he calls for. Werbner sees here the limits of being a prophet and of humanization.

The third pair—the imam in Persia/London and Ayesha in India and on the way to Mekka—stands for uncompromsing religious fundamentalism.

The interaction between these figures and the Prophet leads through various stages to an identification between them. All the characters are embedded in chronotopes, which undoubtedly possess similarities to the spheres of existence (place of creation, world of angels, levels of spiritual and divine existence), to the levels of cosmic development (Sharî'a, Tarîqa, and Haqîqa), and to the spiritual steps of the soul or the levels of migration (Malik 1995:94).

Even the complementary chronotopes are taken up by Rushdie himself; their connections are reinforced by three women (Hind, Thatcher, and Ayesha), all of whom want to reestablish the old order. Three levels of migration can be seen: (1) solely within fictional—profane—reality (modern world and current action: London, India, Persia); (2) solely within the fictional—sacral—ideal (historical levels in the dreams: Mekka, Medina, and Persia); and (3) between these two worlds, which are connected by Gibreel's dreams alone. Gibreel thus becomes a mediator; his dreams—variants of the intercultural journey and/or vehicle for experiencing the Prophet up to the level of the *fanâ fî Muhammad,* the dissolution of the searcher's soul into the Prophet (an important component of the "Neo-Tasawwuf")—actually make the interactive framework between the two poles possible at all.[5]

Migrations within *one* world (that of fictional profane reality or that of the fictional sacral ideal) appear, according to my interpretation, to be fruitful in this one way. Migrations *between* the worlds (reality and ideal) fail, however. The tension between reality and ideal is here irreconcilable and cannot be positively integrated.

As for (1), within one—here the fictional, profane—world move Chamcha and Gibreel, for example. The former finds in the end, after the migration (the search for the self), true love; the latter, however, fails in his suicide. But both are purified by the mercy of the Prophet, of the *baraka.*

As for (2), within the boundaries of the ideal (Mekka/Medina) moves the Prophet. He is for this reason subject to no tensions of identification and can therefore live up to the characteristics of an *insân kâmil,* particularly as he can realize the various sides of the fictional ideal.

As for (3), migration between the different (profane, sacral) worlds produces varied results, which, however, distinguish themselves only gradually. The negative dominates this migration: (*a*) Salman finds himself first in England and Persia but is transferred by Gibreel's dream to Mekka and "migrates." After experiencing the Prophet in dreams, he returns to Persia and finds there a certain satisfaction, though without corresponding empathy. (*b*) The imam (between Persia/England and between London/Persia in the fictional ideal) stands out for his isolation in exile and for his rigid, tight hold on tradition. That is, he surpasses the boundaries of his—fictional—reality and wants to create the ideal Mekka/Medina; his own position is not sufficiently supported, he is alienated. This tension between reality and ideal is irreconcilable and can only be compensated for by static rigidity. (*c*) Then there is the migration which fails because of irrational action and mystical presumption. Ayesha's one-sided migration or attempt to migrate leads to disaster because of lacking self-adaptation; this is isolation through mystical rigor.

The only alter ego who does not migrate is Baal. He represents on the one hand profane creativity, which competes with the sacral perfect individual (the Prophet), but is static to the extent of remaining exclusively in Mekka. He consequently is not forgiven; he receives no *baraka.*

It seems worthy of mention that the Prophet and Chamcha are the only two protagonists who, in spite of migration within *one* world (Mekka/Medina and London/India, respectively), do not move beyond the limits of their sacral and profane realities. They are both rewarded. Each migration in an imagined ideal or real world (India/Mekka or London/Mekka) brings, on the other hand, chaos and death. That is to say, migration—intercultural hybrid dialogue—can only occur on a consolidated level.

Seen in this way, migration in the widest sense—in its different varieties and steps—is movement; it opens up the possibility of a positive debate with the formation of one's own history and holds within it creative renewal and self-discovery. It is embedded in the traditional symbolism of the *rihla* and *maqâmât* as well as in myths and poetry. Through this multidimensionality, the protagonist opens himself to cultural translatability and to higher levels of consciousness, as in the sense of mystical ascent symbolism—likewise a symbolism of space—or rebirth: in this way Jahilia becomes a spiritual degree of immigration. Multidimensionality also holds, however, the danger of radical miscommunication, as in the case of *The Satanic Verses.*

An important aspect of the re-finding or being found (*wujûd*) suggested here is the motive of metamorphoses, which represents the immigrant's confused identity. It is these acquired characteristics (Gibreel, Salman, Chamcha, etc.) which enables an expansion and shifting of professed boundaries and a liberation.

Rushdie himself postulates the crossing of these boundaries and the thesis of intercultural hybridity—"hybridity, impurity, intermingling." A dialogue so conceived can, however, only be guaranteed, as Werbner

5. This intercultural interaction is reinforced by a number of stylizations, such as the use of polarities—religiosity and secularity, north and south, etc.—by plays on words, multilingualism, and code-switching, by magical realism, and by personal narration, all of them means of freeing language and literature from their ghetto, of decolonizing (see Mehrotra 1982, Kreutzer 1992, Kortbus 1995). In a certain way, Rushdie himself thus becomes mediator, *insân kâmil.*

holds in her last section, through empathy and above all through adapting or locating oneself in a tradition of science. Pure alienation or pure inactivity is not conducive to it (the imam, Ayesha, Baal). That seems to correspond to the conception championed in postcolonial literary criticism that migrants have positive catalytic effects on transformation processes in English (colonial) society. It is exactly the hybrid glance of the traveller between worlds—in-between two border conditions—that enables, according to Rushdie himself, historical and current reality to be elaborated upon from new perspectives (Rushdie 1991:15) and the world to be read, written, and determined anew from the inside out (*re-reading, re-writing, and re-worlding*). As postcolonial author, the iconoclast Rushdie subversively rejects the dominant (imperial) discourse of power, and this he even does in two respects: European- as well as Islamic-imperial. As a migrated or *translated man* and through his *double-vision* (Bhabha 1994) he can set up a creative indigenous discourse, develop an aesthetic of liberation, and demythologize stereotypical thought patterns:[6] "turning insults into strength" or "The Empire writes back." It is the "interstitial passage between fixed identifications which open up the possibility of cultural hybridity that entertains differences without an assumed or imposed hierarchy," "a third space" (Bhabha 1994:4), so to speak, or an internal-colonial "Fourth World" (Kreutzer 1995:211). It is at these intersections that "newness" begins (Rushdie 1988:8; 1991*a*:394). In this respect, hybrid texts like *The Satanic Verses* naturally allow many interpretations; the intention or the objective meaning of the text admittedly oversteps the horizon of the individual reader, and one can no longer speak of the mutual semantic household which could have, for instance, a solidarity- and identity-building effect. I therefore fully endorse Werbner's call for the interpretations to be taken up openly and empathetically in a modernistically designed dialogistic forum derived from each reader's own ethical and aesthetic tradition.[7]