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Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*: The Crossroads of Locations

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"The distance between cities is always small"

(Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*, 2006)

ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I analyze the representation of the urban space in Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, drawing attention to how the novel appropriates the notion of displacement. For this, I rely on the concept of mobilities, as proposed by John Urry, and its two main manifestations: corporeal and imaginative. Salman Rushdie's remarks on translation, migration and "imaginative affinities" are recalled in dialogue with such discussion too. I argue that Rushdie's appropriation might enable the production of a counter-narrative that challenges the notion of place, by dislocating it from a static and homogeneous conception to a dynamic and heterogenous one. Here the writings of Michel De Certeau and Marc Augé, respectively, on the concepts of space and non-place are relevant. I also discuss how the novel suggests a space of travel in which mobility and the shifting of perspectives concerning the city's imagery is underscored in its relation to the national space. Michel Foucault's outlining of heterotopia is conjured up to point out how the novel renders fragmented portraits of three main cities: London, Bombay and Jahilia. The starting point is the contrast of the journeys of two characters: Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta, but other experiences of displacement are considered once they are relevant to investigate the points of view of both characters. Moreover, this research discusses how, by inscribing the routes of diasporas in the imagery of London, *The Satanic Verses* foster other possibilities of imagining the nation.

Keywords: Salman Rushdie, mobility, displacement, diaspora, nation

RESUMO

Nesta dissertação, analiso as representações do espaço urbano em *The Satanic Verses*, de Salman Rushdie, ressaltando o modo como o romance se apropria da noção de deslocamento. Para isso, este estudo baseia-se no conceito de mobilidade, conforme proposto por John Urry, e suas duas principais manifestações: corpórea e imaginativa. Os comentários de Salman Rushdie sobre tradução, migração e "afinidades imaginativas" são revisitados em diálogo com tal discussão. Argumento que essa apropriação pode viabilizar a produção de uma contranarrativa, que desafia a noção de lugar, ao deslocá-la de uma concepção estática e homogênea para uma outra dinâmica e heterogênea. Aqui os textos de Michel De Certeau e Marc Augé, respectivamente, sobre os conceitos de espaço e não-lugar são também relevantes. Discuto, ainda, como o romance sugere um espaço de viagem no qual a mobilidade e a alternância de perspectivas associadas ao imaginário urbano evocam também a relação com o espaço nacional. A definição de heterotopia de Michel Foucault é aqui utilizada para comentar como o romance oferece retratos fragmentados de três principais cidades: London, Bombay and Jahilia. O ponto inicial é o contraste entre as jornadas dos personagens Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta, mas outras experiências de deslocamento são levadas em consideração, uma vez que elas são significativas para investigar o ponto de vista dos personagens. Além disso, esta pesquisa analisa como, ao inscrever as rotas das diásporas no imaginário de Londres, *The Satanic Verses* estimula outras possibilidades de se imaginar a nação.

Palavras-chave: Salman Rushdie, mobilidade, deslocamento, diáspora, nação

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INTRODUCTION

Since it was published in 1988, *The Satanic Verses* has been triggering many debates, but as Alan Durant and Laura Izarra state, not always concerning literary and cultural merits. The so-called "Rushdie Affair" has foregrounded the discussions drawing more attention to Salman Rushdie's effort to overcome the threats brought about by the *fatwa*[1] imposed by the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini: "The phrase 'Rushdie controversy' became a more popular, shorthand description than referring to the novel itself; and public debate internationally became much more about what should or shouldn't happen to Salman Rushdie than about what the book does or doesn't mean" (Durant and Izarra 42).

This definitely caused a strong impact on the author's life and spread a lot of tension in the literary, political and social circles. Moreover, from 1989 onward, the Affair has influenced his novel's readings, becoming, thus, unavoidable to address. Also, in relation to this case it is worth mentioning how it reveals a particular moment of the publication industry that is connected with a broad network of economic relations which comprises the dynamics of transnational capital. The book, as Durant and Izarra point out, was "actively marketed internationally, as part of the global circulation of cultural goods. This extended circulation has one of its consequences far greater engagement with contemporary fiction produced in one set of social circumstances by distinct sub-audiences with significantly different social backgrounds and values" (14). Rushdie's cosmopolitanism seems to be, according to these authors, "suited to such global distribution," but the international backlash that culminated in the *fatwa*, on the other hand,

[1] The statement accused Rushdie of being an enemy of Islam, the Prophet and the Qur'an and claimed a sentence of death that was not restricted to the writer but to anyone related to the publication of the novel, such as editors and translators.

reflected the unpredictability of reactions that could spread out especially in a context in which television was creating a global space of information flow.

Rushdie was forced to hide himself for ten years without a fixed address, inhabiting several temporary houses and making very rare public appearances, always avoiding prior disclosure of the events. Hitoshi Igarashi, the Japanese translator of the novel, was stabbed to death in Tokyo. William Nygaard, the Norwegian publisher of *The Satanic Verses* was shot, but fortunately survived. Bookshops were attacked with firebombs in London and the book was banished in India, while many riots broke into the streets of different cities in the world, especially in countries such as India, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey. As the author tells in *Joseph Anton: A Memoir*, the back door of any building was the only way for him to have access to them, and a single walk around neighborhood required authorization by the British staff in charge of his security. His whereabouts were constantly drawing the attention of the media, somehow creating almost a parallel "novel" that went hand in hand with *The Satanic Verses*.

All this massive production of information, on the other hand, projected Rushdie's name internationally, and this exposure raised criticism against him too: "*He did it for money*. *He did it for fame*. *The jews made him do it*. *Nobody would have bought his unreadable book if he hadn't vilified Islam*. That was the nature of the attack, and so, for many years, *The Satanic Verses* was denied the ordinary life of a novel" (Rushdie, *Joseph* 2013, emphasis in original). Another effect that spun off from the release of the book concerns the British Muslim community. They were encouraged to get together and organize the *Muslim News*, which made its debut in February 1989. The newspaper was strategically thought to be a platform for articulating their own voices. Nevertheless, this possibility of mobilization among British Muslims reinforced polarizations, too. Vassilena Parashkevova, quoting Ruvani Ranasinha, points out the complexities involved in the

creation of a British Muslim identity, "by bridging diverse Muslim traditions and even generations gaps under a unit":

> Ruvani Ranasinha, however, reminds us that it has also led to a post-fatwa tendency to homogenize Muslims despite the differences in their responses to the book and the Affair, as well as triggering a liberal support in defence of the freedom of speech against religious intolerance that dangerously posited an enlightened Western secularism against an Islam dogmatism. (Parashkevova 71)

Coming from a Muslim background, Rushdie has defended himself based on the principle of "freedom of speech." The declarations of the writer, though, were very much amplified, and sometimes even distorted by the media, whose angle of analysis molded a reductionist interpretation of the Affair that frequently was attached to the assumption of the existence of two antagonist forces, such as democracy versus tyranny. The writer sometimes tried to avoid this polarization, and his essay "In Good Faith," published in *Imaginary Homelands*, might be an example of such a response. In this text, Rushdie keeps defending the necessity and the importance of freedom of speech but also affirms how the novel does not focus on Islam and reinforces its broader purpose, by means of literary experimentation anchored in notions such as translation, migrancy and hybridity: "It is written from the very experience of uprooting, disjuncture and metamorphosis (slow or rapid, painful or pleasurable) that is the migrant condition, and from which, I believe, can be derived a metaphor for all humanity" (Rushdie, *Imaginary* 1991).

At that moment, some Muslim readers still claimed that the book was historically inaccurate and "blasphemous." But, according to Edward Said, "that it dealt with Islam in English for what was believed to be a largely Western audience was its main offense" (306). After all, "since the language of Islam is Arabic, a language with considerable literary community and hieratic force, English has sunk to a low, uninteresting, and

attenuated level" (Said 306). Until *The Satanic Verses*, published in 1988, Rushdie had been writing from the post-war metropolitan environment of London. In 1961, in his teenage years, he was sent to the British metropolis to study at Rugby school. Three years after his arrival in England, his family migrates from Bombay to Karachi, Pakistan. He has lived there, with his parents, after graduating from King's College, Cambridge, where he studied history, but soon he went back to London. It is worth to recall that when his fourth novel, *The Satanic Verses*, was released he was already an author internationally recognized, especially for *Midnight's Children*, his second book, which came out in 1980 and won the Booker Prize in 1981, the Booker of Bookers in 1993 and in 2008 (for the second time). Although *The Satanic Verses* became under target of part of the Muslim community, it was also shortlisted for the Booker Prize, and won the Whitbread Prize for Best Novel in 1988. In 2001, Rushdie resettles in New York, in the United States.

In the aftermath of the "Rushdie Affair," he only had the opportunity to travel back to India, his place of birth, from 1998 onward, one decade after the release of *The Satanic Verses*. As he remarks both in the essay "A Dream of Glorious Return", published in *Step Across This Line*, and in his autobiography *Joseph Anton: A Memoir*, his home country was the first to ban the book. Such relationship started to change after the "agreement between the British and Iranian government that effectively set aside the Khomeini fatwa" (Rushdie, *Step* 2003). Rushdie then received his "five-year visa" and traveled to Delhi with his son, Zafar, "after a gap of twelve-and-a-half-years."

Besides the importance of contextualizing the "Rushdie Affair," this dissertation tries to detour from it as well. The novel has somehow been overshadowed by this turmoil, and as I intend to argue *The Satanic Verses* might instigate relevant discussions concerning the urban space, mobility and the construction of the nation. The story begins with the actors Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta falling from the sky after their flight

from Bombay towards London is hijacked by a group of terrorists. They explode the airplane and only Chamcha and Farishta survive, landing on the seashore of the British metropolis. Both are found by Rosa Diamond, but, one night later, police officers arrive at her door and arrest Chamcha, who is misjudged as an illegal immigrant. While Farishta remains in Diamond's house, the former is led to a sanatorium from where he manages to escape with a group of other "metamorphosed" creatures. Right in the beginning of the novel the unrealistic tone is felt by the reader. Both Farishta and Chamcha undergo a process of metamorphosis, but the latter is the one who acquires a more extreme form, becoming a "Goatman." That is why, when he tries to go back to his home, he is unrecognized by his wife Pamela Lovelace. Then, Jumpy Joshi takes him to the Shaandaar Café, a place that is both a restaurant and rooming- house, run by Mr. Muhammad and Hind Sufyan.

It is important to point out that parallel stories develop within the main one, through Farishta's dreams, as the episodes related to the prophet Mahound (which is historically a derogatory word used to refer to the Prophet Muhammad), and the satanic verses itself, from which basically derives the title of the novel. Jahilia is a city that belongs to such set of stories, and so is another character, the Imam. They are going to be mentioned in the following chapters, since through the Imam's point of view, for instance, the novel introduces a notion of exile that is questioned. Thus, multiple locations sometimes interweave. The Imam is exiled in London but then he "flies" with Farishta, who sees him as the archangel Gibreel, to Desh, his homeland. Moreover, Farishta struggles to distinguish dreams from reality and the novel seems to dramatize this kind of instability as well. Dreams, memories, historical events crisscross the narrative and it is also in this sense that the novel'sspatiality becomes complex and imbricated with multiple temporalities.

This dissertation is, thus, based on an investigation of the representation of the urban

space in Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. Instead of fixed images though, the novel renders landscapes that shift according to multiple points of view. This seems to embody the characters' experience of displacement portrayed throughout the text. Then, to develop my analysis, I draw on the notion of mobility, introduced by John Urry, as well as on the concept of place, space and non-place developed, respectively, by Michel De Certeau and Marc Augé. Moreover, the discussion of imagined communities proposed by Benedict Anderson is also relevant to this work, as the city becomes the location where the national space is enacted, contested and even negotiated. The notion of heterotopia suggested by Michel Foucault is used to point out how the alternation of perspectives – concerning especially London, but also found in the depictions of other cities such as Jahilia and Bombay – is fostered through the portrait of heterotopic places.

My hypothesis is that mobilities might blur the demarcations between place and space, taking further the former notion that might move from a static and homogeneous kind of understanding to a broader, dynamic and heterogeneous one. According to Michel de Certeau place is an order in which a set of relations might be enacted following rules of coexistence. If compared to space, place is also lacking in movement: "A place is thus an instantaneous configuration of positions. It implies an indication of stability" (117). Further he concludes: "In short, space is a practiced place" (117). "Space," as he points out, is "an effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities" (117).

In the novel, this process might be recognized by the undermining of a single perspective concerning the cities mentioned above and also the nations connected to them. Such multiplicity of points of view avoids making place a stable concept in a conventional way and underscores the cultural and political tensions related to the urban and national spaces. Thus, opening up the possibility of thinking of place in a broader sense. The most

evident are London and Britain which are also called, respectively, “Babylondon” and “Vilayet” in the novel. The latter, according to Avtar Brah, is how Punjab or Urdu speakers in South Asia usually refer to Britain. Then, we also consider how the novel inscribes the routes of diasporas in the imagery of London, redesigning the British metropolis by recognizing its global connections, which have been developed since the period of Empire.

In the first chapter, “Salman Rushdie, cosmopolitanism and ‘imaginative affinities,’” I revisit some of the criticism on Rushdie’s writing in general and specifically on *The Satanic Verses*, remarking also that a reading in dialogue with mobilities might enable the recognition of how the novel creates a space that is multilayered and thus relevant to the development of this research. The author’s conception of translation, migration and “imaginative affinities” is presented here as possible strategies of appropriation of the very idea of mobility, which might be considered in its two main manifestations: corporeal and imaginative. In regard to this aspect, it is worth to point out how these processes can dialogue with Rushdie’s claim of diverse cultural affiliations, which might also be associated to Timothy Brennan’s definition of “Third World cosmopolitans.”

The second chapter, “Displacement, mobilities and the crossroads of locations,” develops the relation between mobilities, place, space, and non-place, underscoring the context in which the former thrives and how counter-narratives might be produced when mobilities are appropriated. We introduce some perspectives concerning diasporas, by relying on the writings of Avtar Brah, Robin Cohen, Gabriel Sheffer, Stuart Hall and Vijay Mishra. A historical background of migrant movements in the post-war context, especially emigration from the former colonies to the British metropolis, which in the novel is also evoked by the image of “The River of Blood,” is provided as well. It is introduced how nationalist discourses are associated with a given place through many strategies, as the

double movement of remembering/forgetting remarked both by Ernest Renan and Benedict Anderson, and how mobilities might intervene in such system, as Urry recalls, by undermining a single narrative of the nation.

In the third chapter, "London, Jahilia and Bombay: between utopian and heterotopic landscapes," I draw attention to the connections between the urban and the national space, discussing how the former might be portrayed through fragmented perspectives that are somehow encased in heterotopic places. I then introduce Foucault's outline of such places together with the discussion of mobilities, which is helpful to understand how alternative forms of imagining the nation can be fostered in the novel insofar as cultural and political tensions are stressed as well. My analysis is based mainly on the journeys of the actors Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta, but a few other characters are mentioned mostly to enable some contrasts that are suitable to specify Chamcha's and Farishta's perspectives.

CHAPTER 1

Salman Rushdie, cosmopolitanism and "imaginative affinities"

Indian, Pakistan, Britain, United States… Is it possible to define Salman Rushdie's writing in a single relation to any of these locations or even approach his novels through traditional national terms? His literary work seems to complicate the answers to these questions, embodying a complex network of places, both imaginary and extratextual ones. A starting point, however, might be the recognition of the importance of the notion of mobility that seems to traverse not only his literary works but also his essays. What is noteworthy is that mobility, as I am proposing here and argue in the following chapters, seems to be appropriated by Rushdie in distinct forms. And at least two modes of mobility can be mentioned: corporeal and imaginative, but each of which can entail a wide variety of movements, as John Urry points out, such was "walking, travelling by rail, driving and air travel" (51). These are socio-spatial practices that reveal a set of relations closer to the notion of space insofar as it embraces the idea of displacement.

In regard to this issue, one of its most evident effects is that Rushdie's novels introduce a global perspective, frequently avoiding to fix its characters in a single location, but somehow approximating, contrasting and sometimes even juxtaposing more than one place. In *The Satanic Verses* such aspect is remarkable and our hypothesis is that mobilities might blur such demarcations between place and space, expanding the former notion that traditionally is understood by means of fixity or putting down roots. Here, moreover, I am going to refer to some criticism that has been made about Rushdie's literary writing and, foremost, *The Satanic Verses*, drawing attention to how mobility might be helpful to think about some aspects associated to the novel, as the discussion concerning the urban space

and its connection to the imagery of the nation.

1.1 General Criticism on Rushdie's writings

Timothy Brennan, for instance, relates Rushdie to other writers such as Bharati Mukherjee, Derek Walcott, Isabel Allende, Mario Vargas Llosa and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. They would share in common a status as "literary celebrities" who seem to have been chosen by Western metropolitan audiences as interpreters and voices from the Third World. The latter nomenclature, according to Brennan, is more a political statement than an essence, thus, a term that such authors might defy as well. Brennan refers to this group of writers as "Third World cosmopolitans" and he points out that Rushdie and Mukherjee have been repositioningcosmopolitanism through the experience of migration. Those authors, despite their differences, according to the critic, "seem to share a harsh questioning of radical decolonisation theory; a dismissive or parodic attitude towards the project of national culture; a manipulation of imperial imagery and local legend as a means of politicising 'current events'; and a declaration of cultural 'hybridity'" (Brennan 35).

Therefore, their conception of decolonization and cultural dependency from former metropolitan powers deviates from some anti-colonial discourses that might defend the construction of a national culture based rather on the valorization of native aspects than on the incorporation or appropriation of foreign elements. A point that Brennan stresses is howsometimes this cosmopolitan perspective is rendered from a position located abroad and, thus, far from those who are daily experiencing the effects of colonial intervention and exploitation. Aijaz Ahmad, moreover, has pondered about Rushdie's "fictions and his political stance," which, according to him, until the "Rushdie Affair," should be understood through the lenses of self-exile, i.e., when "exile itself

becomes a condition of the soul, unrelated to facts of material life" (Ahmad 86). Ahmad suggests that Rushdie seems to affiliate to modernist trope of self-exile, which has created the "predominant image of the modern artist who lives as a literal stranger in a foreign and impersonal city and who, on theone hand, uses the condition of exile as the basic metaphor for modernity and even for the human condition itself" (134).

Upholding Ahmad's reading, however, might be found a conception of exile a bit too strict:

> Exile, in the true sense, is of many kinds besides the purely colonial, and in any case itrarely produces an enduring sense of great pleasure. Exile usually has, as Williams[2] points out, a principle, and the principle prevents one from floating upwards and denying the pain. Self-exile and vagrancy, by contrast, have become more common amongst artists in every successive phase of bourgeois culture since the early days of Romanticism, and as the experience itself has been chosen with greater frequency, thesense of celebration and of the migrant intellect root[ing] itself in itself has grown proportionately. (Ahmad 158)

Analyzing *The Satanic Verses*, especially the passages set in London, what one might notice, however, seems to be a reevaluation of the notion of exile insofar as the novel also introduces many possibilities of displacement that such term could not be able to encompass. There are Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta, who are both somehow middle-class travelers, but other kinds of migration are portrayed in the text. At the Shaandaar Café, which is a "Bed and Breakfast establishment," run by Mr. Muhammad and Hind Sufyan, and also described as a rooming-house "of the type that borough councils were using more and more owing to the crisis in public housing," there are "maybe thirty temporary human beings, with little hope of being declared permanent" (Rushdie 264).

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[2] Raymond Williams.

Then, the text underlines that such people represent indeed "The real world." Caren Kaplan affirms that "the paradigm of exile requires a coherent, recognized identity or point of origin" (149), but neither of these aspects are informed in relation to such "temporary human beings."

Are they "refugees"? Rushdie locates these migrants in the imagery of London, but he does not develop the story of these "temporary human beings." And maybe here we can find some indicationsof both the potentialities and limitations of his text, as Brennan points out: "Rushdie, for example, would feel as many misgivings about portraying the lives of Pushtus and Kurds in Islamabad as in London, for his views veer from theirs at more than one angle. His 'Englishness' and 'lndianness' are fungible: not merely a distinction of language or habitation, but the aesthetic tracings of class – his 'bookishness' and 'intellectualism'" (Brennan 41). The writings of cosmopolitan writers, thus, is not devoid of contradictions. Kaplan affirms that the emergence of such writers also is "materially linked to the weakening of nation-states in the advent of transnational capital configurations" (Kaplan 174).

On the one hand, this might be interesting in the sense that it can lead to a repositioning of national culture in more plural terms, but, on the other hand, such writers could also be appropriated by the "metropolitan cultural capital that may be less interested inrecognizing more overtly revolutionary nationalist struggles in former colonial locations" (174). Kaplan is careful, though, in remarking that this possibility of incorporation for hegemonic uses is rather a reflection of the "social relation of cultural production and reception" than a fault of these writers. She understands it as part of the context of these writer's situation that can accommodate both liberal and radical interests.

Moreover, it is worth to recall that *The Satanic Verses* seem to contrast the experiences of Chamcha, for instance, with other characters such as the Imam, who is

portrayed as an exile: “Which must not be confused with, allowed to run into, all the other words that people throw around: émigré, expatriate, refugee, immigrant, silence, cunning. Exile is a dream of glorious return” (Rushdie 205). The figure of the Imam seems to entail both the exile, because he is alienated from home, and self-exile, since his alienation from the culture of the host nation is also voluntary. This latter attitude is also questioned: “The Imam is a massive stillness, an immobility. He is living stone” (210); and another example here: “Exile is as soulless country” (208). It is relevant yet to compare the Imam with the experience of Hind Sufyan, who is pushed to exile, perhaps in the way that Ahmad understands this condition, in the “demon city” of “London,” where “you were knocked over in the street by invisible hands, in the shops you heard such abuse you felt like your ears would drop off but when you turned in the direction of the words you saw only empty air and smiling faces,” (250). Then she finds the “best thing was to stay home, not go out for so much as to post a letter, stay in, lock the door, say your prayers, and the goblins would (maybe) stay away” (250). Nothing here seems voluntary but imposed by violence.

Another point of view is introduced by Vijay Mishra who discusses Rushdie’s work in terms of “diasporic imaginary,” which he defines as a term used “to refer to any ethnic enclave in a nation-state that defines itself, consciously, unconsciously or through self- evident or implied political coercion, as a group that lives in displacement” (Mishra 14). The author, instead of fixing Rushdie in a specify diasporic context, discusses how the author also problematizes the narratives of diaspora, insofar as he shows traces of affiliation to a more progressive one, being associated to the notion of the “hyphenated subject.”

1.2 Rushdie's concepts of translation, migration and "imaginative affinities"

In the essay "Imaginary Homelands," Rushdie remarks his relation to a "post-diaspora community" (Rushdie *Imaginary* 15), emphasizing the freedom "to be treated as full member of British society, and also the right … to draw on its roots for its art, just as all the world's community of displaced writers has always done" (15). In the same text, he also punctuates his understanding of translation, referring to writers who might share experiences of physical and cultural displacement, including himself: "Having been born across the world, we are translated men" (17), to which he adds: "It normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained" (17). Later, in the essays on the literary work of Günter Grass, with whom he shares some affinities and sees in his writing also a kind of migrant's vision, Rushdie resumes his perspective on displacement and defines what he considers to be the condition of the "fullmigrant," which, according to him, suffers a triple disruption:

> he loses his place, he enters into an alien language, and he finds himself surrounded bybeings whose social behaviour and codes are very unlike, and sometimes even offensive to, his own. And this is what makes migrants such important figures: becauseroots, language and social norms have been three of the most important parts of the definition of what it is to be a human being. The migrant, denied all three, is obliged tofind new ways of describing himself, new ways of being human. (Rushdie 278)

Through the excerpts above it is possible to infer that although Rushdie celebrates the possibility of translation, he also underlines the struggles embedded in this process. Even though it can be painful, he affirms that inasmuch as migrants "make" themselves,

through negotiations between cultures, it can also enable an open and constructive perspective which might be regarded as positive.

Nico Israel seems to both approximate and deviate from Ahmad and Mishra standpoints. He discusses Rushdie's writing in the movement between exile and diaspora. Through this perspective it seems that Rushdie's writing somehow embodies the very sense of displacement and by doing so dislocates the terms above, challenging fixed "boundaries," an aspect that might also resonates with Brennan's formulation upon the "in-betweenness" ofthe Third World cosmopolitans. In regard to this issue, it is worth to recall a comment made by Rushdie after he had published his third novel, *Shame*, in 1983, thus, prior to *The Satanic Verses*: "In my own case, 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" (Rushdie, *Imaginary* 1991). The excerpt above is part of the essay "'Commonwealth literature' does not exist," in which Rushdie questions some discourses he finds derogatory and blunt to deal with literary works, especially the novels that have been produced in the postwar context by writers that might be placed in countries that have been part of the British Empire, or in the metropolitan locations, as himself.

In this text, he tries to define to what kind of writing the term "Commonwealth literature" would stand for, and he ends with the assumption that it would comprise "the body of writing created, I think, in the English language, by persons who are not themselves white Britons, or Irish, or citizens of the United States of America" (63). Then he concludes that this perspective could possibly contribute to a configuration of a "ghetto" whose effect would be "to change the meaning of the far broader term 'English literature' – which I'd always taken to mean simply the literature of the English language

– into something far narrower, something topographical, nationalistic, possibly even racially segregationist" (63).

After suggesting such definition of the term, Rushdie raises his attack, stressing that "Commonwealth Literature" is a chimera, a false category, and to support his argument he recalls how English became a "world language," especially in the aftermath of the British Empire and also because "of the primacy of the United States of America in the affairs of the world" (64). His point is that English "ceased to be the sole possession of the English some time ago" (70), and it does not, therefore, make sense to talk about English literature as something placed "at the centre and the rest of the world at the periphery" (66). Based on this point of view, Rushdie then advocates that "English literature has its Indian branch. By this I mean the literature of the English language," which is also Indian literature: "There is no incompatibility here. If history creates complexities, let us not try to simplify them" (65).

Another aspect that Rushdie understands as complicated in relation to the term Commonwealth literature is how it sustains the idea that "literature is an expression of nationality": "What Commonwealth literature finds interesting in Patrick White is his Australianness; in Doris Lessing, her Africanness; in V.S. Naipaul, his West Indianness," (66). Entailed in this perspective, according to him, is "the bogy of Authenticity," which he defines as "the respectable child of old-fashioned exoticism. It demands that sources, forms, style, language and symbol all derive from a supposedly homogeneous and unbroken tradition" (67). Rushdie points out that the notion of "national authenticity" seems to demandan approach to tradition as something pure, which he disavows: "The only people who seriously believe this are religious extremists" (67).

To illustrate his point, the author recalls the case of Indian culture, whose "very essence," according to him, is "a mixed tradition, a *mélange* of elements as disparate as

ancient Mughal and contemporary Coca-Coca American. To say nothing of Muslim, Buddhist, Jain, Christian, Jewish, British, French, Portuguese, Marxist, Maoist, Trotskyist, Vietnamese, capitalist, and of course Hindu elements" (67). Rushdie celebrates, thus, the "eclecticism" in Indian tradition and regrets whether this "mixed tradition is placed by the fantasy of purity" (68). Making a parallel with the literary creation, he affirms that the dynamics of writing is the "transnational, cross-lingual process of pollination" (69): "Books are almost always praised for using motifs and symbols out of the author's own national tradition, or when their form echoes some traditional form, obviously pre-English" (66). Hesuggests that, instead of searching for relations bounded by political or linguistic frontiers, one should read through a text of those writers who have been put under the category of Commonwealth literature, attending to the imaginative affinities they might share (69).

Considering how Rushdie's writing borrows mythological and literary references from both East and West, it is possible to remark that this crossing of borders between cultures also reinforces the notion of mobility, if it is understood as cultural displacement translated into literary work as well. Vijay Mishra, for instance, underlines how in terms of form, Rushdie appropriates the Indian epic traditions, thus expanding the possibilities of the novel written in English language. The construction of such dialogues between different cultural backgrounds, which Rushdie refers to as "imaginative affinities," opens up the possibility of new models of relationship, that, according to Edward Said, deviates from conventional ways of dealing with tradition: "What I am describing is the transition from a failed idea or possibility of filiation to a kind of compensatory order that, whether it is a party, an institution, a culture, a set of beliefs, or even a world-vision, provides men and women with anew form of relationship, which I have been calling affiliation but which is also a new system" (Said 19).

According to Said, this strategy of affiliation breaks free from fixed categories such as "birth, nationality, profession" (25), and "takes validated nonbiological social and cultural forms" (23). In the excerpt that follows, which is a comment made by Rushdie concerning literary writing, it is possible to find another example of this affiliation process: "We canquite legitimately claim as our ancestors the Huguenots, the Irish, the Jews; the past to which we belong is an English past, the history of immigrant Britain. Swift, Conrad, Marx are as much our literary forebears as Tagore or Ram Mohan Roy" (Rushdie, *Imaginary* 1991).

By doing so, Rushdie reinforces the freedom to create bridges across different cultural traditions. This seems to be a key aspect of his understanding not only in terms of literary creation but also in relation to a kind of diasporic perspective that he understands as broader and progressive, which *The Satanic Verses* seem to convey. Mishra highlights how the "old narrative" of diasporas, mainly associated with the myth of return, for instance, is subverted in the text through an appraisal of the hyphen. The hyphen, according to Mishra, implies a narrative of "the fracture" and not of "the whole" (Mishra 235) and, thus, undermines fixed and essentialized perspectives concerning identity. It embodies the dynamics of mobilities and it can be related to Rushdie's perspective on "translated men," that I have introduced above and which resonates with Mishra's analysis upon the "hyphenated subject in diaspora."

In the essay "Imaginary Homelands," Rushdie affirms: "Our identity is at once pluraland partial. Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools. But however ambiguous and shifting this ground may be, it is not an infertile territory for a writer to occupy" (Rushdie *Imaginary* 15). Later on, in an interview, the author also criticizes the assumption that migrants struggle with the lack of roots and belonging:

> I don't think that migration, the process of being uprooted, necessarily leads to rootlessness. What it can lead to is a kind of multiple rooting. It's not the traditional identity crises of not knowing where you come from. The problem is that you come from too many places. The problems are of excess rather than of absence…. What I have is a feeling of overcrowding. It's not that there are pulls in too many directions somuch as too many voices speaking at the same time. (Rushdie qtd in Syed 43)

This kind of perspective, therefore, displaces the traditional diasporic narrative, such as that one that might claim home as a fixed place. It is not that the very idea of homeland becomes impossible, but it is somehow expanded to multiple places, which are not necessarily connected to a physical territory. It can be, for instance, a place of hope, which might be located in one's memories or, as, in the case of *The Satanic Verses*, it can even acquire a "mobile" condition, thus, opened to the shifting of perspectives, creation of histories, that can emerge through the dynamics of traveling. It becomes a location that can enable one to start over and, therefore, not just a place of origin that would remain immutable, waiting to be restored when there is a possibility of return.

1.3 Criticism on Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*

In the end of *The Satanic Verses*, Chamcha goes back to Bombay and reconciliates with his father before the death of Changez Chamchawala, but instead of inhabiting the place of his childhood he chooses to create a new life with Zeenat Vakil: "Childhood was over, and the view from this window was no more than an old and sentimental echo. To the devil withit! Let the bulldozers come. If the old refused to die, the new could not be born" (547). Both Nico Israel and Priyamvada Gopal highlights a certain irony here, since Chamcha returns to Bombay after many processes of transformations, through which the

text posits questions upon essences and origins. However, Gopal seems also to collect the very sense of mobilities that might be suggested in the outcome of *The Satanic Verses*: "resolution is enacted through a return, albeit to the heterogeneous and constantly transforming country, rather than a mythical homeland" (Gopal 170).

The same does not happen with Farishta, who ends tragically, killing himself. The novel seems to suggest that his tragedy might be connected to his insistence upon remaining untranslated, as Mishra points out: "It is not Gibreel but Saladin who is reborn and who accepts the need for change: the nostalgia for the past (a house, one's ancestral religion, and so on) is not something one can live by but something to which, in an act of both homage andacceptance of his father Changez Chamchawala, Saladin returns" (Mishra 226). Although thetext questions Chamcha's former "blindness," which somehow can be an effect of his own process of alienation during his "conquest of Englishness," it indeed leans more toward Chamcha's point of view. By doing so, the novel underlines the potentiality of his journey, stressing that, although his choices and contradictions could also be connected to some kind of longing for a homogeneous and pure England, his transformations and the possibility of movement it represents draw attention to the role of mobilities, shedding light to what can positively be acquired through the experiences of traveling and cultural negotations.

As Rushdie points out in the essay "In Good Faith," the novel "celebrates hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs… *The Satanic Verses* is for change-by-fusion, change-by-conjoining. It is a love-song to our mongrel selves" (Rushdie, *Imaginary* 1991). It questions the discourse of the total and the sacred, which in the novel isassociated with nostalgia, immobility, and the figure of the Imam introduced in the chapter "Ayesha." The Imam is portrayed in the novel, as we have

introduced above, as a kind of exile: “The exile is a ball hurled high into the air. He hangs there, frozen in time, translated into a photograph; denied motion, suspended impossibility above his native earth, he awaits the inevitable moment at which the photograph must begin to move, and the earth reclaim its own” (Rushdie 205).

It is significant that the Imam, as well as the Prophet Mahound, appears in the episodes related to Farishta’s dreams. The Imam longs for his return to his homeland, Desh, while he lives in an apartment in London, where “The curtains, thick golden velvet, are kept shut all day, because otherwise the evil thing might creep into the apartment: foreignness. Abroad, the alien nation. The harsh fact that he is here and not There, upon which all his thoughts are fixed” (206). Another example that seems to be close to this perspective can be found in the very onset of the novel. Chamcha and Farishta fall from the airplane after it is exploded by Tavleen, one the four Sikh hijackers, whose goals are “An independent homeland, religious freedom, release of political detainness, justice, ransom money, a safe-conduct to a country oftheir choice” (79). But then the text describes that they turned the flight into something macabre. Tavleen uses a coat that hides many bombs that cover her body. Joining her there are other three men who, one at a time, is afterwards killed by her in sacrifice until she performs the last act of self-immolation: “‘Martyrdom is a privilege,’ she said softly. ‘We shall be like stars; like the sun’” (86).

The Satanic Verses seem to problematize the discourse of nationalism, especially when it overlaps with religion, which in the text is also associated to a kind of diasporic narrative embedded in the myths of return. Mishra points out that “the narrative of the ‘sacred’ which diasporic communities construct as a defence mechanism or as a means of connecting the impossible world of the here-and-now with the lost, ideal world of the there-and-then” has as its opposite “the narrative of the hyphen which presences the boundary where the politics of epistemic violence and a self-conscious re-definition of the

project of modernity are located" (Mishra 235). It seems to be towards the latter, thus, that *The Satanic Verses* affiliate and it reinforces mobility as a means of achieving a more open and progressive way of thinking upon place and on the construction of the nation. As I am goingto start discussing below, and develop further in chapter three, the text does not implode the possibility of homelands being imagined, but it criticizes some ways that it might lead to closed or even sectarian conceptions of the nation-state.

Yet, on the discourses of diaspora, it is worth mentioning Stuart Hall, who underlines how the narratives of the sacred sometimes can also be appropriated as a means of creating aplace of hope. He describes, for instance, the use of the Old Testament by the Caribbean: "There we find the analogue, critical to our history, of 'the chosen people', taken away by violence into slavery in 'Egypt'; their 'suffering' at the hands of 'Babylon'; the leadership of Moses, followed by the Great Exodus – 'movement of Jah People' – out of bondage and the return to the Promised Land" (Hall *Essential* 209). The author, thus, seems to offer a distinct perspective if compared to Rushdie's skepticism towards this kind of narrative:

> In this metaphor, history – which is open to freedom because it is contingent – is represented as ideological and redemptive: circling back to the restoration of its originary moment, healing all rupture, repairing every violent breach through thisreturn. This hope has become, for Caribbean people, condensed into a sort of foundational myth. It is, by any standards, a great vision. Its power – even in the modern world – to move mountains can never be underestimated. (Hall *Essential* 209)

Hall recognizes that such perspective might render "a closed conception of 'tribe', diaspora, and homeland." It might embrace an understanding of cultural identity "with an unchanging essential core, which is timeless, binding future and present to past in an

unbroken line," which, on the other hand, is also a myth. But he points out the potentialities of this mythology: "This umbilical cord is what we call 'tradition,' the test of which is its truth to its origins, its self-presence to itself, its 'authenticity.' It is, of course, a myth – with all the real power that our governing myths carry to shape our imaginaries, influence our actions, give meaning to our lives, and make sense of our history" (209).

Later, Hall remarks that beyond its use in terms of creating a place of hope, the narrative of the "sacred" has been appropriated to foster critical perspectives as well. He gives as an example the movement of "Rastafarianism," which "drew on many 'lost sources' from the past. But its relevance was grounded in the extraordinarily contemporary practice of reading the Bible through its subversive tradition, through its unorthodoxies, its apocrypha: by reading against the grain, upside down, turning the text against itself" (*Essential* 220). That same process of affiliation introduced by Said and quoted above, thus, can be identified within the discourse of diasporas. Hall underlines how the Caribbean sought reference "on the modern history of the Jewish people" (*Essential* 209), which, as Robin Cohen points out, "had been unable to sustain a national homeland and were scattered to the far corners of the world" (Cohen 24).

The recurrent use of the word Babylon, which also appears in *The Satanic Verses* in its conventional form and in the neologism "Babylondon," illustrates the stretching of the bonds among diasporas. Cohen recalls that Babylon was the very site where Zedekiah, the Jewish leader, was punished by Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king, after the former's planning of revolt against the Mesopotamian Empire:

> His soldiers forced Zedekiah to witness the execution of his sons; the Jewish leader was then blinded and dragged in chains to Babylon. Peasants were left behind in Judah to till the soil, but the key military, civic and Jews had been compelled to

> desert the land 'promised' to them by God to Moses and religious personnel accompanied Zedekiah to captivity in Babylon…thereafter, the tradition suggests, forever becamedispersed. (Cohen 22)

Cohen then underlines that "Since the Babylonian exile, 'the homelessness of Jews has been a leitmotiv in Jewish literature, art, culture, and of course, prayer. Jewish folklore and its strong oral tradition retold stories of the perceived, or actual, trauma of their historical experiences." Thus, "the use of the word Babylon alone was enough to evoke a sense of captivity, exile, alienation and isolation" (23). When Rastafarianism appropriates this term, according to Hall, however, the reference is dislocated and sometimes raised to criticize the segregated spaces and the oppression imposed on the diasporas in the inner cities of the British metropolis: "The 'Babylon' of which it spoke, where its people were still 'suffering,' was not in Egypt but in Kingston – and later, as the name was syntagmatically extended to include the Metropolitan Police, in Brixton, Handsworth, Moss Side, and Notting Hill" (Hall *Essential* 220).

In part, a similar appropriation of Babylon is found in *The Satanic Verses*, but the text, as it is going to be discussed also in the following chapters, stresses some limitations upon certain forms of reaction against hegemonic power, too. In regard to this issue, we might find some resonance between Hall's perspective and Rushdie's point of view: "A people cannot live without hope. But there is a problem when we take our metaphors too literally. Questions of cultural identity in diasporas cannot be 'thought' in this way" (Hall *Essential* 210). And here it is worth to highlight the image of "The River of Blood" that I am going to summarize and develop in the next chapter. This metaphor became overlaid with some level of racist discourse after Enoch Powell's speech against the migrants' influx in Britain in the 1960s. In the novel, the poet Jumpy Joshi defends a reclaiming of the metaphor and the text seems to encourage the same act towards other terms, such as the

name Mahound, which is historicallya derogatory word used to refer to the Prophet Muhammad.

However, as the novel unravels, a certain failure between the creative reclamation and the following stage of "putting into practice" of a given project seems to be dramatized. This struggle is not located only in the passages that unfold in London. In the part concerning to Bombay, there is some frustration involved in the way that Zeenat Vakil and their friends discuss the contradictions of national politics in the Indian sub-continent. Furthermore, in Jahilia, Salman, who was Mahound's official scribe and supporter, also feels betrayed by the Prophet's yearning for power, as the latter increasingly find a way to create new laws arbitrarily, after consulting with the archangel Gibreel: "Amid the palm-trees of the oasis Gibreel appeared to the Prophet and found himself spouting rules, rules, rules, until the faithful could scarcely bear the prospect of any more revelation" (Rushdie 363). Then, Salman decides to flee the oasis of Yathrib, where Mahound awaits until the moment to makehis triumphal return to Jahilia.

It is indeed in the streets of Brickhall, inner city of London, though, that this kind of frustration seems to achieve one of its biggest dramatic peaks. Almost in the end of the novel, riots flood through the neighborhood and "The street has become red hot, molten, river of the colour of blood" (462). Here, according to John McLeod, the "gap" between the poet's "reclamation" and the effects of the protests are dramatized: "The youthful rioters remain lost in shadow beyond the purview of the novel, locked in a flawed form of oppositional protest which Rushdie to an extent understands but ultimately cannot sanction" (McLeod 156). The author points out that Rushdie seems to cast doubt upon some strategies of fighting against oppression in the metropolis, especially considering the context of the 1980s, when England has been ruled by the conservative government of Margaret Thatcher, whose discourse also tried to revive the achievements of the Empire

and echoed part of Enoch Powell's voice, too. Although the novel in part discloses the social problems of such moment, it also seems to recall the necessity of finding new solutions, as McLeod points out, by drawing attention to the importance to avoid a Manichaean ideology, which, as I am going to discuss in the next chapter, has been expounded by Fanon.

In *The Satanic Verses* there is even an allusion to *The Wretched of the Earth*, and it is conjured up by Farishta: "'The native is an oppressed person whose permanent dream is to become the persecutor' (Fanon)" (Rushdie 353). But considering how the character fails in many of his pursuits, probably, Rushdie rather questions some literal appropriations of Fanon's aphorisms than reinforces Farishta's understanding. Yet according to McLeod, it seems that in the novel "Popular violence is regarded as a misguided attempt to move from the position of the oppressed to that of the persecutor, and not an act of creative translation or metamorphosis" (McLeod 156).

Here it is important to point out that Timothy Brennan, in his reading of *The Satanic Verses*, questions how the novel does not "develop these polemic observations" (Brennan 149), concerning, for instance, "the way the word 'immigrant' in England's public debate invariably means 'black immigrant', and Margaret Thatcher's use of 'we' in a speech recalling the days when England ruled one quarter of the world – a 'we' that naturally excluded England's two million formerly colonised peoples" (149). According to Brennan, the novel deviates from Rushdie's prior works for being less metafictional, and, thus, it portrays characters as "for the first time people living in the world, acting out their lives in a story of their own. The story is not *about* events, but in them" (148). On the other hand, Brennan neither make a single mention to the "River of Blood" nor to the speech of Enoch Powell, which is a point that I am going to discuss in the second chapter.

If there is something that *The Satanic Verses* have struggled with, especially at the

moment right after its release, though, are those Manichean discourses. Thus, that same frustration upon creative "reclamation" depicted in the novel seems to have cast a shadow over the book itself. As Mishra recalls, the episode of the satanic verses, which, in part, the novel retells but does not concentrate on it, has nothing directly to do with the *Qur'an* and probably might be rather refer to "an orientalist fantasy aimed at discrediting the Prophet of Islam" (Mishra 234). Thus, following this perspective, Rushdie seems also to appropriate in his writing of a set of discourses that Edward Said discloses in *Orientalism*.

Said analyses how the notion of the East is a construction based on a complex processof production of knowledge that encompass, for instance, linguistic, literary and historical works. By doing so, these texts also have contributed to the existence of some perspectives that helped to build an imagery concerning the East, which is no less arbitrary than the notion of West: "Therefore as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West. The two geographical entities thus support and to an extent reflect each other" (Said 5). And, according to Mishra, it seems to be how the novel dialogues with some of these orientalist fantasies that stimulated so much revolt in part of the Islam community: "Beyond the heretical implications embedded in *The Satanic Verses*, it was the latter, the way in which the text plays to the discourses of orientalism, which hurt Muslim readers most" (Mishra 234). Nevertheless, the novel was very often attacked, burnt, and banished even without being opened, as Said recalls: "I do not mean that the entire Islamic world acquiesced, but that its official agencies and spokespeople either blindly rejected or vehemently refused to engage with a book which the enormous majority of people never read" (Said, *Culture* 1994).

Some critics remark that the "Rushdie Affair" projects a conflict that is somehow unsolvable. Nico Israel points out that it has embedded a tension of "apparently

irreconcilable narratives" (177). The Affair is, therefore, a difficult situation to balance. It is overtly known that Arabs and Islam have been the target of a cultural war, as Said has already argued in *Culture and Imperialism* (301). And, ironically, under the flag of secularism and democracy,violent practices have also been conducted, diminishing non-Western cultures and forcing them to the edge of obscurity, which reveals the racist background of these discourses. The use of the name "Mahound" (a medieval Christian term created to mock the prophet Mohammad), out of other aspects, in *The Satanic Verses*, is one of the elements considered offensive by Islam community. However, this reference is contextualized in the novel: "To turn insults into strengths, whigs, tories, Blacks all chose to wear with pride the names they were given in scorn" (Rushdie 93).

Considering the British Muslims' reactions, it seems that Rushdie's transgressive, uprooted writing, as Mishra underlines, was unable "to convince the diaspora that there is no suchthing as an 'untranslated man': large sections of the diaspora wish to retain this nostalgic definition of the self and cling to 'millenarian' narratives of self-empowerment in which onlythe untranslated can recapture a lost harmony, a pristine sense of the past" (Mishra 224). Therefore, for some part of the Islamic community, Rushdie has crossed an unnegotiable line, which, as Timothy Brennan affirms, might be related to the author's attempt at historicizing the Prophet Muhammad and the *Qur'an*: "Rushdie takes the chance of portraying the Prophethere (knowing it is taboo), and of placing him back into history, because the letter of the law is today being observed without reverence for the original message" (Brennan 146).

In the novel, the character Salman the Persian, who was Mahound's official scribe, becomes suspicious of how the prophet always consulted with the archangel Gibreel when he wanted to create a new law, making even more restricted the new religion, that was named Submission. It is worth to underline that Islam means submission to the will of God.

Indeed, by incorporating this theme, the novel seems to recall that religion is part of the realm of culture, also an artefact, thus, susceptible of being historicized and portrayed in its differentphases of development. The episode of the satanic verses, whether it is an orientalist fantasy or not, seems to be inserted to mark this very aspect, since it reveals a shifting point in the religion of submission.

It is conjured up in the novel to break with a tolerance to other three female goddesses, Uzza, Manat and Lat, who were worshiped while the name of Allah was arising. This is portrayed in the passages that unfold in Jahilia, which, as we have pointed out, it is part of the episodes related to Farishta's dreams. This city, depicted as a city of businessmen, is the setting for the story of Mahound, who is founding "one of the world's great religions;" (Rushdie 95). Soon, the name of the god Allah starts to circulate, "but he isn't very popular: an all-rounder in an age of specialist statues" (99). Uzza, Manat and Lat are, on the other hand, the three goddesses whose temples attracted pilgrims to the city. The temples' revenues are controlled by the families of the Grandee, Abu Simbel, and of his wife, Hind: "These concessions are the foundations of the Grandee's wealth" (100). Abu Simbel, however, started to feel threatened by the new religion professed by Mahound, who, portrayed as an orphan, did not have the same access to the mercantile elite of the city: "he is as wealthy and successful as any of us, as any of the councilors, but because he lacks the right sort of family connections, we haven't offered him a place amongst our group" (102). Then, Abu Simbel recalls that Mahound could be feeling that "he has been cheated," and the Grandee has the assumption that his fellow could try to find a way to reclaim access to some positions he could not have access until the creation of a religion.

Mahound has three main supporters, Bilal, Salman and Khalid, who are also outcasts:"water-carrier immigrant slave" (104). When they know that Abu Simbel has

offered a deal to Mahound, which is "Allah's approval of Lat, Uzza and Manat" (105), in exchange of Mahound's election as the council of Jahilia" they were against the idea: "And Khalid, closed to tears: 'Messenger, what are you saying? Lat, Manat, Uzza – they'reall *females*! For pity's sake! Are we to have goddesses now?" (107, emphasis in original). The prophet, though, decides to climb Mount Cone, consults with Gibreel, of whom he claims to be a messenger, and returns saying that the cult of three goddesses were allowed: "They are exalted birds, and their intercession is desired indeed" (114).

Afterwards, he meets Hind, Abu Simbel's wife, who provokes him and calls him weak for accepting her husband's offer. Then Mahound changes his mind, goes again to Mount Cone, and starts to say that instead of Gibreel, it was the Devil who spoke to him: "'The last time, it was Shaitan'" (123). Therefore, he withdraws what he has said upon the three goddesses and reinforces that the prior message was not an angelic one, but "Satanic verses" (124). When Abu Simbel is informed of Mahound's most recent news, "The Grandeeof Jahilia institutes a policy of persecution" (125), while "the citizens of the oasis-settlement of Yathrib" are also consulted, and after accepting an offer, they decide to give "shelter those-who-submit, if they wish to leave Jahilia". Then, Mahound, followed by his supporters, leaves the city towards Yathrib.

Vijay Mishra stresses that there is neither any mention to the satanic verses in the *Qur'an* nor in any Islamic discourse in general. As I stated above, it might be an orientalist fiction, which, indeed, infuriated part of the Islam community. When the novel was released, according to Mishra, it was received as a direct attack: "Rushdie's book – its title especially – was therefore read as implying the *Qur'an* itself as being 'satanic' or the work of the Devil" (Mishra 234). On the other hand, in the *Qur'an* there is a reference to the three goddesses, as can be read in the excerpt provided by Mishra: "Have you thought on Al-Lat and Al-Uzza, and on Manat, the third other? Are you to have the sons, and He the

daughters? This is indeed an unfair distinction! / They are but names which you and your fathers have invented: God has vested no authority in them" (*Koran* qtd. in Mishra 233). Thus, *The Satanic Verses*, by also recalling a polytheist, pre-Islamic moment, might place Islam in history and also fictionalize the context surrounding Lat, Uzza and Manat as well.

Regarding this aspect, Brennan's comment might be illustrative:

> Historically, the popular devotion among the pagan Meccans for the female deities Al- Lat, Al-Uzza and Al-Manat had prevented the peaceful expansion of Islam in its crucialearly period; as a consequence, Muhammad at first believed it was God's will that their worship be permitted within the limits of Islamic doctrine. This concession, although apparently blasphemous (since Islam was nothing if not the discovery by the Meccans of the one true God), nevertheless ensured the new religion's success. (Brennan 152)

Some readings that have also been made of *The Satanic Verses* approach the novel in relation to texts that dialogue with a satirical tradition and whose authors share a common fate: "[they] were condemned in their time for challenging dominant political or religious ideologies" (Sanga 124). Recalling some cases in the literary history, Jaina C. Sanga, for instance, compares the reactions to Rushdie's novel with "François Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel* published in the sixteenth century was condemned for being obscene and sacrilegious. The book allegedly mocked theological education and opposed medieval Christian ideology by parodying prominent classical authors, lawyers, clergymen, and even some of Rabelais's daily acquaintances" (124). She still highlights Jonathan Swift, who was condemned to exile in Ireland due to the texts *A Tale of a Tub* and *The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*. And even James Joyce's *Ulysses*, which "was also condemned for being obscene and subversive. Considered blasphemous for its recalcitrant treatment of Ireland and its disparaging representations of social and political ideas" (125).

Instead of just situating Rushdie's novel among the literary works of those writers that belong to a same vein, Sanga rather discusses how *The Satanic Verses* can be thought in the realm of postcolonial discourse. As I have pointed out in relation to Rushdie's imaginative affinities (which can also be thought in terms of affiliation) and his notion of translation, it is worth to think of these strategies here as juxtaposed. It is because, as Sanga affirms, postcolonial writers, while appropriating Western literary traditions, somehow rework texts in a way that new angles of perspective might emerge: "There is an infinite amount of borrowing and intermingling from European literary traditions within the registers of postcolonial fiction. Postcolonial writers unhesitatingly cross-reference, fragment, satirize, or parody European narrative style and ideological perspectives." By doing so, these authors "subvert Western myths and rethink dominant assumptions" (108).

What I have discussed so far is that Rushdie not only borrows from European sources; he draws material from Eastern tradition as well. Thus, the writer stretches the scope of these processes of translation and, in the case of *The Satanic Verses*, encompasses the *Qur'an* too, which is appropriated as being one out of many possible texts. However, for part of the Islamic community, who regard the work as sacred, this gesture of translation is inconceivable. In the essay "In Good Faith," that was published after the *fatwa*, Rushdie affirms that the *Qur'an* was not one of the major works he has been dialoguing with. He reinforces that

> One was William Brake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, the classic mediation on the interpretation of good and evil; the other *The Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov, the great Russian lyrical and comical novel in which the Devil descends upon Moscow and wreaks havoc upon the corrupt, materialist, decadent inhabitants andturns out, by the end, not to be such a bad chap after all. (Rushdie *Imaginary* 403)

Sanga yet underlines that the notion of translation can be connected to another strategy: blasphemy. Her understanding of blasphemy does not directly entail a religious discourse: “This blasphemy is bound not in ideas of religion or God, but rather in historical and cultural re-representations that speak to and attempt to undermine certain colonial ideologies” (Sanga108). One of the cornerstones of the colonial ideology is the Manichaean frame that might fixthe subjects in rigid positions based on a hierarchical relations, for instance, “white”, “light”, “good” versus “black”, “dark”, “bad”, by means of producing a sense of superiority between one culture, as the European, over the others, a strategy that has been used to legitimize oppression and exploitation. It seems that by trying to overcome this polarizations, Rushdie’s text constantly dislocates the axis, interchanging the points of view which at the same time he aims to subvert.

Through these processes of translation and blasphemy, therefore, Sanga remarks that *The Satanic Verses* open a “contestatory space that exists between the sacred and the profane” (110). Blasphemy, in the novel, according to her, “operates at different levels: at one level it appears in the fictional reworking of certain religious tenets; and, on another level, in the secular arena of post-enlightenment discourse, blasphemy operates in the re-reading and re-writing of certain conflictual social and political representation” (123).

Nico Israel, on the other hand, tries to avoid the notion of blasphemy especially when it is thought in the realm of religion, even though the term appears in the novel in different moments. One example is found in the novel’s chapter “A City Visible but Unseen.” The passage is set in the Shaandaar Café, where Chamcha is living in the attic already metamorphosed in the Goatman. One day, Hind Sufyan is reading the “Indian fanzine *Ciné- Blitz*” and she starts to scream that the movie star Farishta is alive. In an interview, the actor says that, in fact, he had missed the flight that ended in the airplane crash. He, then, apologizes his fans who thought he was dead because everything after all

was a mistake. Then, the news celebrates both his survival and his return to movies in a London-based film production that was prepared by the tycoon Billy Battuta and the independent Indian producer Mr. S. S. Sisodia.

Which film would it be? “A theological, but of a new type. It would be set in an imaginary and fabulous city made of sand, and would recount the story of the encounter between a prophet and an archangel; also the temptation of the prophet, and his choice of the path of purity” (272). Mr. Sisodia then highlights that it is a film “about how newness enters the world.” When the reporter asks him if “would it not be seen as blasphemous, a crime against …”, Battuta interrupts and reinforces that “certainly not”: “Fiction is fiction; facts arefacts” (272). Once more in Jahilia, when Mahound meets Salman the Persian, who was his scribe, the prophet says: “Your blasphemy, Salman, can’t be forgiven” (374). Suspicious of Mahound’s frequent consults with Gibreel about anything, as the prophet “just laid down the law and the angel would confirm it afterwards” (365), Salman plans a test. He starts to change some words of the prophet’s speech: “Little things at first. If Mahound recited a verse in which God was described as *all-hearing*, *all-knowing*, I would write, *all- knowing*, *all*-wise. Here’s the point: Mahound did not notice the alterations” (367, emphasis in original).

Salman got the disturbing proof he needed and becomes even more disappointed: “Sothe next time I changed a bigger thing. He said *Christian*, I wrote *Jew*. He’d notice that, surely; how could he not? But when I read him the chapter he nodded and thanked me politely, and I went out of his tent with tears in my eyes” (368, emphasis in original). Salmanis one of the first supporters of Mahound, thus, probably his discordance of the prophet is notjust a matter of faith. The former, being also an outcast, seems to identify in the beginning with Mahound and his ideals. However, when they move to the oasis of Yathrib, Salman perceives that the new rules imposed by Mahound was becoming

excessive. Suffice is to recall another part of the novel that portrays the contrast of women'sfreedom in Jahilia and in Yathrib, that Salman describes, in an ironic tone, during a conversation with the satirist Baal:

> But in Yathrib the women are different, you don't know, here in Jahilia you're used to ordering your females about but up there they won't put up with it. When a man gets married he goes to live with his wife's people! Imagine! Shocking, isn't it? And throughout the marriage the wife keeps her own tent. If she wants to get rid of her husband she turns the tent round to face in the opposite direction, so that when he comes to her he finds fabric where the door should be, and that's that, he's out, divorced, not a thing he can do about it. Well, our girls were beginning to go for that type of thing, getting who knows what sort of ideas in their heads, so at once, bang, outcomes the rule book, the angel starts pouring out rules about what women mustn't do, he starts forcing them back into the docile attitudes the Prophet prefers, docile or maternal, walking three steps behind or sitting at home being wise and waxing their chins. (Rushdie 367)

These excerpts are helpful to introduce a point mentioned by Israel and that is relevant to our discussion. It is undeniable that the notion of blasphemy might be evoked, and Sanga is very accurate in her analysis, disclosing the postcolonial discourse that traverses such strategy. But Israel's reading is also trying to offer an alternative approach that would attempt to avoid the polarizations that were encouraged in the moment of the Affair and still appears in some of the interpretations of the novel, which might contribute to conjure up a kind of battle between secularism and dogmatism, modernism and barbarism.

This kind of outlook to the novel became also very much influenced by the media that many times appropriated some of Rushdie's declarations and raised controversies, following the same pattern of the cultural war against Arabs and Islam that has been

discussed by Said. This is definitely not what Sanga does, but Israel seems to be more interested in discussing passages, as those quoted above, as a possibility of anxiety that is already entailed in the text. The critic also relates it to Rushdie's situation between exile and diaspora, which is "proper to narrative and historiography between the posts of postmodernism and postcoloniality" (Israel 157). In this discursive anxiety, Israel perceives a sort of self- punishment that is already foreshadowed by the novel. This is not the same as to say that Rushdie already knew what could have happened, as the declaration of the *fatwa*, and made nothing to prevent. Israel discusses it in a more complex set of postcolonial subjectivity that seems to be simultaneously questioning how postcoloniality can cope with modernity and vice-versa:

> It is under this set of epistemological, geographical, and historico-political rubrics that the novel's engagement with religion can, I would contend, best be apprehended. For readings that focus merely on that which is considered blasphemous (or satirical) about *The Satanic Verses* often fail to attend to the complexity of the contradictory religious pulsions in the text and, moreover, neglect to contextualize religion in relation to the text's broader treatment of the subject of diaspora. (Israel 168)

Israel affirms that "Rushdie portrays Islam as a religion founded by forced migrants – Muhammed himself was, of course, an exile; his *hijrah* from Mecca to Medina (in A.D. 622) marks the traditional starting point of Islamic history – and then translates the principle of faith in exile into the politically charged arenas of 1980s India and England" (171). Therefore, according to him, "exile, diaspora, and religion are thus portrayed as, in a sense, conceptually joined, as all three unfold in the text under the sign of postcolonial history" (171).

Here it is worth to recall Vijay Mishra to whom "*The Satanic Verses* is the text

about migration, about the varieties of religious, sexual and social filiations of the diaspora"(225), and it does so by portraying the complexities of such formations through affiliations: "For these hyphenated subjects diasporic space as a contradictory, often racist and contaminated space now engenders the possibilities of exploring hybrid, cross-cultural and interdiasporic relationships" (187). A resistance to such standpoint, as we have discussed, is not spared in the novel, and probably that passage of Salman, the scribe, comparing the condition of women in Jahilia and in Yathrib might be an example.

It seems that the text, especially in the parts related to Jahilia, questions how a group when in diaspora chooses to keep their tenets and does not negotiate with other perspectives, even if their own rules might reveal asymmetrical relationships between themselves, as in the case of gender roles mentioned above. Here we can point out how intricated is Rushdie's notion of translation that is not only limited to the realm of texts butseems to be stretched to a broader cultural aspect that entails the social and the political as well, as Sanga has also underscored.

Therefore, by asking "How does newness enter the world?", since its onset, when Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta are still hovering in the sky, the novel might also draw attention to such encounters provided by mobilities. Regarding how it entails a variety of movements, not only corporeal but also the displacement of culture and perspectives, I am going to discuss in the next chapter how it can contribute to an expanded conception of place, which is going to be approached in relation to the urban and national spaces as well.

CHAPTER 2

Displacement, mobilities and the crossroads of locations

In the third chapter of *The Satanic Verses*, "Ellowen Deeowen," there is a passage that, although brief, is relevant to open up this discussion, since it introduces an image that repeats itself throughout the novel in different ways, acquiring multiple meanings. It is a reference to "The Rivers of Blood," which became mainly associated to Enoch Powell's speech in 1960s against the influx of migrants in England, coming from the former colonies, in the aftermath of the British Empire. By stressing this issue, the novel seems to unravel one of its main issues: the experiences of displacement, mobility and the complex relations entailed in these processes that depend on traveling.

These travels are a broader phenomenon since they can encompass both physical andimaginative mobility, as John Urry suggests. Such dynamics might enable new articulations between place and space as I am going to develop below, opening up the possibility of revisions in the notions concerning home, which stretches itself to the realm of the nation as well. The characters of *The Satanic Verses*, when not physically on the move, seem to be wondering to be somewhere else. They might share a sense of division, sometimes unfitting, and a variety of angles emerge through their perspectives, reflecting a spatiality that seems to be crisscrossed by a profusion of locations, and this aspect is certainly one of the strengths of the novel.

The passage mentioned above takes place in the Shaandaar Café, an establishment runby Muhammad Sufyan and Hind Sufyan, who have two daughters: Mishal and Anahita. Mr. Sufyan is a former schoolteacher that leaves Dhaka with his family to resettle in London afterbeing persecuted due to his involvement with the Communist Party: "self-

taught in classical texts of many cultures, dismissed from post in Dhaka owing to cultural differences with certain generals in the old days when Bangladesh was merely an East Wing" (Rushdie 243). But it is Hind who is actually responsible for the success of the Café with her savory cooking:"People came from all over London to eat her samosas, her Bombay chaat, her gulab jamans straight from Paradise" (248).

At a certain point Jumpy Joshi enters, his is a man in his forties with college education and a job, although he seems to be adrift according to Mr. Sufyan's standpoint: "[he] isn't married, works for two pice in the sports centre teaching martial arts and what-all, lives on air, behaves like a rishi or pir but doesn't have any faith, going nowhere but looks like he knows some secret" (185). Sufyan is referring to Joshi in a parallel conversation with Hanif Johnson, a "light-skinned, blue-eyed Asian man" who is "a smart lawyer" and owns an office above the Shaandaar Café. Sufyan then asks Johnson to comment on Joshi situation and the lawyer, expressing in an ironic tone, affirms that the latter is a poet and that he has written some verses under the title "The River of Blood": "He says a street is a river and we are the flow; humanity is a river of blood, that's the poet's point" (186). Sufyan and Johnson, thus, develop a discussion upon Joshi as a writer, and the former even underlines that his style would not lead him to the status of someone who "becomes great, or rich at least" (186). What is interesting here is to highlight how this excerpt projects some metaphors that might work as examples of the kind of spatiality that predominates and crosscuts the novel and encompass some images of mobilities that spread throughout the text.

First the street as a river undermines the understanding of the former as an enclosure with stiff borders. After all, depending on the movements of the tides, the banks of the river might retreat or advance. Thus, the approximation between these two images destabilizes thevery idea of the street as a limited space, and reinforces that cartographical

designs, as maps, are absolutely abstract and somehow arbitrary, although useful. Another aspect that is relevant in the metaphor of the street as a river is how it challenges the definitions of place and space, and my hypothesis is that this might be concerned with the dynamics of mobilitiesthat blur and complexify the demarcation of these terms. Moreover, in this image, “blood”, by means of a metonymy, makes a reference to people. Since it is permanently on the move and essential to life, thus, blood is life, and “people” being metaphorically “blood” are also equated with movement.

Michel De Certeau is assertive when he affirms that walkers transform “the street geometrically defined by urban planning” (117) with their movements, creating different routes. Although we might agree on this point, which is suitable here because it helps us to infer that mobilities enable the creation of spaces, De Certeau analyses place in a way that theimage of the river still defies. According to the author, place is an order in which a set of relations might be enacted following rules of coexistence. If compared to space, place is also lacking in movement: “A place is thus an instantaneous configuration of positions. It implies an indication of stability” (117). And further he concludes: “In short, space is a practiced place” (117). “Space,” as he points out, is “an effect produced by the operations that orient it,situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs orcontractual proximities” (117).

But recalling the image of the street as a river: is it possible to stabilize a position, a place, there? It seems in this case that the condition of movement, which De Certeau associates mainly with space, also underpins the configuration of place, which becomes fluid and seems to be traversed by multiple vectors, too. It is almost like the stability of place is opened to other possibilities, less restricted and predisposed to change. Evidently, a set of positions in this context could also be understood as transitional, a temporary one, and this might correspond to a condition of one in pursuit of freedom, a process not

regardless to challenges and struggles too, as many characters of *The Satanic Verses* are prone to experience.

I argue that the river implies that place, especially as rendered in the novel, cannot beunderstood as something completely fixed, and this might indicate that the spatialities in *The Satanic Verses* would be embedded in multiple layers, reinforcing the sense of mobilities, which could also be related to another point that De Certeau discusses and is relevant here. He underlines that space is as process linked to "the actions of historical subjects (a movement always seems to condition the production of a space and to associate it with a history)" (118). Inasmuch as this is possible, we can infer that those histories can also allow the creation of revisions upon the imagery concerning a given place, disclosing its tensions and contradictions.

Yet in relation to Joshi's verses, the image of the blood seems to entail a connection between the urban space and the body, which obtains the dimension of a river itself, as it is remarked in the passage: "Also the individual human being" (186). And here we face another aspect: where is the limit between one and another? As paraphrased by Johnson, "The River of Blood" seems to suggest a conflation of the external and the internal, the public and the private, rendering indeed a complex spatiality, where the divisions of what is inside and outside appear to be dissolved, and the very idea of a rigid border might become meaningless. By comparing this passage with other ones in the novel, we can affirm that these metaphors should not be understood as indicating that everything tends to homogeneity and stability in aconventional form.

On the contrary, the stories that crosscut the narrative, adding multiple surfaces of memories and alluding to collective histories, diversify and draw attention to a big range of flows. Each flow, therefore, implicates that place could hardly be stabilized, especially in thecontext of the novel, because the intersections enabled by mobilities can constantly

dislocateand even subvert some borders, as the discourses concerning a city or a nation, and which might uphold individual or collective interpretations concerning home and identity. As John Urry points out, “in a fluid space it is not possible to determine identities nice and neatly, once and for all; nor to distinguish inside from outside. Various other fluids may or may not be able to combine together with each other” (31). The image of the river, thus, seems to becloser to that perception of a heterogeneous and dynamic space, i.e., a space of mobilities.

2.1 A historical account of migrant movements from former colonies in the post-war

Here it is important to point out another aspect that can be related to the notion of mobility and seems to be evoked in the “The River of Blood,” which also reflects a relation to some historical facts translated through intertextual dialogues in the novel. “The River of Blood” mentioned in Joshi’s writings is an appropriation of Enoch Powell’s belligerent speech against the influx of migrants in England, in the 1960s, which became a watershed in Britain’s political arena: “*Like the Roman*, the ferrety Enoch Powell had said, I *seem to see the river Tiber foaming with much blood*” (Rushdie 186, emphasis in original). Then, the text follows: “Reclaim the metaphor. Jumpy Joshi had told himself” (186). This defense on reclaiming appears in other moments of the novel, even prior to the Shaandaar Café’s scene, when, for example, the story of Mahound is introduced. This name, which is associated in the text with the Prophet Muhammad, is a medieval stereotype, i.e., “an abusivename for Muhammad used by medieval European scholars who liked to portray the prophet as a crazed charlatan” (Brennan 155), and sometimes meaning the Devil himself. The historicity of the term is not only approached in the novel, it is also “reclaimed,” in the same way as “The River of Blood”: “To turn insults into

strengths, whigs, tories, Blacks all chose to wear with pride the names they were given in scorn" (Rushdie 93).

Joshi's verses, thus, is an alternative perspective to Powell's use of some lines of Virgil's epic poem "The Aeneid," inasmuch as "his versifying attempts to redefine the old racist image of the rivers of blood" (Rushdie 416). Amy Whipple stresses that Powell's speech was targeted against the immigrant communities, suggesting that they were the cause of many social problems, including the threat of increasing of violence. He was accused of manipulating anti-immigration sentiments spread throughout the public opinion, and the manifestations of support he received reflected how it worked: "Powell was not the first public figure to use democratic responsibility as a defense for the representation of anti-immigration sentiment, but this Birmingham speech became the first truly national platform for this argument" (Whipple 725).

On this topic, Whipple also remarks: "From the early 1980s onward, cultural critics and historians have emphasized the language and imagery of the speech as significant in thepostwar construction of 'race' and nation" (Whipple 718). The author recalls that in the month after Powell's declarations on 20 April 1968, "Over 100,000 letters arrived in his mailbox" (718). She analyzed 2,000 out of that number of messages, in which the senders expressed their "gratitude and encouragement" toward a figure they saw as "a new leader who promised to remedy national follies and ills – to give voice to 'ordinary people' and make Great Britain great again" (720).

At that moment, Britain did not have the same role as a global power as it used to in the heyday of its colonial enterprise in the nineteenth century, and there was more than one decade since the influx of postwar migrations from the former colonies, in theaftermath of the British Empire. And, as Avtar Brah affirms, "Britain experienced severe labour shortages during the post-World War II period of economic expansion" (21). Then, during

the 1950s, groups of South Asians became part of the labour migrations that were scattered not only through Britain but through Europe as a whole. The majority of them were employed in "unskilled jobs involving unsociable hours of work, poor working conditions and low wages" (Brah 21).

The several years of exploitation of their former countries, during colonization, according to Brah, increased the levels of poverty and produced "a large labour force" that,due to many economic struggles, however, could not be absorbed in their place of birth. Then, the moves to the British metropolis became one of the means of searching for new opportunities and surviving. Brah points out that they "tended to settle in the rundown parts of working-class areas," where the social conditions were already precarious "before the arrival of the 'immigrants'" (22). However, they frequently were pushed to the role of scapegoats by their neighborhood: "In the minds of the local residents, however, these problems gradually became associated with the presence of 'immigrants'. The 'immigrant', rather than the social institutions and social policies responsible for the problems of what later came to be described as 'inner-city' areas, became the object of their resentment" (Brah22).

When Powell made that public speech, thus, there was already an atmosphere of anxiety in relation to the immigrant communities, and his political approach to the issue, as Whipple highlights quoting Martin Barker, effected a "'new racism' that posited that humansnaturally form 'exclusive groups' and will instinctively defend the shared traditions of these groups against outsiders. They had reconstructed 'race,' in other words, from being a category of biological difference into a category of instinctive cultural difference" (Whipple 721). Inasmuch as Powell tried to justify the racialized reactions of the Britons to those framed by him as outsiders, he also helped to construct a national identity that evoked a sense of tradition articulated in a very contradictory way. As Whipple points out,

“Powell had entered politics after World War II as an ardent advocate of the empire, but he had become an equally ardent opponent of the Commonwealth by the early 1960s” (723). Thus, he would resort in the great cultural achievements that were raised as representative ofBritain’s tradition and defended as important to be preserved, but this should be regarded as apart from its broad history, i.e., to its connection with the period of Empire:

> The man who had once dedicated himself to the preservation of the British Raj therefore demanded that Britain accept not only the end of empire but also the “accidental irrelevance” of the empire to her history. Britain needed to jettison imperialpower as the core of her identity and instead realize that her rich culture and heritage was, and always had been, her true source of pride and prestige. Britain possessed aninnate glory and splendor; she need not believe they were dependent on the external trappings of empire. (Whipple 723)

It is important to underline that Powell seems to have played an ambivalent role at that moment. On the one hand he positioned himself, and indeed was recognized by many, as the analysis of the letters made by Whipple shows, as an “ordinary people” spokesperson, but, onthe other hand, his standpoint went further: “For Powell, reconciling himself to the end of empire involved a return to Englishness as the essential core of Britishness. Since Britain could no longer derive greatness from global power, English history and culture became in his eyes the true bedrock of national pre-eminence” (723).

It seems that his objectives were twofold: insofar as he attacked the latter influx of immigrants that had been registered in England and in other countries of Europe since the 1950s, he had in mind a conception of the nation that could not be extended to those he insisted to frame as “outsiders.” Powell propagated that the Englishman should “fear the erosionof his traditional culture as more immigrants arrived and communalism strengthened” (721). Whipple describes that, in the letters sent to Powell, a variety of

popular racist perspectives were projected through the messages. Some expressed a "nostalgia for the empire" (732) while others, based on conservative ideas, reinforced the importance of drawing a very specific line, inscribing what they understood as being the "true" nation against the emergent multicultural one: "The immigrants may have had British passports, in other words, butthe English, Irish, Scots, and Welsh were the *real* Britons" (724, emphasis in original).

Here it is worth mentioning Ernest Renan, who underlines the arbitrariness of these assumptions based on "race": "The truth is that there is no pure race and that to make politics depend upon ethnographic analysis is to surrender it to a chimera. The noblest countries, England, France, and Italy, are those where the blood is the most mixed" (14). The author emphasizes that race "is made and unmade," as Stuart Hall also points out: "'Race' is a political and social construct. It is the organizing discursive category around which a system of socioeconomic power, exploitation, and exclusion – i.e., racism – has been constructed" (Hall 109). It is not my purpose here to develop this complex discussion, but I understand that it is relevant to contextualize that Renan is approaching race in the realm of the processesof the construction of the nation, which sometimes overlaps itself with the notion of the nation-state. Although, according to him, the

> nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principle. One lies in the past, one in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form. (Renan 19)

Later, the author remarks that a nation is "a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the future" (19). But what he also draws attention to is that those who are elected

and recognized as one's ancestors, including their legacy, are not unscathed of negotiation. Renan does not disregard the specificity of the emergence of some national identities, but he questions the bias of such assumptions:

> An Englishman is indeed a type within the whole of humanity. However, the type of what is quite improperly called the Anglo-Saxon race is neither the Briton of Julius Caesar's time, nor the Anglo-Saxon of Hengist's time, nor the Dane of Canute's time,nor the Norman of William the Conqueror's time; it is rather the result of all these [elements]. (Renan 15)

Renan remarks that an "efficient" selection of memories is usually part of the construction of the nation. Therefore, some historical facts might be highlighted whilst others can be neglected: "Forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation;" then, "the essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common, and also that they have forgotten many things" (Renan 11). Sharinga similar point of view, Benedict Anderson stresses that nationalism operates through a double movement of "remembering/forgetting," fostering a "kind of ellipsis" that seems to inform and at the same time conceal:

> English history textbooks offer the diverting spectacle of a great Founding Father whom every schoolchild is taught to call William the Conqueror. The same child is not informed that William spoke no English, indeed could not have done so, since the English language did not exist in his epoch; nor is he or she told 'Conqueror of what?'. For the only intelligible modern answer would have to be 'Conqueror of the English,' which would turn the old Norman predator into a more successful precursor of Napoléon and Hitler. (Anderson 201)

The European nation-states, according to Anderson, could be understood as "conservative, not to say reactionary, *policies*, adapted from the model of the largely

spontaneous popular nationalisms that preceded them" (111). The historian underlines that the European nationalism's pioneers were the national independence movements spread throughout the Spanish-American Empire. The most successful became the one that effected the declaration of the independence of the Thirteen Colonies in 1776, which led to the formation of the United States: "This independence, and the fact that it was a republican independence, was felt to be something absolutely unprecedented, yet at the same time, once in existence, absolutely reasonable" (192).

By popular nationalism Anderson refers to a kind of consciousness that was possible through the existence of what he calls print-capitalism, given the importance of the newspapers and the novel itself in the role of allowing the possibility of imagining and constructing a sense of community. Those who had access to these texts were, thus, literate groups, the creoles who were both dissatisfied with the restrictions to power imposed by the imperial metropoles and afraid of "'lower-class' political mobilizations: to wit, Indian or Negro-slave uprisings" (48). Later, Anderson points out:

> The Liberator Bolivar himself once opined that a Negro revolt was 'a thousand times worse than a Spanish invasion.' Nor should we forget that many leaders of the independence movement in the Thirteen Colonies were slave-owning agrarian magnates. Thomas Jefferson himself was among the Virginian planters who in the 1770s were enraged by the loyalist governor's proclamation freeing those slaves who broke with their seditious masters. (49)

Even these anti-colonial movements, thus, are not spared of contradictions. And through the excerpt above it is possible to recognize how nationalism might be evoked by a sense of threat that unify a given group against another. This feeling seems to be linked to the events related to "The Rivers of Blood," on the other hand, appropriated in the novel. Spread throughout *The Satanic Verses*, that image indeed acquires multiples

meanings, not always constructive as Joshi's verses intended to be. Sometimes it conjures up a sense of struggle difficult to overcome as it appears in the lawyer's Hanif Johnson oratory: "*The real languageproblem: how to bend it shape it, how to let it be our freedom, how to repossess its poisoned wells, how to master the river of worlds of time of blood: about all that you haven't got a clue*" (Rushdie 281, emphasis in original).

Both Joshi and Johnson are described as characters that work and live in the inner-city of London, i.e., Brickhall, a neighborhood mainly inhabited by those who regard themselves as part of a community, as those enabled by mobilities and that might be associated with the notion of diaspora, which I will discuss below. I've been discussing so far how the novel problematizes some aspects concerning the nation, mainly regarding Britain. However, the text goes beyond the tensions portrayed in London, and the "rivers of blood" appears again in Jahilia. There is portrayed the poet Baal whose sharp verses are publicly acknowledge: "And if rivers of blood flow from the cuts his verses inflict, then they will nourish him. He is the satirist, Baal" (97). "Jahilia" also means "ignorance." In this city, is also depicted the life of the Prophet Mahound, who is the founder of a monotheist religion that became associated with Islam. When Mahound comes to rule Jahilia, Baal flees and goes into hiding.

This story intersects the novel through Gibreel Farishta, who dreams he is the "angel" responsible for conveying the word of the sacred revelation to Mahound, portrayed as a businessman thirsty for power. Born Ismail Najmuddin, he afterwards chooses a stage namethat is a homage to his mother, Naima Najmuddin, who used to call him "farishta," meaning "angel" in Urdu and Persian. Gibreel becomes a national star of "theological movies," interpreting a variety of Hindu gods, although he was raised in a Muslim family. Once he almost experiences death due to a mysterious illness that made his body collapse in full bleeding. When he recovers, however, he starts to doubt his

faith, and as soon as the actor leaves the hospital, he goes to the Taj hotel and eats a lot of "forbidden foods," including pork. There Gibreel also meets the mountain climber Alleluia Cone, with whom he falls in love and then decides to search for when she goes back to London.

Sometimes in the novel the image of the rivers of blood goes from a metaphorical to a graphical level as well. The streets of Brickhall are taken over by tension at some point, as I will develop in the third chapter. And through the description of some news and memories associated with violent events, the social conflicts that traverse the Indian subcontinent are also dramatized. The latter is brought up especially when Saladin Chamcha travels back to Bombay, his city of birth. It is a lost place for him, since his settlement in London at the age of thirteen, when his father, Mr. Changez Chamchawala, enrolled him in an English boarding school. From that moment onward, the connections between Chamcha and his homeland becomes complicated, and the same happens with his relationship with Mr. Chamchawala. During Chamcha's first return, five years after moving to London, where he starts his career as an actor, both son and father discover that the distance between them has been enlarged, and it gets worse after his mother's, Nasreen Chamchawala, death.

In the second time Chamcha travels to Bombay, he is already one of the stars of *The Aliens Show*, a TV broadcast product that is exported from London to the world. As soon as he arrives in his city of birth, he meets Zeenat Vakil, a friend of his, who is a physician and art critic. One of her goals is to convince Chamcha to rethink the relation with his homeland: "Zeenat Vakil made Saladin her project. 'The reclamation of,' she explained. 'Mister, we're going to get your back.'" (52). Vakil introduces him to two friends of her, the "Marxist film-maker" George Miranda and the "poet and journalist" Bhupen Gandhi. They drive Chamcha through Bombay and then stop by in a *dhaba*,

where they drink and start a conversation. Thesocial and economic struggles permeate their talk. Miranda discusses about "Amrika" and itspervasive influence on the sub-continent: "It's not a real place. Power in its purest form, disembodied, invisible. We can't see it but it screws us totally, no escape" (56).

But Gandhi raises another perspective upon the same issue: "We always forgive ourselves by blaming outsiders, America, Pakistan, any damn place. Excuse me, George, butfor me it all goes back to Assam, we have to start with that" (56). Then he speaks of "Photographs of children's corpses, arranged neatly in lines like soldiers on parade" (56). Here that double movement of "remembering/forgetting," pointed out by Anderson, can be related. Gandhi seems to insist upon the necessity of the nation to face its history, even if it is painful as the murders in Assam can be.

At the end of the novel, when Chamcha returns again to Bombay, he reads in the *Indian Express*, during his flight, that "In a north Indian town there had been a massacre of Muslims, and their corpses had been dumped in the water" (518). Then the text follows:

> There were hundreds of bodies, swollen and rancid; the stench seemed to rise off the page. And in Kashmir a once-popular Chief Minister who had 'made in accommodation' with the Congress-I had shoes hurled at him during the Eid prayers byirate groups of Islamic fundamentalists. Communalism, sectarian tension, was omnipresent: as if the gods were going to war. (518)

Therefore, although *The Satanic Verses* are mainly set in London, the novel stretches its scope, encompassing multiple locations, and it is important to stress that the text flows through a variety of experiences of displacement and traveling, thus, reinforcing the role of mobilities. Airplanes, trains, cars, walking, all of them physical movements, are juxtaposed inthe novel with memories, dreams, reading of newspapers and magazines. While the former ones imply the displacement of the body, the latter enables what John Urry calls

imaginative mobilities. Each of these movements might interfere in the understanding of place, as I have argued above and I am going to develop further below and in the chapters that follow.

By creating a network that connects mainly London, Jahilia and Bombay, the text presents itself as multilayered. Sometimes the reference to these places overlap. Suffice it to affirm how Chamcha dreams of London when he was still a child in Bombay, and when he returns to his city of birth he does not feel at home at all, even if London also introduces him to many challenges too. One could say the same of Farishta who, in his search for Alleluia Cone in London, feels completely lost in the British metropolis. Even Cone, the "professional sportswoman," seems to not fit there or anywhere else except in her path to a mountain:

> So what I thought was, you can either break your heart trying to work it all out, or you can go sit on a mountain, because that's where all the truth went, believe it or not, it just upped and ran away from these cities where even the stuff under our feet is all made up, a lie, and it hid up there in the thin thin air where the liars don't dare come after it in case their brains explode. It's up there all right. I've been there. Ask me.' Shefell asleep; he carried her to the bed. (Rushdie 313)

Once Cone is going down the Everest and she has a flicking view of a "city of ice" and thinks: Shangri-La. What is interesting is that in her search for moments of truth, climbing mountains, she conceives the possibility of experiencing the existence of a city that is nothing but a dream, a mythical place. Thus, it is through these various projections that the spatialities are constructed in the novel, rendering some images that reinforce the sense of fragmented perspectives and movement. Here it is important, thus, to introduce the notion of non-place, which Urry underlines as "sites of pure mobility" (63).

2.2 Place, non-place and identity

In relation to this topic we might bring up the ideas developed by Marc Augé. The author absorbs part of the definitions introduced by De Certeau concerning place and space and investigates some connections between place and identity. Coming from an anthropological background, Augé recollects how place plays an important role in the construction of individual or collective identities. However, to achieve this function, a place must have a "minimal stability" (Augé 54), becoming historical from that moment onwards.

This does not imply, though, that those who inhabit a place are always aware of the process that leads to its creation: "The inhabitant of an anthropological place does not make history; he lives in it" (55). Place can, thus, be naturalized and its borders must be reaffirmed continually, by means of reenacting some myths of foundation: "The fantasy of a founded, ceaselessly re-founding place is only half fantasy" (46). Half fantasy, probably, because once place is set up, it establishes a productive association to a given material reality, underpinning the social realm: "For a start, it works well – or rather, it has worked well: land has been cultivated, nature domesticated, reproduction of the generations ensured; in this sense the gods of the soil have looked after it well. The territory has been maintained against external aggressions and internal splits" (46). Here we can recall the claims made by Renan and Anderson on the discourses of the nation and how it is connected with a selection of memories that once official must be repeated, as the story of William the Conqueror in the English books, mentioned by Anderson.

Place is, therefore, constantly invested with multiple meanings. Augé emphasizes how "political symbolism plays on these possibilities to express the power of an authority" (62), and some examples in history might elucidate this point. One of the strategies that he

highlights in the realm of the sovereign power, for instance, is the separation between the "king's body from other bodies as a multiple body." As a result, the sovereign is expected to be in a more fixed position: "The sovereign is very frequently under a sort of house arrest, condemned to semi-immobility, to hours of exposure on the royal throne, presented as an object to his subjects" (Augé 63). And the very condition of the king's almost immobility guarantees "a centre that underlines the permanence of the dynasty, and orders and unifies theinternal diversity of the social body" (63). In modern states, this identification of power with place can be verified through the existence of monuments as the White House and the Kremlin, which entails "a monumental place, a human individual, and a power structure" (Augé 64).

Place and identity, thus, outline the main aspects of what Augé recognize as "traditional anthropological places" (64). He afterwards introduces another term that is the reverse of that former concept, which is the non-place: "If a place can be defined as relational, historical andconcerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place" (78). The author defends the hypothesis that non-places are products of the so-called supermodernity that comprises the condition of the contemporary history. Although we might infer that the latter have its roots in the developments of the industrialization that characterizes the modernity, Augé highlights some similarities and discontinuities between these two moments, as we are going to develop below.

In the nineteenth century, also the heyday of the British Empire, a shift related to the sense of place already appears in the writing of some authors, as Charles Baudelaire. As Augé points out, the French poet combines different temporalities in his verses, alluding to the past but at the same time trying to surpass it – something that seems to have become recurrent in modernist's texts –, by means of using some spatial figures that render a

landscape in which the "old" and the "new" cohabit. In the excerpt[3] provided by Augé, Baudelaire approximates "the workshop with its song and chatter," the "chimneys and spires,those masts of the city" and "the great skies making us dream of eternity" (76), integrating these different places in a unity. According to Augé, however, in the supermodernity this sortof relation is not possible anymore. The main trend, according to him, is of dispersion which is underpinned by non-places, and we might argue with Urry that this is also connected to therole of mobilities that are set off through disjuncture followed by new configurations, in which emerge networks whose limits are undetermined. It is in this multi-directional process that the temporalities also diversify.

Here it's worth recalling Walter Benjamin's essays on Charles Baudelaire. Benjamin identifies in part of Baudelaire's poems another aspect that probably anticipates some characteristics of modernist writings, i.e., a sense of impermanence: "… the urban scene traced out by the fantasque escrimet of 'Tableaux parisiens' is no longer a homeland. It is aspectacle, a foreign place" (149). Here we have another example of destabilization of the notion of place, and it is significant how Benjamin's interpretation evokes a sense of exile. In his essays, Benjamin analyses the French poet's work in dialogue with his contemporaries, as Victor Hugo and Edgard Allan Poe, and in relation to the cultural context of Paris in the nineteenth century. Three aspects highlighted by Benjamin are interesting here: the architecture of the arcades, the world exhibitions and the figure of the *flâneur*. Benjamin's analysis is interesting because it gives us some portrayals of earlier forms of mobilities and how they can create new cultural contexts. The *flâneur* who "seeks refuge in the crowd" and takes the streets as "a dwelling place" (68) might be emblematic of the transformations in thenotion of place that we are discussing so far.

[3] . . . the workshop with its song and chatter; Chimneys and spires, those masts of the city,
And the great skies making us dream of eternity. (qtd. in Augé 76)

The arcades were constructions sustained mainly with iron and glass and, according to David Harvey, they "were mostly built before the 1830s as ground-level commercial spaces" (Harvey 80). It became attractive to expose many products, especially luxuries that were brought to Paris from many parts of the world in the nineteenth century. These world exhibitions reflected the power of an expanding global market, of which the English were theleaders (Benjamin 125). The arcades, according to Benjamin, are described as "a world in miniature" (30). They offered a different possibility of circulation in the city, blurring the limits of the public and the private spaces: "Such an image is presented by the arcades, which are house no less than street" (41). There the *flâneurs* used to find themselves at home (68). Being both a literary character and an icon of a kind of urban experience, the *flâneur* strolls through the city, "abandons himself in the crowd" (86) and even experiments the intoxication of the commodities he finds in his path. However, "it did not blind him to the horrible social reality. He remained conscious of it, though only in the way in which intoxicated people are'still' aware of reality" (89).

Harvey remarks that, by the nineteenth century, the population of the city of Paris had grown "from 786,000 in 1831 to more than 1,000,000 in 1846" (Harvey 89) and the curve was still rising up to "nearly 2 million" in 1870 (176). The migration of rural workers to Parisin search for opportunities that industrialization offered was one of the forces that filled the city with new energy, but many of those displaced subjects struggled there too. Benjamin records this movement in his essays: "Emigration as a key to the big city" (Benjamin 149). The several flows of anonymous people that crisscross the city became, thus, part of themodernity's landscape, and this would draw the attention of the *flâneur*. He enjoys the effacement of the identity in the crowd, but there he remains an observer. Doing so, he goes against the grain, in the sense that he walks but no to fulfil any task, only for the pleasure and the freedom of movement. As Michael W. Jennings points

out, in the introduction of *The Writer of the Modern Life* (2006), the *flâneur* emerges as a marginal figure. And John Urry also adds some comments in relation to the social practice of this interesting figure: "Strolling in some places 'out of time' is almost itself subversive" (54). In the crowd but at the same time detached from it, the *flâneur*, thus, it is not completely taken by alienation and during his walks he can develop awareness, as Benjamin underlines:

> If the flaneur is thus turned into an unwilling detective, it does him a lot of good socially, for it legitimates his idleness. His indolence is only apparent, for behind this indolence there is the watchfulness of an observer who does not take his eyes off a miscreant. Thus, the detective sees rather wide areas opening up to his self-esteem. Hedevelops reactions that are in keeping with the tempo of a big city. (Benjamin 72)

The arcades, although planned to fulfill commercial purposes, enabled a kind of passing by that attracted strollers who resisted the acceleration that traversed the big city: "It is a protest against the tempo of the crowd" (157). However, in the aftermath of Louis Napoleon's coup d'état, in 1851, which established The Second French Empire, Paris was reformed and the arcades became obsolete. The mayor Georges-Eugène Haussmann were in charge of the planning that would put into practice a restructuration of the urban space with the intent of imposing an order and to facilitate the control of the masses: "The true goal of Haussmann's projects was to secure the city against civil war. He wanted to make the erection of barricades in Paris impossible for all time" (Benjamin 43). On other hand, David Harvey remarks that these strategies faced limits too. And here we can grasp another example of the dynamics of mobilities that can challenge the systems of power:

> The urban transformation also had ambivalent effects on the power to watch and control. Many of the dens and rookeries and narrow, easily barricaded streets were

> swept away and replaced by more easily controlled boulevards. But an uprooted population dispersed from the center, augmented by a flood of immigrants, milled around in new areas like Belleville and Gobelins that became their exclusive preserve.The workers became less of an organized threat, but they became harder to monitor. (Harvey 146)

What can be inferred through this brief comment on the movement of migrants, out of other aspects related to the literary and urban history embedded in the cultural context of Paris – which is recognized by Benjamin and Harvey as the capital of modernity –, is how mobilities are related to freedom and might challenge the hegemonic configurations of what is understood as place. Not only because it might unravel the cultural and political aspects that give place a stabilized form, as Augé suggests, but also because it adds multiple relations, undermining a single perspective that might reproduce and impose asymmetrical relations of power. And despite the attempts, as those quoted above, of trying to make some places saferfor ones while others are obliged to be uprooted, as colonial history and still ongoing processes of neocolonialism and exploitation disclose, it seems unlikely now that place can be stabilized in the same, perhaps "imagined," patterns of "solid modernity".

Zygmunt Bauman argues that we've moved from "solid modernity" to the "liquid modernity," and, through this process, the liquid modernity in part strengthens the melting forces of modernity that already aimed to break free of the ties of the past in order to enable new economic and political orders. But, according to him, what distinguishes the solid from the liquid modernity is how the former aimed to replace an old paradigm for another that was yet expected to be strong enough to hold a range of predictions: "Modern times found the pre-modern solids in a fairly advanced state of disintegration; and one of the most powerful motives behind the urge to melt them was the wish to discover or invent

solids of – for a change – lasting solidity, a solidity which one could trust and rely upon and which would make the world predictable and therefore manageable" (Bauman 3). The outcome of this onslaught of the former patterns should be, thus, a form improved, stronger and permanent: "That new order was to be more 'solid' than the orders it replaced, because – unlike them – itwas immune to the challenge from non-economic action" (4).

One of the main configurations of power that represents the solid modernity, as Bauman points out, is based on the structure of the Panopticon, designed by Jeremy Benthamand later on analyzed by Michel Foucault:

> In Panopticon, the inmates were tied to the place and barred from all movement, confined within thick, dense and closely guarded walls and fixed to their beds, cells orwork-benches. They could not move because they were under watch; they had to stickto their appointed places at all times because they did not know, and had no way of knowing, where at the moment their watchers – free to move at will – were. (Bauman10)

Bauman's description of the Panopticon provides an accurate portrait of the operation of this device, that, according to Michel Foucault, became the main source for the construction of prisons in Europe, during the years between 1830-1840 (Foucault 242). Although it is associated mainly with architectural projects focused on people's incarceration, Foucault underlines that the Panopticon is a broader "political technology" that could find multiple uses with the aim of discipline and control:

> It is polyvalent in its applications; it serves to reform prisoners, but also to treat patients, to instruct schoolchildren, to confine the insane, to supervise workers, to put beggars and idlers to work. It is a type of location of bodies in space, of distribution of individuals in relation to one another, of hierarchical organization, of disposition

> of centres and channels of power, of definition of the instruments and modes of intervention of power, which can be implemented in hospitals, workshops, schools, prisons. Whenever one is dealing with a multiplicity of individuals on whom a task or aparticular form of behaviour must be imposed, the panoptic schema may be used. (Foucault 205)

However, Bauman stresses that the Panopticon required a whole set of infrastructures, as buildings, hiring of administrators and surveillants, and so on, in order to work. It was expensive, still very much "bound to the place," and this became more and more at odds with the new cycles of capital accumulation: "[…] the fact that the long effort to accelerate the speed of movement has presently reached its 'natural limit.' Power can move with the speed of the electronic signal – and so the time required for the movement of its essential ingredients has been reduced to instantaneity" (Bauman 10-11). It does not mean that the surveillance propelled by the Panopticon is over: it "still applies to the homeless and shifty 'underclass', which is subject to the old techniques of panoptical control" (13), but that is nolonger the main mode of power that is reproduced in the liquid modernity:

> The end of Panopticon augurs the end of the era of mutual engagement: between the supervisors and the supervised, capital and labour, leaders and their followers, armies at war. The prime technique of power is now escape, slippage, elision and avoidance, the effective rejection of any territorial confinement with its cumbersome corollaries oforder-building, order-maintenance and the responsibility for the consequences of it all as well as of the necessity to bear their costs. (Bauman 11)

It is indeed a complex set of relations that comprises contemporary history. Covering the many aspects and contradictions of the liquid modernity is beyond the scope of this work.The purpose here is rather to situate the context of the current stage of

mobilities. In regard to this issue, according to Bauman, "We are witnessing the revenge of nomadism over the principle of territoriality and settlement. In the fluid stage of modernity, the settled majority is ruled by the nomadic and exterritorial elite" (13). There are indeed those in charge of power that can enjoy the many possibilities of travel insofar as others sometimes don't have the same condition and are uprooted by the impact of external forces as economic, ethnic, religious, cultural and political conflicts. There are those cosmopolitan citizens who might opt to not settle permanently in a given place, and there are those who are constantly under surveillance and have its citizenship undermined, being obliged to inhabit a place temporarily.

That is not a simple discussion, and John Urry states: "These flows create new inequalities of access/non-access which do not map on to the jurisdictions of particular societies" (36). What is important here is to have in mind that mobilities are a broader phenomenon that encompass both "corporeal and imaginative" (154) travel, and that is why it cannot be reduced to a single approach or perspective: there are a diversity of mobilities. From a materialist point of view, mobilities are related to the development of the technologies of communication and transportation that are the main engines underpinning the processes of time-space compression[4] discussed by David Harvey. By reducing the distances through the increased velocity of flows "space appears to shrink to a 'global village' of telecommunications and a 'spaceship earth' of economic and ecological interdependencies" (Harvey 241). Each new cycle of capital accumulation, according to Harvey, demands a new round of time-space compression. Mobilities thrive on this configuration and they can be both cause and effect of the expansion of global economic

[4] Here David Harvey defines what he calls "time-space compression": "I mean to signal by that term processes that so revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time that we are forced to alter, sometimes in quite radical ways, how we represent the world to ourselves. I use the word 'compression' because a strong case can be made that the history of capitalism has been characterized by speed-up in the pace of life, while so overcoming spatial barrier's that the world sometimes seems to collapse inwards upon us." (Harvey 240)

power. However, it is not my goal here to focus on this aspect of mobilities.

Although they are related to the "transition from Fordism to flexible accumulation" (Harvey 171) mode of production, which allowed the international division of labor, creating opportunities but also forms of exploitation of workers located and displaced through different global geographies, my aim is to consider how mobilities might stimulate new cultural contexts. What informs this work, thus, is rather how mobilities can be appropriated in terms of freedom than reinforcing hegemonic power. And if I argue that they challenge the notions of place, it is not the same as to affirm that they erase any possibility of settlement. They might, rather, underscore the arbitrariness and by doing so perhaps can contribute to avoid reactionary forms of nationalism that claims a politics of identity that could reproduce exclusions rather than becoming more open and democratic by providing awareness of its historical process of formation as an imagined community, as Anderson points out.

Instead of erasing the relations within place, it is possible to affirm that mobilities stretch it out. To elucidate this point, is important to understand how mobilities can producedynamic forms of dwelling. Urry, quoting James Clifford, refers to them as "dwelling-in- travel," which is based on a "dialectic of roots and routes" (133). Urry affirms that globalization opens up some opportunities making more affordable the travels overseas. These global flows have increased to the point that "It constitutes by far the largest movement of people across boundaries that has occurred in the history of the world" (Urry 50). The significance that Urry gives to these travels is relevant here. He states that, throught he modes of displacement, other configurations emerge and transform the social practices: "Overall I see such travellings as constitutive of the structures of social life – it is in these mobilities that social life and cultural identity are recursively formed and reformed" (49).

Therefore, as one moves from a territory to another, new relations can be created. It is through such dynamics, which incorporates the experience of travel, that probably a given place, the one of departure or the following that hosts, can be transformed not only physically but also in the level of discourse: “Once traveling is foregrounded as a cultural practice, then dwelling, too, needs to be reconceived – no longer simply the ground from which traveling departs and to which it returns” (Clifford 44). Displacements, both voluntary or forced, do not signify, thus, that cultural bonds are broke off. The connections developed by means of contact to the cultural and social environment that comprises the former place might remain accessible even if by means of memories, as in the case of the populations displaced through different moments of colonial history, when moreover the possibilities of communication were not so easy as in the current stage of mobilities.

A relevant comment upon this process is offered by Clifford: “The history of transatlantic enslavement, to mention only a particularly violent example, an experience including deportation, uprooting, marronage, transplantation, and revival, has resulted in a range of interconnected black cultures: African American, Afro-Caribbean, British, and South American” (36). The author highlights that though many experiences of displacementare marked by traumatic events they can enable the making of cultures that emerge from theprocesses of mobilities and become spaces of hope and resistance:

> These specific circumstances are crucial determinations of the travel at issue – movements in specific colonial, neocolonial, and postcolonial circuits, different diasporas, borderlands, exiles, detours, and returns. Travel, in this view, denotes a range of material, spatial practices that produce knowledges, stories, traditions, comportments, musics, books, diaries, and other cultural expressions. Even the harshest conditions of travel, the most exploitative regimes, do not entirely quell resistance or the emergence of diasporic and migrant cultures. (35)

Mobilities, as we have been discussing, thus, should be understood as a wide range of social practices that encompass many modalities. Its most evident form is indeed the physical travel, but, we could add, especially having in mind the contemporary history, the role of virtual messages that can be useful to sustain bonds, since texts, images and sounds cross distances, through many devices, in the blink of an eye. Physical travel, thus, is one kind of mobility to which many others can be coupled, as those enabled more recently through telecommunication. These devices allow the creation of communities that are not exclusively attached to physical territories. They can share experiences and flow through the spaces of mobilities, which Urry identifies as absolutely hybrid: "In each of these mobilities it is demonstrated that there are complex mobile hybrids constituted through assemblages of humans, machines and technologies" (4). Another example of virtual mobility is the very Internet. Urry recollects how its design was military-based until it became a shared global space through the collective work and efforts of scientists, researchers and the mediation of countercultural movements that made the technology acquire the configuration and expansionthat it has nowadays.

2.3 Some perspectives of diasporas

These communities, fostered by virtual mobilities, are the most recent ones, propelled by the latter technological developments. But, following the ideas already introduced above by Clifford, we can discuss now how one can connect the dynamics of mobilities, both in its older versions and in the most recent ones, with diasporas. Diaspora is a very broad term that encompasses different experiences of displacement. Gabriel Sheffer underlines that the word "diaspora" is rooted in the Greek language: "it is widely

believed that the term first appeared in the Greek translation of the book of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament, with reference to the situation of the Jewish people – 'Thou shalt be a diaspora in all kingdoms of the earth' (Deut. 28, 25)" (Sheffer 9).

The author remarks that diaspora, although also a modern phenomenon, has a long historical existence, since the antiquity, as the journeys of the Jews, Greeks and Armenians exemplify. Other diasporas emerged during the Middle Ages, as the Gipsy and the Chinese. The African and Indian ones are usually framed in the Modern Age, mainly from the seventeenth century onwards, but it seems complicated to assume ultimate temporal references for any of these diasporas. Therefore, we understand these considerations rather asa provisional approach than a consolidated one.

Whilst Sheffer draws a kind of timeline of distinct diasporas, Robin Cohen introduces another possibility of approach to this topic. The latter contrasts "victims" (Jews, Africans, Armenians), "labour" (indentured Indians), "imperial" (British), "trade" (Lebanese, Chinese)and "deterritorialized" (Caribbean, Sindhis, Parsis) diasporas. It is not viable here to develop each of these topics, but what is important is to perceive the diversity of histories that are related to this discussion. Cohen himself adds to these "main types of diasporas" (Cohen 18) comments that show how other groups' experiences can be approximated to those ones quoted above. For instance, "Chinese, Japanese, Turks, Italians, and North Africans" can beapproximated to the "indentured Indians," while "Venetians, business and professional Indians, Chinese, Japanese" could share with Chinese and Lebanese some similar roles in "trade" diaspora. The limits between each of these classifications, therefore, are not much restrictive and a same group might be located in several of those divisions.

One could argue that differences among diasporas might reinforce the existence of a variety of mobilities. Sheffer again, analyzing through a comparative historical point of

view, recollects that a diaspora does not always emerge as an outcome of forced displacement or of labour migrant's network: "It should be emphasized, however, that migrations occurred not only because of economic and political difficulties in the territories of origin but also becauseof an inherent curiosity of human beings that drove, and still drives, individuals and groups towander and explore distant places" (Sheffer 50). He afterwards suggests that, though their specificities, diasporas share in common the experience of travelling: "Only when members of such groups migrate to and settle in territories that are not immediately adjacent to their original homelands do they form incipient diasporas that can develop into established diasporas" (50).

The case of the African diaspora, however, is more complex, and it challenges the assumption of the "original homeland": "Although there is no doubt that members of the black Atlantic group can be seen as constituting a diaspora, the question that remains open is the location of their homeland. Is it the whole of Africa, or the different countries that their ancestors left, such as those in the West Indies?" (87). A good example related to this is given by Stuart Hall, who shows how many layers of culture and multiple links to a variety of "homelands" can be conjoined in the case of the Caribbean diasporic experiences: "The Caribbean is already the diaspora of Africa, Europe, China, Asia, and India, and this diaspora rediasporized itself here" (Hall *Essential* 203).

Diasporas, thus, can be understood as transnational communities, and although travelling is essential for their existence it does not guarantee that one who crosses borders will be integrated to this specific kind of community, as Cohen points out:

> In other words, one does not announce the formation of the diaspora the moment the representatives of a people first alight from a boat or aircraft at Ellis Island, London Heathrow or Chatrapati Shivaji (Bombay). Many members of a particular ethnic groupmay intend to and be able to merge into the crowd, lose their prior identity and

> achieve individualized forms of social mobility. (The changing of ethnically identifiable names by new immigrants signals this intention.) Other groups may intermarry with locals, adopt or blend with their religions and other social practices (creolize) and thereby slowly disappear as a separable ethnic group. A strong or renewed tie to the past or a block to assimilation in the present and future must exist to permit a diasporic consciousness to emerge, while the active fraction of the incipient diasporic must have time to mobilize the group has migrated 'is really a diaspora'. (Cohen 16)

Cohen, in the excerpt above, is also stressing the importance of the passage of time in the formation of a diasporic community. What seems to be difficult is to sustain a single definition with regard to so many and specific histories, even though we understand that thereare indeed some characteristics that uphold the formation of a diaspora, as I've been discussing so far. In regard to this issue, *The Satanic Verses* also open up some dialogues. Vijay Mishra points out how the novel foregrounds more than one perspective concerning diasporas, contrasting them: "From the Africanist ideal of Dr. Uhuru Simba to the multifaceted, decentred, simulative worlds of the Sufyan girls, Jumpy Joshi and Hanif Johnson, one now begins to see not one legitimation narrative of the diaspora but many" (Mishra 228). But it is between Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha, according to Mishra, that two different discourses concerning diasporas are more evident, respectively: a sacred and essentialist point of view, and a secular and fluid one.

Here it is important to recall the beginning of the novel. Farishta and Chamcha are in the same flight that takes off from Bombay to London and is hijacked by Sikh terrorists, who explode the airplane when it has just crossed the English Channel, "above the great, rotting, beautiful, snow-white, illuminated city, Mahagonny, Babylon, Alphaville. But Gibreel has already named it, … Proper London, capital of Vilayet" (Rushdie 4). During

their fall, the text stresses how they go through a process of rebirth and metamorphosis. From the onset, thus, the experience of traveling is highlighted, which is essential for the diasporic condition. The following excerpt underlines how besides these two characters, "there had been more than a few migrants aboard," reinforcing the dynamics of transnational flows and the intrinsic relations between displacement and identity: "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*" (4, emphasisin the original).

The word diaspora, as Robin Cohen recalls, derives from the Greek word *speiro*, which can mean to sow, to disperse, and seed. The latter botanical imagery is also found in the novel: "The aircraft cracked in half, *a seed-pod giving up its spores*, an egg yelding its mystery" (4, my emphasis). If diaspora is not just a modern phenomenon as Gabriel Sheffer remarks, drawing attention to the trajectories of Jews, Armenians and Greeks, it is possible to affirm that *The Satanic Verses* also offer other ways to think about diaspora, in the sense that the text might recall the "old diaspora's narrative" (Mishra 230) and at the same time detours from it. In the very novel's first chapter, a series of questions are already posed: "How does newness come into the world? How is it born? Of what fusions, translations, conjoinings is it made?" (8). It is possible that the dramatic encounter between Farishta and Chamcha foreshadows some of these issues. At first glance they seem to be located on opposite sides, but, as the story unravels, one might recognize how they are also be connected.

Whereas Chamcha is portrayed as an anglicized character whose bowler hat keeps on his head even after going down and diving into the seawater, Farishta is the one who falls andsings: "'O, my shoes are Japanese,'… 'These trousers English, if you please. On

my head, red Russian hat; my heart's Indian for all that'" (5). Farishta, stressing his Indianness, thus, wants to keep faithful to his roots in a way that he embodies a relation with the homeland as something almost sacred. But the novel questions if, by doing so, he should be regarded as being "true" and Chamcha, "a creature of *selected* discontinuities, a willing re-invention" (427, emphasis in the original), thus "false": "While Gibreel, to follow the logic of our established terminology, is to be considered 'good' by virtue of *wishing to remain*, for all his vicissitudes, at bottom an untranslated man" (427, emphasis in the original).

Considering how Farishta struggles in *The Satanic Verses*, being even unable to discern dreams from reality, believing himself to be the messenger of God, i.e., the one who professes the sacred truth, he resists to have a constructive perspective and flexibility that such process of translation requires. But then, why does Chamcha undergo a process of metamorphosis, having his body acquiring a goat form, which becomes associated with the figure of the Devil himself? This is the sort of question that puzzles the character. After all, "Had he not pursued his own idea of *the good*, sought to become that which he most admired, dedicated himself with a will bordering to the conquest of Englishness?" (256, emphasis in the original).

It seems that both Chamcha and Farishta exceed in their goals, and probably this might be one of the main aspects that the text problematizes concerning diasporas. The former, in his search for Englishness, went through a process of alienation. Chamcha, afterwards being transmogrified into a Goatman, finds a shelter at the Shaaandaar Café, among the very people he does not recognize as "real" British. On the other hand, Farishta's essentialist perspective of Indianness exceeds in his goal, such as desiring to remake London based on his purist beliefs. It is important to stress though that the text avoids to portray both characters in a Manichean way. Although apparently one looks like

the very anthesis of the other, when they fall, after the plane crash, it is suggested that Chamcha and Farishta somehow blend and this might indicate how the text avoids to picture them in a fixed position: "… but for whatever reason, the two men, Gibreelsaladin Farishtachamcha, condemned to this endless but also ending angelicdevilish fall, did not become aware of the moment at which the process of their transmutation began" (5).

It is worth to point out how the novel emphasizes the idea of mutation:

> Mutation?
>
> Yessir, but no random. Up there in air-space, in that soft, imperceptible field which hadbeen made possible by the century, and which, thereafter, made the century possible, becoming one of its defining locations, the place of movement and of war, the planet- shrinker and power-vacuum, most insecure and transitory of zones, illusory, discontinuous, metamorphic, – because when you throw everything up in the air anything becomes possible – wayupthere, at any rate, changes took place in delirious actors that would have gladdened the heart of old Mr. Lamarck: under extreme environmental pressure, characteristics were acquired. (5)

The excerpt gives another example of how Rushdie's prose plays with the image of mobility, that entails the experience of the travel, and at the same time foregrounds a discussion of transformation which traverses the novel, as I've been pointing out in relation to Chamcha and Farishta, whether embracing it as the former or trying to resist it as the latter.The mention of the French naturalist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, on the other hand, creates a friction with other discourses that are borrowed to build the portrait of the transitory status of the characters. In the case of Lamarck the main reference might be his notion of evolution, that, although later on became debunked, proposed that living beings moved in progression towards a position of perfection. Such transformations would follow the demands of the environment for adaption. There is some sort of irony here indeed,

because the space in which this metamorphosis takes form is illusory, and one might ask: one move from one point to another to become "better" according to whose point of view?

This excerpt foreshadows a displacement of positions that is going to happen afterwards. When they get to the ground both start to change: Farishta becomes angelic, and in some moments a halo shines over his head, whereas Chamcha is the one who has the most visible mutation: "two new, goaty, unarguable horns" (141) grow "at his temples," his body becomes hairy and "his legs narrowed into tough, bony, almost fleshless calves, terminating in a pair of shiny, cloven hoofs, such as one might find on any billy-goat" (157). Insofar as the novel, especially in the first part, has an unrealistic tone, being infused with the devices of fantasy that are somehow recurrent in Rushdie's works, it uses some representations that are associated with a Manichaean imagery, which, on the other hand, the text also contests.

Considering that Chamcha is portrayed as anglicized, the text seems to question what this indeed means, after all the character believes he has been doing "good" so far, following the steps towards Englishness. But, instead of being encased by the Manichean prism, the novel dramatizes the problems embedded in such system, which has been discussed by Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*. Fanon has shown that one's attempt to erase their own cultural background with the aim of trying to replace it by another one recognized as superior is not something natural. He suggests that this intention is influenced by ideology, which, in the case of *Black Skin, White Masks*, is described in its colonial form. The author points out that colonial discourse has produced fixed categories such as "native" and "black" and, by doing so, posits absolute distinctions between "white" and "black", associating the former with light and virtue, whereas the latter is connected with dark, sin and immorality. This, according to him, could stimulate, especially in former colonized subjects, a sense of inferiority.

Through this process, which the Fanon defines as alienation, the colonized subjects could be pushed to deny their own culture and language to acquire the values and virtues associated to what means to be "white." Here he remarks: "The black man who has lived in France for a length of time returns radically changed. To express it in genetic terms, his phenotype undergoes a definitive, an absolute *mutation*" (11, my emphasis). Fanon stresses that his analysis focuses on the experience of the French Antilles, his place of birth, but he points out "that the same behavior patterns obtain in every race that has been subjected to colonization" (15). One of his main efforts in *Black Skin, White Masks*, therefore, is to bring awareness and try to overcome the Manichaean dialects of colonial ideology: "My theme being the disalienation of the black man, I want to make him feel that whenever there is a lack of understanding between him and his fellows in the presence of the white man there is a lack of judgment" (Fanon 25).

Later on, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon still develops the effects of colonial discourse: "Sometimes this Manichaeanism reaches its logical conclusion and dehumanizes the colonized subject. In plain talk, he is reduced to the state of an animal" (7). And he stresses how it also can enable a movement that is twofold: "On the logical plane, the Manichaeanism of the colonist produces a Manichaeanism of the colonized. The theory of the'absolute evil of the colonist' is in response to the theory of the 'absolute evil of the native' (50). In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon already points out the problem with extremist positions: "Conversely, the black man who wants to turn his race white is as miserable as he who preaches hatred for the whites" (2). However, what seems to have divided some opinions has been his take on the question of violence in *The Wretched of the Earth*: "Violence can thus be understood to be the perfect mediation. The colonized man liberates himself in and through violence" (44).

My aim here is not to go further in this discussion but to contextualize how, in *The*

Satanic Verses, Manichaean dialects seems to be not only dramatized but also questioned. Somehow both Chamcha and Farishta seem to be trapped in this discourse, since they express, from somehow different standpoints, a close attachment to totalized ideas that fixedthe subjects in those "good" and "bad" polarizations, whether trying to erase his past, as in the case of the former, or rejecting foreignness, as the latter. It seems that Rushdie understands both positions as complicated. The text problematizes Chamcha's alienation, but it is skeptical of Farishta's dreams of pure Indianness as well.

Especially the first part of the novel describes how Chamcha becomes so focused in hisconquest of Englishness, and this process is depicted as an accomplishment of some steps, evidently, not always voluntary. When Chamcha is still in the boarding school, for instance, he finds in his plate a kipper in the breakfast, but nobody tells him that the fish was full "of tiny bones" (Rushdie 44). Then,

> His fellow-pupils watched him suffer in silence; not one of them said, here let me showyou, you eat it in this way. It took him ninety minutes to eat the fish and he was not permitted to rise from the table until it was done. By that time he was shaking, and if he had been able to cry he would have done so. Then the thought occurred to him that he had been taught an important lesson. England was a peculiar-tasting smoked fish full of spikes and bones, and nobody would ever tell him how to eat. He discovered that he was bloody-minded person. 'I'll show them all,' he swore. 'You see if I don't.' The eaten kipper was his first victory, the first step in his conquest of England. (Rushdie 44)

What Chamcha could not notice is how these experiences, unfortunately, would also lead him toward a process of alienation. And the text stresses how this regards a double movement, including not only his struggle with the host place but the alienation to his homeland too. And this is evident in the scenes that portray his first return to his

family's home in Bombay, in the break between the end of the school term and the beginning of the English university. There he seems to perceive the former places he inhabited through lenses marked by prejudice:

> 'See how well he complaints,' Nasreen teased him in front of his father. 'About everything he has such big-big criticisms, the fans are fixed too loosely to the roof and will fall to slice our heads off in our sleep, he says, and the food is too fattening, why we don't cook some things without frying, he wants to know, the top-floor balconies are unsafe and the paint is peeled, why can't we take pride in our surroundings, isn't it, and the garden is overgrown, we are just junglee people, he thinks so, and look how coarse our movies are, now he doesn't enjoy, and so much disease you can't even drinkwater from the tap, my god, he really got and education, husband, our little Sallu, England-returned, and talking so fine and all.' (44)

Then, in-between London still escapes him like a mirage, his homeland becomes for him somehow foreign and as well: "Saladin had been seized by the melancholy notion that the gardenhad been a better place before he knew its names, that something had been lost which he would never be able to regain. And Changez Chamchawala found that he could no longer look his son in the eye, because the bitterness he saw came close to freezing his heart" (45). From Salahuddin Chamchawala, he "now called himself Saladin after the fashion of the English school, but would remain Chamchawala for a while yet, until a theatrical agent shortened his name for commercial reasons" (45).

Both Chamcha and Farishta translate their names. While the former anglicizes it, the latter embodies the archangel's figure he believes to suit him better. Whereas Chamcha is divided and struggles with his search for a full transformation into Englishness, Farishta is broken with the oscillations of his faith. He ate pork and now he thinks that the dreams that invade his sleep time and keep returning from the exact point they stop are a kind of

punishment: “Gibreel had spoken to nobody about what had happened after he ate the unclean pigs. The dreams had begun that very night. In these visions he was always present, not as himself but as his namesake … I am him, he is me, I am the bloody archangel, Gibreel himself, large as bloody life” (83). Thus, Farishta suffers with the idea of being “polluted,” as the Imam who “drinks water constantly, one glass every five minutes, to keep himself clean; the water itself is cleansed of impurities, before he sips, in an American filtration machine” (209).

This very ideal of purity is somehow associated in the text with something close to madness, as Farishta’s difficulties in discerning the dreams from reality suggests, and also the contradictory depiction of the Imam quoted above. The latter tries to deny foreignness but uses an American machine to clear the water he consumes. Chamcha, mainly in the first part of the novel, and Farishta, thus, embody some forms of discourse that *The Satanic Verses* poses some questions. And here we can recall Rushdie’s notion of translation, introduced in the first chapter, as probably an alternative way to think upon this relation with both hegemonic and the so-called subaltern cultures. But even Rushdie is aware of his different position, if compared to other writers and artists who might not share the same cosmopolitan perspective he supports because they do not inhabit the same places as him. In the essay “Imaginary Homelands,” Rushdie affirms: “I can’t escape the view that my relatively easy ride is not the result of the dream-England’s famous sense of tolerance and fair play, but of my social class, my freak fair skin and my ‘English’ English accent. Take away any of these, and the story would have been very different” (18).

In the next chapter, I am going to develop in more detail the connection of the characters with the urban space and highlight how *The Satanic Verses* dramatize the relationsbetween diasporas, their struggles with the host nation, since as Caren Kaplan underlines “theinflux of immigrants, refugees, and exiles from the ‘peripheries’ to the

‘metropolitan’ centersboth enriches and threatens the parameters of the nation as well as older cultural identities” (Kaplan 146). The purpose is to keep my discussion in dialogue to the experiences of traveling and the transformations they might engender, considering that Urry remarks how such movements “involve corporeal and imaginative mobilities that undermine a single and definitive sense of what constitutes the nation and the national heritage” (Urry 151). In doing, so, the novel not only redesign the imagery of the urban space, especially London, inscribing in its history the routes of the diasporas, but also provides an expanded perspective of place, in which multiple points of view converge, sometimes producing some short circuits that might how new locations can be produced, through both imaginative and physical displacements.

CHAPTER 3

London, Jahilia and Bombay: between utopian and heterotopic landscapes

In the previous chapters I have introduced the notion of mobility and how it might lead to a reassessment of the notions of place and space, which here I extend to the discussion of the urban and national spaces. I have also pointed out that *The Satanic Verses* foreground three main cities: London, Jahilia and Bombay. It is in the former that the novel is mainly set, but the other two are also evoked in a way that somehow entails an experience of traveling. Gibreel Farishta is transported to Jahilia through his dreams, and Saladin Chamcha flies backto Bombay in some passages. Both characters in the beginning of the novel takes off from Bombay and land in London after the plane crash. At the end of *The Satanic Verses*, there is a return to the Indian city; thus, the text goes back and forth creating an intricated spatiality based on those different locations.

Jahilia is where the episodes concerning the Prophet Mahound are depicted. It is described, before the expelling of Mahound, as a city "built entirely of sand, its structures formed of the desert whence it rises" (94). There never used to rain, and the water was carried carefully for it could destroy everything. When Mahound returns from his exile in the oasis of Yathrib, the city changes:

> The city of Jahilia was no longer built of sand. That is to say, the passage of the years, the sorcery of the desert winds, the petrifying moon, the forgetfulness of the people and the inevitability of progress had hardened the town, so that it had lost its old, shifting, provisional quality of a mirage in which men could live, and become a prosaic place, quotidian and (like its poets) poor. (Rushdie 359-360)

Jahilia was acknowledged by its trades and merchants, but Mahound gradually cuts "its life-blood, its pilgrims and caravans" (360), when he starts to establish a whole new order based on the religion of Submission. What is noteworthy here is how the city's portrait shifts from somehow a fairytale frame to a more grounded, prosaic one, as the excerpt above underscores. Such ambivalence, as we are going to discuss below, however, does not remainonly associated to Jahilia, and we might find the same alternation of perspectives concerning London and Bombay.

3.1 Foucault's outline of heterotopias and mobilities

Out of these three, Jahilia is indeed the most magical one, even though some readings have compared it to Mecca, which, on the other hand, is mentioned in the novel through the story of a group of pilgrims led by a girl named Ayesha, another episode connected to Farishta's dreams. In regard to the transition of Jahilia from a magical city to a realistic one, we might introduce the notion of heterotopia developed by Michel Foucault mainly in the text "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias." In the preface of his book *The Order of Things*, Foucault already introduces such term by contrasting it to the notion of utopia. Whereas the latter would be closer to realm of fabula, heterotopias are able to "dissolve our myths and sterilize the lyricism of our sentences" (Foucault xix). Then, in "Of Other Spaces," he adds that utopias "present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces" (Foucault 3).

Heterotopias, on the other hand, work as "counter-sites, a kind of effectively

enactedutopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted" (3). A certain trace of utopia, therefore, remains in the heterotopia, whose one of the main characteristics is its possibilityof being both real and imagined. Perhaps imagined in the sense that they are thought and construct to foster different possibilities of relations with other places: "As a sort of simultaneously mythic and real contestation of the space in which we live" (4).

Foucault affirms that such places can have a variety of forms, and it depends upon the culture in which they are inserted: "for each heterotopia has a precise and determined function within a society and the same heterotopia can, according to the synchrony of the culture in which it occurs, have one function or another" (5). He then outlines some principles and gives examples. Two extreme types of heterotopias, according to him, might be the "colonies" and the "brothels." In the case of the former, for instance, Foucault underscores "the first wave of colonization in the seventeenth century, of the Puritan societies that the English had founded in America and that were absolutely perfect other places" (8). He describes this as a heterotopia of compensation and "their role is to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled" (8). On the other pole, the "brothel" would stand for the type ofillusion, but, at the same time, it "exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusory" (8).

There are even the heterotopias of "deviation," as "rest homes and psychiatric hospitals, and of course prisons" (5). These are "those in which individuals whose behavior isdeviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed" (5). Foucault introduces other kinds of heterotopias, but these ones mentioned above are enough to develop our discussion. Another aspect that he stresses and is relevant here is that "The heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in

themselves incompatible" (6). I have been pointing out so far is that the dynamic of mobilities blurs fixed demarcations between place and space, by undermining the hegemony of a single perspective, approximating multiple histories and thus interweaving the temporalities. And such disruptive relation with time is also entailed in the creation of heterotopias, which "are most often linked to slices in time – which is to say that they open onto what might be termed, for the sake of symmetry, heterochronies. The heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time" (6).

It seems that through the shifts of perspectives and also by highlighting some heterotopic places, *The Satanic Verses* render decentralized portraits of the cities quoted above. When Mahound arrives in Jahilia, for instance, he is already powerful enough to rule and conquer, starting a new phase, which, on the other hand, the text associates with stagnation and decay. Baal, the satirist poet, who used to mock the prophet, goes into hiding and he finds refuge in The Curtain, which was "the name of the most popular brothel in Jahilia" (Rushdie 376). There he is disguised and dressed like one of the brothel's eunuchs, but instead of being a part of what was happening in Jahilia, there he could know all about the city's events: "Baal's sojourn 'behind The Curtain' by no means deprived him of information about events outside; quite the reverse, in fact, because in the course of his eunuchly duties he stood guard outside the pleasure-chambers and heard the customers' gossip" (377).

Then, one day Baal hears one of the customers talking about "the twelve wives of the Prophet, *one rule for him, another for us*," and he starts to conceive "the form his final confrontation with Submission would have to take" (379). The satirist suggests to the women of The Curtain to impersonate the twelve wives of the prophet, and the play starts making a huge success: "When the news got around Jahilia that the whores of The Curtain

had each assumed the identity of one of Mahound's wives, the clandestine excitement of the city's males was intense" (381). Baal, watching "from a high balcony, was satisfied. There were more ways than one of refusing to Submit" (381). However, the satirist is recognized in the brothel by Salman the Persian, who was Mahound's scribe. When Salman and Mahound finally meet in Jahilia, the former tries to spare his life by informing where Baal has been hiding, and, afterwards, the brothel is closed and the poet is killed.

The depiction of Jahilia, thus, in part, move from the broader landscape of the city of sand to another one enclosed in such heterotopic place, probably replacing a former utopian point of view for a more fragmented and subversive. And by doing so, the text underscores the cultural and political tensions and contradictions of the city that was entering a new age. In the case of the depiction of London such ambivalence, between utopia and heterotopia, is rather reflected by Saladin Chamcha's journey through other possible heteropic places such as the sanatorium, the Shaandaar Café and the Club Hot Wax. Through Gibreel Farishta's experience with the city it is also recognizable such displacement of perspectives as well.

Chamcha's point of view might be more remarkable because the novel emphasizes how the England he wants to live in was in a greater sense a dream-England. But as soon as he lands in the seashore, after the plane crash, such dream is replaced by a sort of nightmare:

> He blinked hard but the colours refused to change, giving rise to the notion that he hadfallen out of the sky into some wrongness, some other place, not England or perhaps not-England, some counterfeit zone, rotten borough, altered state. Maybe, he considered briefly: Hell? No, no, he reassured himself as unconsciousness threatened, that can't be it, no yet, you aren't dead yet; but dying.
>
> Well then: a *transit lounge*. (Rushdie 132, my emphasis)

Another point that we might highlight here is that Foucault's outlining of heterotopic places opens up the possibility of creating a dialogue with mobility. As we have introduced above there is not a single form of heterotopic place, and any site might start to acquire such condition if it has "a function in relation to all the space that remains" (Foucault 8). For instance, the Shaandaar Café portrayed in the novel is both a restaurant and a place where rooms are rent as "'temporary accommodation'" (Rushdie 264), for migrant families "with little hope of being declared permanent" (264). Here the notion of non-place, developed by Marc Augé and introduced in the first chapter, is also entailed. The heterotopic place, thus, draws attention to a complex network of juxtapositions, some of them not always compatible.

Moreover, heterotopias distinguish themselves from ordinary places in terms of access. They "always presuppose a system of opening and enclosing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable" (Foucault 7). The entry in such place might be compulsory, as in the case of a prison or psychiatric hospitals, but other kinds are rather open but in a way that still marks a separation to the spaces surrounding: "There are others, on the contrary, that seem to be pure and simple openings, but that generally hide curious exclusions. Everyone can enter into the heterotopic sites, but in fact that is only an illusion – we think we enter where we are, by the very fact that we enter, excluded" (7-8). It is worth to recall another excerpt from Foucault's essay when he addresses the latter type of heterotopic place because it might also reinforce the importance of the Shaandaar Café in the construction of the heterotopic landscape of London, as we are going to develop further below:

> I am thinking for example, of the famous bedrooms that existed on the great farms of Brazil and elsewhere in South America. The entry door did not lead into the central room where the family lived, and every individual or traveler who came by

> had the right to open this door, to enter into the bedroom and to sleep there for a night. Now these bedrooms were such that the individual who went into them never had access tothe family's quarter the visitor was absolutely the guest in transit, was not really the invited guest. (Foucault 8)

The rooms available in the Shaandaar Café rather underscore the exclusion of those who live in temporarily and are not allowed to take root in London. Before Chamcha arrives in the Shaandaar Café though, he is arrested and led by the police to a place that seems to be no less heterotopic. Here is important to recall that Chamcha and Farishta are found by RosaDiamond, an old English woman when they are yet in a part of the seashore closer to her backyard, after their fall from the sky. She takes them to her house, but, on the next day, immigration officers come to investigate as "somebody had reported a suspicious person onthe beach, remember when they used to come in fishing-boats, the illegals" (Rushdie 139).

Farishta manages to escape. Chamcha still in his pajamas is the first caught. When the former, dressed with the clothes of Henry Diamond, which was Rosa Diamond's former husband, sees Chamcha being handcuffed, however, he does nothing. Then, while the latter is taken by the police, Farishta remains in Diamond's house and makes no effort to help Chamcha. The latter is humiliated, beaten and even obliged to eat his own feces at the Black Maria van. Even though he tries to convince them he was not illegal and asks for a research of his name in the Police National Computer, meanwhile the police officers disbelief and mock him: "What kind of a name is that for an Englishman?" (163).

When they discover that Chamcha was a "British Citizen first class," however, it "had not improved his situation, but had placed him, if anything, in greater danger than before" (164). The solution found by the police was to take him to a place which they refer as a Detention Centre, but its function is quite ambiguous, as the following excerpt

underscores: “His nose informed him that the sanatorium, or whatever the placed called itself” (166), or even here: “That night, in the greeny light of the mysterious institution” (167). There Chamcha’s metamorphosis into a Goatman continues to develop, but he also meets other ones that are somehow transmogrified as him:

> Standing in front of him was a figure so impossible that Chamcha wanted to bury his head under the sheets; yet could not, for was not he himself. . .? ‘That’s right,’ the creature said. ‘You see, you’re not alone.’
>
> It had an entirely human body, but its head was that of a ferocious tiger, with three rows of teeth. ‘The night guards often doze off,’ it explained. ‘That’s how we manage to get to talk.’ (Rushdie 167)

The “man-tiger, or manticore, as it called itself,” then remarks about their mutations: “‘There’s 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 holiday makers from Senegal who were doing no more than changing planes when they were turned into slippery snakes.’” Afterwards, Chamcha asks: “‘But how do they do it?’”, and the manticore replies implying that this might be a matter of discourse: “‘They describe us,’… ‘That’s all. They have the power of description, and we succumb to the pictures they construct.’” But Chamcha is still skeptical: “‘It’s hard to believe,’ … ‘I’ve lived here for many years and it never happened before…’” (168). The manticore also wants to know if Chamcha is going to join him and the others in a plan of escaping from that place. A wolf then questions the former if Chamcha would or not participate, and the manticore answers that “‘He can’t makeup his mind,’ … ‘Can’t believe his own eyes, that’s his trouble’” (169).

Although Chamcha is not “one of the grand strategists of the escape” (171), he follows the group and leaves the Detention Centre. He tries to go back home, but being

metamorphosed he is unrecognized by his wife Pamela Lovelace who panics with his return. Jumpy Joshi then leads Chamcha to the Shaandaar Café where he starts to rest in the attic. In the night he arrives, Joshi and the residents of the Shaandaar, Mr. Muhammad Sufyan, Hind and their daughters Mishal and Anahita, gathered in the kitchen, offer Chamcha some food and develop a discussion upon what might have happened to him. Joshi stresses that the situation should be analyzed through an ideological view:

> 'What has happened here? A: Wrongeful arrest, intimidation, violence. Two: Illegal detention, unknown medical experimentation in hospital,' – murmurs of assent here, as memories of intra-vaginal inspections, Depo-Provera scandals, unauthorized post-partum sterilizations, and, further back, the knowledge of Third World drug-dumping arose in every person present to give presence to the speaker's insinuation. (Rushdie252)

There, thus, Chamcha finds solidarity and he is welcomed by Mr. Sufyan: "'Best place for you is here,' he said, speaking as if to a simpleton or small child. 'Where else wouldyou go to heal your desfigurements and recover your normal health? Where else but here, with us, among your own people, your own kind?'" (253). However, he still does not accept such idea: "Only when Saladin Chamcha was alone in the attic room at the very end of his strength did he answer Sufyan's rhetorical question. 'I'm not your kind,' he said distinctly into the night. 'You're not my people. I've spent half my life trying to get away from you'" (253). It seems that since his arrest Chamcha is constantly challenged, in a painful way, to expand his point of view. He resists to consider the possibility of being placed together with those who might remind him of his homeland, and then the events portrayed in the novel seem to make him face his own process of alienation and somehow learn from it.

In the Shaandaar Café, many aspects concerning diasporas emerge. The gap

between generations, as the relation between Hind Sufyan and her daughters is one of them. Hind is areligious woman, she even sees Chamcha as probably the materialized figured of the Devil. But perhaps what defies her the most is the break between her beliefs and her daughter's lifestyle, since they have been raised in a different cultural environment. The summit of humiliation for Hind though came when she discovers that her daughter was dating the lawyer Hanif Johnson without been told anything until Anahita exposes her daughter:

> and after that there had been no holding Hind, all the years of her humiliation had comepouring out of her, it wasn't enough that she was stuck in this country full of jews and strangers who lumped her in with the negroes, it wasn't enough that her husband was a weakling who performed the Haj but couldn't be bothered with godliness in his own home, but his had to happen to her also. (Rushdie 290)

Mr. Sufyan then asks Johnson to leave but he strikes back, questioning them about therent of the rooms too: "Hanif wasn't going without having his say, *I've kept my mouth shut for too long*, he cried, *you people who call yourself so moral while you make fortunes off themisery of your own race*, whereupon it became clear that Haji Sufyan had never known of the prices being charged by his wife" (290, emphasis in original). At almost the end of the novel, the Shaandaar Café is destroyed by fire when the upheavals, caused by the illegal arrest and death of Dr Uhuru Simba, who was a voice of the black diaspora, take the streets of London. Both Hind and Mr. Sufyan die, and here is noteworthy that the novel might also underscore through their deaths a kind of fall of a type of diasporic discourse. As we have been discussing, *The Satanic Verses* seem to convey a notion of diaspora that is not only detached from myths of return but also resistant to essentialized conceptions of identity.

Dr. Uhuru Simba also changes his name. He was Sylvester Roberts, and Mishal had

a particular issue with him: “Mishal Sufyan hated more than any other black man on account ofhis tendency to punch uppity women in the mouth, herself for example, in public, at a meeting, plenty of witnesses” (285). Then she follows: “he could’ve killed me, and all because I told everybody he wasn’t African, I knew him when he was plain Sylvester Robertsfrom down New Cross way” (285). Here we can recognize two kind of conflicts: a gendered one and another concerning cultural identity. It seems difficult for Mishal to conceive the possibility of Dr Uhuru Simba reclaiming an African identity, probably in a more traditional way, if he has lived his entire life in London. We are going to resume this discussion in the section below, concerning the national space and how all these characters struggle to place themselves in the national discourse. Although Hind and Mr. Sufyan dies, Anahita and Mishal survive in *The Satanic Verses*.

Vijay Mishra points out that “The space of the Shaandaar Café B&B becomes the space of new labour relations between husband and wife but also new forms of sexuality” (Mishra 228). It is worth to recall that it is Hind who is responsible for the thrive of the restaurant, and upon this Mishra also remarks: “Gender relations therefore get repositioned inthe diaspora, and women begin to occupy a different, though not necessarily more equitable, space” (227). All these aspects might be progressive, but Mishra analyzes that, by portraying the end of the Café, the novel stresses a possibility of rupture with some diaspora’s discourse:

> Both the café and the community centre are burned down, Hind, Muhammad, as well as Pamela, die, and suddenly there is no room for nostalgia, no room for the discourseof mysticism . . . that had sustained the discourses of the homeland. Instead, the imperative is to transform one’s memory into modes of political action because the world is far too ‘Real’. (Mishra 228)

Mishal leaves with Hanif Johnson after the fight with her parents and she takes

Chamcha with them. They go to the Club Hot Wax, but wait for the party gets over until Chamcha could rest there. The Club Hot Wax is another relevant place to be considered in relation to the construction of the heterotopic landscape of London. There, the tensions that crisscross the city's streets are reproduced and somehow even fostered. In the Club, the host is the DJ Pinkwalla who "rants toasts raps up on the stage, *Now-mi-feel-indignation-when-dem-talk-immigration-when-dem- make-insinuation-we-no-part-a-de-nation-an-mi-make-prodamation-a-de-true-situation-how- we-make-contribution-since-de-Rome-Occupation*" (292, emphasis in original). Among the people dancing there are some statues made of wax. On one side, "The migrants of the past": Mary Seacole, Abdul Karim, Septimius Severus, Grace Jones, Ignatius Sancho. They are described as "History". On the other side, other types of statues: "bathed in evil green light, wax villains cower and grimace: Mosley, Powell, Edward Long, all the local avatars of Legree" (292). And there is also an effigy of Margaret Thatcher. Pinkwalla then asks who they are going to "melt" in the "microwave oven, complete with Hot Seat, known to Club regulars as: Hell's Kitchen" (293). The crowd screams: "*Maggie-maggie-maggie*, bays the crowd. *Burn-burn-burn*. The doll, the – the *guy*, – is strapped in the Hot Seat. Pinkwalla throws the switch. And O how prettily she melts, form inside out, crumpling into formlessness. Then she is a puddle, and the crowd sighs its ecstasy: *done*" (293, emphasis in original).

Afterwards, "almost four in the morning… they bedded Chamcha down in the empty,locked-up nightclub" (293). There the character transmogrified recovers his human shape while thinking of "Gibreel Farishta, transformed into the simulacrum of an angel as surely as he was the Devil's mirror-self" (294). Then, the text follows: "The face on every one of the waxwork dummies was the same now, Gibreel's face with its widow's peak and its long thin saturnine good looks. The creature bared its teeth and let out a long, foul breath, and the waxworks dissolved into puddles and empty clothes, all of them, every

one. The creature layback, satisfied. And fixed its mind upon its foe" (294). In the morning, Mishal, Hanif and Pinkwalla find the place completely upside down: "tables sent flying, chairs broken in half, and, of course, every waxwork – good and evil – Topsy and Legree – melted like tigers into butter; and at the centre of the carnage, sleeping like a baby, no mythological creature at all, no iconic Thing of horns and hellsbreath, but Mr. Saladin Chamcha himself" (294).

Chamcha goes back to his house in "Notting Hill", knowing that his wife Pamela Lovelace has been starting over with Jumpy Joshi. They live together for a while but after the upheavals in Brickhall, where both Lovelace and Joshi dies, he returns to Bombay mainly to say good-bye to his father who was dying of cancer, but there he remains, not exactly in his father's ancient home. The Club Hot Wax is raided by police officers in an operation that is covered by television cameras that shoots from helicopters: "The machine of state down uponits enemies" (454). The news portrays Pinkwalla and Mr. John Maslama, the proprietor of the club, as criminals, and the place is somehow exoticized:

> It sees strange humanoid shapes being hauled up from the bowels of the Club Hot Wax, and recognizes the effigies of the mighty. Inspector Kinch explains. They cook them in an oven down there, they call it fun, I wouldn't call it that myself – The camera observes the wax models with distaste. – Is there not something *witchy* about them, something cannibalistic, an unwholesome smell? Have *black arts* been practised here? (Rushdie 455, emphasis in original).

Pinkwalla and Mr. Maslama are both "charged with running a large-scale narcotics operation – crack, brown sugar, hashish, cocaine" (456), but afterwards none of this is proved as fact. This episode is one of the peaks of the upheavals, but many riots seem to occur, and such moment underscores the tensions between the processes of suppression and the attempts of resistance of some of the popular movements, which, on the other

hand, the novel remarks to fail in its goals.

Gibreel Farishta's journey is rather loose in the streets. Through his perspective a multiplicity of stories seems to emerge but he is disturbed by them, and aims to control. In the right-hand pocket of the overcoat that belonged to Henry Diamond, now used by him, Farishta finds a book entitled *Geographer's London*. But as soon as he walks and searchs for information in the guide, the book seems inappropriate, then he struggles with the shifting landscapes that emerge in front of him:

> And even though he did not have any idea of the true shape of that most protean and chameleon of cities he grew convinced that it kept changing shape as he ran around beneath it, so that the stations on the Underground changed lines and followed on another in apparently random sequence. More than once he emerged, suffocating, from that subterranean world in which the laws of space and time had ceased to operate, and tried to hail a taxi; not one was willing to stop, however, so he was obliged to plunge back into that hellish maze, that labyrinth without a solution, and continue his epic flight. (Rushdie 201)

Farishta goes to London looking for Alleluia Cone, and it is interesting how the novel develops the story of her family that is Jewish, being her father, Otto Cone, a "Polish émigré, a survivor of a wartime prison camp whose name was never mentioned throughout Allie's childhood" (295). The point that is worth to highlight here is Otto Cone's perspective, which seems to contrast with Farishta's point of view, especially because of the latter's aim to "redeem this city: Geopraphers' London, all the way from A to Z" (322). Otto Cone, who was an "art historian and biographer of Picabia," used to say to his daughter, Alleluia Cone, that "'The world is incompatible, just never forget it: gaga. Ghosts, Nazis, saints, all alive at the same time; in one spot, blissful happiness, while down the road, the inferno. You can't ask for a wilder place'" (295). Then he has also

pointed out that

> 'The modern city'…'is the locus classicus of incompatible realities. Lives that have no business mingling with one another sit side by side upon the omnibus. One universe, on a zebra crossing, is caught for an instant, blinking like a rabbit, in the headlamps of a motor-vehicle in which an entirely alien and contradictory continuum is to be found. And as long as that's all, they pass in the night, jostling on Tube stations, raising their hats in some hotel corridor, it's not so bad. But if they meet! It's uranium and plutonium, each makes the other decompose, boom.' (Rushdie 314)

Otto Cone, however, was hunted by his ghosts and one day "jumped into an empty liftshaft and died" (298). Somehow, he also struggled to find a place to live in, but differently from Farishta, who wants to make London anew, the former seems to be rather aware of the "incompatible realities" in dispute. Each time Farishta tries to control his perception of the urban landscape, it resists to his goals of redemption:

> The city's streets coiled around him, writhing like serpents. London had grown unstable once again, revealing its true, capricious, tormented nature, its anguish of a city that had lost its sense of itself and wallowed, accordingly, in the impotence of its selfish, angry present of masks and parodies, stifled and twisted by the insupportable, unrejected burden of its past, staring in the bleakness of its impoverished future. (Rushdie 320)

Another point that is relevant in the construction of this heterotopic landscape of London it is how it opens up the possibility of underscoring the tensions embedded in the national space as well. The ambivalence between utopia and heterotopia, however, seems to be inverted in the case of Bombay. I have already pointed out that Chamcha returns to his city of birth in the end of the novel, what might be contradictory given how the text

questions Farishta's point of view, which is strongly attached to the notion of homeland. Nico Israel has remarked that Chamcha's latter decision is almost like "the return of a subcontinental prodigal son," who "has been narratively obscured by the long shadow of the blasphemous verses" (174). But curiously Israel stresses "that transnational migration affords are abandoned as a fairy tale, in a somewhat strained attempt at homecoming and reconciliation with father, race, and nation" (174). In the end of the novel a new beginning is indeed suggested, but it seems to not disregard Chamcha's experiences of mobility depicted throughout the text. Therefore, the home to which he returns is no longer the same as the one he has left when he was a child.

3.2 Mobilities and other forms of imagining the nation

I have been developing how in *The Satanic Verses*, the notion of place seems to be expanded and established in more fluid terms, and my reading has been based on the discussion of mobilities that entail a variety of movements, both corporeal and imaginative.These dynamics enable that other perspectives might emerge, and in the section above our focus has been the imagery of the urban space. But, as I have also pointed out, the city is where the national space is tensioned, contested and negotiated. In the novel, it is through the portrait of the experiences of the characters that this dynamic unfolds, and by depicting a variety of displacements, a network of different locations is also composed. Thus, London, Bombay, Jahilia, and even a village from which a group of pilgrims are moving towards Mecca, encouraged by their belief on the achievement of the division of the Arabian Sea, are somehow connected, and this ensemble diversifies the spatialities that crisscross the novel.

Both the passages concerning Jahilia and that village, apparently located in the

Indian sub-continent, are related to Gibreel Farishta's dreams. Here the notion of imaginative mobility might be graphical, but another way of thinking about this has also been introduced in chapter one, which are the process of cultural affiliation that one might develop. Furthermore, what *The Satanic Verses* also seem to convey is the contrast between alternative possibilities of imagining the nation, enabled by corporeal and imaginative mobilities, and the dominant forms of national space, which is related to the idea of nation-state as well. Whereas the nation seems to be more open to the process of affiliations however, the latter can be understood as a complex set of practices and discourses that gives the nation its political form.

In this section, therefore, I am going to explore the relations between the novel and the national space pointing out how the text "imagines the nation differently" (Mishra 219). It is important to recall the role of mobilities throughout this process, and here we might highlight that by diversifying the possibilities of movement, mobilities can both foster alternative imaginings of the nation, insofar as they can stimulate reactions that contain such process as well. For instance, by recalling the modern history of England, Urry stresses how the growth of corporeal travels in the nineteenth century, especially after "the development of the railways during the 1840s" (111), required an adoption of a national system of time reference, because until then each town that was crossed by the railway still had its own mode of schedule. Thus, the embrace of clock-time became essential for the operation of traveling and to sustain the flows in the metropolises.

Here Urry points out: "this lack of national time-keeping could not survive and by around 1847 the railway companies, the Post Office and many towns and cities adopted Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). A standardised national clock-time thus was established in order that mass mobility could develop during the Victorian period" (111). Although clocks had been invented and used for centuries, according to Urry, clock-time became the

"appropriate metaphor for 'modern times'" (114). And it has become so because of its abstract, decontextualized form that was compatible with the needs of industrialization, and here it is possible to underline how this device was also important in the process of imagining an integrated national space.

Being, thus, a useful tool, clock-time is understood as arbitrary and decontextualized because it is removed from any relation with space. Urry recalls Henry Lefebvre, who analyses how this form of time is opposed to the one that is embedded in the cycles of nature: "In nature, time is apprehended within space – in the very heart of space: the hour of the day, the season, the elevation – of the sun above the horizon, the position of the moon and stars in the heavens, the cold and the heat, the age of each natural being, and so on" (Lefebvre 95). In modernity, however, the separation between time and space is reinforced by the clock-time, and one of the effects of this process, according to Lefebvre, is the suppression of "lived time" in social space: "Lived time loses its form and its social interest – with the exception, that is, of time spent working. Economic space subordinates time to itself; political space expels it as threatening and dangerous (to power)" (95). This observation is relevant here because, insofar as *The Satanic Verses* inscribe some of the routes of diasporas in the imagery of London, it also opens up the possibility of recontextualizing time, considering the migrant's experiences. And by dramatizing their lives, the text produces an alternative depiction of the metropolis' social space, contestingalso the exclusion of migrants' histories from some forms of pictures of the nation.

Urry's development of the distinctions between clock-time and lived time might be helpful to analyze how the novel also plays with both of these possibilities. The author suggests the terms "A-series" and "B-series" to refer to these different conceptions of time. The latter would be representative of an Aristotelian perspective that can be summarized as

based on the postulation of events that follows the scheme before/after: “Each event in the B-series is viewed as separate and never changes its relationship to all other events. Time is taken to be an infinite succession of identical instants, each identifiable as ‘before’ or ‘after’ the other” (Urry 114).

Urry, then, approximates such definition to the realm of clock-time and also to Walter Benjamin’s notion of “homogeneous, empty time” (Benjamin 261), which he underlines as somehow analogue to his point. Here it is important to point out that Benjamin writes “homogeneous, empty time” to refer to a kind of historicism that he questions. As an alternative to such approach Benjamin highlights the historical materialism that would uphold, for instance, an historian in the work of disclosing an oppressed past: “He takes cognizance of it in order to blast a specific era out of the homogeneous course of history – blasting a specific life out of the era or a specific work out of the lifework” (Benjamin 263).

Benjamin’s materialistic approach avoid the understanding of the present as a transition, for this view would entail a crystalized relation with the past. The author relates such apprehension to the failures of historicism: “Historicism gives the ‘eternal’ image of the past; historical materialism supplies a unique experience with the past” (262). Urry’s definition of “A-series” time, which is associated with lived time, seems to echo Benjamin’s conception of history. To explain his point of view, Urry recalls the Augustinian sense of time: “[this is] indicated by the relationships of ‘past-to-present-to-future’. Here past events are in part retained within the present and then carried forward into the future. Moreover, the present is not seen as an instant but as having duration” (Urry 115). He, then, points out that this conception reinforces that any discussion of time requires a consideration of a given context.

Later, Urry also introduces the notion of glacial time, which, according to him

challenges both the clock time and instantaneous time, being the latter an example of recent modes of mobilities, as the virtual travels. Glacial time borrows reference from nature, and it is described as "extremely slow-moving and ponderous;" it entails a sense of layers of time: "People feel the weight of history, of those memories and practices within that very particular place, and to believe that it can and will still be there in its essence in many generations' time" (159). What is interesting to note through these definitions is how mobilities, as Urry points out, "are all about temporality" (105). Each of these temporalities indicates that multiple spaces might, therefore, be created and sometimes even juxtaposed, as in the case of the heterotopic places I have introduced above. The very fluid condition that I have been pointing so far in relation to the notion of place in *The Satanic Verses* can also be related to this aspect. Here Urry provides a definition that might be helpful to analyze the spatial dynamics embedded in the novel: "Places can be loosely understood therefore as multiplex, as a set of spaces where ranges of relational networks and flows coalesce, interconnect and fragment" (140).

In regard to such intricate perception of space, it seems incompatible to the national space structured by clock-time. Considering *The Satanic Verses*, it is possible to affirm that both kinds of space coexists, in the sense that the novel incorporates and subverts the national space, reflecting some features that might also be aligned to Urry's comment concerning the links between nation and diaspora: "The cultures that get produced are curious hybrids, constructed and reconstructed through heterogeneity, difference and diverse mobilities" (155). As I have remarked, the novel embraces hybridity, translation which is thus conjoined with mobility, drawing attention to the possibility of emergent forms of conceiving identity.

This challenges the conventional discourse of the nation, since one might share connections with between cultures that evoke many places. Stuart Hall stresses that

"identity is not a fixed origin to which we are attached by the harness of tradition, an origin to which we can make some final and absolute return" (*The Fateful* 127). The author points out that is rather productive to consider processes of identification, which are historical and cultural interwoven. This is not to say that one cannot reclaim an identity, but, according to Hall, it is more precisely a positioning in discourse instead of an essence.

Hall aligns the processes of identification with a broader topic concerning the formation of contemporary cultural identities that not only defies nationalist discourses but the traditional concept of citizenship as well. The latter, as Urry points out, are yet based on a restricted notion of society that mobilities, on the other hand, resist: "So just at the moment that everyone is seeking to be a citizen of a society, so global networks and flows appear to undermine what it is to be a national citizen" (Urry 162). Insofar as citizenship in nonetheless reclaimed, the emergent forms of cultural identity might demand other forms of thinking upon the issue: "contemporary citizenships are implicated in processes which, in by-passing the borders of the nation-state, imply contradictions between different notions and conceptions of citizenship" (167).

3.3 Chamcha, Mishal and Anahita: different views of the urban space

Here we might recall a passage of *The Satanic Verses* that can dialogue with this discussion, because the characters being migrants struggle to position themselves in the national space. Saladin Chamcha, transmogrified in the Goatman, is in the attic of the Shaandaar Café when Mishal and Anahita, who are the two daughters of Hind and Mr. Muhammad Sufyan, bring him a plate of "masala dosa instead of packet cereal" (Rushdie 258) for breakfast. They are thrilled with his presence and regard him as one of them, and probably a especial one, whose appearance, moreover, foster their imagination, and

Mishal consider the possibility that he could even develop "– you know – *powers.*'" But at the moment they show him the food, Chamcha immediately becomes angry and rejects it: "Now I'm supposed to eatthis filthy foreign food?" Then the text follows:

> Conscious of having insulted their hospitality, he tried to explain that he thought of himself, nowadays, as, well, British … 'What about us?' Anahita wanted to know. 'What do you think we are?' – And Mishal confided: 'Bangladesh isn't nothing to me. Just some place Dad and Mum keep banging on about.' – And Anahita, conclusively: 'Bungleditch.' – With a satisfied nod. – 'What I call it, anyhow.' 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… (Rushdie 258-59, emphasis in the original)

Here the text seems to dramatize the very conflict between a migrant or diasporic cultural identity and the notion of citizenship fixed in a specific nationality. Many aspects can be discussed from this passage. One point that is already remarkable is how even though Anahita e Mishal did not share cultural affiliations with Bangladesh, from where their parents migrate to start over in London, they are not recognized by Chamcha as British. His perspective, contradictorily, might reflect the very metropolitan assumption concerning diasporas, which the novel, on the other hand, contests.

It is no wonder this passage is portrayed in the chapter "A City Visible but Unseen." Here the notion of inner-city might be helpful. I have introduced in the first chapter how this term became associated with the neighborhoods inhabited by migrant communities in England. But, as Avtar Brah points out, the inner-city also was a site of tension, since the immigrants were constantly target as the cause of many social problems. This discourse, thus, fosters a division and limit the access to the national space only to a certain group. The title "A City Visible but Unseen" also suggests a kind of complex spatiality that is

unstable, as if a given place is both affirmed and denied. In the excerpt above Anahita and Mishal face this conflict, being still framed as immigrants, although they feel to belong to London, as probably many others who might recognize themselves as part of a post-diaspora generation. It is worth to recall that, as Robin Cohen affirms, a diaspora takes time to develop, and this process might be associated with the notion of glacial time, introduced by Urry. One moves from one place to another, interacts with the culture of the host nation, without aiming afterwards to return to a place of origin.

Meanwhile these movements occur, the clock time of the national space is challenged, in the sense that other layers of histories, memories might be inscribed in a given context. What the novel, thus, opens up is the possibility to discuss how some national discourses might avoid coping with the heterogeneity of the nation's social spaces. It can lead to asymmetrical relations, not only traversed by class, gender, but also by a bias conception of race that might undermine one's right of being recognized as a citizen. When such perspective prevails, thus, even the ones who belong to a post-diaspora generation, as Mishal and Anahita Sufyan could be examples, are regard by a given nationalist discourse as "temporary," just guests whose homeland is abroad.

On the other hand, the novel also raises questions about diasporas, especially how they can render a progressive perspective upon the nation, without recurring to myths of origin. It is worth to recall how the text suggests the risk of being trapped in essentialized perspectives, that, as I have pointed out in the chapter one, could reflect a Manichaean ideology rather dangerous than able to foster more open possibilities of conceiving cultural identity and the nation. Considering that *The Satanic Verses* seem to cast doubt upon an essentialized point of view concerning national identity, the novel also proposes that both the national space and the diasporic one could be rethought.

That is not a simple discussion, and the novel, by encompassing other locations as

Bombay puts into perspective moreover the struggles after the independence movements from the British Empire and the tensions entailed in the process of claiming a national identity afterwards. It is beyond our goal here to analyze the differences between the political and economic condition of the metropolitan context and those of the former colonies, although there are many. Claiming a national identity was an unavoidable stage in the anti-colonial moment, but the novel perhaps stresses how this undertaking might not be spared of some myths that could foster internal violence and disputes of power instead of freedom and equality.

Still upon the dialogue between Anahita, Mishal and Chamcha, we can point out how a notion of citizenship based on a restricted idea of nationality might furthermore collaborate to reinforce one's process of alienation. As I have introduced in chapter one, Chamcha in his enterprise of conquest of Englishness struggles with his Indianness to the extent that he tries a full erasure of his prior cultural background, which reveals itself to be impossible. Each travel back to Bombay was for him a hard experience, as it is depicted at the onset of the novel, when he goes to his city of birth after fifteen years. It is worth to recall that he and Gibreel Farishta were in a plane that took off from Bombay to London before it is exploded by a group of terrorists.

During the flight, Chamcha has a disturbing dream of "a man with a glass skin" (33) who asks for help. Then, "Chamcha picked up a stone and began to batter at the glass. At once a latticework of blood oozed up through the cracked surface of the stranger's body, and when Chamcha tried to pick off the broken shards the other began to scream, because chunks of his flesh were coming away with the glass" (34). That man with a glass skin could probably be a projection of Chamcha's himself, in the sense that both were vulnerable, on the edge of breaking apart. This passage is followed by descriptions of Chamcha's painful relation with his homeland that are evoked when he awakes with the air

stewardess offering something to drink, and, then, "[he] found his speech unaccountably metamorphosed into the Bombay lilt he had so diligently (and so long ago!) unmade. 'Achha, means what?' he mumbled" (34). Afterwards he concludes: "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, emphasis in the original).

Chamcha thinks he is not himself when starts talking with an Indian accent: "What next? Would he take to putting coconut-oil in his hair?" (34). And then he blames his home country: "Damn you, India, Saladin Chamcha cursed silently, sinking back into his seat. To hell with you, I escaped your clutches long ago, you won't get your hooks into me again, you cannot drag me back" (35). What this anxiety might reflect beside his desire of forgetting? It seems that it also indicates how unstable is his place in London, although he has a career and celebrates his marriage with an English wife, Pamela Lovelace.

She, on the other hand, has noticed that their relationship was somehow a façade, becoming then upset: "she had woken up one day and realized that Chamcha was not in love with her at all, but with that voice stinking of Yorkshire pudding and hearts of oak, that hearty, rubicund voice of ye olde dream-England which he so desperately wanted to inhabit" (180). Prior to the moment of discovering that Chamcha has survived the plane crash, Pamela even confides with Jumpy Joshi, with whom she starts a relationship, how constantly disagreements emerged between hers and Chamcha's perspectives. And here it is noteworthy how she portrays Chamcha as behaving as a kind of tourist in London: "Him and his Royal Family, you wouldn't believe. Cricket, the House of Parliament, the Queen. The place never stopped being a picture postcard to him. You couldn't get him to look at what was really real" (175).

Which place does Chamcha inhabit thus? If we follow Pamela's perspective, he

lives in nowhere but a dream. We can argue that she, in part, might be right because Chamcha indeed pursue an idea of London that is, after all, an image broadly sold, somehow common-sense, as Pamela underscores later on. But perhaps there is another point that the text is also questioning, which is the way the character struggles to position himself in the national space. If this is constructed based on a limited idea of Britishness, is it possible for one to be both British and Indian? Would, therefore, Chamcha's eager attachment to national dominant discourse just a matter of choice? I have discussed the process of alienation that the character undergoes, but the novel rather seems to discuss some factors entailed in this condition than to enact a kind of punishment. One point is clear though: the novel stresses how the belief on an essentialized notion of identity, whether it is British or Indian, might not work to think upon such conflict.

Chamcha's behavior might also reflect a kind of role that the metropolis requires him to act, and this seems to be what upsets Pamela the most. She is portrayed as a woman who works in the community relations committee, then, she has a broader perception of political aspects that Chamcha apparently lacks. The novel, therefore, depicts different angles upon Chamcha's position, and by doing so discloses the complexities of his social space. Another example associated to this topic is introduced when Chamcha calls Hal Valence, the creator of *The Aliens Show*, to inform he has survived the plane crash.

Valence, who is described as "the personification of philistine triumphalism" (266), has hired him to perform in the television show, in which Chamcha and the actress Mimi Mamoulian become the stars, giving life to Maxim and Mamma Alien, respectively. But when the former look for Valence, the feedback he receives after years of working in *The Aliens Show* is completely unexpected: "Your profile's wrong, if you follow: with you in the show it's just too damn racial" (265). Then, afterwards Chamcha hits back: 'I've never felt I belonged to a race,' he replied. This is why, when Hal Valance set up his production

company, Chamcha was on his 'A list'; and why, eventually, Maxim Alien came his way" (267). Both Chamcha and Mamoulian lose their jobs. He is replaced by a "huge blond Teuton with pectorals and a quiff inside the prosthetic make-up and computer- generated imagery" and "instead of Mimi, the new show would have a voluptuous shiksa doll" (268).

Later, Valence screams out his patriotism, and declares his love for the country that the TV show is helping to export to the world: "…That's what I've been selling all my fucking life: the fucking nation. The *flag*" (268). And in such picture Chamcha and Mimi are not welcome anymore. Even when they are part of the show there is a sense that only through concealment they were allowed, since they worked as voiceovers, with their bodies covered with clothes, make up and the "latest computer-generated imagery" (62). What is also disturbing is that both in his marriage and in his job Chamcha is not missed. On the contrary, Pamela shares with Joshi a sense of relief when she believes he is dead, and Valence has the opportunity he wanted to change the show's casting. Then, one might ask: Chamcha regrets being cast out exactly from what? After the plane crash he believes his life goes upside down, being metamorphosed, beaten and humiliated by police officers, fired, but the bitter part of it is that everything he feels to have lost it was no longer possible to be sustained whatsoever. It seems that one way or another his dream would fall apart, thus, reinforcing the character's vulnerability.

When he meets Anahita and Mishal, he is confronted by the sisters with whom he shares some struggles of national filiation, although he does not seem to admit it. It is Mishal, moreover, who, through the attic's window of the Shaandaar Café, introduces him to many "Street's characters": "there, a Sikh ancient shocked by a racial attack into complete silence; he had not spoken, it was said, for nigh on seven years, before which he had been one of the city's few 'black' justices of the peace…" (283). And there were another one who "developed the strange need to rearrange his sitting-room furniture for

half an hour each evening, placing chairs in rows interrupted by an aisle and pretending to be the conductor of a single-decker bus on its way to Bangladesh" (283). Anahita, then, interrupts the sister and talks directly to Chamcha: "What she means is, you're not the only casualty, round there the freaks are two a penny, you only have to look" (283).

Mishal unravels the stories embedded in the street "as if it were a mythological battleground … From her Chamcha learned the fables of the new Kurus and Pandavas, the white racists and black 'self-help' or vigilante posses starring in this modern *Mahabharata*, or, more accurately, *Mahavilayet*" (283). The conflicts between the National Front and the Socialist Workers Party are retold by her, and some spots are remarked for the bloodshed: "up that side-street he'd find the scene of the murder of the Jamaican, Ulysses E. Lee, and in that public house the stain on the carpet marking where Jatinder Singh Mehta breathed his last. Thatcherism has its effect,' she declaimed" (283-84). In the excerpts above it is possible to find the contrasts between Chamcha's dream-England and Mishal's *Mahavilayet*. The former is indeed rather idealized whereas the latter challenges it through the portrait of the raw tensions that crisscross the metropolis and discloses the arbitrariness of the national discourse, by also introducing a contextualized depiction of those "Street's characters." It seems that Mishal's perspective is more aware of the contradictions of contemporary London, something that Chamcha tries to avoid.

3.4 Chamcha and Farishta's journeys

We have so far compared the perspectives of Saladin Chamcha with those of Mishal and Anahita, who share different experiences concerning the metropolis, but we could also recall other characters as Rosa Diamond, the Imam and Gibreel Farishta, who,

not in the same way, convey some level of nostalgia for a lost home and somehow they resist the present, becoming more attached to a dreamed past, as in the case of Diamond, or future, as Farishta might lean to. The former is an English old woman, who finds Chamcha and Farishta when they just have landed in the beach closer to her house in London. Diamond, as Farishta, reveals some signs of delusion, but instead of dreams she is obsessed by memories that seems be both lived and fabricated. Thus, she spends time imagining how everything was nine centuries ago, when the Norman fleet moored in the seashore contemplated by her. She prays "for the past's return. Come on, you Norman ships, she begged: let's have you, Willie- the-Conk" (129). And it was in one of these nights that she saw something moving in the seawater: "What she said aloud in her excitement: 'I don't believe it!' – 'It isn't true!' – 'He'snever *here*!'" (130, emphasis in the original), but, evidently, it wasn't William the Conqueror, but Farishta and Chamcha.

Diamond ensnares Farishta with her stories, and when he asks what she thinks about what have happened with him and Chamcha, the old lady says that nothing was surprising once "in an ancient land like England there was no room for new stories, every blade of turf had already been walked over a hundred thousand times" (144). From her point of view, there isn't much appealing in the present, and the flows of memories that she conveys project always some events that happened in a past that the novel leaves opened to cast doubt since "It was so, it was not, in a long time forgot, that there lived in the silver-land of Argentina a certain Don Henrique Diamond, who knew much about birds and little about women, and his wife, Rosa who knew nothing about men but a good deal about love" (143). Farishta perceives that it is precisely in this net of stories that Diamond was living: "that silver land of the past was her preferred abode" (145). To such memories she remained attached until the moment of her death: "even on her deathbed Rosa Diamond did not know how to look her history in the eye" (153).

Although in a different fashion, the Imam also reflects a pesrpective that is detached from the present. As I have introduced in the chapter one, he is portrayed as an exile who longs for his return to Desh, where the character aims to start a revolution. His goal, however, is described as "a stranger dream" (209). After all, the Imam' plans are dangerous and ambitious:

> 'that is a revolt not only against a tyrant, but against history.' … History is the blood-wine that must no longer be drunk. History the intoxicant, the creation and possession of the Devil, of the great Shaitan, the greatest of the lies – progress, science, rights – against which the Imam has set his face. History is a deviation from the Path, knowledge is a delusion, because the sum of knowledge was complete on the day Al-Lah finished his revelation to Mahound. (Rushdie 210)

The Imam's project is to replace history for the time of God: "His boundless time, that encompasses past, present and future; the timeless time, that has no need to move" (214). Not for nothing he despises calendars and clocks: "The word *clock* will be expunged from our dictionaries. After the revolution there will be no birthdays. We shall all be born again, all of us the same unchanging age in the eye of Almighty God" (241, emphasis in the original). Through this depiction of the Imam the text offers a contrast that shows the central role of the clock-time in the construction of the national space. By willing to create a new Jerusalem, which "can be an idea as well as place: a goal, an exaltation" (212), the Imam tries to reestablish a kind of time that the novel underlines as regressive.

That is why I've pointed out that *The Satanic Verses* both appropriate and subvert clock-time, but it does not deny it. It subverts because the text recognizes the glacial time embedded in the formation of diasporas. And the novel rather seems to emphasize the importance of reimagining the national space in a more progressive way, by avoiding an essentialized notion of identity, than to propose an erasure of the idea of the nation as a

whole. As Nico Israel affirms, the Imam refuses "to allow modernity" (163), and this might be an important point that the novel draws attention from its onset, but not without problematizing the national discourse as well.

Here it is worth to recall Benedict Anderson's analysis of the emergence of nationalism. He points out some key factors that enable the emergence of nationalism and of the modern Nation-state. The possibility of a community imagining itself as being part of the same space and sharing a cultural background through a notion of history and simultaneity is uphold by an "homogeneous, empty time," as described by Benjamin, which the metaphor of clock-time introduced by John Urry can also be related. Moreover, the rising of the vernaculars replaces the Latin as language of power and, according to Anderson, this was essential to undermine the communities constructed based on the conception of sacred languages, as Latin and Arabic. These were, thus, "religiously imagined communities" (Anderson 16) whose understanding of simultaneity was completely different from the one that fostered the modern national-state: "It views time as something close to what Benjamin calls Messianic time, a simultaneity of past and future in an instantaneous present" (24).

The European's travels and the development of what Anderson calls "print-capitalism" contributed to weaken both the religious community and the dynastic realm, being the latter based on the idea that monarchs "were persons apart from other human beings and who ruled by some form of cosmological (divine) dispensation" (36). The rising of the vernaculars, alongside the mechanical reproduction of books contributed to fix print-languages, soon recognized as valuable to facilitate communication: "Speakers of the huge variety of Frenches, Englishes, or Spanishes, who might find it difficult or even impossible to understand one another in conversation, became capable of comprehending one another via print and paper" (44). The release of books in Latin decreased and a vast number of

texts printed in the vernaculars spread out from that moment onward. The newspapers and the novels were an essential part of this process, making possible the internalization of the modern notion of simultaneity:

> Why this transformation should be so important for the birth of the imagined community of the nation can best be seen if we consider the basic structure of two forms of imagining which first flowered in Europe in the eighteenth century: the novel and the newspaper. For these forms provided the technical means for 're-presenting' the kind of imagined community that is the nation. (Anderson 24-25)

The nation, therefore, according to Anderson, "is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (6). Furthermore, Anderson stresses that the nation somehow replaced the religiously imagined communities, but he does not suggest that "nationalism historically 'supersedes' religion". Then, the author follows: "What I am proposing is that nationalism has to be understood by aligning it, not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which – as well as against which – it came into being" (12). By such affirmation, Anderson is also pointing out how the "nationalist imagining" both detours and appropriates of some aspects of the religiously imagined communities: "If the nationalist imagining is so concerned, this suggests a strong affinity with religious imaginings. As this affinity is by no means fortuitous, it may be useful to begin a consideration of the cultural roots of nationalism with death, as the last of a whole gamut of fatalities" (10).

Anderson recalls that in such religiously imagined communities, whose examples are "the transcontinental sodalities of Christendom, the Islamic Ummah," upheld by the notion of sacred language introduced above, thrives "a conception of temporality in which

cosmology and history were indistinguishable, the origins of the world and of men essentially identical. Combined, these ideas rooted human lives firmly in the very nature of things, giving certain meaning to the everyday fatalities of existence (above all death, loss, and servitude) and offering, in various ways, redemption from them" (36). Nationalism, though relatively new, tries to convey an idea of immemorial past and limitless future, understandings also found in the religious discourse. Anderson remarks that nationalism does so by inverting its own genealogy, underlining the symbology of death, of the sacrifice of those who have been committed to the nation: "the nation's biography snatches, against the going mortality rate, exemplary suicides, poignant martyrdoms, assassinations, executions, wars, and holocausts. But, to serve the narrative purpose, these violent deaths must be remembered/forgotten as 'our own'" (206).

A modern example provided by the historian are the "cenotaphs and tombs of Unknown Soldiers". These monuments, "deliberately empty," according to Anderson, "[have] no true precedents in earlier times" (9). They were created as a form of homage that, on the other hand, feeds the narratives of the nation: "Yet void as these tombs are of identifiable mortal remains or immortal souls, they are nonetheless saturated with ghostly *national* imaginings" (9, emphasis in the original). It is interesting to make a parallel between such descriptions provided by Anderson and Rosa Diamond's perspective as depicted in *The Satanic Verses*. It seems that, not for nothing, is the old English woman who conveys a definition of what is a ghost: "I know what a ghost is, the old woman affirmed silently… What's a ghost? Unfinished business, is what" (Rushdie 129). Completely immersed in the ancient events entailed in the British national history, these ghosts referred by Diamond sustain the continuum of a specific historical point of view, that is rather connected to a repertory of official nationalism than to other possibilities of imaginings. As we have introduced in chapter one, Anderson underlines that official

nationalism has at its core a reactionary element:

> The key to situating 'official nationalism' – willed merger of nation and dynastic empire – is to remember that it developed after, and in reaction to, the popular national movements proliferating in Europe since the 1820s. If these nationalisms were modelled on American and French histories, so now they became modular in turn. It was only that a certain inventive legerdemain was required to permit the empire to appear attractive in national drag. (Anderson 86-87)

What is also important to underline is that Anderson describes official nationalism mainly to refer to Imperialism, which, he understands as being somehow an anomaly since it conceals "a discrepancy between nation and dynastic realm" (111). Thus, it is relevant to have in mind that different kinds of nationalisms have emerged throughout the modern history. Anderson, moreover, stresses the continuities and discontinuities embedded in the history of the nation, which indeed requires a careful analysis, but to develop an in-depth discussion of this topic is beyond the goal of this research. Here the main point is to approach how in *The Satanic Verses* the dynamics of mobilities might also underscore the urban and national spaces, through different perspectives, disclosing the arbitrariness entailed in both the national identities and nationalist discourses. By doing so, the novel draws attention to the limitations of the modern nation-state, but also questions the possibility of infiltration of nostalgic or conservative conceptions in this realm as well.

In the essay "In God We Trust," Rushdie develops some ideas that can be relevant to this chapter. He analyzes how in the contemporary history complex forms of nationalism have been emerging. He approaches the proximities between politics and religion in a way that reveals how the nation-state sometimes has been reshaped through religious claims. Rushdie recalls the Iranian revolution and quotes a phrase spoken by one of the movement's ideologues, Ali Shariati – whose statement also echoes in *The Satanic*

Verses through the voice of the Imam: "He described what was happening as a 'revolt against history'. What a phrase! In these three unforgettable words, history is characterized as a colossal error, and the revolution sets out quite literally to turn back the clock. Time must be reversed" (Rushdie, *Imaginary* 1991). Then, Rushdie follows: "Can it be that Shariati wished to restore, in place of calendar-time, the old 'Messianic time-sense of the imagined community of faith? I think not. Rhetoric, even when memorable, remain rhetoric" (383-84). It is, thus, not simply a rejection of the nation-estate, but an appropriation of it in a different fashion.

The writer reinforces that such clock cannot be reversed, but what he recognizes, on the other hand, and not only in relation to Iran, is that "The religious revivals of the world are continuations of the political process by other means" (389). Rushdie points out, for instance, the situation of the Indian sub-continent, where "nationalistic and religious ideas inextricably intertwined" (385). The conflicts between different political and religious groups, according to him, disclose the disputes in the national arena, and communalist discourse in such context would help to foster violence. Then, he affirms that "In independent India, the idea of secular nationalism has a particular importance. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the survival of the State may depend upon it" (385).

Pakistan is another example analyzed by him. Insofar as the country's rulers aimed to "place religious beliefs at the centre of contemporary politics," Pakistan is defined by Rushdie as "insufficiently imagined," since the nation-state was based on a faith (387). At the end of the text, the author evaluates that such intricate connection between the nation-state and religion does not concern only to Islam. Rushdie remarks the United States of America, in which religion has been "shoring up the crumbling patriotism of the American people – that is, as an aspect of the nationalist impulse, and not a replacement for it" (391). Rushdie stresses, then, that is unfortunate that to the crisis of liberalism "America reacts by

burying its head in the lap of God" (391). Here it is clear how the author questions the overlapping of religious and nationalist discourse, which for him seems to be a failure in dealing with any sort of crisis in a more creative and progressive way.

In this text, thus, Rushdie refers to and develops some of the ideas introduced by Anderson to address contemporary forms of nationalism. Upon this issue it is worth to recall Partha Chatterjee, who has also discussed how the political upheavals have somehow overshadowed relevant aspects concerning nationalism. The author highlights that the term has even shifted from a "feature of victorious anticolonial struggles in Asia and Africa," mainly in the 1950s and 1960s, to become from the 1970s onward "a matter of ethnic politics, the reason why people in the Third World kill each other" (Chatterjee 3). Then, he follows:

> The leaders of the African struggles against colonialism and racism had spoiled their records by becoming heads of corrupt, fractious, and often brutal regimes; Gandhi had been appropriated by such marginal cults as pacifism and vegetarianism; and even HoChi Minh in his moment of glory was caught in the unyielding polarities of the Cold War. Nothing, it would seem, was left in the legacy of nationalism to make people in the Western world feel good about it. (Chatterjee 3)

Much of the rejection to nationalism, especially in the postwar context, the author accounts for the contemporary unfoldings that would threat the "orderly calm of civilized life" (4). However, the contradiction, according to Chatterjee, is that Europeans, by emphasizing nationalism as one of their "most magnificent gifts to the rest of the world," hardly recognize that "the two greatest wars of the twentieth century, engulfing as they did virtually every part of the globe, were brought about by Europe's failure to manage its own ethnic nationalisms" (4). Then, he follows: "Whether of the 'good' variety or the 'bad,'

nationalism was entirely a product of the political history of Europe" (4).

As Rushdie does in his essay, Chatterjee takes Anderson's ideas as one of the starting points to develop an analysis upon nationalism, but he questions some of the historian's affirmations, as a possible tendency to understand America's and Europe's experiences concerning the nation as the main models from which the nationalist elites of Africa and Asia would have to work with and appropriate:

> If nationalism in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain 'modular' forms already made available to them by Europe and the Americas, what do they have left to imagine? History, it would seem, has decreed that we in the postcolonial world shall only be perpetual consumers of modernity. Europe and the Americas, the only true subjects of history, have thought out on our behalf no only the script of colonial enlightenment and exploitation, but also that of our anticolonial resistance and postcolonial misery. Even our imaginations must remain forever colonized. (Chatterjee 5)

Chatterjee, then, underlines a differentiation between state and nation to elucidate his point. Whereas the former could be imported, the latter would be marked by a relation of cultural difference rather than identity with the modern state. He gives as example the anti-colonial nationalisms. In the case of India, under the rule of British Empire, for instance, the colonial state, which made possible the conveyance of the modern state to the colony, established a relation of difference between ruler and ruled, through the creation of laws, bureaucracy and administration that imposed some restrictions to the Indians. And it was the emergent nationalism that opened up the possibility of contestation of such system: "Ironically, it became the historical task of nationalism, which insisted on its own marks of cultural difference with the West, to demand that there be no rule of difference in the domain of the state" (10). Thus, Chatterjee stresses the importance of not disregarding

this aspect entailed in the movements of anti-colonial nationalism. After all, if analyzed mainly through the perspective of the history of the modern state, according to him, the strategies of resistance of the nation might be undermined.

However, the author remarks that when nationalist politics have growth and "took on the form of the national, that is, postcolonial state" (10) it has absorbed the ideology of the modern liberal-democratic state, which is based on a separation between the domains of the public and the private. But this transition, led by an elite, was pursued in a way that, to sustain the "inviolability of the private self in relation to other private selves," (10) it has kept at its core a project "of cultural 'normalization'" that was indifferent to "concrete differences between private selves – differences, that is, of race, language, religion, class, caste;" therefore, it did not mirrored "That contested field over which nationalism had proclaimed its sovereignty and where it had imagined its true community" (10-11). Some inequalities, thus, are still being reproduced, although in a distinct fashion if compared to the phase of colonial rule. Then, Chatterjee accounts to this complexity, which reflects the struggles embedded in India's history, one of the main challenges to think of nationalism:

> The result is that autonomous forms of imagination of the community were, and continue to be, overwhelmed and swamped by the history of the postcolonial state. Here lies the root of our postcolonial misery: not in our inability to think out new forms of the modern community but in our surrender to the old forms of the modern state. If the nation is an imagined community and if nations must also take the form of states, then our theoretical language must allow us to talk about community and state at the same time. (Chatterjee 11)

Afterwards the author points out that such discussion cannot be the understood simply as a matter of demarcation between an elite and subaltern politics, because they somehow interweave. Nevertheless, Chatterjee underlines that, as a first step, some

distinction is important "to break down the totalizing claims of a nationalist historiography" (13). He concludes that it is through this approximation that might be possible to think of new forms of the modern community and of the modern state. As has been already discussed in relation to Rushdie's works, probably *Midnights' Children* is the novel in which such discussion concerning the nation and the postcolonial state might be more evident. Suffice it to recall that the protagonist, Saleem Sinai, was born on August 15th, 1947: "at the precise instant of India's arrival at independence" (Rushdie 3). By trying to convey his autobiography the character also renders a narrative of the nation that, on the other hand, is not spared of memories' gaps and hesitations, deviating, thus, from the nationalist historiography. Even though, the latter perspective is not erased and it somehow interweaves with Sinai's narration, as the following excerpt of the beginning of the novel foreshadows: "I had been mysteriously handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolublychained to those of my country" (Rushdie 3).

As this dissertation proposes, *The Satanic Verses* might rather discuss the dynamics of mobilities, but while it does so by dramatizing the experiences of characters who migrate, mainly, from the British former colonies, as India, to the metropolis, the construction of the nation becomes no less relevant in this novel. *The Satanic Verses* seem to unravel the many different layers of discourses associated to nationalism, sometimes contrasting the perspectives associated to the modern nation-estate and the postcolonial. Such approximation might embody that same goal stressed above by Chatterjee, which is the effort to imagine a new form of modern state by simultaneously pursuing other ways of imagining the nation.

In the first chapter, I have introduced how mobilities can stimulate a reassessment of the notion of place. Instead of a rooted and fixed entity, it becomes expanded through the articulation of heterogeneities that might undermine the prevalence of just one perspective.

If we think of the national space, thus, mobilities can both foster the processes that led to such configuration and create some tensions as well. John Urry, quoting Homi Bhabha, underlines that "National histories tell a story, of a people passing through history, a story often beginning in the supposed mists of time" (147). One point that is interesting in this excerpt is that the idea of sharing a national heritage is conveyed through a notion of time which is somehow mythical. And Urry points out the role of traveling as almost a rite of passage that could enable one to strengthen the feeling of belonging to a given nation: "Corporeal mobility is thus importantly part of the process by which members of a country believe they share some common identity bound up with the particular territory that the society occupies or lays claim to" (149).

When mobility is thought as a dynamic mainly performed inside a given set of borders and also in adherence to clock-time it might uphold the traditional conception of the nation. However, since the growth of the possibilities of traveling, through the development of the means of transportation and communication, the limits of a given territory especially in cultural terms are less restricted and can be constantly challenged. Transnational movements diversify the flows not only of people, but of cultures narrowing the contact between different perspectives. How to rethink citizenship, national identity considering such configuration? In *The Satanic Verses* the city is the main stage in which such questions seems to be formulated. Following the Polish émigré Otto Cone's point of view, as introduced above, on one hand the "incompatible realities" can interact as uranium and plutonium, decomposing and producing an explosion. On the other hand, even when there is a kind of short circuit, this tension could be productive when stimulates mutual awareness, and then further negotiation.

Some readings of the novel seem to highlight, in part, this latter aspect. Bhabha, for instance, when discusses the passage regarding Rosa Diamond, a character that I have also

commented above, points out that she would embody the English homeland and its national history. Gibreel Farishta, on the other hand, would stand for a hybrid migrant. Both Diamond and Farishta develops a strange relationship. He feels unable to get out of her house, and does not understand what has been keeping him there, instead of Diamond's entangling stories. Bhabha suggests that one remarkable aspect of this passage "is the emergence of a hybrid national narrative that turns the nostalgic past into the disruptive 'anterior' and displaces the historical present – opens it up to other histories and incommensurable narrative subjects" (Bhabha 167). Then, he also affirms that "Gibreel's returning gaze crosses out the synchronous history of England, the essentialist memories of William the Conqueror and the Battle of Hastings" (168).

Bhabha recalls another passage that would reinforce this idea of Faristha's point of view unraveling the national discourse through the character's attempt of transforming the English weather, which, according to the critic, invokes "at once, the most changeable and immanent signs of national difference" (169). In the novel, Farishta is roaming the streets of London but seized by one of his daydreaming moments, feeling himself as the Archangel Gibreel who "would make this land anew" (Rushdie 353). Then, he asks himself how to start:"But where should he begin? – Well the trouble with the English was their… In a word, Gibreel solemnly pronounced, their weather" (354). Bhabha describes Farishta as "the mote in the eye of history, its blind spot that will not let the nationalist gaze settle centrally" (Bhabha 168). But even though Farishta might foster such displacement, would not him somehow reinsert another kind of essentialist discourse that the novel also cast doubt? It might be illustrative the following excerpt that refers to the character's battle with London: "'For truth is extreme, it is *so* and not *thus*, it is *him* and not *her*; a partisan matter, not a spectator sport. It is, in brief, *heated*. City,' he cried, and his voice rolled over the metropolis like thunder, 'I am going to tropicalize you'" (Rushdie 354). It is relevant how

the character aims to bring the tropical weather to the metropolis, suggesting a reimagining of the city by evoking the lands where the British have been. After all, as Mr. S. S. Sisodia, the stutterer Indian film producer, remarks in the novel, "The trouble with the Engenglish is that their hiss hiss history happened overseas, so they dodo don't know what it means" (Rushdie 343).

However, as John McLeod points out, Farishta is disturbed by the ambiguities and multiple stories embedded in the city, and "As he tropicalizes London Gibreel is not acting as the secular translative migrant, but instead momentarily resembles the pious exiled Imam pining for 'hot certainties'" (McLeod 152). Writing from a post-diaspora standpoint, Rushdie seems to appropriate progressive aspects concerning the diasporic perspective, but he questions some ideas, as the myth of return based on an idealized homeland that could be recreated in the present. It seems that Rushdie aims to reshape the very concept of diaspora, by undermining the old diaspora's narratives through a discourse closer to the notion of hybridity and mobility. Vijay Mishra's remarks upon diasporas is relevant here: "In other words, the positive side of diaspora (as seen in the lived 'internationalist' Jewish experience) is a democratic ethos of equality that does not privilege any particular ethnic community in a nation; its negative side (which is a consequence of its millenarian ethos of return to a homeland) is virulent racism and endemic nativism" (Mishra 6).

The critic reminds that many conflicts have been raised by the belief in the reclaiming of a lost homeland: "the fantasy structures of homelands for diasporas very often become racist fictions of purity as a kind of jouissance, a joy, a pleasure around which anti-miscegenation narratives of homelands are constructed against the multicultural, miscegenation-prone reality of the nation-states in which diasporas are located" (16). As I have discussed so far, in *The Satanic Verses* there is not much space to romanticize the old narratives of diaspora. The novel might recall such point of view

but rather to foster awareness, as Mishra also draws attention to this issue in the following excerpt:

> And we need to accept that, contrary to idealist formulations about diasporas as symbolizing the future nation-state, diasporas are also bastions of reactionary thinkingand fascist rememorations: some of the strongest support for racialized nation-states has come from diasporas; some of the most exclusionist rhetoric has come from them, too. Even as the hypermobility of postmodern capital makes borders porous and ideas get immediately disseminated via websites and search engines, diasporic subjects have shown a remarkably anti-modern capacity for ethnic absolutism. (Mishra 17)

Even though the novel might discuss such aspects connected to diasporas, it recognizes their importance, especially in the process of reimagining the nation. They establish, moreover, a complex relation with the nation-state that, according to Mishra, "needs diasporas to remind of what the idea of homeland is" (18). Somehow, "The nation-state sees in them reflections of its own past, its own earlier migration patterns, its own traumatic moments, and its memories of settlement" (15). But what *The Satanic Verses* might suggest is that a diasporic discourse should not adhere to the traditional claims of the nation-state, in the sense that by doing so diasporas could rather fall in its trap than inspire a progressive reshaping of it. Furthermore, by rendering an heterotopic landscapes as I have develop above, the novel undermines totalized perspectives of the city and to the extend alsoof the nation. Mishra's analysis might again be helpful here:

> These embattled ethnicities in nation-states no longer construct their nationalisms through a homogeneous and synchronous imagining of the nation collectively readingits newspapers or responding to global events as a totality. The presence of diasporas marks the end of nation-states defined in terms of a community of

speakers/thinkers that could be relied upon to arbitrate for the national good. (Mishra 213)

The transnational travels fostered by mobilities, therefore, challenges the imagining ofthe nation in the same pattern introduced by Benedict Anderson when he explains the emergence of nationalisms. He affirms that print-capitalism was one of the key factors in that moment, underlining the role of newspapers and the novel in this process of creating a sense of community. But what *The Satanic Verses* also seem to evince is the impossibility of the contemporary novel fulfill this role, since that by dramatizing different perspectives that entail a multiplicity of histories and, thus, temporalities, it complicates the stabilization of thenation in the same fashion that Anderson recalls. Then, *The Satanic Verses* rather articulate fragmented points of view which might also subvert the narratives of the nation-state, underscoring part of its failures and inability to acknowledge "the diasporic contribution to modernity, always reading diasporas (especially those of colour) as the 'one', always regarding them as a dangerous presence in the West" (Mishra 236).

If the modern nation-state has its limitations and some recent forms of nationalisms imbricated with religion it is not a solution, then how does alternative possibilities could be constructed? As I have pointed out so far, the novel, by appropriating the notion of mobility, considers the possibility of thinking of place and nation in a broader sense, but it rather interrogates us upon these issues than comes up with an answer. The crossroads of Rushdie's text proposes the recognition of how creative should be this process, flexible and critical to the existence of different paths and perspectives. Which one might be taken? Here we might recall Robert Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken." The speaker divided by having to choose between two roads decides for the "one less traveled by":

I shall be telling this with a sigh

Somewhere ages and ages hence

Two roads diverged in a wood, and

I –I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the

difference. (Frost 250)

Although the reader of the poem might feel puzzled about the feelings expressed by the speaker, wondering if it is relief, sadness or joy, the last line of the poem, being open to such interpretations, might also draw attention to the recognition of the importance of the process and not just the ultimate destination. *The Satanic Verses* can propose the same, by means of replacing nostalgia for the awareness of the possibilities of new creations and reimagining.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Raymond Williams, in *The Country and the City*, outlines that if in the sixteenth and seventeenth-century the city was mainly associated with money and law, in the following century it was wealth and luxury (290). From the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries though, "the mob and the masses" became foregrounded in the imagery of the urban space, and, then, in the nineteenth and twentieth-century prevails "mobility and isolation." As I have been discussing so far, Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* seem to develop this latter statement and suggests also the implications of the dynamics of mobilities, both corporeal and imaginative, in the process of reimagining the nation.

As the novel inscribes the routes of diasporas in the imagery of London, the transnational travels play an important role, opening up the possibility of creating a mobile space in which characters move, dream, dive into memories. The shifting of perspectives and locations expand the notion of home, and here it is possible to approximate such aspect to Rosemary Marangoly George's discussion upon this issue when she addresses the realm of contemporary literature: "the (re)writing of home reveals the ideological struggles that are staged every day in the construction of subjects and their understanding of home-countries. The search for the location in which the self is 'at home' is one of the primary projects of the twentieth-century fiction in English" (George 3). In *The Satanic Verses*, this kind of search highlighted by George seems to be at the very core of the character's experience of displacement. While their journeys are dramatized, it is possible to recognize, following again George, "that homes are not neutral places. Imagining a home is as political an act as is imagining a nation" (6).

Instead of coalescing into nationalist discourse though, *The Satanic Verses*, by destabilizing the conventional notion of place, seem to disclose how home is possible to be designed and redesigned. By doing so, the novel enables the perception of the very arbitrary and conflicted nature of home, aspects also discussed by George: "They are places that are recognized as such by those within and those without. They are places of violence and nurturing. A place that is flexible, that manifests itself in various forms and yet whose every reinvention seems to follow the basic pattern of inclusions/exclusions (9). Certainly, to provide such recognition of patterns does not mean to reinforce it. The novel might encourage redefinitions of place, home and nation by means of drawing attention to the influence of mobilities in such goal. And here it is worth to recall a remark made by Jaina C. Sanga who stresses that "In *The Satanic Verses*, Rushdie reverses the motif of journey that figures prominently in *Heart of Darkness*. While Conrad's Marlow journeys from England into the heart of Africa, from center to periphery, Rushdie's Saladin Chamcha journeys from India into the heart of England, from periphery to center" (Sanga 108).

Sanga follows Edward Said's suggestion, based on his reading of Tayib Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*, which, according to him, also rewrites Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: "Tayib Salih's masterpiece is necessarily to be viewed as, along with other African, Indian, and Caribbean works, enlarging, widening, refining the scope of a narrative form at the center of which had heretofore always been an exclusively European observer or center of consciousness" (Said, *Reflections* 2003). Regarding Sanga and Said's comments, it is possible to affirm that *The Satanic Verses* introduces other ways of picturing the metropolis. It is noteworthy that when Gibreel Farishta wanders through London the streets "coiled around him, writhing like serpents" (Rushdie 320), and the map he carries becomes meaningless. On the other hand, in the tale

written by Conrad, Charlie Marlow tells that it was a map, in which he sees a river in the form of a snake, showcased in a shop of London, that attracted his eyes and fostered him to apply for the job overseas:

> But there was in it one river especially, a mighty bit river, that you could see on the map, resembling an immense snake uncoiled, with its head in the sea, its body at rest curving afar over a vast country, and its tail lost in the depths of the land. As I looked at the map of it in a shop window, it fascinated me as a snake would a bird – a silly littlebird. (Conrad 36)

Differently from Marlow that somehow is fascinated by such image, Farishta's point of view is rather disturbing. Although in the novel it is underscored how the latter is challenged by the multiplicity of narratives entailed in the city, this rendition still contributes to decentralize the portrait of London. It is also relevant to point out how the book *Geographers' London* becomes useless for Farishta. In the second chapter, "Displacement, mobilities and the crossroads of locations," I've pointed out how maps are somehow abstract and they cannot encompass the variety of movements that might crisscross a given place. Such sense of disorientation that Farishta experiments, thus, somehow reflect the very gap between cartography and the experiences in the streets. Moreover, maps in such context, can also be an allusion to Eurocentrism, to colonization, which does not align with Farishta's point of view.

As Rosemary Marangoly George argues, location suggests "the variable nature of both'the home' and 'the self,' for both are negotiated stances whose shapes are entirely ruled by the site from which they are defined. Locations are positions from which distance and difference are formulated and homes are made snug" (George 2). In *The Satanic Verses*, what can also be discussed, thus, are the complexities of contemporary locations, which defies traditional conceptions of place, home and nation. Suffice is to recall how in

the British metropolis both Chamcha and Farishta struggle and are unable to feel at home there. In the end, the latter returns to Bombay, which becomes another potential location, but not the same place of his childhood, as I have discussed mainly in chapter two.

The Satanic Verses, therefore, is a novel in which the imagery of the city is connected to the dramatization of the lives of characters whose experiences reflect some forms of displacement, such as migration. This aspect opens up the possibility of discussions upon place, the urban and national spaces, since they are all related. Other concepts are associated to these terms, such as citizenship, diaspora, national affiliation, transnationalism and cultural identity. By rendering a contemporary picture of the urban space, which is fragmented and multilayered, the text underscores how might be necessary to expand the limits between place and space, as I have developed in this research.

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