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**MIGRATION AND HYBRIDITY:
STEREOSCOPIC VISION IN THE NOVELS OF
RUSHDIE, MUKHERJEE, AND GHOSH**

By Idil Bozkurt

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through the Department of English Literature
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2003

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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes migrant fictions written by three Indian-English writers who examine both the difficulties and the prospects of displacement by presenting characters that undergo radical changes in their sense of space, social identifications, self and body image as a result of movement. It is founded on the argument that the plurality in a migrant's experience endows her with multiple subject positions that can negotiate contradicting cultural discourses. Hybridity, which signifies the embodiment of multiple subject positions and cultural belongings, provides an energy field of differences out of which creativity and resistance to master narratives of dominant cultures emerge. The Satanic Verses by Salman Rushdie uses the themes of metamorphosis and monstrosity to illuminate the corporeal and mental transformations a migrant undergoes. Rushdie proposes hybridity as a means of agency and resistance for racialized and even demonized migrants. Jasmine by Bharati Mukherjee portrays gendered travel through the life of a woman migrant whose mobility and multiple subject positions provide a resistance to dominations exercised on her gendered and racialized body. The Shadow Lines by Amitav Ghosh argues that socio-cultural spaces, like migrant identities, are hybrid realms in which the lines between Self and Other, here and there, past and present are blurred. In all three texts, the presence of migrant characters forces the metropolis and its residents to not only encounter Otherness but also to discover the Other within, a recognition of difference which must ideally give way to tolerance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my thesis advisor Dr. Darryl Whetter for his genuine interest in my project as well as his knowledge, guidance, and encouragement. I would also like to thank Dr. Stephen Pender for his invaluable feedback and support, and Dr. Tanya Basok for her helpful suggestions.

I am grateful for my husband Onur Kuzgunkaya's unconditional love, patience, and support. Last, but not least, I wish to thank my family. Although I have been away from my family during the completion of this work, I would not have done it without their faith in me.

Chapter 1:

Introduction: An Exploration of Migrancy

This project traces the intersections between home-making and identity formation in narratives of migration through an analysis of characters that undergo a radical change in their sense of space, temporality, social relations, self and body image as a result of movement. Movement in space opens up questions about the validity of tribal identities in contemporary life. While technologies of transportation have facilitated border crossings, the immigration laws still work hard to separate 'outsiders' from 'insiders'. The transition from feeling and being treated as an 'outsider' to becoming an 'insider' in the new residence is an arduous process that not only calls for practical urgencies such as financial stability, but also spiritual demands of identification with new geography and society. Caught up between an allegiance to the former culture and the new one, between the requirement or need for assimilation and the inability or resistance to surrender the influence of past experience/knowledge, a migrant experiences a profound split in his/her identity. Bilingualism and dialogism do not simply break apart a subject, though; the plurality in a migrant's experience creates multiple subject positions that can negotiate contradicting knowledges and draw creativity out of frictions and gaps between various discourses. This embodied collaboration and tension between different cultural sources creates a hybrid subject who challenges the (often nationalist and racist)

discourses of purity with her in-betweenness and subverts the attempts at creating a collective and unified knowledge coherent in itself with her “stereoscopic vision” that is aware of the “provisional nature of all truths and certainties” (Rushdie 12). The issues of movement, discontinuity, multiplicity, and hybridity are paramount in this project.

This project will provide a close reading of three postcolonial novels, The Satanic Verses by Salman Rushdie, The Shadow Lines by Amitav Ghosh, and Jasmine by Bharati Mukherjee. As Indian writers who live in England and the United States and write in English, these novelists main preoccupations are migration, East-West conflicts, the problematization of the relationship between the colonizing and the colonized, the clash between tradition and modernity, and the identity quest of their characters in the midst of dual socializations. Indian writing in English, which began a little more than a century ago, has always attracted attention from sociologists and anthropologists not only because it reflects India’s multiculturalism but also because it portrays a dialectic between social, cultural, and political sensibilities of East and West. While the novels before Indian independence concentrated on the struggle for independence, questioned the historical accounts produced by the West, and addressed social problems such as caste system and poverty, the post-independence writers re-analysed the colonial experience, questioned the nature of historical writing itself, and strongly emphasized the multiculturalism of Indian society. Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao began to favour the objectivity of expression in their realistic novels portraying the growth of the national liberation movement, workers’

strikes, and peasant agitation, but they also highlighted their subjective political ideas by celebrating Gandhian ideology. Younger writers such as Anita Desai and Arun Joshi used Indian cultural and political elements as a background and concentrated more on the individual in their writings influenced by existentialism.

The works of Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, and Bharati Mukherjee show that sociohistoric issues still influence Indian-English literature, but these writings are less local and more involved with the global realities of migration and cultural hybridity, reflecting both a collaboration and tension between various cultural perspectives. In terms of style, Indian-English writers have brought newness to the language by consciously utilizing elements of the vernacular Indian language. The use of Indian myths and epics, and experimentation in language using the techniques of oral story telling (such as digression, repetition, and circular structure) started with Raja Rao, and was perfected by Salman Rushdie.

It might be said that a discernible tradition of Indian-English writing exists, but it must not be forgotten that some of these writers now live in foreign countries such as Canada, England, and the U.S.A, and their works belong as much to the literature of these destination countries as they do to Indian literature. Salman Rushdie explains the impossibility of trying to categorize such multicultural writing and writers according to national belongings:

I have constantly been asked whether I am British, or Indian. The formulation 'Indian-born British writer' has been invented to explain me. But, as I said last night, my new book deals with Pakistan. So

what now? 'British-resident Indo-Pakistani writer'? You see the folly of trying to contain writers inside passports. (67)

Some time after this remark, Rushdie wrote Fury, a novel about America, from his new residence in the United States. He cannot be contained, and nor can his history (or should I say nomadology) or his space or his frames of reference when he writes. But I would apply what Rushdie says about himself to most migrants for whom there is a discrepancy between actual identity - which never *is* but is always *becoming* - and a fixed passport identity as well as a contradiction between 'home' country and the country where a migrant's home actually is. The main concern for a migrant is how to survive in such ambiguity about identity and belonging: How do multiple languages, cultures, habits, and geographies shape an individual? How does one finite, corporeal identity simultaneously occupy several spaces? All three novels under consideration examine these problems. Moreover, they offer a positive attitude towards "in-betweenness" rather than regret, desperation, or even self-hatred.

Chapter 2 highlights some common themes in all three novels, and clarifies some of the terms I will be using throughout this project such as mimicry, hybridity, alienation, and fragmentation.

The research of this project integrates the ideas of postcolonial theorists such as Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha, Edward Said, Salman Rushdie, Abdul JanMohamed, Stuart Hall, Iain Chambers (and many others), making use of their various stances towards the concepts of 'hybridity' and 'resistance' to arrive at a synthesis that best explains the novels. This project also incorporates the

theories of anthropologists and sociologists such as Robert Miles, Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson to address the issues of 'race,' racism, and migrancy. For the analysis of the fictional characters, postmodern and poststructuralist theories, which describe the plurality and multiplicity inherent in the concept of hybridity, were reconciled with recent postcolonial and feminist theories that restore 'agency' to the decentered subject on the basis of experience. This synthesis of postcolonial, feminist, and postmodern theories leaves room for folds and dimensions in one's identity; these dimensions and subject positions provide an in-between space from which the individual can perceive the gaps in discourse and show resistance. To explore the relationship between geography/culture and identity, this project borrows from recent theories of space (as in the works of geographers David Harvey, Edward Soja, Doreen Massey, Jane M. Jacobs, Michael Keith, and Steve Pile) that posit it as a dynamic arena of social relations, politics, and change rather than a fixed and flat territory marked on the map. As well, the interactions between the body and space are traced through the theory of *habitus* posited by Pierre Bourdieu, Marcel Mauss, and Bernd Jager. An interdisciplinary approach has been essential in the reading of these three novels that weave together the issues of 'race', gender, space, body, and identity.

In the analysis of The Satanic Verses in Chapter 3, the discussion will be limited to the character of Saladin Chamcha, and the parts about Gibreel's dreams with religious content will be ignored. The main reason for this choice is that most of the books and articles written about Salman Rushdie and The Satanic Verses already deal with this controversial section about Islamic religion.

My main interest in the book, however, has been its treatment of migrant situations, and its proposal of hybridity as a means of agency and resistance for racialized and even demonized migrants. *Saladin Chamcha's* monstrosity opens up and answers many questions about cultural displacement. Oppression and victimization on the basis of 'race,' as well as mimicry and a constant struggle to fit in permeate *Saladin Chamcha's* life in London. These negative experiences find their space in *Saladin's* metamorphosed body. *Saladin* retrieves his humanity only after he embraces the multiplicity of his emotions and subject positions.

A radical bodily change – metamorphosis described in terms of death and rebirth – appears as a major theme in *Jasmine* as well. In *Jasmine*, postcolonial preoccupation with migration and 'race' issues are combined with corporeal feminist theories, which posit the body both as a surface on which cultures and ideologies are inscribed and an instrument with which these inscriptions are contested. *Jasmine* depicts how the sense of the self and body changes from one space to another due to different ideologies of 'race' and gender accepted in these spaces. The narrator's position between contradicting discourses provide her with an outsider view that perceives the limitations of both knowledges. Individual experience of multiplicity prevails over the dominance of one culturally assigned role over the other.

The Shadow Lines, like *Jasmine*, prioritizes the individual experiences of a particular place and time over the master narratives of history and geography. The narrator creates a patchwork narrative made up of different people's

perspectives on events, which sometimes contradict and sometimes complement each other. The fragments of stories weaved together provide a fuller view of what happened as the narrator fills in the gaps of history with particular memories. The state's political project of imposing a collective history is contested by rewriting that history in a way which exposes the endless ways in which a space and time is experienced. The narrator himself inhabits England through the stories of his cousin when he is in India, and he relives India through memories when he is in England. Or he sees England at the time of Second World War when he looks at the space through his cousin's eyes and contemporary England when he looks through his own. Occupying two lands at the same time, different times in the same place, or shifting subjectivities at will, reveals the hybrid nature of all things and the frivolity of borders.

This project does not argue that these three novels capture the essence of migration; such an essence does not exist. A migrant who left willingly might experience migration differently from an exile that was forcibly displaced. In these three novels, the characters leave their homeland willingly even though a tragedy or trauma experienced in their homeland might have caused this willingness. The adaptation to the new land also takes different forms depending on where one comes from; it is not just the physical distance that separates two lands but also the similarities and differences in accustomed lifestyles. It may be more difficult for a person to get used to, say, the city of Bombay after village life somewhere in India than it is for a migrant who travels from Bombay to London, as the narrator of The Satanic Verses observes: "From Indianness to Englishness, an

immeasurable distance. Or not very far at all, because they rose from one great city, fell to another. The distance between cities is always small; a villager, travelling a hundred miles to town, traverses emptier, darker, more terrifying space" (41). Nevertheless, some commonality of experience can be derived from these novels. The argument of this thesis is that Mukherjee, Rushdie, and Ghosh embrace change, hybridity, and multiplicity without undermining the difficulties and pains that come with displacement; in fact, they see hybridity as the only position that lets migrants resist assimilation into any one culture, a bridging identity that utilizes many cultural sources but gets caught in none. In their novels the characters are driven by a desire to reach out to other places and other subjectivities. Their presence forces the metropolis and its residents to not only encounter Otherness but also to discover the Other within, a recognition of difference which must ideally give way to tolerance.

Chapter 2:

Stereoscopic Vision and Hybridity: The Problem of the “New”

Uprooting the Self

Current metaphors of identity often posit it as static. One's native land and culture are often said to provide one's "roots," implying a secure unity in one's identity; the subject has a centre. "Where are you from?" is one of the first phrases taught in ESL classes, emphasizing the importance of "roots" and indicating a communal identity for those involved in the conversation. Even if an individual has lived in two or three countries, the answer to "where are you from?" must be the place of birth or ethnic location, suggesting that the identity formation starts and finishes in that primal place. These metaphors and stock questions fix the native land as a person's "natural" place in the world and early socialization as the sole determinant of identity and behaviour. However, contemporary life shows that not only those who move to other countries or continents become acquainted with a huge array of different perspectives, but (thanks to media and technorelationships) even those who stay put can no longer resist foreign influences. An expatriate's detachment from his/her 'roots', homelessness, and displacement start at the homeland with a desire to escape from the confines of the existing society and to discover other imagined places. New places offer new interactions and new identifications, which necessarily affect one's identity.

Introducing Hybridity

A migrant has not only close contact with a foreign culture, but s/he also learns to live in this both attractive and challenging unfamiliarity. I propose that instead of undergoing a total change and assimilation from marginal to central, from 'foreign' to 'local', a migrant negotiates differences in his/her identity and acquires viewpoints both from his/her primary culture and destination culture. As the migrant faces the clash of cultures that seem to have little in common, translation of values, lifestyles, and traditions from one culture to another may create difficulties. An individual trying to make sense of these differences will necessarily encounter gaps, frictions, and contradictions in his/her identity. This disruption is not an abnormality to be overcome but a constant, integral complexity. This complexity arises from a migrant's *hybridity*, a word I will use both in its adjectival and substantive forms throughout my project in order to refer to an energy field, either a person or a land, in which multiple positions and cultural perspectives can coexist. Because hybridity provides an elasticity capable of embracing seemingly incompatible cultural discourses and practices, this kind of multiplicity will imply richness rather than sterility or loss of integrity. Borrowing from Gilles Deleuze, I would call the hybrid "all the more total for being fragmented" (6).

The History of Hybridity and its Relationship with the Concept of 'Race'

How has the hybrid, who was treated as inferior, come to be a symbol of resistance against racism and the dominant codes that defined it in the works of postcolonial writers and theorists?

In the colonial context, the word “hybrid” used to be a pejorative term that indicated the inferiority of the “mixed” as opposed to the superior “pure race.” Robert Miles informs us that, “The theorization of ‘race’ and ‘nation’ took place at a time of ‘internal’ European political and economic reorganization and ‘external’ colonial expansion, in the course of which the range of human cultural and physiological variation became more widely known to a large number of people” (61). Especially the second half of the eighteenth century was marked by scientific explorations, and the attempts to write natural history. The systematization of nature and geographical mapping included the division of humans and cultures under such groups as “American,” “Asiatic,” “European,” and “African” along with a description of each. Biologists and anthropologists of the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries claimed not only that the human species could be classified under different ‘races’ according to common biological characteristics that regulated the behaviour patterns of individuals, but they also argued that certain ‘races’ were naturally superior to others. Mary Louise Pratt contends that these descriptions were “explicit attempts to ‘naturalize’ the myth of European superiority” (32). This ‘scientific’ racism served to legitimate the colonial pursuits of the British state; Miles explains that, “The colonial situation became understood as a ‘race relations’ situation: the colonized

were usually understood to be an inferior race, a biologically distinct population whose future depended upon their assessed capacity for 'civilisation' under the tutelage of the superior 'white' British 'race'" (128).

The racialized Other also served to define the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, thereby creating a collective identity of national or ethnic "We" as opposed to "Them," the strangers. The hybrid was always a threat in his/her ambivalence, and therefore acquired the labels of *unnatural* and *unproductive*. This etymology of the term does not necessarily preclude the positive connotations recently attached to the word "hybridity." According to anthropologist Charles Stewart:

Words do change meaning over time, and *hybrid* has embedded within it both negative and positive attitudes toward mixture. In nineteenth-century racial thinking the hybrid was deemed to be weak and sterile--proof that human "races" were different species that could not mix--while in the twentieth century the new field of genetics showed how plant hybrids, for example, could be especially fruitful and resilient. (45)

Another reason why hybridity can no longer have an inferior status with respect to "pure race" is that the concept of "race" itself has been discredited. Tzvetan Todorov reports that researchers have been unable to categorize people under similar physical characteristics: "There are a great number of physical differences among human groups, but these differences cannot be superimposed; we obtain completely divergent subdivisions of the human species according to whether we

base our description of the 'races' on an analysis of their epidermis or their blood types, their genetic heritages or their bone structures" (Todorov 370-71; see also Miles).

"Purity" is not only ideological when it refers to "race," but it is also a myth when it comes to the homogeneity of nations and cultures. In The Shadow Lines, the character's confusion as she ponders crossing the border between India and Pakistan, which used to be one nation before partition, demonstrates the uncertainty around the border phenomenon and nationality: "I realised it had suddenly occurred to her then that she would have to fill in 'Dhaka' as her place of birth on that form, and that the prospect of this had worried her [...] and at that moment she had not been able to quite understand how her place of birth had come to be so messily at odds with her nationality" (152). National borders, which are revealed to be shifting and unstable themselves, cannot create absolute and fixed spaces of stationary cultures.

Since multiple cultural identities are simultaneously embodied in one person, the hybrid blurs the lines between Self and Other. This ambiguity between Self and Other threatens essentialist concepts about ethnicity, race, and nationality. This is not to say that differences no longer exist; it rather means that the resistance to the colonial and the assertion of difference are no longer effectuated through cultural essences or origins, but through doubleness and in-betweenness that undercut the narratives of 'purity'. The problematic subjectivity of the hybrid, with his/her fragmentation and plurality, may create confusion both for a subject and society, but this confusion is necessary in order to subvert the

emphasis on homogeneity. Hybridity is not only resistance to a dominant race, but to the whole discourse of categorization of people under the concepts of pure “race” and “nation”. The concepts of hybridity and difference/resistance are brought together in the works of Salman Rushdie, Bharati Mukherjee, and Amitav Ghosh.

Home, Homelessness, and Identity

The interplay between space and identity acquires a complex nature in the case of migrants who have experienced dual (sometimes triple, quadruple) socializations. Although a migrant is an uprooted individual, her identity is not free of cultural imprints. We should keep in mind that identity formation is a process; identities are not “rooted” once and for all. V.S Naipaul’s The Mimic Men accentuates the inseparability of self and place:

You know, you are born in a place and you grow up there. You get to know the trees and the plants. You will never know any other trees and plants like that. You grow up watching a guava tree, say. You know that brownny-green bark peeling like old paint. You try to climb that tree. You know that after you climb it a few times the bark gets smooth-smooth and so slippery you can’t get a grip on it. You get the ticklish feeling in your foot. Nobody has to teach you what guava is. You go away. You ask, ‘What is that tree?’ Somebody will tell you, ‘An elm.’ You see another tree. Somebody will tell you, ‘That is an oak.’ But it isn’t the same. Here you wait for the poui to

flower one week in the year and you don't even know you're waiting. (204-05)

This passage specifically emphasizes the importance of the location where a person receives his/her early knowledge. The place where one spends his/her childhood becomes the window through which s/he perceives the world. Jager contends that the arrival into a new place necessitates not only a new set of habits, but also new perspectives: "To enter and finally to come to inhabit a house or a city means to come to assume a certain stance, to surrender to a certain *style of acting upon* and of *experiencing* the surrounding world" (252). However, rather than replacing the old identity with the new, the migrant experiences the coexistence of the old self and the new self. It is as difficult for the migrant to return back to his/her "roots/origins" once the change is initiated as it is to be totally assimilated to the point that s/he actually becomes the Other.

Migrants cannot define themselves simply in terms of their belonging to a single culture and place that they call "home" since they cannot feel at home in any one place or they can feel at home in a lot of places. Their "home" loses its external spatial significance, as it becomes a comfort zone in the mind of the person. If "home" signifies belonging and familiarity, a migrant may sometimes feel more at home in an airport or a train station than a *re-membered* place or a lived place. A hybrid develops an identity that is not only shaped by old and new cultures, but also by the space and time in-between, the journey and the experience of dislocation itself. A migrant's identity stems more from "home-making" than "home."

Alienation and Fragmentation

In the process of home-making, the radical changes in one's social space, body, and subjectivity bring forth alienation and fragmentation. For the analysis of alienation in the works of Rushdie, Ghosh, and Mukherjee, the categories distinguished by Melvin Seeman will be used: *powerlessness*, *meaninglessness*, *normlessness*, *cultural estrangement*, *self-estrangement*, and *social isolation*.

A migrant's detachment from and rejection of the values and practices of his/her former culture can be described as *cultural estrangement*. As much as Richard Schacht's prediction that "classical social alienation [as in the work of Hegel], as conceived in terms of the loss or absence of identification with, and participation in, the form of life characteristic of one's society, will have become meaningless" (10) makes sense, this facet of alienation appears in the novels of Rushdie, Mukherjee, and Ghosh. Until the characters embrace their hybridity and overcome their internalization of the conventional understanding that the self is "one/unitary" and a personal history should be "progressive," not only their detachment from their 'home' but also their difference in the new destination becomes a source of distress. Although this kind of alienation causes distress, it also signifies complexity and dissent, out of which creativity and resistance springs.

Alienation that results from social repression and lack of freedom as in the works of psychoanalysts, on the other hand, are used to explain a dangerous and unproductive form of alienation and fragmentation caused by the oppression

of ethnic minorities. Such oppressions cause social alienation (the feeling of being socially excluded) for a migrant as well as an estrangement from his/her own body image as a result of stereotypical descriptions of the racialized body.

Finally, a sense of *powerlessness*, *meaninglessness*, and *normlessness* may accompany the above-mentioned types of alienation. Each of these subthemes of alienation will be contextualized below together with the concept of fragmentation.

In migrant literature, the themes of death and rebirth after migration, and the metamorphosis into a different self as witnessed by the sudden appearance of a new subject in the mirror, point out a psychosomatic split in the sense of identity. Caroline Walker Bynum emphasizes that the concept of identity necessitates physical continuity, and points out two survival theories in recent philosophy: “One a version of the memory theory that goes back to John Locke (‘I am my continuous stream of memory’); the other a theory of material continuity (‘I am my body’ or ‘I am a particular part of my body: my brain’)” (247). Migration, however, disrupts both physical and mental continuity as the new geography and social etiquettes require new bodily habits, and new lifestyles dictate the erasure of the old. Sara Ahmed argues that this disruption can be felt physically:

The journeys of migration involve a splitting of home as a place of origin and home as the sensory world of everyday experience.

What migration narratives involve, then, is spatial reconfiguration of an embodied self: a transformation in the very skin through which the body is embodied. The experience of moving to a new home is

often felt through the surprise of different skin sensation. When we came to Australia, what I first remember is all the dust, and how it made me sneeze and my eyes itch. When I returned to England, I felt the cold pinching my skin. The intrusion of an unexpected space into the body suggests that the experience of a new home involves an expansion and contraction of the skin. (90)

Besides this involuntary disturbance to the body as a result of geographic change, a migrant may also voluntarily change his/her disposition to fit into the standards of the new society. In The Satanic Verses, Saladin Chamcha reconstructs his face and his accent to become an Englishman: "Mr. Saladin Chamcha had constructed this face with care – it had taken him several years to get it just right – and for many years now he had thought of it as simply as *his own* – indeed, he had forgotten what he had looked like before it. Furthermore, he had shaped himself a voice to go with the face, a voice whose languid, almost lazy vowels contrasted disconcertingly with the sawn-off abruptness of the consonants" (33). A migrant experiences estrangement from his/her body because of the suddenness and intensity of change in the new land.

A temporal split in the subject accompanies this spatial split that causes physical transformation. Assuming a new space and culture is almost like rebirth since past knowledge and lifestyles do not correspond to new situations; therefore, a migrant's life does not manifest a temporal continuum starting from one point and developing from there. Fragmentation may arise from the efforts to replace the old self when a migrant tries to leave old systems and values behind

to adjust to his/her new society. A migrant, like a child in Jacques Lacan's mirror-stage, will have to develop a new ego, through identification with the others and an idealized self-image. Speaking a different language in the new destination, the migrant will learn the rules of a different symbolic order, which will reshape the scope of his/her understanding and influence his/her identity. The two steps of alienation according to Lacan - the formation of socialized identity during the mirror stage and the acquisition of language - happen not just once but twice in the life of a migrant. In his book of essays, Imaginary Homelands, Rushdie notes that a migrant experiences an intense rupture between her past and present:

It may be argued that the past is a country from which we have all emigrated, that its loss is part of our common humanity. Which seems to me self-evidently true; but I suggest that the writer who is out-of-country and even out-of-language may experience this loss in an intensified form. It is made more concrete for him by the physical fact of discontinuity, of his present being in a different place from his past, of his being elsewhere. (12)

The conflicting nature of the migrant's past and the present fractures his/her identity.

Moreover, not just the loss of the old landscapes, social routines, and physical inclinations, but also the recollection of the past in a way that it obtrudes on the present daily life causes fragmentation and alienation. The constant return to the past, either through imagination or an unexpected recurrence of old bodily habits, indicates that the linearity of time is broken for the migrant. An example of

the difficulty in overcoming one's old bodily habits can be found in Rohinton Mistry's short story "The Squatter." Sarosh, who begins to call himself Sid in his adopted country of Canada, feels like an outsider when cannot get used to its toilets even after ten years: "Daily for a decade had Sarosh suffered this position. Morning after morning, he had no choice but to climb up and simulate the squat of our Indian latrines. If he sat down, no amount of exertion could produce success" (161). Even if Sarosh's condition may seem like an extreme case, it demonstrates that the traces of the past are inevitably engraved not only on one's mentality but also on one's bodily routines. The reasons for not feeling at home in one's own body or in the new place can be traced to a migrant's "invisible baggage", which particularly shows itself in the form of traditions, habits, and a haunting memory. Memory, which must be differentiated from nostalgia, is not only a medium for intentional reminiscing, but also a force that constantly reinvents and perpetuates the past in a way that it shapes identity. Memory exerts its presence both in our physical and mental life. In The Satanic Verses, the character Saladin Chamcha resolves to live "*in the first instant of the future,*" but the narrator reminds us that, "A history is not so easily shaken off; he was also living, after all, in the *present moment of the past*, and his old life was about to surge around him once again, to complete its final act" (549). Migrants who cannot take control of their progress and inadvertently let the past slip through the cracks may be described as alienated individuals according to humanistic and romanticist philosophies which assume that the self is an organic whole whose actions and intentions should be consistent with one another. An

individual who can no longer realize his/her agency through his/her actions encounters a sense of “meaninglessness,” and an uncertainty about his/her identity. This meaninglessness does not only cause self-estrangement but also cultural estrangement or social isolation.

A migrant who loses his/her point of reference and feels “rootless” either tries to get rid of his/her past altogether, or ignores the present altogether by holding on to his/her “origins” through nostalgia. This way of maintaining an integrated self is unrealistic since one can neither get away from past associations nor shut off the present. A migrant’s inevitable difference lies in the availability of multiple cultural, social, and individual sources both from his/her past and present. This multiplicity and difference is unwanted both by the subject and the society because of the supposed need for “assimilation.” Once we get past the assimilationist ethic, fragmentation may indeed act as a positive force, a source of creative energy. The authors who write from this in-between space and time and the hybrid characters they create exemplify this energy. In Jasmine, Du (a Vietnamese-American boy) adapts and transforms multiple mechanical pieces to build appliances with multiple functions such as a dimmer that scans the FM band as it controls the light: “Why should dimmers confine themselves to one boring function?” (154). Du is described as a “hybrid like the appliances he wants to build”, all the more productive and original for his multiplicity (222). Memory brings together past/present, old self/new self, and traditional/contemporary in the consciousness of a migrant and creates a multi-dimensional identity. Fragmentation, in that sense, is inescapable for a migrant but it is not a state

s/he needs to transcend. The hybrid represents a postmodern self whose subjectivity depends on fragmentation and alienation, which do not necessarily carry negative meanings as long as they signify a spatial and temporal discontinuity resulting from transgression of familiar and secure borders, or an expression of personal difference. Indeed, Pirkkoliisa Ahponen sees this expression of difference as an inevitable part of contemporary life, “In the ambivalence of contemporary life, the habitual being between strangeness and familiarity is the situation where we have to learn to live with differences [...] We learn that differences are not necessarily barriers but are signals of complexity” (179).

Alienation becomes negative only when it proceeds from “a sense of being disenfranchised from local citizenship on the basis of ethnicity” (Horton 66). In a broader sense, ethnic alienation results not just from lack of rights as a citizen but also from oppression and hatred produced by racist discourse and behaviour (i.e., a gaze full of hate, racist jokes, stereotypical descriptions, etc.).

Investigating the venues for resistance available to the fragmented and alienated migrant against the discourses of “oneness of the self” and “purity” of cultural identity, several questions come to mind: Even if an individual is ready to embrace his/her hybridity, is society ready to do so? Is Western society ready to get rid of the notion of “purity” or does it still find hybridity threatening? Migrants are not only haunted by their memories or unfinished business with the people or the reality of the place that they left behind, they are also negatively affected by the hostility they encounter because of their skin colour or religion. The Other

becomes a monster in whose body different cultures, languages, and belongings are stitched together. So, how does the new society's gaze work upon the individual's conception of himself? According to Fanon, the victim of racism is "overdetermined from without"; the "gaze" of the Other fixes and essentializes his/her identity, imagining an inferior social identity stereotypically believed to be true for every member of that "race," religion, or nation at all times. A splitting occurs in the racialized subject's ego as the effect of this stereotypical discourse. This split can be observed in Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks: "In the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema.... I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects...I took myself far off from my own presence..." (110-11). In a world where white dominance determines the object of identification or the accepted body aesthetic, the victim of racism is characterized by a lack: "not white". In Alienation and the Body in Racist Society, Noel Manganyi argues that the experience of alienation and fragmentation occurs differently for racialized subjects than for individuals belonging to a dominant group:

The split which arises from the polarization in body representation in the case of white children would appear to involve merely the dimensions of a 'good' [upper body – head] and 'bad' [lower body associated with sexuality and excretion], the black child must contend with a body that is stereotypically devalued as a totality. The severity of the problem for each child would appear to be

associated with the degree to which his/her features deviate from the appeal characteristics of the white sociological schema. (79)

The kind of fragmentation and alienation that results from oppression can only be damaging for the subject.

To Mimic or not to Mimic

If the racialized individual is enslaved in the disavowing “look” of the Other, is there a possibility of reclaiming his/her agency and showing resistance? If in postmodern theory the subject has no “true” knowledge or sense of self outside of dominant social discourses (and therefore no agency as noted in the declaration of “the death of the subject”), does the hybrid simply internalize this oppression and accept ethnic alienation? Are the descriptions and categorizations of a central group enough to victimize and alienate the marginal ones?

One way of surviving the discrimination is to reconstruct a common cultural past for minorities that reaffirms their common positive identity by replacing the Western version of their history. However, Stuart Hall, as well as Fanon, warns us that this process is not a “rediscovery but the *production* of identity” since cultural identity cannot be “grounded in a mere ‘recovery’ of the past, which is still waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity” (111-12). This “recovered” identity may help form some kind of a resistance, but it will not undo the constant transformations the culture has underwent since then, including the discontinuity and dislocation

experienced because of slavery, migration, or colonisation. Nor should it be desirable to reiterate the Manichean oppositions and the concept of a homogenized Other while trying to create an antagonistic political identity for minorities. If the answer to the problem of agency is not in returning back to the “roots,” where does it lie?

Naipaul's title phrase The Mimic Men reminds us that mimicry is another way to survive discrimination through invisibleness; migrant minorities need to wear “white masks” in order to be accepted by the new society. But mimicry implies more than passivity and subordination to the colonialist mission to “civilize” (mission to force the colonized to assume the values and behaviour of the colonialist); mimicry is, in Bhabha's words, “at once a resemblance and menace” to colonial authority (91). Bhabha argues that even through mimicry, the migrant retains his/her difference since there cannot be an exact translation of values and practices, but rather a negotiation of various cultural perspectives. This inevitable difference itself belies the belief that Western knowledge and norms cannot be uncontested since adjustments and compromises had to be made in the content of religion and norms of civility - the very concepts the colonizers posited as the justification of their mission - just to retain the presence of power in the native's territory. The so-called “purity” of Western culture, therefore, is mocked by its *partial* repetition in the body of the Other who constantly reminds the (white) Self of *incomplete* authority:

Cultures come to be represented by virtue of the processes of iteration and translation through which their meanings are very

vicariously addressed to – *through* - an Other. This erases any essentialist claims for the inherent authenticity or purity of cultures, which when inscribed in the naturalistic sign of symbolic consciousness frequently become political arguments for the hierarchy and ascendancy of powerful cultures. It is in this hybrid gap, which produces no relief, that the colonial subject takes place. (Bhabha 58)

The real agency of the individual presents itself when the migrant becomes conscious of this difference that stems from his/her hybridity not as a loss but a gain.

Hybrid Resistance – Stereoscopic Vision

Although the hybrid is a social agent (like any other individual) and has no authentic self outside of culture, his/her cognizance - which is constantly shaped by new interactions, discourses, myths, and knowledge produced by his/her encounter with new cultures - never stops expanding. Destabilizing contradictions between different cultural discourses can form a critical mind that envisages alternatives to already existing social doctrines. In “The Self Strikes Back: Identity Politics in the Postmodern Age,” Lauren Langman and Valerie Scatamburlo reintroduce an embodied capacity for agency: “Identities of becoming are politically motivated and historically situated – they are not grounded in essentialist, individualist prerogatives. Rather they are engendered by a thorough and critical understanding of the social totality and nurtured in

collective struggles" (136). The hybrid can act as an embodied self who can assert his/her political capability and resistance based on his/her social experience.

The migrant, who has embraced the richness of different forces within him/her and accepted the influences of both her past and her present on his/her identity, draws her strength from a wide spectrum of mental perceptions. In his interview with Jean W. Ross, Rushdie comments on the advantages of having had two countries: "It's curious; it gives you stereoscopic vision, so that you can simultaneously look at two societies from both the inside and the outside. And I think the tensions in that are quite useful; they strike sparks"(5). The new identity of the migrant, therefore, upsets the stereotypes and accepted descriptions with her hybrid nature. The physical geography that has transformed the migrants may now be transformed by them as they add "newness" to it.

Chapter 3:

Multiple Bodies/Selves –

An Analysis of Monstrosity in The Satanic Verses by Salman Rushdie

For 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 length 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, violated privacies, untranslatable jokes, extinguished futures, lost loves, the forgotten meaning of hollow, booming words, land, belonging, home. (Rushdie 4-5)

A falling plane sets off the events in The Satanic Verses as the characters, Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha, fall from the sky and begin their transmutation. Rushdie writes, the air “made the century possible, becoming one of its defining locations” (5). Like the air itself, which is described as “most insecure and transitory of zones, illusory, discontinuous, metamorphic,” the characters in the novel who are born into the air through their fall and transformation are rootless, hybrid, and in-between: “‘O my shoes are Japanese,’ Gibreel sang, translating the old song into English in semi-conscious deference to the uprushing host-nation, ‘These trousers are English, if you please. On my head, red Russian hat; my heart’s Indian for all that’” (5). The migrants of the century travel by air; they are the passengers in a borderless, metamorphic field. Flight makes obsolete the metaphor of ‘roots’ that fixes one’s belonging and

identity formation to a single place, for it detaches a migrant from cultural and territorial familiarity and initiates the experience of homelessness and change. This displacement breaks the temporal linearity of a migrant's life by creating discontinuity and metamorphosis, a death and rebirth in a new body and soul. The evolutions of Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta take unexpected turns as one begins to grow horns and hooves and the other a halo during their metamorphic fall from the air. The discontinuity, hybridity, and homelessness of the migrant identity are best illustrated by a metamorphic change in the body: monstrosity.

Carolyn Walker Bynum observes that the modern debate over identity tends to concentrate on "material continuity – as a way of explaining or questioning continuity of consciousness" (248). Especially in a century when our bodies have greater mobility and technologies can alter the body greatly, questions of identity are somatic. Bynum argues that, "popular culture has moved away from concern with mind/body dichotomies and turned instead to issues of integrity versus corruption and partition" (252). The monster body in The Satanic Verses brings up not only questions of bodily integrity but also the integrity of the soul: what happens when a sudden change occurs in our body? Does our soul change accordingly, or is our soul always constant?

According to Bynum, the reason for the multiplicity of bodies and bodily issues in popular culture is the recent notion that the "soul is in fact physical, that it is a *body* " (250). Looking into a history of monsters, Stephen Pender also argues that: "Because monsters instantiate a particular relationship between

inside and outside, between the deformed exterior of the body and the opaque interior, they were the occasion not only for analogical thinking, but for sustained meditation on the dialectics of inside and outside” (151). Rushdie’s preoccupation with the deformity of his characters’ bodies also reveals this new understanding that the bodily movement and change reflect not only what goes on around the individual but also *inside* the individual.

The inside of the individual is further influenced by his/her cultural space. The Satanic Verses captures the post-colonial reality of Indian-Pakistani migrants in modern England. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen writes:

The monster is born only at this metaphoric crossroads, as an embodiment of a certain cultural moment – of a time, a feeling, and a place... The monstrous body is pure culture. A construct and a projection, the monster exists only to be read: the *monstrum* is etymologically ‘that which reveals,’ ‘that which warns,’ a glyph that seeks a hierophant. (4)

Body, soul, and society are what make a human being; fragmentation in one category points to fragmentation in the other. The Satanic Verses is about broken bodily integrities, broken souls, and broken social systems/lives. I would like to interrogate what Rushdie tries to reveal about each of these categories (body, soul, and society) not separately but as intermingled in the body of a monster, Saladin Chamcha.

In order to understand Saladin Chamcha's metamorphosis into a monster, we have to take a look at his transformation from an Indian boy into an Englishman. Chamcha's conflicted relationship with his father and his hometown prompt him to assume a new identity detached from Indian culture. Chamcha's fragmentation and hybridity start even before he leaves Bombay: "The mutation of Salahuddin Chamchawala into Saladin Chamcha began, it will be seen, in old Bombay, long before he got close enough to hear the lions of Trafalgar roar" (37). After being harassed by a man at the park, Saladin resolves to escape: "It seemed to him that everything loathsome, everything he had come to revile about his hometown, had come together in the stranger's bony embrace, and now that he escaped that evil skeleton he must also escape Bombay, or die" (39). What happens in the park is not the only reason for Saladin's frustration with the city, but marks the moment of his cultural estrangement, his alienation from his 'home.' He does not tell his parents what happened in the park for fear that his father will blame him. Instead, he projects his disillusionment onto Bombay and starts to dream of an ideal city:

Salahuddin Chamchawala had understood by his thirteenth year that he was destined for that cool Vilayet full of the crisp promises of pounds sterling at which the magic billfold had hinted, and he grew increasingly impatient of that Bombay of dust, vulgarity, policemen in shorts, transvestites, movie fanzines, pavement sleepers, and the rumoured singing whores of Grant Road who had begun as devotees of the Yellamma cult in Karnataka but ended up

here as dancers in the more prosaic temples of the flesh. He was fed up of textile factories and local trains and all the confusion and superabundance of the place, and longed for that dream-Vilayet of poise and moderation that had come to obsess him by night and day. (37)

When Saladin Chamcha leaves behind the space of his childhood and adolescence, he decides to leave his former identity behind, too. He shapes himself into the person he wants to be: an English citizen. He constructs his body to adjust to his new environment. The first description we have of Chamcha depicts this change:

This face was handsome in a somewhat sour, patrician fashion, with long, thick, downturned lips like those of a disgusted turbot, and thin eyebrows arching sharply over eyes that watched the world with a kind of alert contempt. Mr. Saladin Chamcha had constructed this face with care – it had taken him several years to get it just right – and for many years now he had thought of it as simply as *his own* – indeed, he had forgotten what he had looked like before it. Furthermore, he had shaped himself a voice to go with the face, a voice whose languid, almost lazy vowels contrasted disconcertingly with the sawn-off abruptness of the consonants. (33)

Chamcha's decision to become an Englishman is not realized easily. First, he has to replace his older habits with new ones and overcome his differences, which stand in the way of his *belonging*:

Yes, an English, even if his mother had been right all along, even if there was only paper in the toilets and tepid, used water full of mud and soap to step into after taking exercise, even if it meant a lifetime spent amongst winter-naked trees whose fingers clutched despairingly at the few, pale hours of watery, filtered light. On winter nights he, who had never slept beneath more than a sheet, lay beneath mountains of wool and felt like a figure in an ancient myth, condemned by the gods to have a boulder pressing down upon his chest; but never mind, he would be English, even if his classmates giggled at his voice and excluded him from their secrets. (43)

Massive determination is required to change one's dispositions since our bodies are not just instruments, but are charged with knowledge gained in our early development first through imitation, and then through education. According to Marcel Mauss, "there is perhaps no 'natural' way for the adult" even in his/her bodily functions (102); the body is a social entity and the habits of the body are socially acquired. Since the climactic and geographical conditions of a landscape together with cultural life act as important constituents that make up the *habitus* or bodily dispositions, changing one's location necessitates the absorption of a

new set of bodily habits. Altogether these habits are the means through which one displays his/her identity. Bernd Jager says:

To enter and finally to come to inhabit a house or a city means to come to assume a certain stance, to surrender a certain *style of acting upon* and of *experiencing* the surrounding world...To truly enter and come to inhabit a place means to redraw the limits of our bodily existence to include it, to come to incorporate it and to live it henceforth as a ground of revelation rather than as panorama. (55-56)

Quite understandably, then, one of the major challenges Saladin Chamcha faces before he gains his new identity occurs as he tries to eat fish at the school: "One day soon after he started at the school he came down to breakfast to find a kipper on his plate. He sat there staring at it, not knowing where to begin. Then he cut into it, and got a mouthful of tiny bones. His fellow pupils watched him suffer in silence, not one of them said, here, let me show you, you eat in this way" (44). Saladin has not only acquired a new bodily skill; he has taken a step towards assuming his new identity as an Englishman: "The eaten kipper was his first victory, the first step in his conquest of England" (44). Chamcha goes through a process of unlearning the habits he acquired as a child and teenager, and gaining new ones primarily through imitation. Every physical impediment on his way to become an Englishman becomes a challenge. Even his racial difference is compensated with his marriage. Pamela, with snow-white skin and a voice recollective of aristocracy, is another step in Saladin Chamcha's conquest

of England: "if she did not relent then his entire attempt at metamorphosis would fail" (50).

The narrator of The Satanic Verses refers to the double nature of Saladin's metamorphosis:

A man who sets out to make himself up is taking on the Creator's role, according to one way of seeing things; he's unnatural, a blasphemer, an abomination of abominations. From another angle, you could see pathos in him, heroism in his struggle, in his willingness to risk: not all mutants survive. Or, consider him socio-politically: most migrants learn, and can become disguises. Our own false descriptions to counter the falsehoods invented about us, concealing for reasons of security our secret selves (49).

So far as he is seen as a man who denies his origins and denounces his country (especially because he chooses the side of the colonizer) he is treacherous, but he might as well be regarded as a quixotic hero who tries to be in total control of his identity and future. Chamcha becomes an actor in England, an imitator of voices of all kinds. He is described as a man who mimics and wears masks. When Jumpy, Saladin's friend, enters Saladin's room, he realizes that Saladin "would do anything, put on any damn-fool costume, change into any shape, if it earned him a loving word" (181). Chamcha's room is further described as "an imitation of life, a mask's mask" (180). Apparently, Saladin Chamcha's main concern is to *belong*, feel at *home*, and be one of the English. He, therefore, hides a secret self underneath his skin: his Indianness. When Zeenat Vakil (the

woman with whom Saladin has an affair when he visits Bombay) tells Saladin that he should be ashamed for imitating the British and maintaining a conflict with his father, Saladin Chamcha remembers a play based on a story by Sartre on the subject of shame (72-73). According to Sartre, "I am my own motivation without being my own foundation" (285). In other words, the fact that I was born the person that I am is contingent and unjustified, but at each instant I *choose* who I am, and therefore, transcend this contingency. Saladin is trying to transcend his former physical characteristics and tendencies to become what he chooses. Sartre does not deny that one's contingent body is his point of view upon the world: "Birth, the past, contingency, the necessity of a point of view, the factual condition for all possible action on the world – such is the *body*, such it is for me" (303). However, we can always transcend these haphazard conditions and choose our being-in-the-world:

My *birth* as it conditions the way in which objects are revealed to me (objects of luxury or of basic necessity are more or less *accessible*, certain social realities appear to me as *forbidden*, there are barriers and obstacles in my hodological space); *my race* as it is indicated by the Other's attitude with regard to me; my *class* as it is disclosed by the revelation of the social community to which I belong inasmuch as the places which I frequent refer to it; my *nationality*; my *physiological structure* as instruments imply it by the very way in which they are revealed as resistant or docile and by

their very coefficient of adversity; my *character*; my *past* as everything which I have experienced is indicated as my point of view on the world by the world itself: all this in so far as I surpass it in the synthetic unity of my being-in-the-world is my body as the necessary condition the existence of a world and as the contingent realization of this condition. (304)

As indicated in the above quotation, our contingent body does introduce limitations, but according to Sartre, “we are a choice, and for us to be is to choose ourselves” (304). Sartre goes as far as to argue that, “I cannot be crippled without choosing myself as crippled” (304). Following Sartrean logic one would conclude that Chamcha should be able to get past his origins, ‘race,’ native language, and past experiences in order to transcend his Indianness and become English. But can a person really construct himself a whole new identity? Or will he always be bound by these contingencies that determine his point of view upon the world whether he wants it or not? Perhaps it would be more appropriate to ask if a person can retain his old self and develop a new identity at the same time. Hybridity, which implies multiple subject positions, could provide the answer to this dilemma of retaining the old versus opening up to renewal.

For migrants, the linearity of the past, present, and future is interrupted by the old bodily habits, previous states of mind, and memories which haunt the present and influence the future. As Saladin Chamcha returns to England after a visit to his place of birth, Bombay, his old self begins to lurk underneath his constructed identity: “Saladin found his speech unaccountably metamorphosed

into the Bombay lilt he had so diligently (and so long ago!) unmade" (34). This sudden transformation into his previous mode of being makes him wonder what else is in store for him in the future:

How had the past bubbled up, in transmogrified vowels and vocab?
 What next? Would he take to putting coconut-oil in his hair? Would
 he take to squeezing his nostrils between thumb and forefinger,
 blowing noisily and drawing forth a glutinous silver arc of muck?
 Would he become a devotee of professional wrestling? What
 further, diabolic humiliations were in store? He should have known
 it was a mistake to go home, after so long, how could it be other
 than a regression; it was an unnatural journey; a denial of time; a
 revolt against history; the whole thing was bound to be a disaster.
 (34)

Saladin's movement towards the past instead of the future takes place contrary to the logic of time, and this subversion of temporal logic foreshadows his later metamorphosis into a monster. Even the difference between time zones indicate that, in a migrant's life, time can be inverted rather than being simply continuous and progressing: "Five and a half hours of time zones; turn your watch upside down in Bombay and you see the time in London" (41). We also see the inversion of time through the metaphors of death and rebirth. Through movement, a migrant can kill his old self and may be reborn again in the midst of his life. We see the analogy between death and migration when the narrator describes Gibreel's father, who willingly submits to death, as a migrant: "Some

migrants are happy to depart" (20). The possibility of rebirth is also one of the most repeated phrases in the novel: "To be born again, you have to die." The line between the old self and the new self, however, is always blurred. Although Chamcha is not a migrant who idealizes his homeland through his memories (indeed, the stereotypes he lists about Indians out of his own fear of becoming an Indian proves just the opposite), his past still haunts him. Chamcha may have wanted the separation, but with every change and rebirth he undergoes something of the old is retained - his body betrays him and carries him back to his old self. Revisiting his homeland, Saladin feels "the past rush in like a tide, drowning him, filling his lungs with its revenant saltiness. *I am not myself today*, he thought. The heart flutters. Life damages the living. None of us are ourselves" (65). On his way back to England, when he cannot control his voice and his Indian accent reappears, the same thought goes through his mind: "I am not myself," and then he asks himself, "what does that mean anyway" (34-35)? The last time Saladin Chamcha repeats this sentence he has become alienated from his body; he has become a monster.

Expressed in his sense of powerlessness over his own actions, his loss of personal control over the course of his life, and the meaninglessness of the world, Saladin's alienation and anxiety dominate the text. At one instance, Saladin tries to convince himself that he is "a real man... with a real history and planned out future,"(139) but "in spite of his litany, perverse thoughts insisted on visiting him. As for instance: that the world did not exist beyond that beach down there, and now, this house. That if he weren't careful, if he rushed matters, he

would fall off the edge into the clouds. Things had to be *made*" (140). This is a moment when Saladin encounters nothingness and decides that he has to construct the world through his own actions. Saladin is a man who *makes* himself constantly. As we have already seen, Saladin's efforts in constructing himself results in even a more severe alienation since the ghosts of his past do not allow him to become a successful mutant. Sartrean freedom of choice seems to be undermined in the text since Saladin cannot help his body's actions no matter how hard he tries to choose and construct himself.

In "Structures and the Habitus," Pierre Bourdieu opposes Sartre's view of "absolute possibility" and argues that, "the world of practicality can grant only a conditional freedom" for the individual (81). This conditional freedom depends on the "objective potentialities" of the group or class in which the individual belongs. Bourdieu recognizes a "conductorless orchestration, which gives regularity, unity, and systematicity to the practices of a group or class, " and says that "the habitus is precisely this immanent law, *lex insita*, laid down in each agent by his earliest upbringing" (85-86). Although Saladin Chamcha's aspirations to discard Indian heritage and become an Englishman belies Bourdieu's thesis that there is necessarily a "correlation between *objective probabilities* and *subjective aspirations* (motivations or needs)" (82), Saladin obviously cannot leave behind the dispositions he acquired in Bombay. Zeenat Vakil criticizes him for being an imperfect imitator of the English: "You know what you are, I'll tell you. A deserter is what, more English than, your Angrez accent wrapped around you like a flag, and don't think it's perfect, it slips, baba, like a false moustache" (53). Whether

Saladin is morally in the wrong is another issue, but the fact that after all these years his accent slips proves the strong effect of earlier years in one's acquisition of bodily tendencies. Bourdieu argues that the body can be treated as a memory in the process of acculturation:

The principles embodied in this way are placed beyond the grasp of consciousness, and hence cannot be touched by voluntary, deliberate transformation, cannot even be made explicit; nothing seems more ineffable, more incommunicable, more inimitable, and therefore, more precious than the values given body, made body by the transubstantiation achieved by the hidden persuasion of an implicit pedagogy, capable of instilling a whole cosmology, an ethic, a metaphysic, a political philosophy, through injunctions as insignificant as 'stand up straight' or 'don't hold your knife in your left hand.' (94)

In short, what we acquire in a culture through our bodies is imprinted on us in such a fashion that it is most difficult to annihilate it. Marcel Mauss also emphasizes the triangle of body, soul (the self, the identity which is never separate from the body), and location (or culture) insisting upon a "triple viewpoint" (biological, sociological, and psychological) that is needed of the "total man" (101). Mauss argues that even the most basic activities such as walking, running, swimming are socially acquired, and "each society has its own special habits" (99). If the body and identity are unquestionably interrelated, and the body owes its dispositions to the culture, then the migrant who has lived in two

cultures will necessarily possess the habits of both rather than replacing one of the habits with the other. The migrant body is a hybrid body.

Saladin does not want to embrace his hybridity; he denounces India and rejects the possibility that there should remain even a bit of Indianness in him. Remembering a drama production he saw in Bombay, based on an English original, but adapted according to the values of the Indian society, he says: "Damn all Indians. What the hell. The vulgarity of it, the sod it sod it indelicacy. What the hell. That bastard, those bastards, their lack of bastard taste" (141). Ironically, at this moment the police arrest him, taking him for an illegal migrant. "You've got to believe me, I'm a British," says Chamcha but the immigrant service will not believe him, since his appearance is what they take as evidence for their conviction. Not only is Saladin brown, but he has now become a monster: "Saladin Chamcha ... raised his hands to his forehead, and then 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 goatly, unarguable horns." (145)

The new transformation of Saladin Chamcha may be regarded as an unexpected continuation of his former efforts to reconstruct himself. He does go through a total change, but not exactly in the direction that he chooses. While Saladin Chamcha tries very hard to belong, he becomes "the Other." How has

Saladin Chamcha become a monster? How did he become so alienated both from society and himself?

After turning into a monster, Chamcha is shocked at other people's response to his disfigurement: "What puzzled Chamcha was that a circumstance which struck him as utterly bewildering and unprecedented - that is, his metamorphosis into this supernatural imp - was being treated by the others as if it were the most banal and familiar matter they could imagine" (163). The fact that others do not find Chamcha's monstrosity odd probably shows that this is how they regard aliens in the first place. The immigrant officers arrest him because they think that he illegally entered the country. Chamcha's monstrosity only supports their conviction that he is an alien who needs to be punished for breaking in; otherwise he is no different than the other immigrants they deal with. The officers mock and beat Chamcha and refuse to believe that he is an English citizen. Neither his looks nor his name fits into the definition of "Englishman." When Chamcha tries to convince them to check his name on the computer, one of the officers, a Liverpool fan, inquires: "Who are you trying to kid? Look at yourself. You're a fucking Packy billy. Sally-who? - What kind of name is that for an Englishman?" (168) The narrator tells us, however, that the officer, "sounded uncertain" when he rejected the possibility of Chamcha's being an Englishman (168). It seems that there is an irresolvable question around who is and who deserves to be British; everyone has a vague idea but nobody is certain. The immigration officers think themselves English and mock Saladin's name, but Saladin points out that the officers' names (Novak, Bruno, and Stein) do not

sound so Anglo-Saxon, either. Saladin, on the other hand, thinks of himself as so British that he rejects the Indian food that the daughters of Muhammad Sufyan give him, saying that he is British and cannot eat filthy foreign food. Muhammad Sufyan is a migrant from Bangladesh and owns the Shaandaar Café in England, and his daughters Anahita and Mishal have grown up in London. A natural response comes from one of Sufyan's girls: "What do you think we are?" (267) Mishal says: "Bangladesh isn't nothing to me. Just some place Dad and Mum keep banging on about" (267), but Saladin does not want to admit that they are English: "But they weren't British, he wanted to tell them: not really, not in any way he could recognize. And yet his old certainties were slipping away by the moment, along with his old life" (267). The uncertainty around the definition of "Englishness" shows that the lines between "us" and "the Other" can no longer be drawn easily. Vijay Mishra says: "To be British in a post-diaspora Britain is to be conscious of multiple heritages and peoples' conflicting participation in the long history of Britain. For many, an easy, unproblematic re-insertion into a utopic or linear narrative of the British nation is impossible. In the *Satanic Verses*, we get a strong affirmation of the undesirability of this version of linear history" (23). As the individual adapts his/her bodily dispositions when s/he arrives at a new destination, the existence of people from different cultures will likewise change the concepts of nation's purity and homogeneity. In the modern age, movement not only makes people but also the land hybrid and heterogeneous: "Not all migrants are powerless, the still-standing edifices whisper. They impose their

needs on their new earth, bringing their own coherence to the new-found land, imagining it afresh" (Rushdie 473).

There is, however, still a rejection of the multi-ethnic society by those who find mingling with "the Other" threatening. Mocking and beating Saladin, the immigration officers begin to handle "weightier matters": "With solemn faces and judicious voices, they were speaking of the need, in this day and age, for an increase in observation, not merely in the sense of 'spectating,' but in that of 'watchfulness,' and 'surveillance'" (167). Obviously, those who look and sound 'different' will be watched even with more scrutiny, and in order to 'belong' the migrant will resort to mimicry trying to become a part of the society. The time Chamcha passes in the immigration office is when he feels the Other's gaze upon himself more than ever. Saladin represents the abject, which is reinforced by his non-civilized and animalistic behaviour:

Chamcha was mystified. Then he noticed that a large number of soft, pellety objects had appeared on the floor of the Black Maria. He felt consumed by bitterness and shame. It seemed that even his natural processes were goatish now. The humiliation of it! He was – had gone to some lengths to become – a sophisticated man! Such degradations might be all very well for riff-raff from villages in Sylhet or the bicycle repair shops of Gujranwala, but he was cut from different cloth! (164)

The narrator's last sentence about "the villages in Sylhet or bicycle repair shops of Gujranwala" shows how Saladin has internalized the stereotyped descriptions

of the so-called “underdeveloped” nations and people. The representation of minorities as the monster Other serves to hint that not only their body but also their soul is disfigured. Associations with evil and barbarism inherent to monstrosity prove that demonization permeates both the body and the soul of the Other. Saladin Chamcha does not want to be another monster among many: “What he was rejecting was a portrait of himself and Gibreel as monstrous. Monstrous, indeed: the most absurd of ideas. There were real monsters in the world – mass-murdering dictators, child rapists. The Granny Ripper. You only had to open the tabloids any day of the week to find crazed homosexual Irishmen stuffing babies’ mouths with earth” (420). Looking at the “real monsters” in Saladin’s description, one can easily observe that the monsters are always depicted as “Others” who are not just individuals but representatives of certain nations, cultures, religions, and ‘races’: Uhuru Simba, a spokesman for the African minorities in England, gets wrongfully arrested as the Granny Ripper (the serial killer who is known for tearing the victims’ bodily organs) in the novel, and the tabloids publish stories about “crazed homosexual Irishmen.” Cohen says:

The monster is difference made flesh, come to dwell among us. In its function as dialectical Other or third-term supplement, the monster is an incorporation of the Outside, the Beyond – of all those loci that are rhetorically placed as distant and distinct but originate Within. Any kind of alterity can be inscribed across (constructed through) the monstrous body, but for the most part

monstrous difference tends to be cultural, political, racial,
economic, sexual. (7)

In other words, the monster is an ideological construct that emerges from the notions of “Otherness” developed *inside* in order to secure *inside* from *outside*.

Waking up in a hospital after being beaten unconscious by police, Saladin

Chamcha comes across a creature with a human body and the head of a tiger.

The manticore tells Chamcha that he is not alone and explains:

‘There is a woman over that way,’ it said, ‘who is now mostly water-buffalo. There are businessmen from Nigeria who have grown sturdy tails. There is a group of holidaymakers from Senegal who were doing no more than changing planes when they were turned into slippery snakes. I myself am in the rag trade; for some years now I have been a highly paid male model, based in Bombay, wearing a wide range of suitings and shirtings also. But who will employ me now?’ (173)

That all the mutants come from previously colonized third world nations is not coincidental. Chamcha asks the manticore how they turned out to be the way they are. “They describe us,” replies the manticore, “That’s all. They have the power of description and we succumb to the picture they construct” (174). But is description alone enough to turn one into a monster? Do we necessarily become what others appoint for us?

During the discussion on Chamcha’s mutation in the Shaandaar Café, Muhammad Sufyan tries to come up with a scientific explanation referring to “the

last edition of *The Origin of Species* in which ever great Charles accepted the notion of mutation in extremis to ensure the survival of species" (259). Science, however, falls short of explaining the monster phenomenon. Jumpy offers another solution: "The central requirement is to take an ideological view of the situation" (259). He sums up what Chamcha has gone through: "A: Wrongful arrest, intimidation, violence. Two: Illegal detention, unknown medical experimentation in hospital... and thirdly, psychological breakdown, loss of sense of self, inability to cope" (261). Jumpy further adds: "Ideologically, I refuse to accept the position of victim. Certainly, he has been victimized, but we know that all abuse of power is in part the responsibility of the abused; our passiveness colludes with, permits such crimes" (261). This position offers another explanation; Saladin became a monster not simply because others regarded him as one, but also because he accepted all the stereotypes of his 'race' and nation. Instead of standing up for "his people," Saladin remains passive against all the labels attached to his former society, thinking that this attitude would gain him acceptance into English society. The English, however, never stop to see him as an alien. Saladin's passivity is also criticized by Zeenat Vakil, the woman Saladin has an affair with in Bombay: "Such a fool, you, the big star whose face is the wrong colour for their colour TVs, who has to travel to wogland with some two-bit company, playing the babu part on top of it, just to get into a play. They kick you around and still you stay, you love them, bloody slave mentality, I swear" (62). Chamcha does not want to admit that he has a slave mentality; he says he has a gift for accents and that is why he has got this job. When *The Aliens Show*, a TV

show for children's television that Chamcha acts in under the guise of aliens, attracts political criticism because of "its reinforcement of the idea of aliens-as-freaks," Chamcha refuses to leave the show saying that, "The damn show isn't an allegory. It's entertainment" (63-64). Later on, however, Chamcha loses his job because of his 'race'. The creator of *The Aliens Show*, Hal Valance, tells Saladin: "Audience surveys show that ethnics don't watch ethnic shows. They don't want 'em Chamcha. They fucking want Dynasty, like everyone else. Your profile is wrong, if you follow: with you in the show it's just too damn racial. The Aliens Show is too big an idea to be held back by the racial dimension" (273-74). Hal Valance is not subtle about the racism in media:

Let me tell you some facts. Within the last three months, we re-shot a peanut butter poster because it researched better without the black kid in the background. We re-recorded a building society jingle because T'Chairman thought the singer sounded black, even though he was white as a sodding sheet, and even though, the year before, we'd used a black boy who, luckily for him, didn't suffer from an excess of soul. We were told by a major airline that we couldn't use any blacks in their ads, even though they were actually employees of the airline. (276)

Saladin is shocked to hear Hal Valance, not because of all these racist remarks, but because Saladin's never felt he belonged to a 'race' and to be fired from his job for being brown seems absurd to him (276). At first, Saladin's attitude towards 'race' is attractive for producers, for he does not have a strong ideology

or political agenda that would be an obstacle to acting the way they want him to. However, when racial issues surface, Saladin Chamcha is still a brown man for them. Racial difference always stands in the way of Saladin's assimilation into British society. The minorities likewise do not care for Chamcha; the black radicals give Saladin Chamcha a nickname, "Brown Uncle Tom," because of his closeness to Valance (276). Saladin is rejected on both sides; his displacement agitates both himself and others who cannot place him under one category. While Saladin's denial of shared values with the Indian society causes his cultural estrangement in Bombay, deprivation from his rights as a citizen on the basis of his 'race' results in social isolation in England. Saladin feels alienated from both societies, which leaves him in an in-between place of (non)belonging. This ambiguity about his belonging brings up questions about the concepts of 'race' and nationality.

Although the people Chamcha has worked with, the work he's done, and his nickname suggest that Saladin Chamcha has indeed been passive in the face of victimization, the naiveté in his words: "I've never felt I belonged to a race" makes one wonder what 'race' is after all. What makes one belong to a 'race'? Does one belong to a 'race' even if s/he feels s/he doesn't? Tzvetan Todorov says:

Racism is the name given to a type of behaviour which consists in the display of contempt or aggressiveness toward other people on account of physical differences (other than those of sex) between them and oneself. It should be noted that this definition does not

contain the word “race,” and this observation leads us to the first surprise in this area which contains many: whereas racism is a well-attested social phenomenon, “race” itself does not exist! (370)

Todorov draws our attention to the relationship between science and ‘race’, and argues that the efforts to justify the existence of ‘race’ through biological difference have been futile:

Gobineau believed that races could be distinguished by differences in blood, but he was the only one to hold this belief. All the other racist thinkers realized that too much mixing among populations had already gone on for it to be possible to speak of purity of blood. They did not give up the notion of race for all that, but rather transformed a physical category into a cultural one: for example, Joseph Renan speaks of ‘linguistic races,’ Taine of ‘historical races,’ and Le Bon of ‘psychological races.’ The word ‘race’ thus became virtually synonymous with what we ourselves call ‘culture,’ and nineteenth-century racialism subsists today in the idea of cultural difference. (373)

As a man who always feels more attached to English culture, is Saladin wrong to feel betrayed by his constant rejection on the basis of his ‘race’? Saladin thinks: “We strive for heights but our natures betray us; clowns in search of crowns” (176). Yet, even in this disillusionment one can feel Saladin’s acceptance that it is his “nature” that betrays him; he still does not blame racism but his own ‘race.’ When Sufyan says: “Where else would you go to heal your disfigurements and

recover your normal health? Where else but here, with us, among you own people, your own kind? (261), what goes through Saladin's mind is: "I'm not your kind. You're not my people. I've spent half my life trying to get away from you" (262). Saladin Chamcha, seeing himself as British, feels the same kind of contempt towards the blacks/browns as the whites feel towards him.

But if 'race' does not exist at all, can Saladin Chamcha be blamed for not standing up for his 'race'? When Chamcha becomes a monster, he ironically becomes a symbol for the minorities who identify with him. Their acceptance of Saladin Chamcha (who used to be 'The Brown Uncle Tom'!) as a hero sounds as absurd as the British society's rejection of him on the basis of his physical difference. Mishal Sufyan tells Chamcha: "You're 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" (296). Quite contrary to Chamcha's intentions, "illegal migrant, outlaw king, foul criminal or race-hero, Saladin Chamcha was getting to be true" (297). The ethnic reactions caused by the minorities' identification with the monster Chamcha are another way of submitting to racist descriptions. Even in their reactions, because they succumb to the description of themselves as outlaws and criminals, they reinforce racist assumptions about the evil nature of aliens. Is there, then, no hope for the minorities but to become monsterized? The only way, it seems, is to embrace hybridity - "cultures and subjects formed by the juxtaposition and co-presence of different cultural forces and discourses and their

effects” (Pile and Thrift 21) - and give up the notions of ‘purity of the race’ on both sides.

Even Saladin has to come to terms with his own hybridity before he can start a new life. Although ‘race’ is an artificial category that produces *imagined* communities and alliances and Saladin could rightfully deny that it can have any sort of impact on his identity, the influence of cultures, habitus, and languages cannot be contested that easily. Saladin’s former culture and language - not as an essence but as past knowledges and experiences – inhere in him as one of the many dimensions of his identity, and the occasional slippage of Indian accent and old bodily habits attest to the fact that he still retains that dimension. Saladin embodies that dimension along with his Englishness albeit with gaps and contradictions. As Nikos Papastergiadis argues, “To elaborate the elasticity in the trajectory of identity is not a vindication of the claims that the horizons are boundless, access is free, and the past is without weight or shape” (277). Saladin still carries the weight of his past, but his past need not become a burden waiting to be discarded; conflicting experiences of his past and present jostle with each other to create a multiplied subject enriched by manifold frames of reference.

Kenneth J. Gergen writes,

Indeed, the traditional demands for coherence and consistency in self might reasonably be traced to the influence of hegemonic forces – such as church and state – that demanded a coherent subject in order to better guard their interests against competitive

ideologies. It is when one moves in a state of ambiguous multiplicity that realization of relational being is most fully realized. (124)

Can it be the very fact that he rejected his hybridity all along and tried to cut all his ties with his old self that turned Saladin into a monster?

The discussion between Saladin and Sufyan on whether bodily discontinuity also signifies spiritual continuity is important in terms of shedding light on Saladin's mutation. Metamorphosis that comes with migration may either imply a superficial change that does not affect the constancy of the soul or it may symbolize an irrevocable transformation of both body and soul. Sufyan says: "Question of mutability of the essence of the self has long been the subject of profound debate. For example, great Lucretius tells us, in *de Rerum Natura*, this following thing: 'Whatever by its changing goes out of its frontiers' – that is, bursts its banks, - or, maybe breaks out of its limitations, - so to speak, disregards its own rules, but that is too free, I am thinking... 'that thing,' at any rate, Lucretius holds, 'by doing so brings immediate death to its old self' " (285). Perhaps by trying too hard to transcend his contingency, Saladin killed his old self and even his humanity accidentally died with his old self. Sufyan, however, supports an opposing theory by Ovid: "As yielding is stamped with new designs And changes shape and seems not still the same, yet is indeed the same, even so our souls – Our spirits! Our immortal essences! – Are still the same forever, but adopt In their migrations ever-varying forms" (285). While one theory holds that Saladin Chamcha brought this change to himself by constructing himself to a point that he could not control the changes in his body anymore, the other holds

that the soul never changes. Saladin hopelessly says: "Either I accept Lucretius and conclude that some demonic and irreversible mutation is taking place in my inmost depths, or I go with Ovid and concede that everything now emerging is no more than a manifestation of what was already there" (285-86). What exactly was there? If Saladin's soul is unified and constant, what does monstrosity say about the nature of his soul and character? Saladin asks this question to himself:

For what was he – he couldn't avoid the notion – being punished?
And, come to that, *by whom?* Had he not pursued his own idea of the good, sought to become that which he most admired, dedicated himself with a will bordering on obsession to the conquest of Englishness? Had he not worked hard, avoided trouble, striven to become new? Assiduity, fastidiousness, moderation, restraint, self-reliance, probity, family life: what did these add up to if not a moral code? (265)

The narrator will later ask whether this forced change is the actual evil in Saladin Chamcha, comparing the nature of his transmutation into a devil with Gibreel's transformation into an angel:

Might we not agree that Gibreel, for all his stage-name and performances; and in spite of born-again slogans, new beginnings, metamorphoses; - has wished to remain, to a large degree *continuous* – that is, joined to and arising from his past; - that he chose neither near fatal illness nor transmuting fall; [...] making him that angelic Gibreel he has no desire to be; - so that his is still a self

which, for our present purposes, we may describe as 'true'...
 whereas Saladin Chamcha is a creature of *selected* discontinuities,
 a willing re-invention; his *preferred* revolt against history being what
 makes him, in our chosen idiom, 'false'? And might we then not go
 on to say that it is this falsity – call this 'evil' – and that this is the
 truth, the door, that was opened in him by his fall? (441)

The narrator then admits the shortcoming of this explanation: "But, and again but: this sounds, does it not, dangerously like an intentionalist fallacy? – Such distinctions, resting as they must on an idea of the self as being (ideally) homogeneous, non-hybrid, 'pure,' – an utterly fantastic notion! – cannot, must not, suffice" (442). Saladin Chamcha's extreme obsession with Englishness may be a fallacy, but it is not sufficient to explain his transformation into a monster; nor does his monstrosity prove that Saladin Chamcha is pure evil. Saladin's monstrosity signifies much more than his own character; discontinuity, hybridity, multiplicity are not peculiar to the migrant or the monster Chamcha but are the ways in which the universe works. The modern world rejects the notions of unity and progress, as indicated during a radio broadcast Saladin listens:

Evolution theory had come a long way since Darwin. It was now being argued that major changes in species happened not in the stumbling, hit-and-miss manner first envisaged, but in great, radical leaps. The history of life was not the bumbling progress – the very English, middle-class progress – Victorian thought had wanted it to

be, but violent, a thing of dramatic, cumulative transformations: in the old formulation, more revolution than evolution. (432)

This stance has both scientific and social implications. If there is no linear progress in terms of evolution, then there is no cause and effect either in one's life or in social development and history. The world is full of accidents: "These days character isn't destiny anymore. Economics is destiny. Ideology is destiny. Bombs are destiny. What does a famine, a gas chamber, a grenade care how you lived your life? Crisis comes, death comes, and your pathetic individual self doesn't have a thing to do with it, only to suffer the effects" (Rushdie 447). Heterogeneity and multiplicity makes it impossible to locate origins, as Foucault explains in his article "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History":

To follow the complex course of descent is to maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations – or conversely, the complete reversals – the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being do not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents. (155)

In a world where intentions and consequences do not easily link together, Saladin Chamcha's monstrosity cannot be explained by an essential trait of his evil nature or vice versa. The word "evil" itself suggests that there is one higher truth, the pursuit of which makes one good and the divergence from which makes

one bad. However, in the modern world meanings and truths proliferate, and categories and binaries blur.

Saladin Chamcha's problem does not lie in his *willed* lack of continuity since the world itself is full of accidents and disruption. As Otto Cone, another migrant in the novel, says, continuum is "the most dangerous of all the lies we are fed in our lives. Anybody ever tries to tell you how this most beautiful and most evil of planets is somehow homogenous, composed only of reconcilable elements, that it all *adds up*, you get on the phone to the straitjacket" (305). What Saladin Chamcha lacks is real feelings. He has been an imitator so long that "the polite Englishman" figure does not allow him to cross any boundaries, to feel the richness of multiplicity, plurality, and humanity in him. Finding out what originally made Saladin Chamcha a monster in this world of accidents would probably be impossible (Otherness and victimization, his own attempt to reconstruct himself through mimicry, his severance with his past?), but his monstrosity is undeniably the utmost manifestation of his estrangement from his own body and emotions. Saladin Chamcha becomes a human once again when he feels an irrepressible hatred towards Gibreel who seems to have everything he lacks: fame, love of a whole nation and love of a woman (a white woman, shall I add?). After all the restraints he imposes upon himself and the secret selves he hides under his constructed British face, "Mr Saladin Chamcha himself, apparently restored to his old shape, mother-naked but of entirely human aspect and proportions, *humanized* – is there any option but to conclude? – by the fearsome concentration of his hate" (304). The narrator reminds us: "If love is a yearning to

be like (even to become) the beloved, then hatred, it must be said, can be engendered by the same ambition, when it cannot be fulfilled" (443). Even feelings themselves are hybrid, it seems, for hate is not the opposite but a metamorphosed version of love.

Metamorphosis and hybridity are integral to the world: "An iceberg is water striving to be land; a mountain, especially a Himalaya, especially Everest, is land's attempt to metamorphose into sky; it is grounded flight, the earth mutated – nearly – into air, and become, in the true sense, exalted" (313). The iceberg, however, may always melt and the mountains, no matter how high they may reach, can never be the skies. This is not to deny change, for an iceberg cannot be regarded as water anymore and the mountain is not just a piece of ground. Their in-betweenness makes them fascinating.

If there is no homogeneity in nature, then there is no unity for the body or the soul of the individual, either. Foucault argues that, "Nothing in man – not even his body – is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men" (153). One proof of this statement would be the individual's own experience of the multiplicity in himself. Saladin says: "O, the conflicting selves jostling and joggling within these bags of skin. No wonder we are unable to remain focused on anything for very long; no wonder we invent remote-control channel-hopping devices. If we turned these instruments upon ourselves we'd discover more channels than a cable or satellite mogul ever dreamed of..." (533-34). Finally, Saladin is aware of the impossibility of attaining a unity in himself; he has lived the migrant experience of mobility, change, and

has been exposed to different lifestyles, points of views, values, traditions, languages, and habits. Watching the *Gardeners' World* on television, he meets with a new hope that rests on his hybridity:

On *Gardeners' World* he was shown how to achieve something called a 'chimeran graft' (the very same, as chance would have it, that had been the pride of Otto Cone's garden); and although his inattention caused him to miss the names of the two trees that had bred into one – Mulberry? Laburnum? Broom? – 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. Amid all the televisual images of hybrid tragedies- the uselessness of mermen, the failures of plastic surgery, the Esperanto-like vacuity of much modern art, the Coca-Colonization of the planet – he was given this one gift. (420)

If even plants can be uprooted and take new forms in their new space, so can Saladin. Instead of roots with centres and pivots that die with movement, Deleuze and Guattari offer the "rhizome" model that is characterized by "connection and heterogeneity" as well as "multiplicity:"

Unlike a structure, which is defined by a set of points and positions, with binary relations between the points and biunivocal relationships between the positions, the rhizome is made only of lines: lines of segmentarity and stratification as its dimensions, and the line of flight or deterritorialization as the maximum dimension after which the multiplicity undergoes metamorphosis, changes in nature[...] The rhizome operates by variation, expansion, conquest, capture, offshoots. (21)

The model of rhizome, then, rejects fixation and stasis; it acts as a plane of moving and changing intensities and connections constantly on the process of “becoming” rather than a state of “being.” This model provides more chances of survival for a migrant like Saladin whose deterritorialization and metamorphosis are necessary parts of his becoming.

When Saladin once again chooses to extend his roots (or rather bulbs and tubers as in a rhizome) to Bombay, he restores his relationship with his dying father and reconciles with the ghosts of his past. His return should not be seen as a return to his essence or ‘home’; Saladin surely cannot be the same person as when he left Bombay the first time. Like a rhizome, Saladin “has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*,” for whom “Where are you going? Where are you coming from? What are you heading for? These are useless questions” (Deleuze and Guattari 25). Origins cannot determine Saladin, nor does he need an enclosure of identity. At his father’s bedside, Saladin does not feel he is once again reunified with his past,

but experiences the possibility of living with his multiple selves simultaneously: "Saladin felt hourly closer to many old, rejected selves, many alternative Saladins – or rather Salahuddins – which had split off from himself as he made his various life choices, but which had apparently continued to exist, perhaps in the parallel universes of quantum theory" (538). At the end of the novel there is a hope for Saladin Chamcha because this time he will see the city as a dynamic place rather than a "picture postcard," (181) as England has always been for him. Zeeny Vakil, Chamcha's new love, says: "Try to embrace this city, as it is, not some childhood memory that makes you both nostalgic and sick. Draw it close. The actually existing place. Make its faults your own. Become its creature; belong" (555). As Saladin has changed into a different person in time, so has Bombay. Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson claim that not only people, but also "cultures need to be rethought 'in terms of travel,' so that 'returning home' is not to find oneself in the same place as before" (33). Chamcha will once again reconcile with his own humanity, once again in a new destination. Rather than a return to origins, then, Saladin's journey to India must be regarded as an embracing of hybridity - an acceptance of dynamism, flux, change, and multiplicity both in terms of spaces and identities.

Chapter 4:

Mobility, Multiplicity, and the Formation of Critical Eye/I in Jasmine by Bharati Mukherjee

“Our sense of being, of identity and language, is experienced and extrapolated from movement: the ‘I’ does not preexist this movement and then go out into the world, the ‘I’ is constantly being formed and reformed in such movement in the world” (Chambers 24).

Narrated in the first person, Mukherjee’s Jasmine represents a life full of detours; the “I” in the text does not correspond to one self but to many: Jyoti, Jasmine, Jase, and Jane. The narrator shifts between radically different and distinct selves in each stage of her life, and yet she also becomes the embodiment of many selves simultaneously. The developments in her life do not follow a chronological sequence, but overlap with each other; the ‘I’ of the present is constantly interrupted by the ‘I’ of the past and vice versa. In its assertion of heterogeneity and multiplicity against an holistic self, Jasmine portrays both postcolonial and feminist sensibilities. Borrowing from theories of Achille Mbembe, Albert J. Paolini asserts that, “Because the postcolony is a ‘chaotic plurality’ made up of a multitude of spheres and arenas, the postcolonial subject has to learn to continuously bargain and mobilize ‘several fluid identities which, by their very nature, must be constantly revised in order to achieve maximum instrumentality and efficiency as and when required” (75). Likewise, Teresa de Lauretis finds in feminist writing:

the concept of a multiple, shifting, and often self-contradictory identity, a subject that is not divided in, but rather at odds with, language; an identity made up of heterogeneous and heteronomous representations of gender, race, and class, and often indeed across languages and cultures; an identity that one decides to reclaim from a history of multiple assimilations, and that one insists upon as a strategy. (9)

Revealing intersections between various discourses of domination, Jasmine advocates resistance to these discourses through a revisiting and re-visioning of the narrator's multiple subject positions. Each subject position exposes gaps in production of knowledge and constructions of selfhood. While '*Jyoti*' signifies subordination to patriarchy, '*Jane*' depicts oppression under an assimilationist ethic that denies the narrator's difference. Jasmine, on the other hand, portrays an in-between identity, an identity of transition and becoming, which suitably gives the book its title.

Mukherjee's non-linear narrative questions the fixity of identity in a particular space and time by displaying the narrator's identity formation and constant mutation during migration. The drastic changes in the way Jasmine experiences her body (sexuality and dress) as a result of her migration to America trouble the notion of a selfhood shaped by her belonging to a single community and a fixed home. The narrator's migration from India to America involves a transition between different cultural discourses, myths, and body and identity politics as well as a physical departure from familiar sensations, habits,

and rituals. From the village of Hasnapur to New York, the narrator not only experiences a difference in language and dress codes, she also experiences a discrepancy in her sense of self: "I'm a 'dark-haired girl' in a naturally blond country. I have a 'darkish' complexion (in India, I'm 'wheatish')" (33). Her cultural roles, especially as a widowed woman, in India and in America also clash:

Nirmala brought plain saris and salwar-kamez outfits for me from the shop so I wouldn't have to embarrass myself or offend the old people in cast-off American T-shirts. The sari patterns were for much older women, widows. I could not admit that I had accustomed myself to American clothes. American clothes disguised my widowhood. In a T-shirt and cords, I was taken for a student. (145)

In both examples, the body acts, in Elizabeth Grosz's words, as "a site of social, political, cultural, and geographical inscriptions, production, and constitution" (23). According to Grosz the outside and inside fold into each other through the body: "The body provides a mediation between what is perceived as purely internal and accessible only to the subject and what is external and publicly observable, a point from which to rethink the opposition between inside and outside, the private and the public, the self and other" (20). Jasmine's body, then, acts as a space in which the psychical and the social interact with each other; her story constitutes her embodiment in the world: her relationships, interactions with others, struggles, routines, and desires. We attain knowledge of the character of Jasmine through her social roles and how she interprets them. By the

inconsistencies in socially-defined roles, she becomes aware of her own desires. Her interpretation of and reaction to social definitions turns into resistance. The body paradoxically becomes both the ground on which these social roles (as 'woman', as 'Asian' etc.) are exercised and the point of resistance against imposed definitions and fates.

The narrator of Jasmine cannot let either culture's idiom limit her own self-expression. The contradictions and gaps between the everyday practices of two lands make her question her own constructed identities as well as the body/identity politics in each culture. Sidonie Smith argues that this engagement with multiple cultural discourses, which renders the subject with multiple perspectives, opens up new spaces of resistance:

Coming out of a complex experientially based history (a history of specifics of gender, race, class, nationality, religion, ethnicity) to engage official histories of the subject, the autobiographical subject speaks not from one overdetermined position within the webs of discourse. Each autobiographical subject becomes what Lee Quinby labels 'multiply designated,' severally situated within diverse, sometimes congruous often competing, even contradictory discursive fields. This multiplication of speaking positions increases 'the possibility of resistance through a recognition of the simultaneous non-unity and non-consistency of subject positions.'

(21)

While contradictions and non-consistencies in one's knowledges and practices always calls for a fragmentation in the sense of selfhood, this antagonism within oneself is more often productive than not, for solutions to problems hardly come without debates.

Migration creates a sudden disruption in one's self-image. In America, as Jasmine lets go of her former life style and bodily habits, she also begins to let go of her attachment to her past and her home in India. When Lillian Gordon – a charitable rescuer of illegal immigrants - teaches her how to walk and talk like an American, Jasmine's physical change makes her question her state of mind as well: "I checked myself in the mirror, shocked at the transformation. Jazzy in a T-shirt, tight cords, and running shoes. I couldn't tell if with the Hasnapuri sidle I'd also abandoned my Hasnapuri modesty" (133). Jasmine's sudden metamorphosis strikes her when she encounters her unfamiliar image in the mirror. According to Judith Oster, the frequent employment of mirrors in the works of bicultural writers serves to emphasize either a split of identity or rebirth in a new body:

Look into the mirror – indeed the very need to look into the mirror, to seek one's image – seems to assume greater urgency as well as clearer self-consciousness in bicultural texts where change and difference is more obvious or more sudden, and therefore more clearly dramatized, than in the conventional bildungsroman [...] Whether sought or come upon accidentally, a view in a mirror is instantaneous, not a gradual process over time; the unexpected

difference reflected in the mirror, a trope (as well as a crucial incident) expressing identity disruption or formation. (60)

Jasmine's image in the mirror reflects *both* a threat to her former identity ("disruption") and the emergence of a new subject position ("formation"). A walk does not simply mean travelling on foot, for the way a woman walks gives away her (communal) identity; 'Hasnapuri' had been inscribed on Jasmine's bodily movements. Marcel Mauss sees "an education in walking": "The positions of the arms and hands while walking form a social idiosyncrasy, they are not simply a product of some purely individual, almost completely psychical, arrangements and mechanisms" (100). Indeed, Lillian educates Jasmine on the visible difference between Hasnapuri walk and American walk: "Now remember, if you walk and talk American, they'll think you were born here. Most Americans can't imagine anything else" (135). Since the doctrines of a socio-cultural space reveal themselves in the minute details of clothing habits, Jasmine's new body image and new clothes display a rupture from her former culture and its practices. This physical change, however, also reflects a new gender role, a new subjectivity emerging in American society.

The body politics of a socio-cultural space can easily be observed in everyday practices. Gillian Rose posits the everyday as "the space of the construction of masculinity, femininity and the heterosexual contract (among other positions)," and points out that, "For many women [...] the threat of everyday 'mistakes' – too much rouge, a dingy bra strap showing, a voice too shrill in laughter – is threat of misperforming, of becoming a *grotesque* spectacle"

(337; emphasis added). Jasmine, then, has to absorb the 'proper' conducts for American women in everyday space. Lillian Gordon teaches Jasmine how she can avoid looking *grotesque* as she warns her about high heel shoes: "Shoes are the biggest giveaway. Undocumented aliens wear boxy shoes with ambitious heels" (132). While learning not to look grotesque in the new land, Jasmine wonders if she is transgressing the limits of her former culture through her bodily change; she understands that if a woman chooses to walk in a different fashion than what her culture demands of her, walking itself becomes an act of resistance. Oster touches upon the hesitation of a migrant to let go of previous knowledges and practices:

And so we find that it is not only customs, parental expectations, beliefs, clothing, physical features that enter into an identity or an identity conflict, but what baggage am I – or should I be – carrying? Or have I left it behind at a previous station? If so, should I go back and retrieve it? Is there something precious tucked in among the unfashionable, old, worn clothes I was so glad to leave behind?
(75)

Despite this hesitation, Jasmine acknowledges that migrants are quick learners, "Once we start letting go – let go just one thing, like not wearing our normal clothes, or a turban or not wearing a tika on the forehead – the rest goes on its own down a sinkhole" (29). What the narrator calls "the rest" suggests not another piece of clothing, but a whole body of knowledge produced by acculturation. The processes of learning and unlearning cultural practices, which

start simply as attempts to 'fit in,' eventually result in the juxtaposition of two cultures and their contradictory discourses. Understanding the limitations of each culture, the subject learns to debate different elements in her hybrid body.

Jasmine's migration from India to America facilitates the development of a critical eye/I as she can view her own body in relation to two different cultural imprints that challenge each other. The coexistence and struggle of different cultural roles and constructed identities give rise to a complex and fragmented subjectivity, but gaps in the translation of knowledge and practices also enable the subject to step out of the lived discourse, and perceive it from the lenses of an outsider. This distance gives the female and/or racialized subject, whose "body is caught up in representation" (de Lauretis 12), a chance to exert political agency.

Jasmine's estrangement from her culture starts before she moves to America, but the possibilities of resistance are very restricted within the limits of a small Indian village where the subject is under constant surveillance of societal norms and traditions. Jasmine's silent resistance is directed against the constraints on her gender:

In a makeshift birthing hut in Hasnapur, Jullundhar District, Punjab, India, I was born the year the harvest was so good that even my father, the reluctant tiller of thirty acres, had grain for drought. If I had been a boy, my birth in a bountiful year would have marked me as lucky, a child with a special destiny to fulfill. But daughters were

curses. A daughter had to be married off before she could enter heaven, and dowries beggared families for generations. (39)

As the fifth daughter of the family, Jasmine's (or Jyoti at the time) future seems far from promising: a dowryless bride if she could ever be a bride at all. She gets her first scar from her mother who tries to save her from this future: "a ruby-red choker of bruise" on her throat and "sapphire fingerprints" on her collarbone (40). The narrator explains that her mother's murderous act was neither mad nor violent but marked concern for her; she thinks her daughter would be better off dead than live a predestined life of poverty and suffering. Jyoti's transformation starts when she averts the physical coercion on her gendered body that bears her destiny: "I survived the sniping. My grandmother may have named me Jyoti, Light, but in surviving I was already Jane, a fighter and adapter" (40).

Her culture's insistence on the passivity of the feminine body, which cannot survive on its own but needs the protection of a husband, undercuts the narrator's fight for an autonomous body. The narrator's grandmother, who disapproves of Jyoti's schooling and tries to arrange a marriage for her, affirms, "God doesn't think you're ready for salvation. Individual effort counts for nothing" (57). An astrologer, who foresees Jyoti's widowhood and exile, once again maps out her future leaving no room for her agency. Jyoti feels subjected to the panoptic gaze of God as well as patriarchal society, for God and fate are constantly invoked to remind her of her 'proper place' in society. Jyoti fights back again, calling the astrologer a crazy old man, but gets another scar from her resistance: "A twig sticking out of the bundle of firewood I'd scavenged punched

a star-shaped wound into my forehead" (3). Jyoti's scars become the signs of her constant struggle against a predestined, restricted life in which a woman's worth depends on her ability to find and keep a husband, as well as her fight for a difficult journey towards her desires: "I feel the tug of opposing forces. Hope and pain. Pain and hope" (21). The painful, star-shaped scar symbolizes a "third eye" through which she hopes to "peer into invisible worlds" (5). Torn as she is between pain and hope, fate and will, tradition and desire, Jyoti and Jane, she will find her agency only after a personal fragmentation.

Before Jasmine leaves Hasnapur, her lack of mobility restricts her agency; her defiance against her gender role can only be limited to subversive tactics. Jasmine's experiences along with her descriptions of the lives of other women in Hasnapur reveal the social process of producing gendered selves. According to Elspeth Probyn a vocalization of women's particular experiences can unsettle the gender politics of a social space and time: "The experiential may enable an enunciative position which puts forward a level of being as the conditions of that being are problematized" (29). Although Probyn acknowledges that "The production of a speaking position is always tied to the practices and politics bound up with daily life", she also allows that, "While the everyday may be boring at times, it is filled with a plethora of details and ruses that allow us to get by" (86). Jasmine observes these "details and ruses," the limited opportunities of resistance that help Hasnapuri women survive. Even before Jasmine leaves for America, her mind begins to fill with nonconformist desires. Following her schoolteacher Masterji's conviction that it is "important that modern ladies go for

secondary-school education and find themselves positions" (50), Jyoti rejects her fate as someone's daughter, wife, or widow, and declares she wants to be a doctor and set up her clinic in a big town (51). There are, however, permissible and impermissible rebellions (as Jyoti later on discovers). She may escape marrying a widower with three children against her grandmother's wishes, but as soon as she voices her wish to be a doctor, they say: "The girl is mad!" (51). Jyoti learns what is expected of her and to what degree a woman can transgress societal norms and traditions: "All over our district, bad luck dogged dowryless wives, rebellious wives, barren wives. They fell into wells, they got run over by trains, they burned to death heating milk on kerosene stoves" (41). Her keen observation of what passes as "permissible" appears in the description of a widow in the neighbourhood: "She was a widow and for herself she bought only half kilos of potatoes and onions (as a widow she should not have eaten onions); I knew even then I was witnessing permissible rebellion" (47). The furthest Jyoti herself can push her will is to marry someone she loves. Even then she is only allowed to fall in love with a voice; she cannot see the man she falls in love with until her brothers decide to show her to him: "Love before first sight: that's our Hasnapuri way" (67). When Jyoti and Prakash meet, all Jyoti can do is blush and say nothing, and they get married two weeks after their first meeting. Instead of pursuing her childhood dreams, which prove unthinkable in Hasnapur, Jyoti accustoms herself to the limitations on her gendered body, and exercises her will to the degree that it does not upset traditions. The 'permissible' rebellion of Jyoti and other women in her society can be defined as 'tactical,' a term Michel de

Certeau defines as “a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus” (quoted in Probyn 86-87). Probyn affirms that, “Given women’s historical lack of institutional ‘loci,’ it is tempting to generalize and say that all women’s speaking is tactical” (87). Whether these rebellions are consciously political or not, the observation and narration of these acts of defiance provides a critique of the social structures that make women resort to “tactics” in order to survive. Mobility or even the possibility of going away, however, will provide Jasmine with more distance from such cultural practices and open up new possibilities of social critique.

In Jasmine’s life, the promise of starting a new life elsewhere begins with her marriage with Prakash; migration promises the possibility of controlling one’s fate as opposed to submitting to destiny. As a man, Prakash has more access to the outside world than her wife could ever wish to have; he is more versed in politics and in direct contact with the corrupt business world where he has to keep false books for his boss. Trapped by repugnant social and political conflicts in India, Prakash invests his desires into the hopeful letters his professor sends from America. He tries to open up his wife’s eyes to social realities so that she will agree to leave India with him: “He wanted to break down the Jyoti I’d been in Hasnapur and make me a new kind of city woman. To break of the past he gave me a new name: Jasmine” (77). Prakash resists moving in with his uncle’s family after marriage, where Jyoti would look after the elders as duty commands. Jyoti finds it hard to get used to the kind of freedom Prakash offers her: “For the uncle love was control. Respect was obedience. For Prakash love was letting go.

Independence, self-reliance: I learned the litany by heart. But I felt suspended between worlds" (76). Prakash's modernist views that begin to pervade Jyoti's mind divide her between a communal identity and the possibility of a transgressive new self, which seem mutually exclusive to her. Although Jyoti still remains unaware that she can have desires against society's expectations from her gendered position, she does feel the disturbing presence of a monitoring power - God, morality, or tradition - that surrounds her. When Prakash wants her to call him by his name instead of using pronouns, as Hasnapur wives would normally do, she has to practice saying his name in the bathroom so that she wouldn't blush (77). Jyoti feels the need to escape into a room that provides a marginal, private space away from the centre of public gaze in order to exercise her transgression. The bathroom, preserved for unspeakable bodily activity, becomes the space for her sacrilegious defiance of public decorum. The idea of going away slowly begins to grow on her, too, as she thinks the panoptical gaze that constantly reaffirms her predicted fate will elude her once she transgresses the borders: "If we could just get away from India, then all fates would be cancelled. We'd start with new fates, new stars. We could say or be anything we wanted. We'd be on the other side of the earth, out of God's sight" (85). Promises of new lands and allegiance to the old clash in the narrator's person: "Jyoti, Jasmine: I shuttled between identities" (77).

Personal traumas, which remind Jasmine that the familiarity of the space and the security of maintaining a traditional life may shatter with an unexpected accident, further detach her from her 'roots.' The narrator's father dies in a most

absurd fashion: "He got off a bus in a village two hours west of us and was gored by a bull" (58). The narrator explains that, "The horror was suddenness. He used to say, lying on his charpoy in the courtyard, I can watch death coming from here. He'll have to be a very sneaky fellow to catch me by surprise. I will die with my kurta buttoned and my glasses folded on my paper and all my prayers said. The bull attacked it from behind. He never saw it coming" (58). If Pitaji's death makes Jyoti aware of the haphazardness of environment, her husband's unforeseen death because of a bomb further proves that even in the most familiar land and community one can keep no faith in an uninterrupted progress or the logic of cause and effect. In fact, Jyoti's own metamorphosis into Jasmine is described in terms of physical discontinuity, death and rebirth during a single lifetime. This division within one's self unsettles both a linear and progressive temporality, and an identity safely anchored in one body and place. Jasmine decides to erase her former self, Jyoti, after her husband gets killed by Khalsa Lions, Sikh Nationalists fighting for the sovereign state Khalistan (the Land of the Pure). She tells herself: "Don't crawl back to Hasnapur and feudalism. That Jyoti is dead" (96). The distance she maintains from herself as if she is speaking to someone else marks her confrontation with her own dividedness. *Jasmine* becomes more than a name her husband gives her; it announces the unfolding out of a new self: "We *had* created life. Prakash had taken Jyoti and created Jasmine, and Jasmine would complete the mission of Prakash. Vijn and Wife. A vision had formed" (97). Jasmine decides to go to America to fulfil Prakash's vision. When she looks at her fake visa, she feels "renewed, the recipient of an

organ transplant" (103). The body of an organ transplant recipient, however, becomes invaded by an Other. Even before Jasmine leaves India, she begins to feel the presence of an Other self inside her.

Involvement with otherness destabilizes the notion of an identity rooted in one's origins. Rosemary Marangoly George argues that even if a migrant's past still affects her/him in the new land, attachment to a tribal identity is irrevocably broken: "Immigration, one could argue, *unwrites* nation and national projects because it flagrantly displays a rejection of one national space for another more desirable location, albeit with some luggage carried over" (186). Jasmine arrives in America with the remnants of her past; she carries in her suitcase a photo album, and Prakash's blue, unworn suit that he had planned to wear in America. By carrying this luggage, she tries to bring her dead husband into her own body, but the presence of a past, already dead, impedes with her own rebirth in the new land. The captain of her boat, Half-Face says: "Travel light sweetheart, always travel light. If you hadn't been carrying this bag, you wouldn't be in the deep shit now, you know that?" (114). Jasmine's heavy luggage causes her trouble both metaphorically and literally as Half-Face rapes her in the hotel room to which he carries her luggage. Jasmine's first plan is to end her life upon reaching the place where she and her husband were going to live, but when she later on decides to live she will have to let go of her weighty past: "I walked out the front drive of the motel to the highway and began my journey, traveling light" (121). Jasmine, who already discarded Jyoti, will have to shed even more identities as she transcends her past and hastens to a future in a brand new

destination. Each new land and new social interactions necessitate a mental and corporeal transformation. Yet, in each destination an invisible baggage of old values, lifestyles, languages, and ideologies of former social spaces unconsciously accompanies the migrant. Jasmine becomes Jazzy with Lillian Gordon, Jase with Taylor who hires her as an *au pair*, and Jane with the Iowan banker Bud, but these identities are neither mutually exclusive nor free of the narrator's former identities of *Jasmine* and *Jyoti*. In her search for a new 'home,' this multiplicity interferes with her belonging to a single place.

Nostalgia appears as Jasmine's first invisible baggage in America. While with Lillian Gordon, Jasmine still feels burdened with nostalgia of a lost 'home': she cries when she sees pictures of Kanjobal Indians that remind her of Hasnapur (131), trying on new shoes makes her remember the time Prakash and she went to buy western shoes (132), and she longs for the secure and close-knit company that Kanjobal women have for themselves. It is, however, this nostalgia for a 'home', any 'home', and an urgent need to belong that enables Jasmine to undergo a drastic change through which she becomes an American. Feeling that her difference and her invisible baggage of memories and former acculturation might preclude her adaptation into a new society, Jasmine begins to refashion her self-image. When she finally finds a 'home' with the family of her dead husband's professor, the Vadheras, this time her new self-image obtrudes her from being a part of this close-knit Indian family: "In this apartment of artificially maintained Indianness, I wanted to distance myself from everything Indian, everything Jyoti-like. To them I was a widow who should show a proper modesty

of appearance and attitude” (145). Jasmine’s preference for t-shirts instead of saris with patterns fit for a widow becomes a conscious resistance against restrictions of her former culture. She finds out that although she had been yearning for a ‘home’ and belonging, she cannot return back to a place that she left willingly and to a time when she did not question her conformity to social structures. Jasmine overcomes her own longing for her lost ‘home.’ The Vadheras, however, live in constant nostalgia, trying to hold on to their former lifestyles and cultural belongings. They speak Hindi, watch Hindi movies on VCR every night, and keep in touch only with Hindu families in the neighbourhood. More importantly, the Vadheras try to retain their communal roles in the family:

Nirmala had no idea where her husband worked – her never told her. ‘What if there’s an accident?’ I asked, and she smiled, like a child. ‘*He* will know’ she said, using the pronoun. She had no idea what he did. He was following an ancient prescription for marital accord: silence, order, authority. So was she: submission, beauty, innocence. (151)

Distribution of distinct gender roles among family members is not an arbitrary but an intentional act to maintain a solid structure for the preservation of community, argues Anne-Marie Fortier: “Gender is the central vehicle for mobilization of family and generations in the collective re-enactment and display of cultural continuity” (167). Jasmine notices that, although the professor claims to be a modern man and Nirmala has become a working woman in America, they both try to hold on to the gendered power structures of ‘home’ to maintain a local

identity: "He [the professor] sealed his heart when he'd left home. His real life was in an unlivable land across oceans. He was a ghost, hanging on" (153). The land is unlivable not because the Vadheras lack the resources to return back to their country, but because even if they do, the land they return to will not correspond with the way they imagine it and fix it in their minds like a still picture; the traditions and roles that they keep sacred constantly change in the real 'home,' while they stay constant in the fetishized one that they create. The Vadheras create a stereotypical home for themselves, which Nigel Rapport sees as "a means for individuals rapidly to project and establish a secure personal belonging in a constantly shifting, satisfyingly complex, modern world[...]" Notwithstanding the experience of migration and social flux, therefore, the individual can still cognitively construct for himself a personal place which is holistic and constant" (282). This stable, unchanging 'home' signifies a safe haven for Vadheras, whereas for Jasmine it becomes a prison especially because fixed gender roles are not only maintained in 'home,' but they are also manipulated to perpetuate the existence of 'home'. Jasmine not only observes the unequal power relationship between the professor and his wife, she also senses her own powerlessness as a 'widow' if she stays "behind the fortress of Punjabiness" (148):

Sundays were our days to eat too much and give in to nostalgia, to take the carom board out of the coat closet, to sit cross-legged on dhurries and matchmake marriages for adolescent cousins or younger siblings. Of course, as a widow, I did not participate.

Remarriage was out of the question within the normal community.

There were always much older widowers with children to look after who might consider me, and this, I know, was secretly discussed, but my married life and chance at motherhood were safely over.

(147)

Her life of cooking, cleaning, shopping, and looking after the elders makes Jasmine find herself in the bathroom “sobbing from unnamed and unfulfilled wants” (148). The bathroom once again acts as a private space of her silent resistance, the space where she can express the unspeakable. Her desires, which cannot yet be articulated, make her realize that she cannot hold on to her roots for security anymore; she had already encountered otherness – America as the other outside and a woman with ineffable wants as the other inside - and the alternatives that it might present: “I, who had every reason to fear America, was intrigued by the city and the land beyond the rivers. The Vadheras, who would soon have saved enough to buy a small apartment building in Astoria, had retired behind ghetto walls”(145). Jasmine’s conviction that the Vadheras live in a false, fetishized world is further reinforced by her discovery that the professor is indeed an importer and sorter of human hair. If the life of Vadheras proves to be a lie, so too is the whole discourse on fixity and origins: “A hair from some peasant’s head in Hasnapur could travel across oceans and save an American meteorologist’s reputation. Nothing was rooted anymore. Everything was in motion” (152).

A world in which everything is in motion, however, leaves the subject without security, stability, and order. The lack of attachment caused by uprooting

destroys one's certainties about future, leaving the subject in confusion. At Kate Gordon's (Lillian's daughter) house, where she will be hired by Taylor and Wylie to look after their daughter Duff, the clutter of the house reflects Jasmine's own chaotic condition: "I had just escaped from the tidiness, the neatness of my benefactors in Flushing. I'd just abandoned whatever chance at security I had in the world" (161). But the chaos of the room promises possibilities as Jasmine is relieved to see "that one could live like this [in disarray as opposed to an orderly existence] and not be struck down" (160). Jasmine begins to see America not as a place to which unfortunate circumstances brought her, but as a place where she will start her new life.

Homemaking and a search for belonging remains a prominent project for Jasmine even if she maintains no faith in a nostalgia that carries over the simulacrum of former 'home' to her new habitation. Rapport and Dawson point out the perpetuation of the concepts of 'home' and home-making despite migrancy: "The evidence points to a successful resilience of 'home,' however this may come to be defined, and an inexorability of home-making – even as individuals and groups lead their lives in and through movement (cognitive and physical) and refrain from finally and essentially affixing their identities to places" (32). Still in search of a home, Jasmine wants to settle for once and for all: "America may be fluid and built on flimsy, invisible lines of weak gravity, but I was a dense object, I had landed and was getting rooted" (179). As Jasmine tries to unlearn her former culture, she idealizes what it is to be "American" in the person of her generous new family, and wants to become not only an employee but a

member (of both the family and the new culture that this family represents to her):

He smiled his crooked-toothed smile and I fell in love. I mean, I fell in love with what he represented to me, a professor who served biscuits to a servant, smiled at her, and admitted her to the broad democracy of his joking, even when she didn't understand it. *It seemed entirely American.* I was curious about his life, not repulsed. I wanted to know the way such a man lives in this country. *I wanted to watch, be a part of it.* (167; Emphasis added)

This new identification and her new idealized self image provide an escape from the traumas she underwent in the past, all of which she begins to associate with India:

I fell in love with his world, its ease, its careless confidence and graceful self-absorption. I wanted to become the person they thought they saw: humorous, intelligent, refined, affectionate. Not illegal, not murderer, not widowed, raped, destitute, fearful. In Flushing, I had lived defensively in the midst of documented rectitude. I did not want to live legally if it also meant living like a refugee. (171)

Despite a conscious process of unlearning Jasmine's new identity formation does not cancel out her former self. Although Jasmine declares that she has now become *Jase*, she still feels and thinks like Jyoti/Jasmine when habits and values are involved. When she moves in with Taylor's family to look after Duff, the family

wants her to have her own room, but Jasmine prefers to stay in Duff's room, as she is not used to sleeping alone: "I could not imagine a small child sleeping alone. I had trouble enough with it myself, never having spent a night alone until I got to Lillian Gordon's" (172). Aside from the difficulty of changing her habits, Jasmine constantly finds herself at awe with the moral codes in America. Looking out to the dorm windows across Claremont Avenue, Jasmine cannot believe the casual attitude of the students: "Barnard women were studying cross-legged on narrow beds, changing T-shirts, clowning with Walkmans clamped to their heads. They wore nothing under their shirts and sweaters. Men were in their room. Even on the first morning I saw naked bodies combing their hair in front of dresser mirrors. Truly there was no concept of shame in this society" (171). Likewise, when Wylie decides to leave Taylor for another man, saying that it would be her only chance at happiness, Jasmine cannot even begin to understand a woman leaving her family for 'happiness': "There was no word I could learn, no one I could consult, to understand what Wylie was saying or why she had done it" (182). Upon Wylie's departure, she begins to doubt if the American way of raising children turns kids into unsatisfied adults: "I asked Duff the enriching questions Wylie wanted me to, and let Duff find the answers for herself. I wondered if anyone asked Wylie enriching questions, if I was creating the foundations for impossible yearning later in Duff's life" (185). Although Jasmine tries hard to integrate herself into American life, her previous experiences and knowledge shaped in another place precludes her Americanization without any doubts or hesitation. Jasmine may have willingly emptied her luggage of old pictures and

reminiscences, but the memory itself remains. Edward Said observes the clash between memory and present-day experience in a migrant's life, "For an exile, habits of life, expression or activity in the new environment inevitably occurs against the memory of things in the other environment" (366). The discontinuity between Jasmine's past and present manifests itself at such moments when unconsciously retained memory interferes with her full participation in and acceptance of the lived moment and place.

The narrator's past and present are so blurred that Jase and Jasmine, identities of two different worlds, exist on the same plane: "For every Jasmine the reliable caregiver, there is a Jase the prowling adventurer. I thrilled to the tug of opposing forces" (176). The narrator finally begins to acknowledge that her subject positions can co-exist; she does not have to discard Jasmine to become Jase. According to Iain Chambers, a migrant can distance herself from her former culture and see it with critical eyes without completely abandoning her former knowledges and subject positions:

None of us can simply choose another language, as though we could completely abandon our previous history and freely opt for another one. Our previous sense of knowledge, language and identity, our peculiar inheritance, cannot be simply rubbed out of the story, cancelled. What we have inherited- as culture, as history, as language, as tradition, as a sense of identity – is not destroyed but taken apart, opened up to questioning, rewriting and re-routing.

(24)

The clash between Jasmine's former life and this modern but unstable and insecure environment makes her question both worlds. The fluidity and flexibility of American life provides Jasmine with opportunities of sustaining herself without being indebted to another family and surpassing the codes of proper behaviour for widows. However, it lacks the permanence and the security of a traditional lifestyle. This unpredictableness hurts Jasmine, who sees everything slipping away with Wylie's sudden whimsy just when she thinks she has found a solid job and place for herself: "In America, nothing lasts. I can say that now and it doesn't shock me, but I think it was the hardest lesson of all for me to learn. We arrive so eager to learn, to adjust, to participate, only to find the monuments are plastic, agreements are annulled. Nothing is forever, nothing is terrible, or so wonderful, that it won't disintegrate" (181). Jasmine's dreams of getting rooted once again in a new place with a new identity shatters when she encounters a figure from her past: her husband's murderer. This encounter reminds her not only of her illegal status, but also of her former identity, which bears the traces of past traumas. Taylor, who had fallen in love with Jase, meets with Jasmine for the first time: "He was shaken. I told him everything: the marriage, the bombing, the murder. I had been until that time an innocent child he'd picked out of the gutter, discovered, made whole, then fallen in love with" (189). Jasmine's past continues to haunt her although she is no longer burdened by nostalgia.

Besides a haunting memory, haunting stereotypes about Jasmine's 'home' and 'race' follow Jasmine in America. As Jasmine holds Kate Gordon's iguana in her hands, she feels a new subjectivity emerging: "Truly I had been reborn.

Indian village girls do not hold large reptiles in their laps. They would scream at the swipe of a dry tongue, the basilisk stare of a beady eye" (163). In her movement from a place where reptiles are supposed to be killed to a place where they are petted, Jasmine perceives the loss of an old self and the formation of a new one. The transition, however, will not come easily. Her identification with the reptile is telling: "I looked into his beady little eyes, his ugly wattled face. Sam, I thought we're both a long way from home, aren't we? What'll we do? Look after little girls? There's no going back, is there?"(164). This identification signifies two contrary positions towards her migration. While the reptile can adapt and survive in its new environment and even be loved, it will always be an exotic creature out of place, and its appearance will always testify to that. In Jasmine's case, not only an unconscious attachment to old values and habits estranges her from the new land, but also her skin colour acts as a visible sign of her alienness. Jasmine's identification with a monster-like-creature echoes the colonial discourse that demonizes the Other, portending that the stereotypes about her 'race' and fear of her Otherness may hinder her new belonging.

In Iowa, Jasmine acquires a new identity from her partner Bud, which makes her feel like a born American without a complicated past: "Plain Jane is all I want to be. Plain Jane is a role, like any other. My genuine foreignness frightens him. I don't hold it against him. It frightens me too" (26). Jane wants to be part of a homogenized society in which she will not feel like an alien but feel safe and belong. She wants to feel like whole again by erasing the Jyotis, Jasmines, and Jases of her past, and become one non-fragmented self, Jane: "There are no

harmless, compassionate ways to remake oneself. We murder who we were so we can rebirth ourselves in the images of dreams" (29). No matter how much she wants to assimilate herself into the new society, however, Jasmine retains her difference. She feels the presence of this difference even more each time others ignore it because they feel threatened by her foreignness. Even Bud resists any knowledge about her life before she became his Jane: "Bud's not like Taylor – he's never asked me about India; it scares him. He wouldn't be interested in the forecast of an old fakir under a banyan tree" (12). Bud nevertheless desires her newness and exoticism:

Bud courts me because I'm alien. I am darkness, mystery,
 inscrutability. The East plugs me into instant vitality and wisdom. I
 rejuvenate him simply by being who I am [...] I make him feel what
 he's never felt, do what he's never done. There's a shape-
 changing, risk taking pirate rattling the cage of his heavy flesh.
 Baden was death until you came, he tells me, you brought me back
 from the dead. (200)

Otherness is "at once an object of desire and derision" (67), in Homi Bhabha's words, which becomes manifest in Bud's fear and desire of miscegenation. Even for the people closest to her in Iowa, Jasmine is a stranger from 'somewhere out there,' of which they possess no knowledge. Bud's mother, Mother Ripplemeyer, likes Jasmine even more than Bud's ex-wife Karin: "Just before the divorce, according to Bud, Karin was agitating to stick Mother in the Lutheran Home.

Mother senses I have different feelings about family" (17). However, like Bud, she does not want to learn anything about Jasmine:

Mother Ripplemeyer tells me her Depression stories. In the beginning, I thought we could trade some world-class poverty stories, but mine make her uncomfortable. Not that she's hostile. It's like looking at the name in my passport and seeing 'Jyo-' at the beginning and deciding that her mouth was not destined to make those sounds. She can't begin to picture a village in Punjab. (16)

Mother does not know anything beyond America, and does not feel the need to learn as long as she can do her occasional fund-raising to help people 'out there' (as Mother calls it) and relieve her conscience: "Out there. I am not sure what Mother imagines, On the edge of the world, in flaming deserts, mangled jungles, squelchy swamps, missionaries save the needy" (21). The preconceived ideas about 'out there' or the 'Other' preclude any possibility of seeing foreign places and people as who they really are, and turn their multidimensional identities into fixed, lifeless stereotypes.

Stereotypical representations of a racialized subject, which must constantly be repeated and reproduced in everyday instances in order to fix his/her ethnic identity against discursive and historical changes, provide a "surveillance" mechanism for the dominant culture that wants to keep Otherness safely at bay (Bhabha 66). As a migrant from a 'third world' country, Jasmine encounters these stereotypes in everyday circumstances. Jasmine comes across a woman in the hospital who tells her, "You have nice hips. Wide. Nature meant

you to carry babies,” and notices that the ‘you’ in the woman’s remark has a ‘generic sweep’: “You teeming millions with wide hips breeding like roaches on wide-hipped continents” (34). A university professor, Dr. Mary Webb, invites her to lunch and tells her of her experience of reincarnation, thinking that as a ‘*mystic*’ Hindi Jasmine might understand her: “This can’t be bizarre to you. Don’t you Hindus keep revisiting the world?” (126). Moreover, when Jasmine orders pork chops, she comments: “I thought you’d be a vegetarian” (126). Even Bud tells her that, “When Mother called him and told him that she was sending over a starving Indian to save he’d pictured a stick-legged, potbellied, veiled dark woman like the ones he’d seen fleeing wars, foods, and famines on television” (199). That Jasmine does not fit into this stereotype does not make him question his knowledge, though; he simply prefers to see Jasmine as an American or *Americanized* woman who no longer has any connection with India. Jasmine says: “In Baden, I am Jane. *Almost*” (26; Emphasis added). The word “almost” reminds one of Bhabha’s theory of mimicry through which the dominant culture tries to ‘normalize’ the Other: “Mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a *subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*” (86). Jasmine herself resorts to mimicry as a way to integrate herself seamlessly into American society.

Migrants are forced to abandon their differences because of intolerance towards Otherness in society. As a migrant desires integration, the disavowal of her difference paradoxically alienates the racialized subject both from her former experience and from her new social environment that undermines this

experience. Bud worries that their adopted Vietnamese son will “always be attached in occult ways to an experience he can’t fathom,” and that he’ll never be their fully American son. He believes that, unlike Du, Jasmine is totally detached from her past, “But not you, Jane, that’s what I love about you” (232). Jane, however, is a mask, or in the narrator’s word, a “role” given to her by American society. In a country where the immigration officers comment, “The border’s like Swiss cheese and all the mice are squirming through the holes” (28) on television, and a woman blames her husband’s unemployment on the presence of too many migrants, Jasmine feels she has no choice but to avoid any sign that might reveal her difference. Although she never articulates it, Jasmine does feel anger at the intolerant and contemptuous behaviour she witnesses time and again. When Du’s teacher Mr. Skola tells Jasmine he tried to speak Vietnamese with Du, Jasmine hides her real feelings: “I suppressed my shock, my disgust. This country has so many ways of humiliating, of disappointing. How *dare* you? What must he have thought? His history teacher in Baden, Iowa, just happens to know a little street Vietnamese? Now where would he have picked it up?” (29). Mr. Skola calls Du a “quick study,” not as a compliment but as a scorn; adding a condescending “They were like that, the kids who hung around us in Saigon” to his sentence (29). Jasmine accepts that both Du and she are “quick studies,” meaning they quickly learn to imitate and mimic so as not to give away their foreignness. But mimicry does not simply denote weakness and an imitation of the dominant culture; Bhabha argues that, “The disavowal of the position of the migrant woman – her social and political *invisibility* – is used by her in her secret

art of revenge, *mimicry*" (56). Mimicry acts as a revenge because, as Paolini observes, in this "splitting, doubling, projection, mimicry, what is disavowed is repeated as something different, a hybrid" (54). Jane M. Jacobs explains the presence of resistance in hybridity:

Hybridity is not just a mixing together, it is a dialogic dynamic in which certain elements of dominant cultures are appropriated by the colonised and rearticulated in subversive ways. In Bhabha's words, hybridity is about the 'seizure of the sign ... a contestation of the given symbols of authority.' Such subversions are uncanny returns, where disavowed and repressed subjectivities and knowledges 'enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority – its rules of recognition.' (27-28)

Although Jasmine tries to Americanize herself, she still retains a difference in her hybridity that challenges the dominant culture around her; her hybridity becomes a power through which she disrupts the look that disavows her. This empowerment can be observed in Bud's ironic change of character, as Bud, who refuses to recognize Jasmine's former culture, finds himself transformed by it: "Asia had transformed him, made him reckless and emotional. He wanted to make up for fifty years of 'selfishness,' as he calls it. One night he saw a television special on boat people in Thai prisons, and he called the agency the next day" (14-15). Bud decides to adopt Du thanks to this change Jasmine initiated in him.

The alliance between Du and Jasmine also shows that migrants retain their difference from the dominant culture not due to any distinct cultural essence but hybridity. The only person with whom Jasmine can talk about her past experiences is her son Du, for he is the only one who has similarly experienced the traumas of dislocation. Jasmine characterizes her son as 'hybrid': "My transformation has been genetic; Du's was hyphenated. We were so full of wonder at how fast he became American, but he's a hybrid, like the fantasy appliances he wants to build. His high-school paper did a story on him titled: 'Du (Yogi) Ripplemeyer, a Vietnamese-American'" (222). Although Jasmine does not think of herself as Hindu-American, her need to talk about her past experiences with her son suggests that she has been shaped by her former culture and her dislocation as much as she has been influenced by American culture. Du, with whom Jasmine feels a special bond, provides Jasmine with a connection to her past: "His education was my education. His wirings and circuits were as close to Vijn & Vijn as I would ever get" (223). Moreover, both Du and Jasmine manifest the coexistence of two different cultures in their identity through their composite creations. Du adapts and transforms multiple mechanical pieces to build appliances with multiple functions such as a dimmer that scans the FM band as it controls the light: "I have altered the gene pool of the common American appliance" (156). Similarly, Jasmine shows her synthesis in the kitchen: "I am subverting the taste buds of Elsa County. I put some of last night's matar panir in the microwave. It goes well with pork believe me" (19). If Du is hybrid like the appliances he makes, Jasmine is hybrid like the food she cooks. The only

difference might be that Du owns his hybridity whereas Jasmine wants to be only American: "Once upon a time, like me, he [Du] was someone else. We've been many selves. We've survived hideous times. I envy Bud the straight lines and smooth planes of his history" (214). Jasmine will soon discover that the rapid sociological changes in modern life eventually unsettle the "straight lines and smooth planes of" every small town, including Elsa County, and every person, including Bud.

Socio-cultural space does not contain unchanging communities within a fixed territorial ground exempt from outside influence or interior conflicts. When Jasmine decides to go to Iowa, Taylor says Iowa is "dull and flat": "Taylor thought dull was the absence of action, but dull is its own kind of action. Dullness is a kind of luxury" (6). The luxury of dullness in Jasmine's mind lies in the steadiness and the order of the place; after the political chaos in India and the fast and unpredictable lifestyle in New York, Jasmine finally hopes to make home in a small town of farmers called Elsa County. Elsa County proves to be the exact opposite of Taylor's description of it as "flat"; as Doreen Massey argues, "Space is not a 'flat' surface because the social relations which create it are themselves dynamic by nature" (156). Jasmine notices the first transformations in Elsa County through Darrel, a university graduate who does not want to continue farming after his parents' death, but either open a golf club on his farm or flee to New Mexico for good. Bud, a traditional man, does not approve of such changes: "With ground so cheap and farmers so desperate, they're snapping up huge packages for future non-ag use. Airfields and golf courses and water slides and

softball parks. It breaks Bud's heart to even mention it" (10). Jasmine, however, notices that the change is inevitable:

I see a way of life coming to an end. Baseball loyalties, farming, small-town innocence. Most people in Elsa County care only about the Hawkeyes – football or basketball. In the brave new world of Elsa County, Karin Ripplemeyer runs a suicide hot line. Bud Ripplemeyer has adopted a Vietnamese and is shackled up with a Punjabi girl. There's a Vietnamese network. There are Hmong, with a church of their own, turning out quilts for Lutheran relief. (239)

Changes in Elsa County reflect the effects of globalization in the contemporary world. As Jasmine has witnessed in Hasnapur, nowhere in the globe is far and tiny enough so as not to be influenced by other places:

When I was a child, born in a mud hut without water or electricity, the Green Revolution had just struck Punjab. Bicycles were giving way to scooters and to cars, radios to television. I was the last to be born to that kind of submission, that expectation of ignorance. When the old astrologer swatted me under a banyan tree, we were both acting out a final phase of a social order that had gone untouched for thousands of years. (239)

Even Bud who wants to hold on to his traditional lifestyle is affected by newness: "Darrel is a romantic just like him. The banker who steps out of marriage to live with an Indian is the same as the lowan who dreams of New Mexico. They've been touched with the same virus" (229). The virus Jasmine talks about is the

desire for change or rather the recognition of Otherness in one's self. For those who believe in roots, transformation is a virus with its unsettling and contagious nature.

Jasmine also regards herself as a virus, an intruder. At a fair for Relief Fund, her difference strikes her as out of place: "All the dolls had yellow hair. It had been a simpler America. The toys weren't unusual or valuable; they were shabby, as ordinary family's cared-for memorabilia. Bud's generic past crowded the display tables. I felt too exotic, too alien" (202). Jasmine feels guilty for not only being an immigrant who intrudes upon the *natives'* lives, but also for being a *woman traveller*, a woman who has defied her natural place 'home' and her role as 'care-giver' and 'perpetuator of traditions.' Every time she upsets the traditions and initiates a change, she holds herself responsible for events very much beyond her control: "I feel responsible. For Prakash's death, Bud's maiming. I'm a tornado, blowing through Baden" (206). Jasmine thinks she should have been dead instead of Prakash because the Khalsa Lions shouted: "Prostitutes! Whores!" as they threw the bomb. She feels responsible for the act of a farmer who cannot keep up with his payments and decides to shoot his banker, because Karin, Bud's ex-wife, calls her a tornado that leaves behind destruction wherever she goes. Jasmine owns the blame for the consequence of the clash between Hindus and Sikhs as well as the destitution of Iowan farmers! She innocently asks: "Is it the wife's job to sort out possible assassins?" (191), feeling she can never fulfil her duties as a woman and a wife. That makes her a tornado, a virus, a monster, or a *whore* as women are repeatedly labelled when

they transgress social codes. Karin calls her a gold-digger; a man at a bar in Baden shouts “I don’t know nothing about horsepower but I know *whorepower* when I see it” upon seeing Bud and Jasmine together (201). Jasmine sees herself in the light of these descriptions, and feels alienated from herself, her past and her present life in America. She feels she does not even own her name(s): “I have had a husband for each woman I have been. Prakash for Jasmine, Taylor for Jase, Bud for Jane. Half-Face for Kali” (197). She has been described and overdetermined as a woman and as a minority over and over again.

Jasmine does not only change her name but also her identity each time she travels and forms new identifications as a result of her interactions in the new destination: “Jyoti would have saved [money]. But Jyoti was now a *sati*-goddess; she had burned herself in a trash-can-funeral pyre behind a boarded-up motel in Florida. Jasmine lived for the future; for Vijn and Wife. Jase went to movies and lived for today” (176). She constantly remakes her self according to the knowledge, myths, values, traditions, and routines of the new place, trying to unlearn what she is already accustomed to: “I am sure that I have been reborn several times, and that yes, some lives I can recall vividly” (126). But as this remark suggests, her old selves are still in play; she recalls them, and they have the power to interfere with the present:

Jyoti of Hasnapur was not Jasmine, Duff’s day mummy and Taylor and Wylie’s *au pair* in Manhattan; that Jasmine isn’t this Jane Ripplemeyer having lunch with Mary Webb at the University Club today. And which of us is the undetected murderer of a half-faced

monster, which of us has held a dying husband, which of us was
 raped and raped and raped in boats and cars and motel rooms?
 (127)

Her fragmentation makes her doubt which one of her identities best defines her. Among these changes, fragmented and alienated selves, who really is the narrator, then? The narrator finds Jasmine the most suitable name for herself (as suggested in the title) because Jasmine represents the first instance of her questioning, her development of a critical eye to her culturally constructed identity, and her movement away from its restraints. *Jasmine* does not designate a fixed, enclosed identity, but a constant process of identity formation. In other words, Jasmine is neither Jyoti nor Jane, but it does contain all of these identities. Jasmine leaves Bud because the identity of Jane becomes as limiting as Jyoti: "I am caught between the promise of America and old-world dutifulness" (240). Even Jasmine's pregnancy by Bud will not confine her to the role of Jane; she will not be pinned down by any single constructed identity.

According to Jasmine, "The world is divided between those who stay and those who leave" (228). Abdul R. JanMohamed clarifies that 'those who leave' do find their home in their movement and resistance: 'Homelessness-as-home' accentuates a *joissance* derived from transitoriness, from privileging process and relationship over allegiance to groups or to objects representing reified relationships; it privileges the pleasure of border-crossing and transgression" (457). Jasmine herself feels more at home with the movement, which offers her a possibility of making her own fate rather than settling with what others appoint for

her: "I realize I have already stopped thinking of myself as Jane. Adventure, risk, transformation: the frontier is pushing indoors through uncaulked windows. Watch me re-position the stars, I whisper to the astrologer who floats cross-legged above my kitchen stove" (240). Jasmine does not give up her search for home, but 'home' begins to acquire a new meaning for her. As Sara Ahmed explains, "Home becomes the impossibility and necessity of the subject's future (one never gets there, but is always getting there), rather than the past that binds the subject to a given place" (78). 'A given place' comes with its given language, discourse, and practices that Jasmine's hybrid identity cannot help but problematize.

Can Jasmine ever escape the definitions of 'woman' and 'immigrant' in which others will always place her? Jasmine does not need to escape language; rather, her narrative displays her problematic identities and eventually reveals the problematic nature of the discourses by which they have been shaped. The fragmented narrative of her embodied experiences in different cultures posits her movement - not a point of origin - as the basis of her identity. Jasmine remains in motion even at the end of the book, and this motion grants her a space between languages and doctrines. Jasmine can never completely free herself of the effect of her past experiences: "I cry through all the lives I've given birth to, cry for all my dead," but she will move on as she is "greedy with wants and reckless from hope" (241). Julia Kristeva describes the psychology of people on the move:

Not belonging to any place, any time, any love. A lost origin, the impossibility to take root, a rummaging memory, the present in

abeyance. The space of the foreigner is a moving train, a plane in flight, the very transition that precludes stopping. As to landmarks, there are none. His time? The time of a resurrection that remembers death and what happened before, but misses the glory of being beyond: merely the feeling of a reprieve, of having gotten away. (7-8)

The narrator's subjectivity and political consciousness forms in her migration and resistance to an unacceptable home despite the instability and insecurity that such movement might bring. This insecurity becomes an affordable cost for her hope of escaping from the restrictions on her gender and 'race'. Jasmine portrays a gradual realization of how the location penetrates into the self through language (especially through the notions of gender, 'race,' sexuality, and class). As well, the narrative depicts how *embodied experience* of different locations and dislocations fashions an expanding self-consciousness about new possibilities for the self.

Chapter 5:

'Time-Space Compression' in The Shadow Lines

by Amitav Ghosh

It was an old story, the best story in Europe, Snipe said, told when Europe was a better place, a place without borders and countries – it was a German story in what we call Germany, Nordic in the north, French in France, Welsh in Wales, Cornish in Cornwall: it was the story of a hero called Tristan, a very sad story, about a man without a country, who fell in love with a woman-across-the-seas.... (Ghosh 186)

The Shadow Lines subverts the definition of 'home' as a snug and safe centre of one's world by relativizing the concepts of 'home' and 'away'. What constitutes 'home' for a person who can easily find his way through the streets of England without a map although he has never seen them before and spent almost all his life in India (55)? What happens if a person cannot feel the familiarity of the space he inhabits when suddenly the normalcy of daily life is interrupted by an uproar: "We saw that street twice every day, but now it seemed somehow unfamiliar. The pavements, usually thronged with vendors and passers-by, were eerily empty now- except for squads of patrolling policemen [...] The streets had turned themselves inside out: our city has turned against us" (202-03)? Where is home when one becomes such a stranger to her place of birth that she needs a visa to visit there: "But you [grandmother] are a foreigner now, you're as foreign here [Dhaka] as May [an English girl] – much more than May, for look at her, she doesn't even need a visa to come here" (195)? What

becomes of distance when the dialects of Asia are more frequently heard in Europe: "For me the experience of hearing Bengali dialects which I had never heard in Calcutta being spoken in the streets of London, was replete with ironies" (241)? These examples portray the contingency of cultural distribution over distinct spaces on the world map as well as the arbitrariness of border phenomena. They contest the concept of socio-cultural space as a fixed, static geographical spot with clear boundaries, and posit it as a site of constant flux and transformation. As James Clifford affirms, "Difference is encountered in the adjoining neighborhoods, the familiar turns up at the ends of the earth" (14). The impossibility of making a clear distinction between home and away penetrates not only the lived experience of spaces but also everyday language: "You see, in our family we don't know whether we are coming or going – it's all my grandmother's fault. But of course, the fault wasn't hers at all: it lay in language. Every language assumes a centrality, a fixed and settled point to go away from and come back to" (153). Such an unsettling politics of space, which upsets the binary between home and away, marks a shift in the politics of identity as well. The new politics of space, which inevitably involves the concepts of displacement and dislocation as opposed to fixity and stasis, produces decentered subjects.

For decentered subjects, a changing, fluid geography of particular lived experiences, imaginations, and inventions replaces any totality of meanings and values. Observing the close relationship between dislocation, knowledge, and identity, Mark Krupnick affirms, "Displacement is an exile from older certitudes of meaning and selfhood, a possibly permanent sojourn in the wilderness" (5).

Wilderness, however, does not signify the lack of a socio-cultural space that will shape a subject; on the contrary, it means an easier accessibility to multiple territories, which proliferates meanings and subjectivities. As Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift argue, location retains its importance in terms of providing a context out of which subjectivity emerges: "A characteristic of the subject's understanding of the world is its situatedness. The subject can only 'know from'" (29). While subjectivity necessitates a context, this context need not constitute a single place. Nor does one place, say a country, city, or even a village, produce a single stance or point of view. Postmodernity is marked by mobility of not only people, but also knowledge. Each socio-cultural space produces its own set of beliefs, concepts, and routines and as these knowledges change, evolve, or disappear the space is reshaped. According to Doreen Massey, this reciprocal relationship between the spatial and social is exactly why spaces must not be reduced to 'absolute' landscapes "lacking in dislocation, the very form of possibility" (Place and the Politics of Identity 144): "If spatial organization makes a difference to how society works and how it changes, then, far from being the realm of stasis, space and spatial are also implicated in the production of history – and thus, potentially in politics" (146). The narrator of The Shadow Lines unsettles the readily received meanings and overdeterminations with his hybrid subject position by juxtaposing his particular memory and other people's account of events with history, his experience of space with the concepts of nation and borders, his invented and imagined places with the material places, and his sense of fragmented temporality with the linear understanding of time.

Just as the social space signifies much more than a territory marked on a map, a migrant crosses borders of identity as well as law. Iain Chambers argues that, “As historical, cultural and psychic subjects we, too, are uprooted, forced to reply to our existence in terms of movement and metamorphosis” (24). Although everyone living in a big city necessarily encounters alterity and experiences her “sense of centre being displaced” (Chambers 24), a migrant’s experience of movement between different places involves a more intense relationship with strangers and unfamiliar cultural discourses. In The Shadow Lines, different localities with different ideologies and power relationships as well as various accounts of these places from different subject positions come together to create a collage of times, spaces, and narratives. A nameless narrator, perhaps resisting to be fixed by a single name and identity, tells a story that is, in Iain Chambers’s words, “also a his-story, a her-story, a cultural narrative, a fabricated reality like any other” (26):

The awareness of the complex and constructed nature of our identities offers a key that opens up to other possibilities: to recognise in our story other stories, to discover in the apparent completeness of the modern individual the incoherence, the estrangement, the gap opened up by the stranger, that subverts it and forces us to acknowledge the question: stranger in ourselves. (Chambers 25)

Not only the borders between 'home' and 'away,' but also Self and Other get blurred. The narrator of The Shadow Lines posits a desire for the Other as the basis of subjectivity:

One could never know anything except through desire, real desire, which was not the same thing as greed or lust; a pure, painful and primitive desire, a longing for everything that was not in oneself, a torment of the flesh, that carried one beyond the limits of one's mind to other times and other places, and even, if one was lucky, to a place where there was no border between oneself and one's image in the mirror. (29)

Although there is a certain sense of lack in this description of desire ("a longing for everything that was not in oneself"), desire also represents a productive force as in Deleuze's definition of the word, which James Brusseau clarifies as:

"Deleuze's linked concepts of desire and partiality will clear space for a multiplying subject that escapes the constricting singularity the tradition imposes on its heirs" (112-13). In The Shadow Lines, sexual desire symbolizes the desire to transgress one's borders. The narrator longs for his relative Ila, who attracts him with her unorthodox actions, conversations, and attire: "She looked improbably exotic to me, dressed in faded blue jeans and a T shirt – like no girl I had ever seen before except in pictures in American magazines" (81). Ila's clothing travels from the west and into the narrator's mind: "She was wearing clothes the like of which I had never seen before, English clothes, a white smock with an appliqué giraffe that had its hooves resting on the hem while its neck

stretched almost as far up as her chin" (43). When Ila denies that she could have been wearing those clothes at that time, the narrator insists:

But I do remember. I can see her in it. I can still hear the starch that Lizzie-missy had washed into it, I can see the creases left by her iron, I can feel the gauzy texture of the cloth, I can smell the faint milky smell of the baby's talcum powder that Lizzie-missy has poured over her, I can even see the patch of white it has left on her neck and the two rivulets of sweat that have wound their way through it. (43)

This detailed memory of Ila's clothing does not prove that the narrator's memory never fails, but the particularity of his description shows the extent to which his attraction to Ila stems out of his fascination with her Otherness.

Desire for the Other also gets hold of Ila as an English boy named Nick fascinates her. In their school years, English kids pick on Ila for being brown and, although Ila and Nick are playmates, Nick does not take Ila's side. Ila reinvents Nick in her imagination as a hero who saves her through the story she makes up about her doll Magda (75). For Ila, Nick is unattainable even when they get married. Nick cheats on Ila with other women, who all have different cultural backgrounds. His justification for adultery brings out the relationship between sexual desire and desire for other lands: "He said he just likes a bit of variety; it's his way of travelling" (188).

Tridib longs for May, whom he only knew as a baby when he was in England. They keep in touch when May grows up and send pictures to each other. The picture of May invokes the memory of England:

He liked to have it in front of him every time he wrote her. But it was awful having it there in a way, looking him in the face: there were so many things he wanted to write about, but every time that picture caught his eye, he found himself thinking of Lymington Road and Hampstead. But that wasn't quite right either, not really accurate. He didn't 'think' of Lymington Road; he could see it, quite clearly, as though he were there, with her, sitting under the cherry tree garden.
(137-38)

Tridib's infatuation with May also provides an escape from his limited environment. The narrator describes Tridib as "a recluse" (18). Tridib feels alienated from the people in the neighbourhood with whom he converses from time to time: "He was often maliciously dismissive of those people; marine mammals, he would say of them, *creatures who sink to the bottom of the sea of heartbreak when they lose sight of the herd*" (18; emphasis added). His dislike of the people stems from their inability to see beyond their small world in a street corner of Calcutta. Tridib, on the other hand, cannot stick to the borders of Calcutta streets; he has already been infected by a desire for otherness as a result of his migration to England when he was a kid. To others and to himself, the migrant Tridib is ambiguous: "There was a casual self-mockery about many of the things he said which left his listeners uncertain about whether they ought

to take what he said at face value or believe its opposite. As a result, inevitably, there were all kinds of conflicting rumours about him – especially because he was secretive about his family and his circumstances to an extraordinary degree” (10). Tridib’s secrecy about his family may result from his doubts about whether he can define himself with reference to origins and blood relationships, and his “self-mockery” might as well be a sign of his uncertainty about the ‘truth’ of anything. Tridib represents a decentered subject, who exerts an “openness of outlook based upon a freedom to move across border and boundaries in pursuit of new senses of self and other” (Pile and Thrift 21). His desire to meet May exemplifies this need for transgression and search for alterity:

He did know that that was how he wanted to meet her, May – as a stranger, in a ruin. He wanted them to meet as the completest of strangers – strangers-across-the-seas – all the more strangers because they knew each other already. He wanted them to meet far from their friends and relatives – in a place without a past, without history, free, really free, two people coming together with the utter freedom of strangers. (144)

When May goes to Delhi to see Tridib, she wonders what made her travel five thousand miles: “Of course, there wasn’t a reason, no good reason at all she could think of, except curiosity – curiosity about what lay beyond West Hampstead, a curiosity that had come to be focused on this man whom she’d never met” (166). The narrator, then, notes that as soon as May sees Tridib at the station she understands that curiosity has nothing to do with her travel, but

does not offer an alternative explanation. Might we conclude that she, too, like Tridib was infected by desire rather than simple curiosity?

These complex series of desires for strangers and strange places, which also result in improbable identifications, mark the interplay between Self/Other and how this difference is alternately accentuated or overcome in psychic and social realms. In what the narrator calls “the inequality of our needs” (44) - his unrequited love for Ila and Ila’s unrequited love for Nick - the social seems to have more impact than the instinctual. Ila’s desire for Nick is entangled with her need for inclusion into English society and escape from racist attacks, whereas the narrator’s love for Ila unconsciously involves a desire for a higher social standing which will provide him with more mobility (Ila’s ability to travel around the world is her main draw). Thus the desire to travel and the desire for a stranger both signify the search for a new subjectivity realized in the other and through the other.

While the desire to transcend one’s contingencies and claim a new subjectivity may open up unexplored possibilities for a person, new destinations regulated by the rules of inclusion and exclusion may also create hostile and alienating environments. A new subjectivity results from new identifications, but this transformation may not come easily especially if the subject and his/her new ego ideal represent unequal social positions, such as the colonizer and the colonized. The myth of white superiority pervades the narrator’s mind even before he leaves India, which appears in his unequal identification with Nick:

After that day Nick Price, whom I had never seen, and would, as far as I knew, never see, became a spectral presence beside me in my looking glass; growing with me, but always bigger and better, and in some way more desirable – I did not know what, except that it was so in Ila's eyes and therefore true. I would look into the glass and there he would be, growing, always faster, always a head taller than me, with hair on his arms and chest and crotch while mine were still pitifully bare. And yet if I tried to look into the face of that ghostly presence, to see its nose, its teeth, its ears, there was never anything there, it had no features, no form; I would shut my eyes and try to see its face, but all I would see was a shock of yellow hair tumbling over a pair of bright blue eyes. (50)

Blue eyes and yellow hair signify the impossibility of the narrator's ever attaining his ideal ego. These features appear once again in Ila's description of her own ideal ego, Magda the doll: "They had never seen hair that shone like hers – like a bright, golden light. They had never seen such deep blue eyes, nor cheeks as pink and healthy and smiling like hers" (73). Noel Chabani Manganyi's observations about the estrangement of the victim of racism from his/her body, seem to explain Ila's and the narrator's obsession with yellow hair and blue eyes: "His devaluation of his body was primarily an external affair, and he accepted a body aesthetic that was not only dissonant with his body type, if he were Negroid; but most difficult, he accepted one which was actually unattainable" (52). According to Manganyi, the visible minorities are unconsciously "devaluating their

own body type while introjecting the vital values of the idealized white sociological schema" (100). The internalization of the dominant discourse at a young age alienates Ila and the narrator from their own bodies.

As Ila makes up a story about Magda (Ila's doll and her imaginary child during a game called "house") being picked on by another kid because of the kid's jealousy of Magda's beauty and popularity, she bursts into tears, for Magda's story represents Ila's own experience only in a distorted fashion whereby she is not excluded because of her 'race' and is saved by the object of her desire (Nick). In Ila's story Magda knows English better than other kids even though it is not her native language (74), and everybody wants to be friends with her (73). The reality, as Nick's sister May later on tells the narrator, is that Ila does not have any friends at school and Nick comes home early that day, disappearing from the scene in order not to help Ila (76). The beating of Ila is far from a common fight among children, as the word "wog" uttered by her tormenter in the story conveys. The narrator's discovery of two contradictory stories told by Ila and May at different times emphasizes the contradictory lives and identities Ila experiences in different locations:

Ila walking alone in a drizzle under that cold grey sky: Ila who in Calcutta was surrounded by so many relatives and cars and servants that she would never have had to walk so much as the length of the street – and as for alone, why there we were, all of us, I, her relatives, her friends, all waiting to walk with Ila, Ila the sophisticate, who could tell us stories about smart girls and rich

boys in far-away countries whose names we had learned from maps. Ila walking alone because Nick Price was ashamed to be seen by his friends, walking home with an Indian. (76)

Ila's social status changes according to the place she is in: In India her financial status and her mobility place her into the upper class of society, whereas in England her 'race' reduces her to lower class. As different places impose different roles and labels on Ila's identity, these conflicting social positions cause a split in her subjectivity. The chasm between Ila's two lives illustrates the relationship between psychic realm (identity, identification, desire), socialization, and place. Spaces do not simply denote neutral landscapes where events take place, but they are ideologically charged territories upon which the concepts of gender, class, 'race' and nationality are inscribed. If even the desires are socially constructed and identities are shaped by the meanings, values, and routines attached to spaces, can a person show resistance and make a difference in any space?

Spaces are not free of representations, and different representations, all of which maintain a certain amount of imagination, come together to contribute to the way space is shaped. As each space imposes its own doctrines on the subject and determines his/her social position, inhabitants of a place impose their descriptions on space. According to Salman Rushdie, "description itself is a political act," for "redescribing a world is the necessary first step towards changing it" (13-14). Jane M. Jacobs sees this kind of resistance as a

postcolonial project, which challenges the physical space and its impositions on identity through a re-envisioning of the space:

In recent colonial discourse analysis and postcolonial theory spatial metaphors proliferate. Here, the contours, boundaries and geographies of space are 'called upon to stand in for all the contested realms of identity.' Smith and Godlewska suggest that many of the literary-based re-evaluations of colonialism are ambivalent about geographies 'more physical than imagined.' The possibility of material and imagined geographies being neatly separate, as Smith and Codlewska imply in their critique, is of course unthinkable – one constitutes the other. (3)

The title The Shadow Lines is a metaphor for not only the artificial geographical borders that wish to enclose spaces and set apart Self and Other, but it is also a metaphor for the blurry distinction between imagined and material place. A place can only be retrieved in fragments when imagined, as Rushdie explains: "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" (10). But Rushdie sees value in this "broken mirror" reflection of the space: "The shards of memory acquired greater status, greater resonance, because they were remains; fragmentation made trivial things seem like symbols, and the mundane acquired numinous qualities" (12). Likewise, the narrator of The Shadow Lines sees symbols wherever he looks: What looks like a "musty old office" to Ila stands for the Left Book Club in which Alan Tresawsen (Nick's

grandfather who loses his life in the Second World War) had worked before the war. A table that seems “so utterly useless” to May, symbolizes a shrine under which the narrator witnessed Ila’s life in England and met with Nick for the first time through Ila’s stories: “It seemed impossible to me to think of that table as an object like any other, with a price and provenance, for I had seen it taking shape with my own eyes, within a cloud of dust, in that very room” (49). The narrator tells Ila that “a place does not merely exist, that it has to be invented in one’s imagination; that her practical, bustling London was no less invented than mine, neither more nor less true, only very far apart” (21). Inventing his own space not only offers the narrator a way to survive in a foreign place but also enables his own personal resistance to the material reality of the space. The narrator resorts to nostalgia during his stay in England, but his nostalgia is not as much a longing for his home in India as it is for an England seen through Tridib’s eyes, the England that he loved to hear about when he was a kid:

Tridib had shown me something truer about Solent Road a long time ago in Calcutta, something I could not have seen had I waited at that corner for years – just as one may watch a tree for months and yet know nothing at all about it if one happens to miss that one week when it bursts into bloom. I wanted to know England not as I saw her, but in her finest hour – every place chooses its own and to me it did not seem an accident that England had chosen hers in a war. (57)

The narrator chooses the Second World War as the temporal lens through which he sees England because of Mayadebi's (Tridib's mother and the narrator's grandmother's sister) description of London during the time of war:

People were becoming friendlier; in the shops, on the streets, she couldn't help noticing. Everyone was so much nicer now; often when she and Tridib were out walking people would pat him on the head and stop to have a little chat with her; the shopkeepers would ask her where and how her husband was, and when he was to have his operation. But it wasn't just her – everyone was being friendly with everyone else; why just that morning his sister Elisabeth, had said that old Mrs Dunbar who lived down the road had actually been civil for the first time in living memory. (66)

Ila does not understand this preference for imagined places rather than real ones: "Why? Why should we try, why not take the world as it is?" she asks (31). Imagination and invention are the narrator's way of challenging the accepted order of space: "I told her how he had said that we had to try because the alternative wasn't blankness – it only meant that if we didn't try ourselves, we would never be free of other people's inventions" (31). When the narrator recreates a no-longer-existing London, he does not simply give in to nostalgia; in Rushdie's words, his goal is "no longer a search for lost time," but a "way in which we remake the past to suit our present purposes, using memory as our tool" (24). According to the narrator, Ila and Tridib experience space and time differently: "Ila lived so intensely in the present that she would not have believed

that there really were people like Tridib, who could experience the world as concretely in their imaginations as she did through her sense" (30). The narrator himself identifies more with Tridib; imagining foreign lands makes him escape the confines of his own space, Calcutta, and imagining other faces of England (gathered from the stories he heard in Calcutta) allows him to experience England in a time when people were more tolerant and kind to each other regardless of each other's nationality or 'race.'

Tridib's stories offer a way out of the narrator's own "puritanical world, in which children were sent to school to learn how to cling to their gentility by proving themselves in the examination hall,"(23) and in which his grandmother slaps him for wasting time instead of doing work (13). The memory of the times he, Ila, and Tridib spent in Calcutta accompany the narrator as long as he stays in England:

I could not forget because Tridib had given me worlds to travel in and he had given me eyes to see them with: she who had been travelling around the world since she was a child, could never understand what those hours in Tridib's room had meant to me, a boy who had never been more than a few hundred miles from Calcutta (20).

Although Ila does not value Tridib's stories as much as the narrator does, she does not simply take in the world as it is, either; she refuses to accept her place in the periphery of London society because of her colour. In her childhood, she tells exciting stories about school activities in which she takes the centre stage,

whereas in pictures of yearbooks she is either in the margins or altogether absent from the scene: “Somehow, though Ila could tell me everything about those parties and dances, what she said and what she did and what she wore, she herself was always unaccountably absent in the pictures” (22). When she grows up, she claims her centre stage in history by joining a political group of people and protesting against racism:

You’ve [the narrator] spent your whole life living safely in middle-class suburbs in Delhi and Calcutta. You can’t know what this kind of happiness means: there’s a joy merely in knowing that you’re a part of history. We may not achieve much in our little house in Stockwell, but we know that in the future political people everywhere will look to us – in Nigeria, India, Malaysia, wherever. It must have been the same for Tresawsen and his crowd. At least they knew they were a part of the most important events of their time – the war, and fascism, all the things you read about today in history books. That’s why there’s a kind of heroism even in their pointless deaths; that’s why they’re remembered and that’s why you’ve led us here. You wouldn’t understand the exhilaration of events like that – nothing really important ever happens where you are. (104)

Ila’s arrogance about the “centrality of her experience” and her belief that history takes place only in the west aside, she really does try to challenge her space and make her voice heard: “I had been with Ila once, when she had come out of her

hairdresser's shop, her hair all new and curled, and marched straight off to Brixton with her little crew of friends, to confront a gang of jack-booted racists armed with bicycle chains. As for me, I knew I would not have dared" (105). In England Ila wants to prove that she will not be pushed to the margins of history because of her nationality or 'race,' and in India she rebels against the restrictions society poses on her gender. Ila's rebellion in India shows itself in her conversations: "Mere vagina-envy, she said, laughing, and I tried to keep my face impassive as though I was accustomed to girls who used words like that" (19). She also doesn't mind taking the stage in a bar where there are no other girls. Robi (Tridib's brother) warns Ila that "girls don't behave like that" in India: "You can do what you like in England. But here there are certain things you cannot do. That's our culture; that's how we live" (88). Ila's gender, like her 'race,' fragments her identity; as a woman she leads distinct lives in England and India because of distinct gender roles in each society. Ila is repulsed by Robi's reaction to her mere attempt to enjoy herself. She yells: "Do you see now why I've chosen to live in London? Do you see? It's only because I want to be free [...] Free of your bloody culture and free of all of you" (88-89). Ila may have chosen England as her residence, but she knows very well that she has to fight her way in order to be free there, too: free of prejudices and racism. Her two subject positions determine the nature of her resistance; she wants to be free of her 'race' in England, and she wants to be free of her gender in India.

The narrator's resistance, however, takes place in an entirely different space: his text. Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson assert that, "Narrative

mediates one's sense of movement through time, so that in the telling one becomes, in Rushdie's (telling) observation, an *émigré* from a past home" (28). The Shadow Lines moves not only through time, but it also leaps from one place to another and from one character's tale to another's. The narrator may not be a political activist in the sense that Ila is, but he is the one who gives voice to Ila's fight. He is the one who can see through Tridib's eyes. His story also includes May's story, Nick's story, Tresawsen's story, and his grandmother's story with equal openness. According to Michael Keith and Steve Pile such particular experiential histories can problematize master narratives of history: "It may be argued that simultaneously present in any landscape are multiple enunciations of distinct forms of space – and these may be reconnected to the process of re-visioning and remembering the spatialities of counter-hegemonic cultural practices" (6). In The Shadow Lines, the streets of England with their concrete social relations and a portion of India's history get filtered through the narrator's memory and acquire meaning with the connections he makes between each story. Multiple subjectivities and movement open up new spaces of resistance, as explained in Rapport and Dawson's approach to "narrative as a movement": "Through narrative, human beings, individual men and women with agency, tell the world, and tell it anew, continuously reorganizing their 'habitation in reality'" (29). This new space, therefore, characterizes a hybridized space which is not defined by strict boundaries that separate outside from inside and defies differences within, but by its complex social relations as they are lived, remembered, and partly imagined.

For many people, however, the erasure of borders poses a threat to identity and stability. The narrator's grandmother stubbornly believes in the integrity of borders, and maintains that Ila does not belong in England:

It took those people a long time to build that country; hundreds of years, years and years of war and bloodshed. Everyone who lives there has earned his right to be there with blood: with their brother's blood and their father's blood and their son's blood. They know they're a nation because they've drawn their borders with blood. Hasn't Maya told you how regimental flags hang in all their cathedrals and how all their churches are lined with memorials to men who died in wars, all around the world? War is their religion. That's what it takes to make a country. Once that happens people forget they were born this or that, Muslim and Hindu, Bengali or Punjabi: they become a family born of the same pool of blood. That is what you have to achieve for India, don't you see? (77-78)

Grandmother's observation about the memorials all around the world representing the power of a nation rings true indeed. However, the need to preserve such places itself implies that the ties between the citizens, or in grandmother's words "those who shed blood for the country," constantly need to be repeated and reinforced *lest they might be forgotten*. A collective identity does not evolve all by itself but through the efforts of the state or the church. Jane M. Jacobs reminds us that the formation of a collective identity is always in the making:

The making of heritage is a political process[...] Which places do or do not become part of heritage and what transformations places undergo in the process of recognition is a key arena for combative struggles of identity and power. It is not simply that heritage places symbolise certain values and beliefs, but that the very transformation of these places into heritage is a process whereby identity is defined, debated and contested and where social orders are challenged and reproduced. (35)

Robert Miles also argues that a homogeneous unity has never been fully realized in any nation (including Britain), but is always strived for by the state; the cultural variations as well as different dialects in every nation attest to this fact (117). A “historical constancy and causality,” then, is not a true reflection of the past but a political project of the present that aims to unify diverse experiences and create solidarity among citizens through commonality (Wagner 51). Not only the heritage places, but also the media and history books contribute to the formation of a collective memory. When the narrator and his friends discuss the war of China, everyone agrees that it was the most important historical event that happened during their lifetime except the narrator himself. When the narrator mentions the riots of 1964, however, no one else seems to remember that they even existed: “But don’t you *remember*? I said. Didn’t you read about it or hear about it? After all the war with China didn’t happen on your doorstep, but you remember *that*?” (221). Only after the narrator checks the old newspaper against his memory of what happened does he understand why there is a collective

forgetting of the riots. The narrator brings these riots, which are also the cause of Tridib's death, out of the silence to which they were doomed:

Once they [riots] were over and there was nothing left to describe they never spoke of it again – while those other events, party splits and party congresses and elections poured out their eloquence in newspapers and histories for years and years after they were over, as though words could never exhaust their significance. But for these other things we can only use words of description when they happen and then fall silent, for to look for words of any other kind would be to give them meaning, and that is a risk we cannot take any more than we can afford to listen to madness. (228)

The narrator's frustration with media's silence on certain historical events exemplify Peter Wagner's conviction that, "The researchers appropriate the past selectively to explain the present" (51). This method, in turn, helps create a unity among the memories of citizens upon which a national history and collective identity can be based. Interestingly, how the war with China affected Indian memory can also be seen in Rushdie's account of his false memory:

I myself have a clear memory of having been in India during the China War. I 'remember' how frightened we all were, I 'recall' people making nervy jokes about needing to buy themselves a Chinese phrase book or two, because the Chinese Army was not expected to stop until it reached Delhi. I also know that I could not possibly have been in India at that time. I was interested to find that

even after I found out that my memory was playing tricks my brain simply refused to unscramble itself. It clung to the false memory, preferring it to mere literal happenstance. (Imaginary Homelands 24)

Although one can easily give in to collective memory, the narrator refuses to let the master narratives overwrite his particular experience. Unlike history, he does speak of how the riots felt and how Tridib lost his life during one of the riots in Dhaka. He rebels to the way everyone hid the real reason of Tridib's death, saying that it was an accident. He sees this silence as a conspiracy in which he will not take part:

The madness of a riot is a pathological inversion, but also therefore a reminder, of that indivisible sanity that binds people to each other independently of their governments. And that prior, independent relationship is the natural enemy of government, for it is in the logic of states that to exist at all they must claim the monopoly of all relationships between peoples. The theatre of war, where generals meet, is the stage on which states disport themselves: they have no use for memories of riots. (230)

While Tridib's death makes the narrator see historicity and geography of places in a new light, it makes his grandmother even more fanatical about her attachment to the notions of community and nation. Like his grandmother, the narrator had also shared a 'commonsensical' view of space:

I was a child, and like all the children around me, I grew up believing in the truth of the precepts that were available to me: I believed in the reality of space; I believed that distance separates, that it is a corporeal substance; I believed in the reality of nations and borders; I believed that across the border there existed another reality. The only relationship my vocabulary permitted between those separate realities was war or friendship. (219)

The narrator no longer believes in the notion of distance because he starts to make connections between the memory of his school bus being attacked during the riots in Calcutta and the murder of Tridib during the riots in Dhaka: "I began on my strangest journey: a voyage into a land outside space, an expanse without distances; a land of looking-glass events" (224). The occurrence of two related events at the same time in different countries makes him question the relevance of physical borders:

They had drawn their borders, believing in that pattern, in the enchantment of lines, hoping perhaps that once they had etched their borders upon the map, the two bits of land would sail away from each other like the shifting tectonic plates of the prehistoric Gondwanaland. What had they felt, I wondered, when they discovered that they had created not a separation, but a yet-undiscovered irony – the irony that killed Tridib: the simple fact that there had never been a moment in the four-thousand-year-old history of that map, when the places known as Dhaka and Calcutta

were more closely bound to each other than after they had drawn their lines – so closely that I, in Calcutta, had only to look into the mirror to be in Dhaka; a moment when each city was the inverted image of the other, locked into an irreversible symmetry by the line that was to set us free – our looking-glass border. (233)

What Tresawsen says upon Mayadebi's comment that people have become friendlier in London during the war, shows that Dhaka and Calcutta are not the only two cities that mirror each other: "People don't believe me, he said, but it's the same over there – in Germany – though of course in a much grotesque way. It was odd coming back here – like stepping through *a looking-glass*" (66; emphasis added). Not only places, but also people's actions mirror each other. In their childhood, as Nick does not want to be seen with Ila because of her 'race,' the narrator denies that he is a friend of the Muslim boy, Montu, because of his religion (200). Seeing places relationally rather than assuming the centrality of one's own place produces a fuller view of history. The narrator can observe that similar causes paradoxically divide people, for the defence and protection of *one's own 'home'* and community comes before 'away' and 'others' who feel the same way about *their 'home.'* The concept of 'home' proves to be more exclusive than inclusive. Even Robi, who always abides by the rules no matter how preposterous they may be, starts to question the logic of 'us' against 'them' upon his brother Tridib's death:

You know, if you look at the pictures on the front pages of the newspapers at home now, all those pictures of dead people – in

Assam, the north-east, Punjab, Sri Lanka, Tripura – people shot by terrorists and separatists and the army and the police, you'll find somewhere behind it all, that single word; everyone's doing it to be free. When I was running a district I used to look at those pictures and wonder what I would do if it were happening in my area. I know what I'd have to do; I'd have to go out and make speeches to my policemen, saying: You have to be firm, you have to do your duty. You have to kill whole villages if necessary – we have nothing against the people, it's the terrorists we want to get, but we have to be willing to pay a price for our unity and freedom. And when I went back home, I would find an anonymous note waiting for me, saying: We're going to get you, nothing personal, we have to kill you for our freedom. It would be like reading my own speech transcribed on a mirror. And then I think to myself why don't they draw thousands of little lines through the whole subcontinent and give every little place a new name? What would it change? It's a mirage; the whole thing is a mirage. How can anyone divide a memory? (247)

Yet, the narrator's grandmother stays solid about her attachment to the cause of freedom. For those, who see the world in terms of preordained systems and divisions rather than interconnectedness of sociocultural spaces, 'community' acquires a metaphysical body, like that of God and nation, rather than a real body of people sharing the same territory. Grandmother's fanaticism about making sacrifices for the country in its bad times does not match her uncharitable

nature when it comes to helping people suffering right in front of her. She gives away her precious necklace to fund the war with Pakistan: "I had to don't you see? For your sake; for your freedom. We have to kill them before they kill us; we have to wipe them out" (237). She even bleeds herself, and says: "I must get to the hospital [...] I mustn't waste all this blood. I can donate it to the war fund" (237). Yet, she does not want to help the woman in need who gives her information about her old relative in Dhaka. The narrator explains his grandmother "always founded her morality, schoolmistresslike, in larger and more abstract entities" (129). According to the "abstract entities" of nation and class, the grandmother fixes individuals into discrete, definite places. Her old relative, with whom she has not talked in years, must be saved from Dhaka in order not to give his last breath among 'enemies' (137). A servant, on the other hand, must know her proper place in social strata: "Oh 'Mrinmoyee' is it? Mimicked my grandmother, thrusting her chin forward – she was always savagely cutting with maidservants who had names which struck her as being pretentious for their station" (130). Likewise, in grandmother's mind, refugees bring nothing but menace: "When I last came here ten years ago, there were rice-fields running alongside the road; it was the kind of place where rich Calcutta people built garden houses. And look at it now – as filthy as babui's nest. It's all because of the refugees, flooding in like that" (131). Grandmother's love for her country would have been touching if she really felt any affinity with people who shared the territory with her. She shows no tolerance whatsoever for those in the margins - the poor or the refugees - which indicates that the idea of community,

is hollow. It appears that simply drawing physical boundaries does not unite people inside the boundary; after that there are centres and margins to be determined, a division inside the division. Once again, the narrator voices the exclusionary politics of 'home' as he explains the panic of his parents to lead him away when he looks out to the gutters:

I was already well-schooled in looking away, the jungle-craft of gentility. But still, I could not help thinking, it was a waste of effort to lead me away. It was true of course that I could not see that landscape or anything like it from my window, but its presence was palpable everywhere in our house; I had grown up with it. It was that landscape that lent the note of hysteria to my mother's voice when she drilled me for my examinations; it was those slopes she pointed when she told me that if I didn't study hard I would end up over there, that the only weapon people like us had was our brains and if we didn't use them like claws to cling to what we'd got, that was where we'd end up, marooned in that landscape: I knew perfectly well that all it would take was a couple of failed examinations to put me where our relative was, in permanent proximity to that blackness: that landscape was the quicksand that seethed beneath the polished floors of our house; it was that sludge which gave our genteel decorum its fine edge of frenzy. (134).

The narrator knows that his grandmother could not care less about this destitution in her own country, but when it comes to war or anything to do with

enemies, she stands in full defence of her imagined community. The narrator, nevertheless, is not so quick to judge his grandmother as a “warmongering fascist” like Ila does (78). He feels a mixture of love and pity for his grandmother, for he knows that, “it is always an awkwardly embarrassing matter to preach poverty to the poor or homelessness to the homeless,” as Fred Dallmayr puts it (51). His grandmother’s home in Dhaka remains within the territory of Pakistan after Partition: “She had not been able to quite understand how her place of birth had come to be so messily at odds with her nationality” (152). After this displacement, she finally wants to believe that there must be a definite border, which separates distinct territories:

But if there aren’t any trenches or anything, how are people to know? I mean, where’s the difference then? And if there’s no difference both sides will be the same; it’ll be just like it used to be before, when we used to catch a train in Dhaka and get off in Calcutta the next day without anybody stopping us. What was it all for then – partition and all the killing and everything – if there isn’t something in between? (151)

Grandmother still wants to believe in the stability and fixity of borders even though she has experienced their inconstancy first hand, perhaps all the more so because of it. She wants to belong and have a secure home:

All she wanted was a middle-class life in which, like the middle classes the world over, she would thrive believing in the unity of nationhood and territory, of self-respect and national power: that

was all she wanted – a modern middle-class life, a small thing that history had denied her in its fullness and for which she could never forgive it. (78)

After witnessing years of struggle for freedom, she cannot easily give up her ideas about the importance of being a strong nation and keeping the borders intact. These ideas as well as the thought of her past and her former home ensure her continuity; her nostalgia keeps her from disintegrating.

Attachment to a place, however, comes from lived experience and interactions rather than abstractions of “nation” or “community.” When grandmother remembers the place of her childhood Dhaka, she imagines the everyday life, the specifics of places, people, voices, and feelings. As the narrator notes, “People like my grandmother, who have no home but in memory, learn to be very skilled in the art of recollection” (194). Dhaka, in the memory of the grandmother is so alive that the narrator can almost see it through her eyes:

She had talked to me so often about that house and that lane I could see them myself; though only in patches, for her memory had shone upon them with the interrupted brilliance of a lighthouse beam. So, for example, I could see Kana-babu’s sweetshop at the end of their lane with absolute clarity, I could even see the pink cham-chams stacked in their trays, the freshly-pressed shandesh heaped in orderly mounds beneath the cracked, discoloured glass of the counter; I could hear the buzzing of the flies, and I could see Kana-babu sitting hunched behind his cash-box, scratching his

stomach, the same Kana-babu who had once caught their cousin stealing rosogolla and poured a whole potful of sticky syrup down the front of his shorts. (194).

What makes up a socio-cultural space is not geographical borders around it, but the life that its inhabitants give it. Massey offers a relational understanding of specific locations:

The uniqueness of a place, or a locality, in other words, is constructed out of particular interactions and mutual articulations of social relations, social processes, experiences and understandings, in a situation of co-presence, but where a large proportion of those relations, experiences, and understandings are actually constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself, whether that be a street, a region or even a continent. Instead, then, of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings. And this in turn allows a sense of place which is extra-verted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way the global and the local. (Mapping the Futures 66)

Although different places mirror each other, and territories can never be neatly dispersed over the earth as they are shown to do on a map, a place can still retain its difference. For Massey, this difference does not show itself “through simple counterposition to the outside”, but “it can come, in part, precisely through

the particularity of linkage *to* that ‘outside’” (Mapping the Futures 67). Spaces need to maintain relationships with the outside in terms of political, economic, and cultural exchange. This penetration does not only occur in the colonized spaces, which still contain imperial monuments, such as the statue of Queen Victoria in Calcutta. The description of Brick Lane in London shows how England is also transformed by otherness:

I walked ahead of Ila and Bick in a trance, looking at the Bengali neon-signs above the shops that lined the lane, staring into display windows lined with the latest Bengali film magazines, reading the posters that had been slapped on those walls of aged London brick – stern grey anti-racism posters issued by an iridescent spectrum of the left-wing, buried now under a riot of posters advertising the very newest Hindi films - listening to quick exchanges in a dozen dialects of Bengali as people hurried past me, laughing and chattering. (100)

The power relationships - although still visible in the glory of the monument of Queen Victoria and the allocation of a marginal space for each culture (Chinese town, Greek Town, Brick Lane etc.) as if with a wish to contain it within limits - are constantly challenged and overturned in cosmopolitan cities. Jacobs affirms that, “Precisely because cities are sites of ‘meetings,’ they are also places which are saturated with possibilities for the destabilization of imperial arrangements” (4). When May sees the statue of Queen Victoria in India, she blurts out: “It shouldn’t be here. It’s an act of violence. It’s obscene” (170). But Tridib and May

choose the location as their “ruin,” the place where they will have intercourse. Their desire for each other, a brown man and a white woman, mocks the imperial might of Queen Victoria, for the concepts of purity and exclusivity upon which superiority depends is interrupted by penetration and mergence of the two ‘races.’

Spaces carry multitudes, which sometimes clash and sometimes cooperate to act as catalysts of change and newness, a richness that comes out of dissension. In The Shadow Lines different places and times dissolve into each other to provide fragmented glimpses, which provide a bigger picture in their juxtaposition and interrelatedness: we see England during the Second World War and in the present, the narrator returns back to the memories of his childhood in Calcutta as he speaks to May in England, the grown-up Ila who cries on the narrator’s shoulders because of her husband’s infidelity suddenly becomes the Ila who cries as she tells the story of her doll, Magda. The differences in time and distances in space are overcome in the complex social relations, memories, imaginations, and the fragmented narration:

Those empty corners filled up with remembered forms, with the ghosts who had been handed down to me by time: the ghost of the nine-year-old Tridib, sitting on a camp bed, just as I was, his small face intent, listening to the bombs; the ghost of Snipe in that far corner, near his medicine chest, worrying about his dentures; the ghost of the eight-year Ila, sitting with me under that vast table in Raijabar. They were all around me, we were together at last, not

ghosts at all: the ghostliness was merely the absence of time and distance – for that is all that a ghost is, a presence displaced in time. (181)

The ghosts of the past and the reality of the present, Self and Other, home and away find a way to reach out to one another in Amitav Ghosh's novel.

Chapter 6:

Conclusion: Reactionary Politics of Migration

The writings of Salman Rushdie, Bharati Mukherjee, and Amitav Ghosh demonstrate that in the contemporary world socio-cultural spaces and identities can no longer be defined in terms of fixity, coherence, and enclosure, but must now include dynamism, multiplicity, and hybridity. Migration, which not only uproots a subject from his/her 'origins' but also from his/her former knowledges, values, routines, habits, and self-image, appears as a major theme in The Satanic Verses, Jasmine, and The Shadow Lines. Migration involves a transgression of the boundaries of the self as well as space. The migrant characters in these novels embody multiple (and even paradoxical) cultural and habitual resources without necessarily privileging the dominance of one resource over the other. With its characteristics of fluidity and change as opposed to centeredness, migration marks a transcendence of binding discourses. Migrancy requires a more progressive conception of the relationship between space and identity that acknowledges the former's influence over the latter without essentializing the subject and closing down the possibilities of becoming for the self.

Although home-making still appears as a prominent project for migrant characters in these novels, the notion of 'home' loses its meaning of a homogenized, safe, and stable physical place, which anchors its members in

collective practices for the common good. Like postmodern identity, the postmodern 'home' is a contested realm of heterogeneity and contingency; it is simultaneously local and global. For a migrant, 'home' is both *here* and *elsewhere*, but it is also a never fully realized, an endlessly pursued objective of finding one's (cognitive or physical) place in the world. This pursuit sometimes ends up in a constant movement, as in the case of Jasmine's narrator, positing 'homelessness' as one's home. Such emphasis on nomadism may be seen as a resistance to encapsulating social environments and the ideologies produced in these settings. Movement provides a transitory space distanced from any single social space, enabling a bird's eye view through which a migrant develops his/her critical look and resistance to dominant cultures.

While celebrating this positive aspect of migration that opens up a point of resistance in what Bhabha calls "a third space", one should not forget the personal difficulties a migrant undergoes as a result of dislocation. Throughout the project, a major concern has been not to portray hybridity and migration in an overly romanticized fashion. One of the major difficulties of living in the west as a migrant from a 'third world' country is the inevitable encounter with racist discourses, or - in a milder but no less alienating form - racialization and stereotypes. The assimilationist ethic paradoxically asks a migrant to leave behind his/her differences and mime the dominant culture while repeatedly designating him/her as the Other through stereotypical descriptions. This type of exclusion, as well as the migrant's own difficulty of reconciling the old and the new cultures in his/her own identity creates alienation from the self and society.

Metaphors of death and rebirth dominate the works of Rushdie, Mukherjee, and Ghosh as migration marks a split between one's sense of space (old habitus versus new habitus) and time (past versus present) as well as sense of self (a radical transformation in terms of bodily and mental existence). A refashioning of the self does not mean a smooth transition between cultures or identities; the past may have left behind but the ghosts of the past continue to haunt the subject. As the narrator of *Jasmine* experiences the simultaneity of her various subject positions of her past and present in the form of ghosts: "In the white lamplight, ghosts float toward me. Jane, Jasmine, Jyoti" (88), the narrator of *The Shadow Lines* is accompanied by the non-corporeal presence of loved ones from his past: "Those empty corners filled up with remembered forms, with the ghosts who had been handed down to me by time[...] that is all that a ghost is, a presence displaced in time" (181). Saladin Chamcha of *The Satanic Verses*, on the other hand, defines his ghost as unresolved conflicts from the past that still influence the present: "Now I know what a ghost is. Unfinished business, that's what" (554). In all these examples, despite the chasm between past and present experiences, past continues to influence the present. A migrant retains his/her old self, but continues to generate new subject positions in his/her new social space. The hesitation between different identifications is resolved as the subject gradually embraces his/her multiplicity and hybridity both as a means of survival and as a tactic of resisting discourses of 'purity' and 'homogenous unity.' Neither submitting to assimilationist discourse nor hanging on to a nostalgic past

provides the answer for the characters in the novels of Rushdie, Mukherjee, and Ghosh who ultimately choose in-betweenness.

There are, of course, migrants who cling to their tribal identities and choose to simulate their past 'home' in their new residence. Rushdie, Mukherjee, and Ghosh do not see this decision as a viable means of survival for their characters. Although the narrator of The Shadow Lines sympathizes with a displaced subject's need to belong in his descriptions of his grandmother's character, he also criticizes grandmother's fanaticism about "abstract entities" of nation and community. Likewise, the narrator of Jasmine disapproves of the Vadheras, an Indian family in America, who "had retired behind ghetto walls" of Punjabiness (145). In his book of essays Imaginary Homelands Rushdie affirms that "The largest and most dangerous pitfall would be the adoption of a ghetto mentality. To forget that there is a world behind the community to which we belong, to confine ourselves within narrowly defined cultural frontiers, would be, I believe, to go voluntarily into that form of internal exile which is called the 'homeland'" (19). Making a distinction between those who stick to their old belongings and those who accept hybridity does not aim at prescribing an 'ideal' form of migrancy. But resistance occurs in two directions in the novels of Rushdie, Mukherjee, and Ghosh; dominant cultures of both old and new lands are criticized for their various structures of domination (gender, class, 'race,' etc.). As well, it would be a paradox to resist the dominant western culture on the basis of 'nationalism' while trying to reveal the folly of 'purity' and 'homogeneity,' the concepts upon which the colonizers built their arguments of superiority.

Although one can no longer speak of authenticity and discreteness of social spaces in a time of global migrations, advanced communication technologies, and intense cultural exchange, difference is not lost. Doreen Massey explains that globalization does not mean the loss of specificity for social spaces: "Globalization of social relations is yet another source of (the reproduction of) geographical uneven development, and thus uniqueness of place. There is the specificity of place which derives from the fact that each place is the focus of a distinct *mixture* of wider and more local social relations" (156). Both spaces and identities, then, affirm their difference in their hybridity rather than their essence. The gradual replacement of a fixed and unified conceptualization of places and individual identities with a more flexible, open, and mobile view will hopefully create societies free of bigotry and prejudice.

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