POSTORIENTALISM: ORIENTALISM SINCE ORIENTALISM

by

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ABSTRACT

POSTORIENTALISM, OR ORIENTALISM SINCE ORIENTALISM

This dissertation examines a range of popular contemporary texts in a post-Saidian context. It begins with an analysis of Orientalism, as that text influences almost any discussion of representations of East/West relations. Now, almost twenty years after Orientalism was first published in 1978 it is still a crucial text, and it still needs to be understood and argued with. The other texts looked at in this dissertation include novels, drama, films, opera, a musical, and the print and electronic mass media. They are texts that either represent or comment on East/West relations. The main texts I examine fall roughly into two categories: ones that are clearly orientalist and ones that are postorientalist. Those that are orientalist repeat the same myths of Orient Said describes in Orientalism. Those that are postorientalist challenge those myths by repeating and elaborating them, reversing and displacing the orientalist gaze.

The methodological approach is an eclectic blend of cultural studies and literary criticism. Such an approach enables analysis of a variety of texts, from classical nineteenth century books and myths through to contemporary postmodern representations, that deal with identity politics.

My thesis is that contemporary postcolonial representations that deal with East and West and that use and displace the very terms such categories rest upon, can be called "postoriental".
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: POSTORIENTALISM

PRELUDE

My own experience, as a woman, of being part of a European family that lived in Egypt through French enculturation, British colonisation, post World War Two American intervention, and a nationalist movement that culminated in decolonisation, explains my imaginary position here, in Australia, as an intellectual who has a sense of always being from elsewhere. Being from elsewhere is not necessarily a negative thing. As Salman Rushdie writes in Imaginary Homelands (1992:17)

Having been borne across the world, we are translated men [sic]. It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained.

Cultural translation, as evident in the representations in this dissertation, is an ongoing process that becomes “bearable” when the subject accepts that identity is fragmented and unstable. Schizophrenic, hyphenated conditions of living here with a memory of elsewhere, vary depending on the nation-state, the subject’s class, gender, ethnicity (Vijay Mishra 1995a), and sexuality. Actual travel, or travel as memory, as the impossible ideal, as the psychic compulsion towards the return to one's origins never eventuates, either because the place of origins changes or because nostalgia distorts it beyond recognition. Reading and writing makes sense when there is some affiliation in the reader/writer relationship. So here, in Australia, I see myself as being more closely affiliated with writers like Edward Said and Nawal el Saadawi than, say, Stephen
Muecke and Elizabeth Jolley. Imaginary, as I use it, does not mean fictive. On the contrary, one's imaginary self, and how one moves through time and place, is made up of potent personal, familiar, social, political, and geographical experiences and memories. To quote Salman Rushdie (1992:12) again,

it may be argued that the past is a country from which we have all emigrated ... but ... the writer who is out-of-country and even out-of-language may experience this loss in an intensified form ... of his [sic] being 'elsewhere'.

And this being elsewhere can produce the "differance", in the Derridean sense, that underlies representation. It is the space into which language erupts. This concept of the inscription of the world as meta-fiction, that is closer to "truth" than history, is central to the representations I will be looking at. Just as the narrator in Salman Rushdie's The Satanic Verses (1988) demands of Islam "what sort of idea are you?" so too does this dissertation begin with an exploration of what sort of idea orientalism is.

In reference to ideas in culture, especially at a time when the very idea of culture itself was under scrutiny, T.S. Eliot wrote in 1948 (1962:117-118) that

The ideas with which you did not agree, the opinions which you could not accept, were as important to you as those which you found immediately acceptable. You examined them without hostility, and with the assurance that you could learn from them. In other words, we could take for granted an interest, a delight, in ideas for their own sake, in the free play of intellect.

Eliot was referring to the problem of how concerned intellectuals were approaching new ideas in the inter-war years. He describes an environment in which culture springs from, rather than represses, differences of opinion. In his description of how culture is, if you like, a history of difference, Robert Young (1995:53-54) writes that culture works conflictually between sameness and difference, unity and diversity. He also
writes that it is in postmodernity that we find an "inner dissonance" that is productive. It is in postmodernity that we know that texts do not have a fixed identity. There are no fixed, isolated texts, but only interpretations; and any interpretation is always contingent.

OUTLINE

Before explaining the main theoretical concepts that are central to this dissertation, I will provide a very brief outline of Chapters Two to Six. This is done in order to be able to direct theoretical points of reference to specific examples. The description of Chapter Two (below) is more detailed in that it sets the historical and theoretical parameters of the whole dissertation.

Chapter Two begins with a problematisation of nature, language, and representation, which is then discussed in terms of representation and postmodernity: duplication and dissimulation (Jean Baudrillard). Thus by beginning "Orientalism since Orientalism" in that manner, the main analysis of Edward Said's book, Orientalism, is already in context of postmodern representational practices. Said's thesis on orientalism shows how Europe has constructed itself as a global self and the Orient as its other. However, in doing so, Said conflates the technologies of representation with the ideologies of representation. He sees the power relations inherent in representational practices as always negative. In Chapter Two I show how this is not always the case (Foucault) and I also show how Said fails to account for alterity (Derrida) and desire (Teresa de Lauretis) as always being inherent in representational practices, but they are not always negative. There are many more meanings of orientalism. And there are
representations that use orientalist tropes in order to subvert colonial relations between East and West. These representations are what I call postorientalist.

Unless it is indicated otherwise, I have used orientalism ambiguously. The widespread use of the term “orientalism” usually takes Said’s Orientalism for granted as an established set of critical ideas in cross-cultural studies. Chapter Two looks at some of the limitations of Said’s Orientalism and it also looks at the how valuable that text has been. My historical starting point will be the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a time of European high imperialism and the beginning of the spread of media technologies, and my end point will be the late twentieth century, a time of heightened awareness of representational practices, especially in the mass media. In other words, this dissertation looks at representation since classical orientalism, and it also looks at representation since Said’s Orientalism.

Chapter Three traces the hundred-year-old orientalist myth of Madame Butterfly through various texts and genres, from Pierre Loti’s Madame ChrystHEME which was first published in 1887, through Giacomo Puccini’s opera Madama Butterfly, up to the massively popular musical Miss Saigon. The trajectory of that myth moves around the world, repeating and elaborating (just like the so-called butterfly effect: James Gleick) the myth of what happens when East meets West. It looks at how myth functions (Roland Barthes) and how mythical tropes are fetishised. Chapter Three offers David Cronenberg’s film, based on David Henry Hwang’s play, M. Butterfly, as a postorientalist text, as it uses orientalist tropes to subvert the impasse of orientalism.
Chapter Four looks at Salman Rushdie’s novel *The Satanic Verses* and the so-called Rushdie Affair that followed the publication of the novel and fatwa declared against the author. I frame it as a postmodern, postcolonial, postorientalist mass media event. I look at the irony of how Rushdie has been accused of being an orientalist for writing a novel that is precisely against the dangers inherent in imagining the world as being made of up of Eastern and Western essences, especially in context of Thatcherite England.

Chapter Five looks at Hanif Kureishi’s novels and films, focussing on his novel, *The Black Album*. *The Black Album* is similar to Kureishi’s other narratives in that it is set in London with a central protagonist who is a young male Indo-Anglian exploring who he is and where he belongs. What makes *The Black Album* particularly relevent to this dissertation is that it is also focussed on the protagonist’s experiences at university at the time of student protests against, and burning of, “the book” (it is understood that “the book” is Salman Rushdie’s book *The Satanic Verses*). *The Black Album* is a fictional account of the Rushdie Affair and the conflict between Islamic culture and popular Western culture. Kureishi looks at the same social and political issues Rushdie looks at, and adds pop culture to their collective images of contemporary England.

Chapter Six takes up a thematic strand that is common to representations by Rushdie and Kurieshi. That is, cultural education through mastery and use of English by diasporic sub-continental Indians. Chapter Six focusses on Bharati Mukherjee’s novel *Jasmine*, as it traces the life of a young woman from a Punjabi village to America. At first glance, *Jasmine* appears to be a self-consciously constructed postroientalist representation of East/West relations about being Asian in America, somewhat like
Rushdie's and Kureishi's novels about being Asian in England. However, on closer analysis, *Jasmine* ends up looking more like the same old orientalist Madame Butterfly myth, with an Indian butterfly chasing the American Dream. Mukherjee represents Asianness as being made up of mindless nationalism, religiousness, backwardness, poverty, and patriarchy. She constructs America through images of democracy, freedom, secularism, and opportunity, as well as violence. She repeats the sort of culturalism, to use Arif Dirlik's (1987) expression, that constructs people according to prescribed ideas of culture.

Such a critical reading of *Jasmine* does not end this dissertation on a negative note. It reasserts that representation, whether it is self-representation or representation of an other, involves and invokes identity as multiple. It also reasserts that while the analytic methods that Said's *Orientalism* have provided are valuable for understanding the East/West split, they are not creative; they do not generate new possibilities for new identities. New creative approaches to East/-West identities are possible through what I refer to as postorientalism.

**FROM ORIENTALISM TO POSTORIENTALISM**

Said's *Orientalism* looks at culture as a "saturating hegemonic system" (1987:14) that productively constrains writers and thinkers. Said (1987:14-15) writes:

I study Orientalism as a dynamic exchange between individual authors and the large political concerns shaped by the three great empires - British, French, American - in whose intellectual and imaginative territory the writing was produced.
Similarly, Aijaz Ahmad looks beyond individual texts to see what is going on politically in textual relations. Ahmad (1992:13) writes:

What concerns me actually is not this or that novel or theoretical articulation but the relation between the internal structure of such rhetorical forms and the historical coordinates within which they arise.

Although the actual workings of "the three great empires" have changed over time, and hegemonic power in the Middle East has passed from the French to the British and then to the American empires, French, British, and American hegemonies still exert wide influence in "intellectual and imaginative territory", or textual production, today. And this textual production articulates "the relation between the internal structure of such rhetorical forms and the historical coordinates within which they arise". It is not only the historical context of textual production that is relevant to identity politics, but also the ways in which contemporary texts historically contextualise themselves, that is crucial.

The global circulation of texts that represent East/West relationships impacts on who we imagine ourselves to be, and how we map our world/identity, whoever that "we" category includes (and excludes). This dissertation begins with orientalism as a model that explains self/other relationships, and then moves on to show different ways of representing difference. I do not (cannot, do not wish to) do away with difference but rather I will explore new ways of articulating difference so that it is no longer a case of absolute power or disempowerment (Chris Berry 1994:15). As a study of the politics of representation this dissertation is rather speculative and relies on a mixture of literary criticism and cultural studies, so as to assert the very hybrid character of what is meant by race, ethnicity, and nationality, as well as sexuality, in various forms of
representations, especially in popular culture. As Anthony Easthope (1991) points out, one of the main changes that has occurred in literary studies has been to take popular culture seriously, thus expanding its range to include what Foucault calls "signifying practices". Homi Bhabha (1995:21) looks at the shifting margins of cultural displacement and asks "what the function of a committed theoretical perspective might be, once the cultural and historical hybridity of the postcolonial world is taken as the paradigmatic place of departure". The theorists I use in this dissertation are mainly Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Roland Barthes. Although they are mostly used in literary studies, they are also cultural critics because they refer to deconstructionists and postmodernists like Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Jean Baudrillard, and because they extend their fields of study to include popular texts like film, television, reportage, music, and so on. The whole field of representation has expanded from formal, written forms like the novel to include the electronic mass media and performance. I have taken "text" to include novels, magazines, newspapers, radio, television, film, music, musicals, gossip, scandal, the internet, and conversations. At times the "text" is the author, a performance artist or an actor.

The texts I look at in this dissertation are thoroughly intertextual. They refer to other contemporary and historical novels, films, music, television programs, and other authors and performance artists. By "popular" I invoke Lawrence Grossberg's (1988:25) description of the term in that it refers to a complex and contradictory cultural terrain of everyday life which unfolds in a multidimensional context. Although Aijaz Ahmad (1992) dismisses this use of theory as a way of scanning some books, films, a bit of television, some newspapers, and advertising, it is precisely these elements which make up the popular culture of metropolitan centres. Furthermore, the
entrenchment and longevity of such myths depends on these mass media speaking to each other intertextually, to use Julia Kristeva’s notion of intertextuality as referring to the literal and effective presence in one text of another text (in Michael Worton and Judith Still [eds.] 1990). This is especially evident in Chapter Three, which looks at how the Madame Butterfly myth has been repeated and elaborated across the media and across cultures. The Madame Butterfly myth is a particularly rich representation, as it reproduces a single colonialist, masculinist fantasy that is both the source drive to represent and also its own ultimate, unattainable goal. It is the production of the ideal woman through sexual desire and the desire for power. To use Teresa de Lauretis’s (1984:13) words, “desire provides the impulse, the drive to represent, and dream, the modes of representing”. The many Madame Butterfly stories are stories of Western male desire. Through language and representation, in novels, cinema, drama, opera, and so on, subjectivities are constructed in terms of a series of ideological positions. They are signifying practices in which the subject is implicated, constructed, but not exhausted (de Lauretis 1984:15), especially in (post)orientalist discourses. Or, to put it another way, the idea of autonomous agency is an illusion (Zizek 1994). The desire/representation nexus is problematised in Chapter Six, where the main protagonist, Jasmine, in Mukherjee’s novel, Jasmine, strives to shape herself into a Western masculinist fantasy of the ideal woman: deracinated but exotic; sexually liberated but always needing a white male lover. For all its references to migrations, displacement, exploitation, hybridity, racism, and so on, Jasmine ends up looking neo-orientalist, as it applies those references to a civilisational other: a poor, semi-literate Punjabi village girl, who is romanticised into heroic dimensions².
The texts I look at are also popular in the commercial sense in that, considering their genres and their expected audience, they "sell well". For example, Edward Said's book Orientalism had sold approximately 8,000 copies in Australia by April 1996 (with approximately 4,000 in India). Such figures are considered very good for "that kind of book"\(^3\). Bharati Mukherjee's novel Jasmine has sold 2,061 copies in Australia since 1991. Mukherjee is a prolific prize-winning writer of novels, reviews, and articles\(^4\). Hanif Kureishi's novel The Buddha of Suburbia has sold 9,000 copies in Australia since 1991 and 2,036 copies of The Black Album since 1996. Kureishi's films are very popular throughout gay communities as well as festival film audiences. Salman Rushdie's novel The Satanic Verses has sold well over 30,000 copies world-wide and its popularity (as well as Midnight's Children) guaranteed large sales of his most recent novel, The Moor's Last Sigh. An additional layer of "the popular" is found in Rushdie's and Kureishi's texts in that they also deal with "pop" culture. "Pop" refers to the sounds and imagery that emerged with rock'n'roll and pop music since the 1950s (Iain Chambers 1986), and which has left a wider cultural and political mark since the 1960s. The popularity of the various Madame Butterfly texts is blatantly evident in the longevity of repeated operatic performances, record, tape and compact disc sales, and the many other popular texts that use the idea of Madame Butterfly to make various comments on tragic love.

This dissertation looks at texts in English. In a few primary texts that are originally not in English, like Puccini's opera, Madama Butterfly, and Vico's book, La Nuova Scienzie, which are both Italian, and Pierre Loti's Madame Chrysanthême which is French, I have used English translations. These texts are translated (in the case of music, cultural translatability across European languages, and non-translatability from
Chinese to European languages, is explored in Chapter Three) and circulate in a transnational, Anglophone world. When I use "English" I invoke many meanings which include the language, the literary canon, the Empire and the subject position, all simultaneously, as meanings that sometimes contest each other, sometimes re-arrange themselves, or are sometimes subsumed by a singular, dominant meaning. As Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (in JanMohamed and Lloyd [eds.] 1990:72-101) says, no critical theory escapes the specificity of value and ideology. The texts I examine problematise English and comment on it from within Western critical discourses. For example, Mukherjee's *Jasmine* is framed as a contemporary postcolonial Indo-American *Jane Eyre*. Another example is in Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* when the narrator refers to writers like Charles Dickens, saying that for all Dickens’ concern for the working class, Indo-Anglians in the English suburbs experience such alienation that they cannot relate to any colonial texts, not even Dickens, except in an oppositional way.

The categories East and West are (still) so embedded in each other that often the only way to maintain such identities is (still) through various devices, like masquerade, mimicry, silence, denial, exclusion, or domination. Chapter Two critiques some aspects of Said’s *Orientalism* and then the rest of the dissertation takes up his invitation to write other instalments that describe other parts of the extensive, rich, and thick, discursive fabric of orientalism. The structure of this dissertation, as well as the content, makes the point that particular interpretations of various influential texts are made possible because of the influence of Said’s *Orientalism*. Also, interpretation of texts that deal with the politics of East/West tropes are influenced by orientalism, as a textual practice. This point is explored in Chapters Four and Five which look at the
Introduction

political impact of Salman Rushdie’s novel The Satanic Verses as a postmodern, postcolonial, postorientalist text. The global crisis provoked by Rushdie’s novel has been violent and carries universal implications. The Rushdie Affair has turned the Islamic public sphere into a modern space of contestation over representation, questioning any easy understanding of the local and global persistence of diversity. As Amin Malak (1989:177) puts it, the Rushdie Affair has seen the West once again misread the East and the East once again misrepresent itself. This, Malak says, has threatened to contaminate discourses with intolerance and presumptuous assumptions about the superiority of one value system over another. In those Chapters I look at some of the problems inherent in the paradox of particularism and globalism as a legacy of postmodernism. My reading of Rushdie’s The Satanic Verses is to reveal it as a text that is made up of multiple texts (written, mythical, filmic, religious, pre-Adamite, postmodern) drawn from many cultures (Eastern, Western, religious, secular). Thus it enters into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, and contestation through the mass media (which seriously challenges Ahmad’s approach to “literature”). And the place where the multiplicity of The Satanic Verses is focussed is in the reader.

The controversy that surrounds The Satanic Verses illustrates Jean-Francois Lyotard’s (1988:xi) description of the differend. It is worth quoting at length his opening description of the title of his text, The Differend, as

a case of conflict between (at least) two parties, that cannot be equitably resolved for lack of a rule of judgement applicable to both arguments. One side’s legitimacy does not imply the other’s lack of legitimacy. However, applying a single rule of judgment to both in order to settle their differend as though it were merely a litigation would wrong (at least) one of them (and both of them if neither side admits this rule). Damages result from an injury which is inflicted upon the rules of a genre of discourse but which is reparable according to those rules. A wrong results from the fact that the rules of the genre of discourse by which one judges are not those of the judged genre of genres of discourse. The ownership of a literary or
artistic work can incur damages (as when the moral rights of the author are assailed); but the very principle that one ought to treat a work as an object of ownership may constitute a wrong (as when it is recognized that the "author" is its hostage).

Different parties act according to different rules. The whole Salman Rushdie/The Satanic Verses situation, with the conflict between what has emerged as two parties: those "for" and those "against" where one side's legitimacy insists on the other side's lack of legitimacy, is illustrated in Chapter Four. One side treats the novel as blasphemous and has sentenced its author to death, while the other side insists on the author's freedom. The conflictual difference between these two positions very clearly illustrates Lyotard's differend. Each position has different rules of judgement. However, difference in the U.S.A. has a different history as illustrated in Chapter Six. Its settler and later "melting pot" history survives on a double disavowal. "Settler" as a colonial category ignores the existence of indigenous populations (as indeed Australia's colonial history does), and "melting pot" as a myth of nation ignores racial and ethnic diversity. Similarly, Kureishi's and Rushdie's work shows that much of the racism in England today is a disavowal of its history of colonialism. That is, just as the many Madame Butterfly texts disavow the part played by the coloniser who fathers Eurasian or Amerasian children, there seems to be a British disavowal of its own part in the displacement of Asian and African people.

Although current postcolonial discourses of diaspora and hybridity are intimately linked to orientalism, as evident in a range of popular representations that circulate in cosmopolitan metropolitan centres, many representations both include their colonial histories and also express how identity is multiple as a result of those histories. It is these texts I refer to as postorientalist. In an interview with Robert Dessaix (1994a) Rushdie says that we are
witnessing a permeation between East and West which is an effect not just of colonisation but also of the global village. He says that as abstract categories, East and West are discreet from each other, but cultures leak into each other and identities are multiple. There are no original cultures, just endless duplications and elaborations.

My thesis of postorientalism uses the idea of duplication, repetition and elaboration from James Gleick’s (1989) description of chaos theory. I emphasise that my use of chaos theory is not “scientific”. I use it strategically as a means to extend Said’s thesis of orientalism. Said postulates a fairly fixed world order, with a dominant West which has the power to represent a subordinate East. However, some recent representations that subvert that East/West order show that the elaboration of identity reaches across race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality. Such elaborations and changes occur through what Gleick refers to as the butterfly effect. Chaos theory postulates that any change to any system, even the minutest alteration, has far reaching effects. This is the butterfly effect. The butterfly effect is used throughout this dissertation as a metaphor for how cultural representations move around, influence each other, and change. There are many cultural myths that use the image of the butterfly. For example, Chapter Two begins with the masculinist idea of the butterfly-as-femininity-as-dissimulation. Chapter Three explores the myth of the Oriental butterfly, as exemplified in the Madame Butterfly myth, in texts that are orientalist, counter-orientalist, and postorientalist. Chapter Four looks at butterflies and eros in a selective reading of Salman Rushdie’s novel, The Satanic Verses, and the so-called Rushdie Affair. The whole Rushdie Affair has demonstrated how global the butterfly effect is in cultural representations. Chapter Five takes up and elaborates the effects of the political and cultural flows of the Rushdie Affair. That Chapter looks further at life in England
under "the iron butterfly", Margaret Thatcher. Chapter Six looks at what happens when chaos theory is invoked and used as a pretext for a text that is actually neo-orientalist, Bharati Mukherjee's novel, *Jasmine*. *Jasmine*, just like other orientalist texts discussed in this dissertation, uses an economy of needs and desires to naturalise, depoliticise, and romanticise the American Dream, the ultimate, global, hegemonic system.

In the last few years critics like Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Fatima Mernissi have introduced to the West deconstructions of the East, and others like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Aijaz Ahmad, Akbar Ahmed, and Salman Rushdie, have critiqued hitherto given world views, and offered new ways of representing and reading the world. All of these writers, and many more, show how the concepts and the words that have been used to describe, and hence reinscribe, the world have become increasingly inadequate. Terms like "The East", "The Orient", "Third World", "Asian", "Black", and/or "Woman", that are used to describe difference from "The West", "First World" (the "Second" is clearly in decline), "European", "White", and/or "Person" are in crisis. When I use these terms I intend to invoke the tense ambiguity that tugs at their meanings. That is, when I write, for instance, the West, I refer to a world order that is dominated by advanced capitalist nations that produced themselves by first producing the very idea of themselves as producers and custodians of advanced enlightened development. So the idea of the West depends on what Stuart Hall describes as a world view of "The West and The Rest" (1992b:275-320). Such a West/Rest dualism relies on the colonial inside/outside\(^6\) dialectic which, to use Gaston Bachelard's (1969:212) words, sustains a myth of alienation. Bachelard refers to a lecture given by Jean Hyppolite where Hyppolite speaks of "a first myth of outside and
inside”. He describes how a simple geometrical opposition of inside/outside “becomes tinged with aggressivity. Formal opposition is incapable of remaining calm”. Although the illusion of the innocence of such structures of formal opposition is broken, they are still used. Current studies in postcolonialism have provided a context wherein one can continue to imagine world literature and culture which is at once universal and particular.

The postorientalist texts I look at in the dissertation speak to both the East and the West at the same time. They are cultural amphibians (Said 1990:3). They explore the border zones of culture and identity. Lyotard writes that

an ‘internal’ peace [at home] is bought at the price of perpetual differends on the outskirts [the borderzones]. ... This internal peace is made through narratives that accredit the community of proper names as they accredit themselves. The Volk shuts itself up in the Heim, and it identifies itself through narratives attached to names, narratives that fail before the occurrence and before the differends born from the occurrence.

It is in the borderzone, or pagus, or on the page, or on the cinema or television screen where different discourses come into conflict. It is in borderzones that we conduct war and commerce. It is in the borderzones that “newness enters the world” (The Satanic Verses). It is in the borderzones that we find intertextuality in the forms of dream/illusion/cinema/narrative/newsprint/radio/gossip/scandal. Thus different realities are formed and circulate. It is also in the borderzones that we sometimes find cultural schizophrenia, living “here” with a memory of elsewhere. It is where actual travel, or travel as collective cultural memory, compels the psyche towards some sort of “return” that can never eventuate, either because the place of departure has changed or because nostalgia has distorted it beyond recognition.
POPULAR CULTURE AND DESIRE

In Orientalism Edward Said looks at the powerful discourses of "science, philology, and art" (1987:20). But Foucault (1986) warns against blaming everything on the domination of science and the bourgeoisie. He suggests, instead, an examination of the extremities of the tendrils of power, where we might find an insurrection of subjugated knowledges (1986). Criticising disciplines like "science, philology, and art" simply on the grounds that they are powerful actually serves to reinscribe them as powerful discourses. It does not tell us anything about how subjects are active agents in what Foucault calls a chain of power. An ascending analysis of power (Foucault 1986), from the apparently fragmented, minor, insignificant (in context of "science, philology, and art") instances of orientalism, that is, a genealogy, better serves to understand how and why more minor cultural forms are invested with and used by more global forms. Foucault writes that the bourgeoisie, since the sixteenth century, has been interested in retaining its dominance. The details of the groups it dominates are practically irrelevant. The European bourgeoisie does not particularly care about, say, the Asianness of certain others, but it does care about the existence of other centres of power. This dissertation is an analysis of instances of orientalism and postorientalism that are popular and do not fall into the big hard disciplines of "science, philology and art". It finds orientalism working in the ways Said alludes to and then ignores. He massifies orientalist representations without going into the infinitesimal details that work so strongly and that are not always so evil.

There is a close relationship between representation, gender, and the popular. That relationship is forged by who has the power to represent what for whom. Late
nineteenth and early twentieth century forms of capitalism and the mass media formed and reflected societies that were divided between the elite and the masses. The idea of "massification" developed in the early twentieth century, together with the West (as described above) in the elite position and the so-called Third World as the masses. So by injecting "popular" into a discussion of orientalism I intend to move beyond the usual textual analyses of Conrad, Dickens, Disraeli, Eliot, Melville, and Naipaul, towards a selection of recent texts that represent something very different again.

Women, natives, and others, as Trinh T. Minh-ha (1989) has crystallised, have gone from being bodily and geopolitically repressed and exploited, to being portrayed as eternal objects, rather than active agents of history. Much writing about "native" women who apparently bear intuitive truths has come to occupy a prominent place in the popular Western imagination. Without digressing into analyses of so-called New Age Consciousness, one can say that these women are seen to occupy another space, one that is essentially different from other representations of women. They are their female sexuality. And their version of female sexuality is seen to be either a collection of elaborate rituals which celebrate essential femininity, or primitive, backward, repressed, and seething. Either way, these women are represented as though they are their sexuality. These women are made to represent what I call orientalism.

Said's libidinal organisation of orientalism describes orientalism as passing through a latency period during which there was a thorough enculturation or naturalisation of the hierarchised differences between the West and the Orient. Said's writing, in a post-Freudian context, refers to it as "an unconscious (and certainly an untouchable) positivity" (Said 1987:206). He also describes manifest Orientalism as being "the
various stated views about Oriental society, languages, literatures, history, sociology, and so forth" (Said 1987:206). Latent orientalism remains more or less constant, as is evident in the survival of the Madame Butterfly myth, while the various forms of manifest orientalism change from time to time, as Chapter Three demonstrates in relation to that myth. Said refers to orientalism as being a "male conception of the world ... (where) women are usually the creatures of a male power-fantasy. They express unlimited sensuality, they are more or less stupid, and above all they are willing" (Said 1987:207). Chapter Three examines many representations of Madame Butterfly and finds that although they are mostly repressive, sexist, and imperialist, it is not enough to demonise them. We still need to examine how and why desire operates in such a way that something like the Madame Butterfly myth, an exemplary trope of orientalism, is still being used in one of the strongest forms of global cultural imperialism, the musical, Miss Saigon, while, at the same time, the same myth is being exposed and explored in David Cronenberg's film, M. Butterfly. To put it simply, orientalism operates as an integral part of Western desire. Chris Berry (1994:13) looks at the new topographies of desire that are represented in some of the more transgressive versions of Madame Butterfly, where

the "other" (or "object") and the "subject" constitute the two poles of the metaphor of desire as we now know it, with power concentrated at one of them only. ... the metaphor of the desiring subject and its other has become a generalised and hegemonic framework for reading the topographies of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality and all manner of identities.

Chris Berry writes about the relationship between economies of desire, imaginary geographies, and "new topographies" in representation of our experiences of the world. He explains that these new topographies are directly related to the forces of globalization, postmodernism, and postcolonialism that are reconstructing the world
order as we experience it. Berry writes that the global spread of postmodern consumer capitalism and the construction of identity are not formed or found around national production but rather in multiple niche markets. Asia's emergence as an economic center rather than part of the colonised periphery of the British empire, and therefore of Australia, has reorientated Australia's identity (Berry 1994:11). Chris Berry also indicates the importance of dynamic systems of desire and sexuality. Chapter Three refers to Dennis O'Rourke's film, *The Good Woman of Bangkok*, in which the role of the sexuality and identity politics of the ethnographer/client/filmmaker/subject is relevant to reconfiguring Australia's identity in relation to Asia.

Another clear, contemporary example of representations of sexual desire and racial identity politics, combined with the politics of imperialism in general and orientalism in particular, is found in Hanif Kureishi's body of work. Kureishi's work is interesting in that it is not only a popular body of representations that depict postcolonial Britain, but it is also part of popular culture itself, as it is where sex and politics meet (Simon Hughes 1997). Chapter Five examines his work and looks at how Kureishi's representations of difference in identity take gay sexuality for granted (Kureishi 1986). Sexuality per se is part of any culture, and, as will be shown in Chapter Five, in postmodern culture sexuality is commodified and circulates in pop icons like Prince and Madonna. And so, rather than taking gay sexuality, as seen in the film *My Beautiful Laundrette*, as a marker of overdetermined sexuality, it is heterosexual relationships, as problematised in the novel *The Black Album* when they impinge on so many other institutions and social practices, that Kureishi's texts explore. Chris Berry (1994:15) writes that
If one persists in viewing the world through the hegemonic metaphor of dichotomous desire in which one is only either empowered subject or disempowered other, ... (then) there is a proliferation of discourses around some of the individual features thrown up by globalization, postmodernity, and postcolonialism but a reluctance on the part of erstwhile subjects to remap where we all are on the new terrain, for we do not yet have an adequate new topographical mechanism to work with.

As postorientalism uses orientalism to explore and displace the East/West dichotomy, so too does it explore and displace (hetero)sexism that is inherent in the racism that runs through orientalist narratives. Thus postorientalism provides a “new topographical mechanism” that overcomes the impasse of dichotomy.

HYBRIDITY IN ENGLISH

Hybridity is not new. What is new is the concept of culture as hybrid, changing, dynamic, impure. Hybridity has been used in various ways, from nineteenth century expression of biological and botanical mixing and grafting to twentieth century ideas of racial and cultural mixing. Kureishi’s and Cronenberg’s texts explore racial and cultural hybridity and also express postmodern sexual hybridity. Robert Young (1994:4) writes that by the 1850s there were already those such as Herbert Spencer who were asserting that "progress consists in a change from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous". "Progress", in the nineteenth century climate of Darwinian evolution, was seen to depend on hybridity, adaptability, changeability. In 1861 J. Crawfurd (sic) writes that "at best we [English] are but hybrids, yet, probably, not the worse for that" (OED). Figuratively speaking, according to the OED, a hybrid is anything derived from heterogeneous sources. But the hybrid was also seen as a grotesquity, an aberration of nature, especially when it was found in other species and other (non-white) "races". R. B. Smith observed in 1878 "negroes from the Soudan, not such
sickly ... hybrids you see in Oxford Street ... but real downright Negroes halfnaked (sic), black as ebony" (OED). Rushdie's and Kureishi's narratives are filled with hybrids, such as "you see in Oxford Street". Their "sickly" characters are sickly in a parody of British representations of Pakistanis as idle and therefore prone to immorality. It was Margaret Thatcher's aim to restore Victorian values of hard work and domesticity, through national mythologies that defined Britishness (Chambers 1990:28) as a way of countering such sickly attitudes.

This idea of in-betweeness, hybridity, or multiplicity, is crucial when considering postoriental postcolonial diasporic identity as something dynamic, driven by a confluence of histories. And expressing that dynamism in English is no longer seen necessarily as capitulation to a dominating system, but as mastery of what has become a global system of hybridity. Salman Rushdie claims that "to conquer English may be to complete the process of making ourselves free" (1992:17). Problems surrounding the use of English by a subject that does not identify as English permeate Kureishi's (and Rushdie's) narratives. In Kureishi's book, The Black Album, Shahid, the central character, meets Riaz Al-Hussain, who is studying law. Riaz had migrated to England at the age of fourteen. Shahid comments that his English is so perfect that he "could feel the punctuation hanging in the air like netting" (5). Shahid's uncle liked to assert that the only people who speak good English now were subcontinentals. Rushdie explains that even though (or perhaps because) English has been the language of the colonisers, it is now a world language. He writes that

those people who were once colonised by the language are now rapidly remaking it, domesticating it, becoming more and more relaxed about the ways they use it - assisted by the English language's enormous
flexibility and size, they are carving out large territories for themselves within its frontiers" (1992:64).

What Britain, as the self-made centre of the West, is now giving birth to is its own mongrel (Rushdie 1992) bastard (Hodge & Mishra 1991) children. And now her children have grown up in the master's home, gone to school and university, and are shaping their own narratives and reinventing themselves. Chapters Four and Five look at how Hanif Kureishi and Salman Rushdie deal with hybridity and cultural diversity in different ways. As Sara Suleri (1989:608) says, "The Satanic Verses revels in cultural diversity rather than opting for a simple dichotomy between East and West". Both Kureishi and Rushdie look at what happens when the British Empire's bastard children, born from colonial possessions, articulate the life of old Empire's metropolitan centre as hybrid. They expose what Homi Bhabha (1995:111) calls

the reference of discrimination [which] is always to a process of splitting as the condition of subjection: a discrimination between the mother culture and its bastards, the self and its doubles, where the trace of what is disavowed is not repressed but repeated as something different - a mutation, a hybrid.

Thus the trace of British colonial control of India, a most intimate relationship, is not repressed but repeated as something else, something different. This is how Indian and Pakistani populations in Britain are seen as other, as if their existence in that particular geographical location is at best accidental or at worst opportunistic. England today, within the concept of "Great" Britain, is a product of its own imperial machinery. Kureishi's textual world is filled with people who are coming to terms with the inevitability of change and the productiveness of difference. He also deals with the social and political issues that surround British and Pakistani conservatism, greed, corruption, and the effects all this has on ordinary people, the disempowered, in Thatcherite England.
Among Kureishi’s Pakistani characters, there are those that have mastered the language of power and there are those that are striving to master the language of desire. Shahid in Kureishi’s The Black Album can be mapped onto Hanif Johnson in Rushdie’s The Satanic Verses. Both Shahid and Hanif work hard to master the “languages that mattered” (TSV:281), but only Hanif wants to master “vocabularies of power” (TSV:281), in the power-hungry orientalist sense. Shahid wants to learn multiple languages that speak of multiple desires. This notion of mastering the master’s language, and the frequent discontinuities between national culture and language and the subject’s culture and language, is theorised by Benedict Anderson (1994:316). He writes that

The nativeness of natives is always unmoored, its real significance hybrid and oxymoronic. It appears when Moors, heathens, Mohammedans, savages, Hindoos, and so forth are becoming obsolete, that is, not only when, in the proximity of real print-encounters, substantial numbers of Vietnamese read, write, and perhaps speak French but also when Czechs do the same with German and Jews with Hungarian. Nationalism’s purities (and thus also cleansings) are set to emerge from exactly this hybridity.

As evident in the growth of Islamic fundamentalism, “Mohammedans” are not “becoming obsolete”. However, the contestation over self-representation and Islamic resistance to Western cultural imperialism, as conducted mainly through the mass print and television media, is unmooring the moorishness of “Moors”. At first glance it appears contradictory that precisely when hybridity emerges as "normal" so too does the reassertion of racial/ethnic identity. A recurring question underlying Kureishi’s narratives is that if everyone is dividing up into different racial or cultural groups then where does one belong? The broader question is where do cultural hybrids belong?
The question of belonging for the hybrid is a wide cultural issue, rather than being a single-issue related to race or ethnicity or place/home. Homi Bhabha (1995) writes that the displacement from the (powerful colonial) symbol to the (ambivalent postcolonial) sign gives rise to a space of hybridity. He describes how it is in that space between the signifier and the signified that difference as hybridity occurs. This is how alterity is always inscribed in the self. This is how the self is othered.

Hanif Kureishi looks at how second generation Anglo-Pakistanis are forming their own messy cultural identities. Salman Rushdie also writes about the messiness of cultural identities. He writes the "fabulist historiography" of postcolonial India and Pakistan in Midnight's Children and Shame, "only to remind us in The Satanic Verses that the truest eye may now belong to the migrant's double vision" (Bhabha 1995:5). Neither Rushdie nor Kureishi look for a “truest eye”. Rather, they challenge the “truth” of tradition and cultural authenticity.

In “Signs Taken for Wonders” Homi Bhabha (1995) describes the presence of the hybrid as “irremediably estranging” in that it forces the “revaluation of the symbol of national authority as the sign of colonial difference”. The difference of cultures can no longer be easily identified or even seen clearly so as to be appropriated. Hybridity disrupts colonial representation. Through the hybrid, previously “denied knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority” (Bhabha 1995:114). Hybridity “is not a third term that resolves the tension between two cultures” (Bhabha 1995:113). Rather, it reverses the colonial gaze. Colonial domination was sustained through disavowal of its own impurity. Hybridity is a strategic reversal of the process of domination. This is clearly illustrated in Chapter
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Three in the analysis of David Cronenberg’s film *M. Butterfly*. It depicts the subversion of colonial power relations through the exposure of the French diplomat’s hybrid sexuality by his Chinese lover. The Frenchman’s disavowal of his homosexuality is crucial in his pursuit of “the perfect woman”, an Oriental Butterfly. Ultimately his Butterfly does not provide any depth or truth, nor does s/he resolve any tension between the Frenchman’s sexual preferences. Rather, s/he repeats all the Western, heterosexist discriminatory practices back to him.

Chapter Six looks at how Jasmine tries to be American and not a hybrid, as if the two were mutually exclusive. I show how the novel ignores white America’s double disavowal: of its indigenous people and culture, and its history of African slavery and immigrant programs. *Jasmine* upholds the American Dream: that anyone can achieve anything. The populist discourse that runs through *Jasmine* stands in contrast to the popular discourses in postorientalist texts. While Jasmine does everything she can to erase any messy identification that might detract from her ambition to be “American”, protagonists in postorientalist narratives de/inscribe “home” in new places and ideas, without forgetting where they came from, as it were, and without getting lost in nostalgia.

AT HOME IN DIASPORA

Salman Rushdie (1992:124) writes that the migrant sensibility is one of the central themes of this century of displaced persons. Migrancy, exile, homelessness, displacement, and dislocation are all terms one uses when describing diaspora. The OED defines diaspora as the dispersal of Hellenistic Jews outside Palestine, amongst the Gentiles. So, although the term is no longer applied strictly to Jews, especially
since the most devastating effect of the claims for a Jewish homeland in Palestine has sent millions of Arabic, non-Jewish Palestinians into exile, one of the strongest elements in any consideration of diaspora is the concept of home. Lyotard (1988:151) writes that the home, the Heim, is a zone or place where "the differend between genres of discourse is suspended". Lyotard's idea of the differend informs and elaborates ideas of the postcolonial and diaspora. Diasporic people often imagine "home" as being elsewhere. It is an idealised place that one dreams of returning to, even if that return is never going to eventuate. "Home", for the immigrant, is elsewhere when the "here" is fraught with conflict. "Home" (to substitute Lyotard's "genres" with "cultures") is a place in which the differend between cultures is suspended. Home is an imaginary place where there is no difference, no conflict, and no marginalisation. But after moving from one place to another, "migrants must, of necessity, make a new imaginative relationship with the world, because of the loss of familiar habitats" (Rushdie 1992:125). Vijay Mishra (1995a) writes that for many people around the world the concept of "home" has become "damaged". However, if the epistemological logic of postmodern identity as fragmented, changing, unstable, and so on, is the norm rather than the exception, then the idea of "damage" implies that there is an ontological "whole"; that there was something whole in the first place that somehow got damaged in transit.

It is in this gap between wholeness and fragmentation that the concept of diaspora (fragmentation) is tied in with the concept of the nation (wholeness). In order to look very briefly at the nexus between diaspora and national identity, insofar as national identity is an ingredient in identity politics, it is useful to look at Anthony D. Smith (1991:14). Smith foregrounds the need for an historic territory or homeland as
fundamental to identity. While Smith admits that there is not always a congruence between the state and the nation (1991:15), the primary position of homeland suggests that without a homeland one is somehow lacking in identity. This preoccupation with the gap between ethnicised or racialised identity and the actual nation one finds oneself in betrays a desire to have the two (the identity of the state and the identity of the body) actually match each other. Etienne Balibar (1991:73) describes national identity as being formed through narratives of nations and, as such, these narratives constitute a "retrospective illusion". This "retrospective illusion" is similar to Hobsbawm's (1994:1) "invented tradition" which is taken to mean that certain practices that are given ritual or symbolic importance are made to imply a historic continuity. Hobsbawm writes that the "nation" is a comparatively recent historical innovation. And so, paradoxically, modern nations generally claim to be anything but novel or constructed. Rather they claim to be "natural human communities that require no other definition than self-assertion" (Hobsbawm 1994:14). Balibar (1991:90) writes, in relation to the linear narrativisation through which nations and nationalism are constructed that, "we have to renounce linear developmental schemas once and for all". It is only through a sense of linearity that one can lay claims to a single home. But the idea of "returning" home, for most diasporic subjects, is what William Saffran (1991:94) describes as "a largely eschatological concept: it is used to make life more tolerable by holding out a utopia ... that stands in contrast to the perceived dystopia in which actual life is lived". He writes that "diaspora consciousness is an intellectualisation of an existential condition" (1991:87).
Successful nationalism could be seen as the completion of what Benedict Anderson describes as a project for "coming home from exile, for the resolution of hybridity" (1994:319). He adds that

If one migrated from a village in the delta of the Ganges and went to schools in Calcutta, Delhi, and perhaps Cambridge; if one bore the indelible contaminations of English and Bengali; if one was destined to be cremated in Bombay, where was one intelligibly to be home, where could one unitarily be born, live, and die, except in "India"? (1994:319).

And Anderson's "India" is an imagined, rather than experienced, place. It is "imagined through a complex of mediations and representations" (Anderson 1994:319). Anderson's "India" is, like Salman Rushdie's (1992), an India of the mind and Spivak's (1990:87) India as a “political construct”. Diasporic subjects carry around with them this imaginary home, even as they live fully as citizens of some other nation-state. Chapter Six looks at how Mukherjee's Jasmine strives to forget or repress her diasporic consciousness. Ien Ang (1993:35) provides a description that takes into account both the material and the symbolic aspects of diaspora. She writes that

Diasporas, then are commonly understood as transnational, spatially and temporally sprawling, sociocultural formations of people, creating imagined communities whose blurred and fluctuating boundaries are sustained by real and/or symbolic ties to some original "homeland".

Ang explains that any orientation towards a homeland is not a natural reflex. Rather, it is "a position of subordination in relation to Western hegemony, on the one hand, and the cultural absolutism of (Asian) Otherness on the other" (1993:37). Desiring to "return" to a homeland is often the result of the marked subject, whose body indicates a differend, being constantly asked where it is from. As Ang explains, "the question of "where you're from" tends to overwhelm and marginalise that of "where you're at""
(1993:33). Or, as Mishra (1995a:149) writes, the customary question in Bombay, "Where are you coming from?" always interpellates the subject in a schizophrenic social and psychological way.

Because home, to the diasporic subject, is largely an idea rather than a place one is at or will return to, then the idea of home lives on in the memory. Thus homeland is imaginary (Anderson 1991, Rushdie 1992). Memory can be for a home that one left behind in the past, or, indeed, it can be a socioculturally constructed memory that makes the present always seem dislocated; created in someone else's imagination. Rushdie writes that it may be that

exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge ... that our physical alienation ... almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands ... (1992:10).

Sociologists John Rex and Sally Tomlinson (1979:15) write that Asian (Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi) migrants in Britain have often expected to make economic and status gains and to accumulate wealth at any cost in the hope of eventually returning home. They add that in actuality these migrants become established and live permanently in a state of diaspora. The generations that are born in England form and renew their identities through not only family and public cultural forms (official markers of the nation) but also through transnational cultural forms that are embodied in film, television, and the print media. In other words, the diasporic subject's heritage includes "both a Bradford-born Indian kid's right to be treated as a full member of British society, and also the right of any member of this post-diaspora community to
draw on its roots for its art, just as all the world's community of displaced writers has always done" (Rushdie 1992:15). It seems that "post-diaspora" here would refer to British-born Indians, as they would have a stronger sense of not being just Indian, yet not being quite British. They would have a strong sense of their identity as being at once plural and partial (Rushdie 1992:15). Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* is precisely about migration and diaspora and the messiness of actual identities disrupts neat, linear narratives of identity.\textsuperscript{12}

CONCLUSION

There is still a category of crass orientalism (as strikingly evident in Chapters Three and Six) in which representations of Asianness or Arabness, or even Latinness or Southernness use particular images as metonymic for a whole range of characteristics-as-symptoms for a generic Asia, Middle East, Islam, Third World, South and particular kinds of people. These images appear in the popular media, in literature, magazines, advertising, film, and television. In the many ways that these "Orientals" are othered, they are variously demonised, exoticized, eroticised and/or romanticised. However, there are also texts that describe the world in a way that draws upon and then challenges any easy binaries like East/West or self/other.

Because we represent our world into being through the many narratives we repeat and elaborate, we make sense of our lives and give them texture through description. Rushdie says that "redescribing a world is the necessary first step towards changing it" (1992:14). and this is done by pushing the limits, challenging and changing not only the boundaries but also the imagined centres. As "we read the world" (Rushdie 1992:25) we are the texts we produce. Texts are "worldly" in that they are social,
historical, human events (Said 1983:4). And history is the history of prose; or rather of the "becoming-prose of the world" (Derrida 1976:28). So, rendering the world through representations becomes its own materiality (Aijaz Ahmad 1992:66). We can think abstractly about the world only to the extent that it has already been represented as abstract (Aijaz Ahmad 1992:66). Theories of representation invoke identity politics in that they beg the question: who has access to representation and is representation always necessarily based on a self/other dynamic? There are different possibilities, or possibilities of difference, that do not always further reinforce binarism. Those possibilities depend on who has the power to inscribe the world into their own image. Spivak uses the expression "worlding" to mean that our description of the world is not mere reportage, but that representational practice actually contributes towards making it what it is. She writes that

Our role [as custodians of culture] is to produce and be produced by the official explanations in terms of the powers that police the entire society .... . Our circumscribed productivity cannot be dismissed as a mere keeping of records. We are part of the records we keep (1988:108).

The keeping of records actually forms identity. Rushdie (1992) says that identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between them. And it is this sense of difference that makes some of the representations in this dissertation recognisable as postorientalist, and others as orientalist, as the latter hijack "difference" in order to speak of assimilation. I am not implying that the migrant story, as it has become a genre, is necessarily new or transgressive. However, many of the representations in this dissertation include migrancy or displacement as one of the many elements of what constitutes postorientalism. Edward Said (1993:xxix) describes contemporary immigrant settlers' national identity as being "too varied to be a unitary and homogeneous thing". There
are many "realities". An old static notion of identity that has been at the core of imperialism has been replaced by new and different alignments, or allegiances, that cross over borders (Said 1993:xxviii).

These representations I call postorientalist assert that hybridity of different sorts has always been the case. Or, as Said (1990:49) writes, "all cultural forms are historically, radically, quintessentially hybrid". Writers like Salman Rushdie, Hanif Kureishi, Bharati Mukherjee and indeed Said himself are from previously colonised places, have mastered English (language and culture), live in metropolitan centres, and write for and about themselves. They inscribe, to use Said's (1990) expression, voyages in, into the old imperial metropolitan centres from the colonial or peripheral regions of the world. They describe how identity is multiple and ever-changing, never fixed or final. Such identity is contrasted to the kind of identity that is sought by fundamentalists (of any sort) that demand identity to be essential, fixed, and ordained by God, State or mammon. Rushdie and Kureishi represent migrant identities as exemplary of postcolonial postmodernity, as the migrant's world is one that has been abandoned by God (as is relevant in Chapters Two, Four and Six). Thus, although the migrant-author has been abandoned by God, this does not mean that, as Foucault (1979) comments, biographical and psychological criticism is over, along with notions of the subject as originary or creative.

The questions now being asked explore the conditions and effects of the functions of the author. In other words, the author is involved in relations of power. And so, as I will show in the next Chapter, representations that deal with orientalism are marked by the social and political relations of their author. Chapter Three shows how the many
authors of the many Butterfly representations conduct various forms of colonial or postcolonial relations. Chapters Four and Five look at the Rushdie Affair as the exemplary case of the problematic political position of the author. Chapter Six problematises issues of authorial power relations in that it constructs Western visions of India/nness and America/nness and represents them through a fairly predictable realist migrant narrative.

The next Chapter looks at Edward Said's book Orientalism in terms of the technologies and ideologies of representation and the functions of the author and relations of power, as these issues are crucial to my thesis on postorientalism. It looks at how Said conflates orientalist texts with their author and finally points to how that impasse can be overcome so as to use the idea of postorientalism in a productive way.

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1 Mine is a hybrid blend of Benedict Anderson's (Imagined Communities) and Lacan's (Ecrits: A Selection).

2 Simon During critiques how “the West is modern, the modern is West” in literature in Ian Adam and Helen Tiffin (eds.), Past The Last Post (1991).

3 These sales figures and comments are taken from a telephone interview with an employee from Penguin Australia, Melbourne, on 4 February 1997.


5 My description of this sort of “reading” is taken from Roland Barthes' (1987:148) description of where the total existence of “writing” lies.


7 There are many critiques of how the term “Third World” was coined, circulated, and became increasingly invested with particular meanings. Edward Said (1987) and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (in Harasym 1990) refer to the Bandung Conference of 1955 as the occasion when the term, “Third
World” was first used. It included the independent countries of Asia and Africa that were at the conference. However, Aijaz Ahmad (1992:294-295) points out that Alfred Sauvy claimed that he coined the term in 1952, modelled on the concept of the French prerevolutionary Third Estate. It refers to the social groups other than the clergy (the First Estate) and the nobility (the Second Estate). That is, it refers to the marginalised strata of a large system. Since World Wars One and Two and the Cold War, the “Third World” has come to refer to nations that were not included in the capitalist First World or the communist Second World. They were the non-aligned nations of Asia, Africa, and South America. However, “Third World” is often used to imply that the nation in question, somehow by now inherently, suffers a whole range of conditions. Mark Berger (1994:258) writes that the term is closely related to concepts like “‘developing countries’, ‘less developed countries’, ‘underdeveloped countries’, ‘backward countries’ and ‘the periphery’”.

8 The idea of orientalia figures strongly in the Madame Butterfly myth in Chapter Three, and in Bharati Mukherjee’s novel Jasmine in Chapter Six. The concept of orientalia was the result of investigating the gaps and silences in Edward W. Said’s Orientalism in his references to "Oriental sex" which were not elaborated. The idea of oriental sex is crucial to texts which deal with (post)orientalism. So it is always already there as a subtext of orientalism. Orientalia is meant to suggest orientalism as a profound form of racism, one that resides in sexuality. It is justified by representing oriental sexuality as a formula of apparent perversions which are constructed as an essential difference between liberal humanist capitalist "us" and "them".

9 Or, as Homi Bhabha concludes his article on “The Third Space” (1990:221) “Great Britain ... might in fact be, after a decade of Conservative government, a rather Little country, a modest economic enterprise in Big trouble”. Britishness connotes the last vestiges of the British Empire in today's Britain as the hegemonic union of England, Scotland, and Wales. Robert Young (1995:3) writes that "the dutiful use of the term 'British' rather than 'English', as Gargi Bhattacharyya observes, misses the point that in terms of power relations there is no difference between them: 'British' is the name imposed by the English on the non-English". Salman Rushdie refers to how Margaret Thatcher reclaimed the Greatness of Britain after the Falklands victory, as it proved that the British were still the people "who had ruled a quarter of the world" (1992:92).

10 For a critique of General Mohammad Zia ul-Haq’s rule of Pakistan, see Rushdie 1992 pp. 53-55.

11 Salman Rushdie’s latest novel, The Moor’s Last Sigh (1995), does precisely that: it unmoors the Moorishness of Mores Zogoiby, called the Moor, as he tells the story of his life. His mother, Aurora, strives to capture the Moorishness of the Moor by painting the Moor in various ways: “Moor in exile”, the “dark Moor”, the “black and white Moor”, and finally the “black Moor”. Aurora had concluded by then that the ideas of impurity, cultural admixture and melange which had been, for most of her creative life, the closest things she had found to a notion of the Good, were in fact capable of distortion, and contained a potential for darkness as well as for light. This ‘black Moor’ was a new imagining of the idea of the hybrid - a Baudelairean flower ... of evil ... and of weakness" (303).

Thus Rushdie again, still, subverts romanticisation of hybridity as a new kind of otherness. However, finally while the Moor looks at and contemplates the Alhambra he reflects that the building is a monument “to that most profound of our needs, to our need for flowing together, for putting an end to frontiers, for the dropping of the boundaries of the self” (433).

12 Robert Young (1995:3-4) explains that in the nineteenth century the idea of a fixed English identity was produced as a reaction to the changes that were taking place in metropolitan and colonial societies. These societies were constructed as parts of an imaginarily homogeneous British Empire so as to counter the fragmentation that is inherent in any large body.
CHAPTER TWO

ORIENTALISM SINCE ORIENTALISM

One such butterfly, in transparent nudity, loving the duskiness of heavy
leafage, was called *Hetaera esmeralda*. Hetaera had on her wings only
a dark spot of violet and rose; one could see nothing else of her, and
when she flew she was like a petal blown by the wind. Then there was
the leaf butterfly, whose wings on top are a triple chord of colour, while
underneath with insane exactitude they resemble a leaf, not only in
shape and veining but in the minute reproduction of small imperfections,
imitation drops of water, little warts and fungus growths and more of
the like. When this clever creature alights among the leaves and folds
its wings, it disappears by adaptation so entirely that the hungriest
enemy cannot make it out. ... This butterfly, then, protected itself by
becoming invisible.

Thus Edward Said (1984:137) quotes from Thomas Mann’s “Dr Faustus” (1979:138-
139) in his essay “On Originality”, posing the question of whether authority derives
from producing “the true” or “the copy” (Said 1984:138). Drawing together nature
and language in his search for “originality”, Said (1984:137) writes that “The
butterfly’s cunning is a function of nature’s, and the idea of an unstable butterfly
resonates through Spitzer’s¹ speculations on the nature of language”. Said says that
“nature and language are orders of duplication” (1984:138). However, if they each
duplicate themselves then all we have is copies; there are no more originals. Jean
Baudrillard’s (in William Sterns and William Chaloupka [eds.] 1992) idea of endless
duplication is found in his idea of hyperreality, which effaces the difference between
nature and culture, the real and the imaginary. Said does not elaborate on whether
such duplication is dissimulation (especially in context of the duplicitous Dr Faustus),
or whether it is always a fact of representation. Said wonders if both nature and language duplicate themselves "naturally" or if they are both endless dissimulations.

Dissimulation in the above quote is invested in not just a butterfly, but a feminized butterfly. She is one that, as Said notes, foretells Adrian's seduction by a prostitute; one who simulates whatever he desires. While Thomas Mann's butterfly represents quintessential femininity-as-dissimulation, and femininity-as-prostitution, often butterflies in narratives are both feminized and orientalised (as I will show in the next Chapter). Despite her "transparent nudity" the butterfly is made to represent the essence of femininity as dissimulation, resembling nature with "insane exactitude", cleverly disappearing, becoming invisible. Like the most alluring Oriental seductress, she uses cunning to evade even the predatory voyeur. This is how she evades "the hungriest enemy", reflecting his fantasies back onto himself. She is attributed with being able to simultaneously disappear into nature and also attract the trained eye. She represents a fantastic point that hovers dangerously on the threshold between nature and language, or language and non-language, or, indeed, nature and non-nature. Her very existence threatens the boundaries between categories, thus making chaos possible.

However, it is vital to remember where this chain of dissimulation begins: in the observer's fantasy. It is precisely dissimulation that he desires. The butterfly, as an object of fascination, provokes ecstasy, but only insofar as the subject seduces himself. The butterfly is a representation of the undecidability of femininity and, from an orientalist's point of view, especially Oriental femininity or, indeed, the Oriental as
feminine. As Baudrillard shows, in an era of reproduction and simulation, everything becomes undecidable. In an era of globalism and mass communication, identities become undecidable. Thus East and West become undecidable codes that, at the most, flag fragments of histories and ideologies.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important texts that has enabled deconstructions of the East and the West is Edward Said's Orientalism (1987). Since it was first published in 1978 it has been widely used to examine how the West has historically represented itself and the East as West and East in particular, exploitive ways. It explores the particular self/other relationship between the West (as a sovereign self) and the East (as a colonised other), drawing up a historical account of how European imperial expansion dominated and controlled the East. Orientalism is about how the science that developed in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries went hand-in-hand with European construction of the East. As Roberts (1985 in Stuart Hall 1992:285) explains:

The conquest of the high seas was the first and greatest of all triumphs over natural forces which were to lead to domination by western civilisation of the whole globe. Knowledge is power, and the knowledge won by the first systematic explorers ... had opened the way to the age of western world hegemony.

In this Chapter I will look at the connections between the self/other relation between East and West and how that developed because of the development of technologies. However, the ways Said uses this history for his thesis is problematic at times, as I will show below. Said locates orientalism in Europe's scientific attitude toward Oriental languages (and, by extension, people) without exploring, as Benedict Anderson (1991)
does, the fundamental changes that took place with the appearance of the print media (the novel and the newspaper) in the eighteenth century. "For these forms provided the technical means for 're-presenting' the kind of forms of imagined community that is the nation" (Anderson 1991:25). Anderson locates the evidence of modernity in technology, not in particular peoples. When modernity is seen in technology then it does not carry a moral, ethical, or even political value. There is a vital connection between Said's deconstruction of the West and the East as concepts that underwrote imperialism and colonisation, and Benedict Anderson's description of how nations flourished as "imagined communities" during that same period, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Said's work sweeps along from Greek and Roman antiquity to the present without accounting for the significantly different discursive practices, as described by Michel Foucault. For example, Foucault (1986:34-5) says that grammar only appears to form a coherent figure from groups of statements. Such a group of statements may be "a false unity". Rather than seeking broad, coherent, simultaneous emergence of statements that form a discourse, Foucault suggests analysing the interplay of the appearance and dispersion of concepts. The emergence of diverse discourses around Orientalism indicate the diversity of imaginary relationships to the categories East and West and colonial histories.

From the early 1980s, when Orientalism began to be read extensively, to the late 1990s, orientalism has become a common term, used throughout many discourses and disciplines, from academia to the media. "Orientalism" as a common term now refers to almost any representational practices that depict a negative East in relation to a positive West. Many representational practices have shown an increasing awareness of
orientalism as they have dealt with emergent global, transnational, transtexual identities. Orientalism has so thoroughly permeated discourses beyond the ones Said refers to (anthropology, sociology, history, and philology) that even representations of a positive East and a negative West are referred to as “orientalism in reverse”, “counter orientalism”, or, as I will elaborate, “postorientalism”. The postcolonial, hybrid representations I look at in this dissertation are of postorientalist actualities, where culture is marked by migration, diaspora, exile, or dislocation. They use orientalism strategically as an oppositional reversal and displacement of Eurocentrism. Thus culture itself is diverse, not merely understood in terms of binary opposites. There are no “original” cultures, only endless duplications and elaborations; endless representations, especially in popular forms like spectacular novels, films, and live performances.

Representation, as endless repetition and elaboration, includes both the technologies and the ideologies that sustain each other as they are used to (re)produce the world in particular ways. Orientalist representations continue to depict East and West in particular ways that reflect and reinscribe particular power relations. However, although alterity is always embedded in these representaions, Said takes the alterity itself that characterises texts written by orientalists as generating "bad" representations. I will show how he fails to account for the fact of alterity in any representation. He also relates the rise of technologies of representation to the development of science, so the problem of colonial ideology ends up being displaced and conflated with almost any Western representation of the East.
In the Introduction to the book *Orientalism*, Said writes that "the Orient is ... (one of) ... Europe's ... deepest and most recurring images of the Other" (1987:1). This immediately interpolates Europe as self and the Orient as its other. It positions the Orient as a deep (repressed) and recurring (returning) phantasm that Europe constructed (imagined). In other words, writing in a post-Freudian context, Said writes that the West's construction of the East gathered strength during the acutely psychotic phase of the nineteenth century, when the tropes that identified the Orient imperceptibly became the cultural unconscious of the West's self-identity. Said finds these tropes in literary texts* where he looks at Western representations of the East and he looks at how they are produced and reproduced through stereotypical discourse. Said implies that the processes of subjectification are the same as the images that are identifiably positive or negative. In other words, if Said interprets an image as negative, he ascribes the negativity to the exteriority of representation itself. It is as if the exteriority itself is the reason for a particular text's degree of orientalism, or as if the act of representation is always the same as the act of colonisation. Said appears to conflate the technologies of representation (or exteriority) with power relations (or ideology).

After the publication of *Orientalism* and subsequent articles on Middle Eastern politics, there were many lively exchanges between Said and others about identity and self-representation in the mass media. One of those exchanges took place between Said, Robert J. Griffin, Daniel Boyarin, and Jonathan Boyarin through the journal, *Critical Inquiry*, in 1989, and it highlighted the difference between, and conflation of, technology and ideology.
Said (1985a) framed an argument about racism and Zionism around "difference", especially the difference between Jews and non-Jews in Palestine. He describes how that difference was mobilised to give Jews, "the Chosen People" a unique claim to "the Land of Israel" (Said 1985a:40,41). But Griffin writes that Said's claim that the distinction between Jew and non-Jew is racist itself, and that "the real question is not race, but nationality, and that it is precisely this Israeli self-definition that Palestinian ideology attempts to deny" (Griffin 1989:620). Without getting involved in whether Said or Griffin or the Boyarins are racist (in the same issue Said defends himself brilliantly against both Griffin and the brothers Boyarin3), what is (still) being contested is representation or, to be more precise, self-representation in a wide public forum, most notably the mass print media in the United States of America. Griffin describes Said's article as a "wilful misrepresentation" (Griffin1989:612) that resorts to "half-truths, misrepresentations, and open falsehood" (Griffin1989:622). But Said has the last word4 in describing Griffin as ""Griffin" ... a political invention", and invites him to dissolve himself as an enterprise and announce his withdrawal from a discussion he has degraded (Said 1989:646). In doing so, Said dismisses Griffin as a (dangerous) invention, a fictitious representation or representative of that very body, "the largest, wealthiest, and most organized Jewish community in the world - the one in the United States" (Said 1985:53) that the brothers Boyarin pick up on (Said 1989:630). Said writes that Palestinians were not legitimately represented and Zionists strongly opposed the Palestinians' right to represent themselves (Said 1985:51).
This argument between Said, Griffin, and the Boyarins (and countless others who "took sides") raged around two peoples, the Palestinian Arabs and the Israeli Jews. It was a contestation over the right to legitimate self-representation, both in civil government and in the mass media. This contestation over representation highlights some of the problems in Orientalism. In Orientalism Said conflates textual analyses with political analyses. While both analyses are vital to any understanding of power relations and the actual impact of discursive practices, Said's thesis in Orientalism claims to revolve around textual practices. To quote Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (1985:6):

language use signifies the difference between cultures and their possession of power, spelling out the distance between subordinate and superordinate, between bondsman and lord in terms of their "race". These usages develop simultaneously with the shaping of an economic order in which the cultures of color have been dominated in several important senses by Western Judæo-Christian, Greco-Roman cultures and their traditions. To use contemporary theories of criticism to explicate these modes of inscription is to demystify large and obscure ideological relations and, indeed, theory itself.

ORIENTALISM

Said defines orientalism as a field, or an academic designation. That large field is one that includes anyone studying or teaching the Orient in anthropology, sociology, history, or philology (Said 1987:2). Said also defines orientalism as "a style of thought" based on an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the East and the West, or the Orient and the Occident (Said 1987:2). Also, Said defines orientalism as a "Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (Said 1987:3). Said demonstrates how power relations between the West and the East are produced and repeatedly re-inscribed, or reproduced, in textual representations. He claims that such representations are never innocent and that, as

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Said writes, "Orientalism is a form of paranoia". But if there is no possibility of any representation being "innocent", then perhaps, indeed, Orientalism is a form of paranoia. So, orientalism is not about any verifiable actuality about the East or the West, rather it is about the ideas that generate certain configurations of power that determine the relationship between the Occident and the Orient (Said 1987:5, 1985a:90). This relationship has been discursively constructed historically and it prepared the field for, and became a consequence of, colonial relations. Thus history is not divinely determined but, rather, made by men (sic) (Vico in Said 1984, 1985) and geography (how we imagine and navigate through the world) is also constructed discursively. Having thus explained that discourses are constructed, politically motivated, founded on relationships of power, and, by invoking the idea of hegemony, suggesting that power is everywhere, Said goes on to use the same issue as the problem, as it were. This confusion flags a contradiction between postmodernism and humanism in Said's theory. Said comments that texts are not produced in a cultural or political vacuum. He writes that "no production of knowledge in the human sciences can ever ignore or disclaim its author's involvement as a human subject in his own circumstances" (Said 1987:11 - my italics). That is, the author's identity invests the texts he produces with politics. But if the intention of the author, as it were, constitutes "the relationship between knowledge and politics" (Said 1987:15), then how can Said also claim that

my concern with authority does not entail analysis of what lies hidden in the Orientalist text, but analysis rather of the text's surface, its exteriority to what it describes. ... Orientalism is premised upon exteriority (of the author to the actual Orient). ... The principal product of this exteriority is of course representation ... the Orient is transformed from a very far distant and often threatening Otherness into figures (referring to Aeschylus's play The Persians) that are relatively familiar (and) highly artificial. ... What is commonly circulated by it is
not "truth" but representations ... the written statement is a presence to the reader by virtue of its having excluded, displaced, made supererogatory any such real thing as "the Orient" (italics reproduced from text) (Said 1987:21).

At first sight, Orientalism seems to flirt with the idea of a postmodernist approach to textual analysis (looking at the text and not the author) without actually carrying it out. Said repeatedly insists that the Orient is much more than just an idea, that there is a "real" Orient (Said 1987:22-23), that the "idea" of the Orient is not innocent. His method is to "employ close textual readings whose goal is to reveal the dialectic between individual text or writer and the complex collective formation to which his work is a contribution" (Said 1987:24, my italics). So Said also wants to determine whether or not the writer of an orientalist text is also himself an orientalist, and to what extent his work contributes to not only Western representations of the East but also, perhaps more significantly, "bad" representations that were/are circulated in order to maintain Western hegemonic power. Said's emphasis on classical written texts and his avoidance of popular cultural forms means that he neglects performative representations. I will use Diana Knight's (1993) "chance encounter" between Said and Barthes to further this point.

Diana Knight's (1993) article, "Barthes and Orientalism", begins with a description of a photograph at the opening of Barthes' autobiography. It depicts him as the hooded and masked figure of the Persian King Darius in Aeschylus' play, The Persians. Knight uses this example to begin her discussion which looks at the problematic relationship between Barthes' writing on Oriental cultures and the ethical and political implications of Said's theory of orientalism. The problem is that Roland Barthes more
or less fits most of Said’s descriptions of orientalists, in his actual pursuit of, and in the
textual jouissance of, particular kinds of sexual experiences in Japan and Morocco.
However, as Trinh T. Minh-ha (1989:41) puts it, “he [Barthes] might be fetishist ... but
We love his fetishism; it’s intelligently written! and theoretically sound!” To repeat
Trinh’s reference to those in power, “We” could (perversely) read Trinh naively, and
explore why we indeed do “love” Barthes’ writing, then this problem throws open
Said’s paradigm of orientalism to include postorientalism. In other words, Barthes’
writing, however it may fetishise his experiences in the Orient, shows a sharp
awareness of the relationship between orientalism, travel, and the colonial context
(Knight 1993:619). For example, The Empire of Signs (1983) is itself, textually, as
minimalist and sensualist as the Japan it describes. Barthes does not act as Japan’s
interlocutor, rather, he describes the textual/sexual experiences that he shares with his
Japanese acquaintances.

Because modern orientalists worked textually, “Orientalism was fully formalized into a
repeatedly produced copy of itself” (Said 1987:197). However, Said later says that
people and cultures cannot be separated into Western and Eastern essences, as that
leads to "misrepresentations and falsifications" (1995:349). Yet “misinterpretations
and falsifications” are also representations. And so the Orient that appears in
Orientalism, then, is a system of representations framed by a whole set of forces that
brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness, and later, Western
empire (Said 1987:202-203). However, Said repeats a mainstream idea of the
expressive authorial subject (Michael Dutton and Peter Williams 1993:316), describing
his own methodology thus:
My principal methodological devices for studying authority here are what can be called strategic location, which is a way of describing the author's position in a text with regard to the Oriental material he writes about, and strategic formation, which is a way of analysing the relationship between texts and the way in which groups of texts, types of texts, even textual genres, acquire mass, density, and referential power among themselves and thereafter in the culture at large. ... Everyone who writes about the Orient must locate himself vis-a-vis the Orient; ... representing it or speaking in (sic) its behalf. ... Every writer on the Orient (and this is true even of Homer) assumes some Oriental precedent, some previous knowledge of the Orient, to which he refers and on which he relies. ... The ensemble of relationships between works, audiences, and some particular aspects of the Orient therefore constitutes an analysable formation - for example, that of philological studies, of anthologies of extracts from Oriental literature, of travel books, of Oriental fantasies - whose presence in time, in discourse, in institutions (schools, libraries, foreign services) gives it strength and authority (1987:20).

It is difficult to unravel what Said means by "the author’s position" because he also claims to look at orientalism as a discursive construction: "the ensemble of relationships between works, audiences, and some particular aspects of the Orient". Said conflates the discourse, orientalism, with particular authors, orientalists. He seeks out authorial intentionality, referring to an orientalist "style of thought", while also looking at textual production in a postmodernist sense, that is, that each text is part of larger cultural formations. This is where Roland and orientalism meet.

Roland Barthes (1977:145-146) explains that writing can no longer designate mere recording or representation; rather it designates a "performative" in which "the enunciation has no other content ... than the act by which it is acted". In other words all writing, not just orientalist writing, is "premised upon exteriority" as it excludes, displaces, makes superrogatory any "real thing" as the writing itself is the "real thing". The author is a modern figure, so it is no surprise that orientalism as a form of
representation is itself modern. As Barthes says, the person of the author gains importance with the development of capitalist ideology, where the explanation of a text is sought in the person who produced it, as if the writing were the author confiding in us (Barthes 1987:142-143). Ironically, Said's view of the author is premised on a Western humanist ideal that equates "the human" with Enlightenment, which was one of the central ideologies behind colonisation, which itself was driven by racist ideologies. In his analysis of the ideological impact of humanism on colonial control, Robert Young quotes Sartre stating that "Humanism is the counterpart of racism: it is a practice of exclusion" (1990:123). He also quotes Frantz Fanon stating that the Western bourgeoisie invites the sub-human "nigger and Arab" to become human (Young 1990:123). In which case, the sub-human is always becoming, and never quite achieving the same status. The ontological category "the human" and "human nature" had been inextricably associated with the violence of Western history (Young 1990:124). Said seems to constantly get caught in the very same criticisms he makes of orientalist scholars. His appeal to humanism, as the only apparent way out of the violence of binaristic systems, assumes its own centrality. Said identifies the "Enlightenment as an unified trajectory and master sign, of both Orientalism and colonialism" which he then employs, as "humanism-as-ideality ... invoked precisely at the time when humanism-as-history has been rejected so unequivocally" (Aijaz Ahmad 1992:164). However Said's methodological eclecticism can be seen as less a sign of carelessness than a shrewd way of manoeuvering within the powerful metropolitan circles (which is one of Ahmad's strongest denouncements of Said [and Rushdie among others] as a Third World intellectual [also a term he denounces but inexplicably uses]) (Timothy Brennan in Michael Sprinker (1993:17)).
Said’s use of humanism and transhistoricity make his description of orientalism and imperialism look like a “trans-historical totalisation of discourse” (Dutton and Williams 1993). And Said’s historical methodology, of trying to combine Auerbach (especially his Mimesis [1968], which is a sweeping account of European history from Greek Antiquity to modernity) and Foucault is not only un-Marxist but also radically un-Foucauldian (Aijaz Ahmad 1992:166). Said’s project belies the fracturing of history into what Foucault calls “epistemes”, or fragments of history, rather than history as a long, continuous, coherent narrative (Dutton and Williams 1993).

POWER/KNOWLEDGE

Said looks at how orientalism was produced as a discourse that produced its own knowledge and truth (1987:3, 94), using Michel Foucault’s The Archaeology of Knowledge (1986) and Discipline and Punish (1987). However, Said adopts Foucault’s method of critical analysis only up to a point. Whereas Foucault allows for the emergence of counterdiscourses beneath discourses of power, Said ignores Western discourses about the Orient that oppose and subvert rather than support Western expansionism (Schaub 1989). In an article called “Foucault’s Oriental Subtext”, Uta Liebmann Schaub explains that in the 1960s Foucault incorporated ideas from Eastern spirituality, especially Hindu philosophy, in his understanding of “the obliteration of the ego”. Along with Barthes and Derrida, those ideas of ego/centre became prominent in the writing of the Tel Quel group in its critique of Western intellectual traditions. Schaub writes that Foucault saw the Orient as inaccessible to the Western “mentality” and proclaimed its “unmitigating otherness”. Although
Foucault held on to those ideas of otherness, he did not flag any influences from Oriental philosophy. However, Schaub concludes that “Foucault’s Oriental subtext supports ... a critique of Western civilization as a whole” (1989:315).

Foucault’s theorisation of power relations looks at the question of subjection and the political struggles associated with identity. In Discipline and Punish he writes that “power and knowledge directly imply one another ... there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge” (1987:27). And it is in this context of power and knowledge that political struggles take place, especially in relation to identity. Foucault looks at how different kinds of subjects were produced through discursive and power relations.² Foucault’s argument is that nothing is outside power (Power/Knowledge and The History of Sexuality). Power is an ensemble of relations in which individual and social agents live and work.

Trinh T. Minh-ha (1989:41) asks "Can knowledge circulate without a position of mastery? Can it be conveyed without the exercise of power?" It is worth quoting her reply at length, as it flags the strengths of Orientalism in her "no" reply, and it indicates where to go from here in her "yes" reply:

No, because there is no end to understanding power relations which are rooted deep in the social nexus - not merely added to society nor easily locatable so that we can just radically do away with them. Yes, however, because in-between grounds always exist, and cracks and interstices are like gaps of fresh air that keep on being suppressed because they tend to render more visible the failures operating in every system. Perhaps mastery need not coincide with power. Then we would have to rethink mastery in terms of non-master (Trinh 1989:41).
We would also have to rewrite alternative relations to theory (Trinh 1989:41). Despite the automatic assumption that power is something always already negative, something that we would somehow want to "do away with", Trinh's reply to that pressing question is useful as it describes how oppositional forces "always exist" and that the failure to have totalising power appears "in every system". Dutton and Williams write that for Said "power is easily reduced, in populist terms, to an assumed commodity form which some possess and many others lack. ... (it is) (re)commodified ... as an essence or thing-in-itself"; it is "the product of a particular exchange relation" (1993:318).

It remains difficult to know precisely how Said uses Foucault's notion of discourse. In The World, The Text, and The Critic Said points to Foucault's flawed attitude to power ... derives from his insufficiently developed attention to the problem of historical change. ... (H)e does not seem interested in the fact that history is not a homogenous French-speaking territory but a complex interaction between uneven economies, societies, and ideologies. Much of what he has studied in his work makes greatest sense ... as part of a much larger picture involving, for example, the relationship between Europe and the rest of the world. He seems unaware of the extent to which the ideas of discourse and discipline are assertively European (1984:222).

Yet it is precisely what Said interprets as Foucauldian theory that he uses to drive Orientalism. That is, that there are several (albeit interrelated) histories of orientalist discourses; that all those discourses are not French speaking territories (even though Said does stress the importance of expansionist Napoleonic military and educational disciplines), and that orientalist discourses are (tautologically) assertively European. Later, in Culture and Imperialism (1993:132), Said writes that orientalist discourses
developed through historical writing, painting, fiction, and popular culture, and "Foucault's ideas about discourses are apt here". In the 1995 afterword to Orientalism, Said explains how identity is always a discursive construction, but then, in the same breath, states that it is bound up with social and political power relations (Said 1995:332). Said sees power as being always necessarily negative, unlike Foucault who sees power as being always everywhere, rather than being possessed and centralised.

Orientalism is a kind of representation that always involves totalising control. Thus the complex relationship between power and representation is evoked, but not quite clarified, in Orientalism. Hence Said calls orientalist representation a serious "misrepresentation". He proposes that

The real issue is whether indeed there can be a true representation of anything, or whether any and all representations, because they are representations, are embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions, and political ambience of the representer. If the latter alternative is the correct one (as I believe it is), then we must be prepared to accept the fact that a representation is eo ipso implicated, intertwined, embedded, interwoven with a great many other things besides the "truth", which is itself a representation... representations have purposes... "knowledge" - (is) never raw, unmediated, or simply objective (Said 1987:272-273).

Said's view of misrepresentation, according to Grewgious (1994), implies that the exteriority of the object that is being represented divorces it from a material reality, thus refusing to let that reality speak. Grewgious (1994:89) writes that for Said "the Orient is exterior to the representation that exteriorises it and at the same time interior to that representation, produced in its representations". In other words, the fact that the representation is not the thing itself but rather something constructed, or, in Said's
own words, "even occasionally invented outright" (1995:332), is what Said sees as the problem, as it were. In arguing for self-representation in "Orientalism Reconsidered" (1985) Said reconsiders issues raised by various groups that were analysing identity politics at the same time that he was writing Orientalism. However, to continue to agonise over sameness and difference, or whether or not a representation is identical to its object, avoids what Grewgious calls "the Derridean textual abyss" (1994:90). Nivedita Menon (1993) explains Aijaz Ahmad's "misrepresentation" of Said, using Habermas' criticism of Derrida (1987) writing that if representation is supposed to refer to and approximate a reality and it deviates, then it is indeed a misrepresentation:

But what if the very distinction between representation and reality is understood to be discursively constituted? The argument, therefore, is not that the line between representation and misrepresentation is very thin but that both are implicated within a discursively constituted context outside which the distinction itself between the two breaks down. ... within a context, it is possible to speak of something being misunderstood or misinterpreted. However, this claim cannot be made on the authority of some reality but only with reference to the context itself (Menon 1993:71).

The context of orientalist representation is not only racism, as Said claims, but also modernity itself; the industrial age of technological representation.

With the advent of the discipline of psychoanalysis that was led by Sigmund Freud, the age of representation is also the age of psychoanalysis. Sigmund Freud's theories of psychosis are also theories of interpretation and representation. The "talking cure" occurs through the textual processes of remembering and narrativising on the one side, and listening and interpreting on the other. As Allan Megill (1985:322) points out, Freud attracted postmodern intellectuals because he provided a pure form of, to
borrow Barthes' expression, the "pleasure of the text". Megill explains that the Freudian "analytic attitude" provides the detachment necessary to live with undecidability. Freud is not just an interpreter of dreams, or of the psyche, or of culture, but the interpreter as such (Megill 1985:325) of all experiences as interpretations of representations. Said is aware that there is no way out of representation and that, again as Grewgious puts it, there is no way of drawing a line between misrepresentation and representation. Grewgious points out that Said gets around this by using qualifiers like "almost", "commonly", "reality", and indeed "truth". Said uses these qualifiers in psychoanalytic references that point to latent and manifest orientalism. Latent orientalism refers to "an almost unconscious (and certainly untouchable) positivity" (Said 1987:206 my italics). Manifest orientalism refers to "various stated views about Oriental society, languages, literatures, history, sociology, and so forth" (Said 1987:206). Said claims that latent orientalism is constant, while manifest orientalism changes in the forms it appears in and in the orientalist's personal style (Said 1987:206). It was "profoundly conservative ... transmitted from one generation to another, it was part of the culture" (Said 1975:222), disseminated and forgotten. As long as orientalism, as a kind of psychosis, remained unexamined, it was inadvertently repeated. Repetition of such latent binarism maintains the status quo. Said (1987, 1985a) explains that the Orient and things Oriental were constructed by the West as being constant or frozen. The West, defining itself as being advanced, dynamic, and enlightened, was apparently in a better position than the East to represent the East (to itself), because it (the East) was backward and unenlightened. While Westerners considered "their own" texts in changing historical contexts (Said 1987 uses Shakespeare as an example), representations of the East have, according to
Orientalism, remained fixed once and for all time "by the gaze of Western percipients" (Said 1985:92). The Orient thus produced, as an object of the Western and elitist gaze, was not a free agent. European culture formed and strengthened its identity by setting itself off against the Orient as its Other (Said 1987:3). The orientalist Madame Butterfly myth, as explained in the next Chapter, repeats classical representations of the prototypical, fetishized oriental woman so that she remains in a "frozen opera", to use Michael Ondaatje's (1984:22) expression 11.

ORIENTALISM AS FETISH

The Orient, things oriental, or even just the idea of orientalness are often represented in a fetishistic way. In the anthropological sense of the word "fetish", oriental as fetish refers to how an oriental object or person (as object) is invested with a whole repertoire of qualities, and possession of the object or person gives the possessor the illusion of power over the Orient. A fetish is also an object of devotion. In the psycho-sexual sense of the word, oriental as fetishistic refers to how a fragment or a part gives the voyeur sexual gratification. Said writes that "the Orient ... seems to have its origin in a quotation, or a fragment of a text, or a citation from someone's work on the Orient, or some bit of previous imagining, or an amalgam of all these" (1987:177). Thus the Orient is imagined, or fantasised, as a fragment or a phrase that attracts and seduces. The fragment stands for the whole. Whether the object is a veil that stands for Islam/feminine sexuality/religiousness/licentiousness, or a rice-paper screen that stands for Japanese/ness/fragility/delicateness/minimalism, or a hook-nose that stands for Arabness/Jewishness/lechery, it is objectified and adored or abhorred. Whatever
signifier is used, it signifies a whole history of fantasies in representations. Said writes about how "metaphors of depth, secrecy, and sexual promise: phrases like ‘the veils of an Eastern bride’ or ‘the inscrutable Orient’ passed into the common language" (1987:222). Western orientalists saw themselves as having gotten beneath the films of obscurity (Said 1978:223). The orient was observed, sexualised, fantasised, explored, penetrated, and exploited by orientalists. Pre-Romantic, pre-technical visions of oriental splendour and cruelty were often expressed as a form of gothic, which expressed sensuality, promise, terror, sublimity, idyllic pleasure, and intense energy (Said 1987:118). Orientalists played with the Orient as something that is limited and also challenging (Said 1987:181). Said (1987:137-138) writes that

As a scholarly attitude the picture of a learned Westerner surveying as if from a peculiarly suited vantage point the passive, seminal, feminine, even silent and supine East, then going on to articulate the East, making the Orient deliver up its secrets ...

Each orientalist representation re-works and re-interprets the East. However, such representations are not about contemporary inhabitants of the actual world, they are about the orientalist’s fantasy and his “imperious consciousness”. The Orient is expressed as the weaker partner of the West. The Orient is both attractive and to be feared. It is sexualised as being either unbridled voluptuousness or as shy, demure, and vulnerable. It is a “male conception of the world” ... [where] women are usually the creatures of a male power-fantasy. They express unlimited sensuality, they are more or less stupid, and above all they are willing” (Said 1987:207). Said (1987:188) writes that “the Orient seems still to suggest not only fecundity but sexual promise (and threat), untiring sensuality, unlimited desire, deep generative energies”. Thus oriental
sex is not only fetishised but also made spectacular. It is made into a spectacle of the private. It is an escapist fantasy made up of cliches which include harems, princesses, princes, slaves, veils, dancing girls and boys, sherbets, ointments, and so on. The repertoire is familiar ... because ... the association is clearly made between the Orient and the freedom of licentious sex. ... For nineteenth century Europe ... the Orient was a place where one could look for sexual experience unobtainable in Europe. In time "Oriental sex" was as standard a commodity as any other available in the mass culture, with the result that readers and writers could have it if they wished without necessarily going to the Orient (Said 1987:190).

And now, in the late twentieth century, popular orientalism offers more of the same, as Australian men join their European, American, and wealthy Middle Eastern counterparts to take "sex tours" in South East Asia where they can cheaply buy men, women, and children. There are contemporary representations that either repeat this violence or problematise it. The next Chapter will show how the musical, Miss Saigon depicts America's involvement in the war in Vietnam as a "love story" between an American GI and a Vietnamese prostitute, thus repeating an orientalist representation of the world. The next Chapter also looks at how Dennis O'Rourke's film, The Good Woman of Bangkok, problematises the colonial and sexual relations between the West and Asia. Although Australia did not colonise South East Asia, as a British colony it largely (still) sees itself as Western, European, prosperous, enlightened, advanced, and so on, thus marking its relationship with Asia along colonial, orientalist parameters. The film frames Dennis O'Rourke, film maker and sex client, in the ambivalent position of being both exploitive and also benevolent. This ambivalence in the film introduces to orientalist discourse the possibility to say something new and different about contemporary representations of the encounter between East and West. Miss Saigon repeats the two orientalist categories of women: the good ones, who are mothers and
wives; and the bad ones, who are unredeemable whores. However Aoi, the prostitute who is *The Good Woman of Bangkok*, is represented as a complex, sensitive, intelligent woman, who continues to work even after O'Rourke tries to "save" her by buying her a rice farm. Thus *The Good Woman of Bangkok* could be interpreted as a postorientalist text.

**POSTORIENTALISM: THEORY**

Foucault (1986:118) says "each discourse contains the power to say something other than what it actually says, and thus to embrace a plurality of meanings: a plethora of the 'signified' in relation to a single 'signifier'". So the discourse of orientalism actually contains the power to embrace a plurality of meanings. It need not be interpreted in fixed ways. While there are many Western representations of the East that are clearly, unambiguously orientalist, there are increasing representations that use orientalist tropes to generate new meanings. Such texts can be called postorientalist. One of the postorientalist texts examined in the next Chapter is David Cronenberg's film, *M. Butterfly*. It repeats the "frozen opera" of Madame Butterfly, but only to deconstruct it.

Deconstruction uses a double gesture to overturn, oppose, and displace the system that uses classical opposition. That first step, or level, of reversal is inevitable, despite the fact that it does not really disrupt the field of oppositions. The next step is the displacement of the binary opposition and the reinscription of the opposition within a larger textual field that can account for nonpresence as other than lack of presence (Nealan 1992:1269). The practice of orientalism established a relationship between...
West and East as one of master and subaltern. Said's Orientalism has exposed that
binary opposition so that it does not get automatically reinscribed with each
representation of the East by the West. It makes possible the collapse between such
opposites. However, reversal of orientalism, or occidentalism, has also been used by
very conservative groups. For example, the notion of Japaneseness has been used by
the political far Right in Japan to assert the cultural and social superiority over all other
races (Dutton and Williams 1993:318-319). Also the idea of so-called Confucian
values as "truths", has been deployed in places like Singapore, Korea, Taiwan, Hong
Kong and Japan as a form of social control, obscuring the economic actualities of
global capitalism (Chua Beng-Huat 1990). Dutton and Williams (1993:319) say that
"to suggest that all sorts of anti-Orientalist discourses are ethically sound is to
reproduce the romance of the East on which certain variations of Orientalism itself
were and continue to be grounded". Because statements always stand in relation to
other statements in terms of power, thus forming discourses which are circulated,
repeated, and elaborated, Dutton and Williams suggest the usefulness of "an ethical
disinvestment of the term". This would prevent getting caught up in declaring what
representations are "bad" or not.

Deconstruction of orientalism as a textual practice displaces that mode of thinking that
gets caught in an impasse of oppositions, where East and West are seen as mutually
exclusive categories. For example Said (1987) points out that actual material
constructions (like the Suez canal) textualise the world, inscribing political and
ideological meanings, and written, spoken, or performed texts have actual material
impact on the world. Such texts, as parts of discursive formations, are not separate
from empirical reality. In his critique of postcolonialism, Arif Dirlik (1994) comments on how binaries like coloniser/colonised, First World/Third World, and "the West and the Rest" are a Eurocentric move to authenticate the globalization of cultural discourses, and as such, as long as we use those terms unproblematically, they serve to reinforce Eurocentrism. So the first level of deconstruction is to overturn the order of things, and the second level is double reading. The double reading occurs when "an outside or excluded term intervenes within the very constitution of a thinking of the same" (Nealan 1992:1279). Because this intervention occurs in different, not generalisable situations, undecidability remains as a condition of Derridean deconstruction. "We seem to end up in a mood of negative assurance that is highly productive of critical discourse" (Paul de Man in Nealan 1992:1270). It is this double reading that Derrida refers to as the unreadable:

The unreadable is not the opposite of the readable, but rather the ridge that also gives it momentum, movement, sets it in motion (Derrida in Nealan 1992:1271).

Rather than seeing undecidability as a negative condition, it is useful to see it as a condition of always further possibility of reading. When undecidability is taken as a failure or limitation of the text, with the critic wanting unequivocal reading possibilities, then what is being required is a totalising system, mastery over texts (Nealan 1992: 1271-1273). Nealan writes that for Derrida "the nature of the field ... inscribes difference within the heart of identity" (1992:274). But then he also writes that "undecidability is a consequence of the functioning of the general system, a system that is grounded in difference rather than identity" (ibid). The latter assumes, as Baudrillard does, that the Saussurian linguistic claim (that you can have a binary pair
whose elements do not jockey for dominance) is possible. Different elements are what they are by virtue of what they are not, or what others are. Hence irreducible otherness is always inscribed within identity. And so systems always have alterity. There is no master term; no terms that exists outside any system as a pure, positive term. Nealan explains that "undecidability comes about because systematicity is always already at work in the very constitution of supposedly pure ... concepts, those that wish to rule the chain, ensure its decidability" (1992:1275). As Nealan notes, "Differance", Derrida writes, is "a system that no longer tolerates the opposition of activity and passivity" (1992:1276 Note 4) or, as will be seen in the next Chapter, the simple opposition of straight and gay. Nealan also notes that Derrida argues that his "undecidables" - hymen, pharmakon, supplement, and so on - "mark the spots of what can never be mastered, sublated, or dialectized" (1992:1277 Note 16). There are many popular contemporary texts that are postorientalist, in that they repeat orientalist tropes but also indicate "spots of what can never be mastered".

Orientalism is a discourse that depends on and reproduces the opposition of activity and passivity, mastery and slavery. Let us consider the possibility that for Said the problem is the impossibility of escape from the East/West slave/master axis. The mere fact of acquiring knowledge (out of a position of strength) textually and reproducing and dispersing that knowledge institutionally is not the problem. Even with the example of Egypt, which can be interpreted in many ways, he falls into his own binaristic trap. He refuses to step outside the binaristic hermeneutic. Said explains that the long period of British rule was justified in advance by Orientalism, which was established by the French (Said 1987:39). Therefore "[k]nowledge of the Orient,
because generated out of strength, in a sense creates the Orient, the Oriental, and his world” (Said 1987:40). As long as the impression that binarism itself, epitomised in the imaginary division of the world into East/West, colonised/coloniser, and even female/male is maintained as the most urgent problem that faces humanity, then the impasse is insurmountable. The logic of binarism makes it so. Said explains the main intellectual issue raised by orientalism by asking

Can one divide human reality ... into clearly different cultures, histories, traditions, societies, even races, and survive the consequences humanly? By surviving the consequences humanly, I mean to ask whether there is any way of avoiding the hostility expressed by the division, say, of men [sic] into "us" (Westerners) and "they" [sic] (Orientals). For such divisions are generalities whose use historically and actually has been to press the importance of the distinction between some men [sic] and some other men [sic], usually towards not especially admirable ends. When one uses categories like Oriental and Western as both the starting and the end points of analysis, research, public policy ..., the result is usually to polarise the distinction - the Oriental becomes more Oriental, the Westerner more Western - and limit the human encounter between different cultures, traditions, and societies (Said 1987:45).

Humanity clearly is not itself divided into a single static binary system. The binary system Said refers to is the representational system which developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that represented humanity as "us" and "them". By early twentieth century East and West ended up being hard and fast categories that conveyed Western power over the East, that had the status of scientific truth (Said 1987:46). Thus "truth" was the effect of "science". Representation has depended on binaristic exclusion, and so what is represented is necessarily exclusionary. What has become evident in some representations is the self-consciousness of these processes and power relations.
This binaristic self/other established the self as sovereign, powerful, knowledgeable, and the other as knowable, as that which merely stands in negative relief to the self. While Said uses this self-West/other-East binary as the crucial fact that underlies the East/West relationship, Homi Bhabha explains that what is in question is not the ways that otherness appears in Western representationalist discourse, but rather, the mode of representation of otherness (Bhabha 1983:19 - my italics). Or, as Young (1990:141) points out, Bhabha sees Said's refusal to deal with the alterity and ambivalence of knowledge (the "manifest") and desire (the "latent") that inform orientalist discourse. The model of the West and the Orient that Said constructs is so hegemonic and instrumentalist, with power flowing in one single direction, that there is no room for strategies of resistance (Bhabha in Young 1990). Nevertheless, such a model is still useful for describing certain contemporary texts, like the musical Miss Saigon (Chapter Three) and Bharati Mukherjee's novel Jasmine (Chapter Six), as they both reproduce classical colonial orientalist discourses.

Said describes colonial discourse as being founded on and relying on binaristic thought. As such it would foreclose possibilities of ambivalence. Bhabha explains that it is ambivalence, however, that gives colonial discourse its historical longevity. Bhabha (1983) begins his analysis of colonial discourse with "fixity" as that which paradoxically connotes rigidity as well as disorder. Then "the stereotype" also depends on both what is known and in place (rigidity), and that which must be anxiously repeated. It is "ambivalence" that ensures repeatability in changing historical circumstances. Ambivalence ensures the repeatability of the stereotype. It "informs its strategies of individuation and marginalisation; (it) produces that effect of probabilistic
truth and predictability which, for the stereotype, must always be in excess of what can be empirically proved or logically constructed" (Bhabha 1983:18). So ambivalence actually informs colonial discourse. It was binaristic thought that produced the orientalist Madame Butterfly stereotype and it is still being anxiously repeated one hundred years later (Chapter Three). However, there are some postorientalist representations, like David Cronenberg's film of David Henry Hwang's play, M. Butterfly, that parody the excesses suggested by that same orientalist myth. M. Butterfly expands the racial/sexual paradigm of orientalism to include gender and sexuality. Homi Bhabha looks at how racial and sexual difference is inscribed bodily and circulates discursively in an economy of pleasure and desire, domination and power, and fear and repulsion. The moment of colonial discourse occurs when

the epithets racial or sexual come to be seen as modes of differentiation, realised as multiple, cross-cutting determinations, polymorphous and perverse, always demanding a specific and strategic calculation of their effects (Bhabha 1983:19).

Hanif Kureishi's books and films (Chapter Five) expose racial and sexual modes of differentiation as they cut across Margaret Thatcher's Britain. He exposes the perversity of racism by taking gay and lesbian sexuality for granted. Said mentions the nexus between racial and sexual modes of differentiation, but focuses on the racial. The sexual is referred to in the ways Oriental imaginative geography was constructed as

the space of weaker or underdeveloped regions like the Orient was viewed as something inviting French interest, penetration, insemination - in short, colonisation. Geographical conceptions, literally and figuratively, did away with the discrete entities held in by borders and frontiers (Said 1987: 219).
Perhaps, more accurately, geographical conceptions reinforced what were considered to be discrete entities within borders and frontiers. And it was the transgression of those borders by the active logocentric European man; it was the whole paradigm of the world as being divided along an East/West axis that defined the hermeneutic relation between orientalist and Orient (Said 1987:222).

There are popular representations that transgress that hermeneutic. Chapter Three contrasts orientalist and postorientalist representations that deal with the same issues. It looks at how the construction and maintenance of the Madame Butterfly myth went hand in hand with French and later American colonial expansion. Many representations of Madame Butterfly very clearly represent the Japanese/Asian/others as "them" who were contrasted with "us" European/civilised/selves. That Chapter also looks at a contemporary subversion of the Madame Butterfly myth. The subversion is achieved by playing around with familiar existing categories such as race, culture, gender, sexuality, and nationalism. It explains colonial discourse back to the coloniser. Homi Bhabha explains that colonial discourse, as an apparatus of power, depends on the "recognition and disavowal of racial/cultural/historical differences. ... (It) construe(s) the colonised as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction" (1983:23). M. Butterfly shows the French diplomat, the one who believed the Butterfly Myth, as the degenerate type.

Said argues that orientalism informed all the major institutions that produce our imaginary world. And I argue that it largely still does, albeit in often transgressive
ways. And it is those transgressive postorientalist representations that indicate shifts in power relations between East and West. Benedict Anderson (1991) describes how communities are always necessarily imagined because nobody can know everyone else in the community they live in. While Anderson's use of the imaginary is as a technology, or a technique, Said uses the colonial imaginary as always already negative, because it (the imaginary/representation) can never match up to the material world it purports to describe. And so Said's links between universities, technologies, and communities end up leaving no room for alternative ways of thinking about power relations. Historiography, as a practice that materialises communities, nations, indeed the world, unfolds as a particular kind of representation, and that representation is as much about relations of power as it is about inert facts. For instance, one of the effects of the Islamic invasions of the Roman Empire from the seventh century was the shifting the centre of European culture from the Mediterranean, which was an Arab province, towards the Germanic North (Said 1987:70-71). So the history of Europe is also the history of orientalism. Europe developed its identity by virtue of it not being oriental. Thus the Orient and things oriental stood for that which is not Europe. As this Romano-Germanic civilisation developed, Europe began to "shut in on itself: the Orient, when it was not merely a place in which one traded, was culturally, intellectually, spiritually outside Europe and European civilisation" (Said 1987:71). However, Said uses this historic development to assert that "(i)maginative geography ... legitimates a vocabulary, a universe of representative discourse peculiar to the discussion and an understanding of Islam and of the Orient" (Said 1987:71). And I would argue that is precisely what representation is. Whether representation is in the domain of science or drama, it creates certain imaginative geographies. Whether these
imaginations are "good" or "bad" is another story. Said takes issue that the language that is used in orientalist discourse does not even try to be "accurate" (Said 1987:71). When considering representationalism, accuracy to an outside, empirical world is not necessarily relevant. What is relevant is its own consistency. It employs a system of representation that is similar to Realism; it constitutes itself as a regime of truth (Bhabha 1983:23). Said refers to how orientalism is a form of "radical realism; ... (it is) absolutely anatomical and enumerative" (Said 1987:72). It is the discourse's own radical realism that, with each repetition, accrues more truth value. And when discursive constructs and material constructions reflect one another, as in the case of the Suez Canal and orientalist thought, then the project is totalising. Another example of such a project is the musical Miss Saigon, discussed in Chapter Three. Miss Saigon springs from orientalist tropes that are so profoundly entrenched that it flaunts its own orientalism. Orientalist projects create and maintain a language, a discourse, that denoted the orientalist's power, and not the people as humans or their history as history (Said 1987:87). Said describes "a textual attitude" as a way of apprehending the real world through texts. It is a way of avoiding the messiness of the real world. If the text happens to reinforce what one has read, then it accrues truth value.

(S)uch texts can create not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe. In time such knowledge and reality produce a tradition, or what Michel Foucault calls a discourse, whose material presence or weight, not the originality of a given author, is really responsible for the texts produced out of it (Said 1987:94 - second italics mine).

However, in the realm of representation (and that includes Orientalism), there is no "reality" that is outside the text. There is only an infinite chain of representation and interpretation13. Yet Said implies that it is the condition of textuality that embodies
"attitude". Said (1987:96) describes how these textual practices, this orientalism, "overrode the Orient". And the ideas that were established through orientalist discourse became complicit with politics and culture. Robert Young (1990:127) analyses this problem and writes that yes, there is a "deep complicity of academic forms of knowledge with institutions of power", and also adds that "all knowledge may be contaminated". Although orientalist textual practices have had very real material repressive effects on colonised peoples, the generalisations that Said makes about representation itself are very contentious.

There is no doubt that the relationship between the West and the East was that of master-slave\textsuperscript{14}. Stuart Hall (1992b:294) explains how "the discourse of "the West and the Rest" could not be innocent because it did not represent an encounter between equals". However, Bhabha problematizes this sort of interpretation of power/discourse. Homi Bhabha writes that the productivity of Foucault's concept of powerknowledge lies in its refusal of an epistemology which opposes, in a symmetrical or dialectical relation, essence/appearance, ideology/science, self/other, masterslave, which can be subverted when it is inverted. So it is difficult to see how the subject is dominated without the dominant being also strategically placed (Bhabha 1983:24-25). Once he invites the idea of colonial discourse as a technology, Said does not extend instrumentalist notions of powerknowledge. Orientalism implies that power gained from knowledge is always already "bad". And it implies, by extension that science (as technology and disciplines like philology) is always "bad".
From the late decades of the eighteenth century, with the development of philology as a science, orientalism treated the Orient as being linguistically important to Europe, and Europe divided and subdivided its subject matter, based on an unchanging object (Said 1987:98). Language and race were inextricably tied and, as far as the colonisers were concerned, the "good" Orient was locatable in a classical period of past glories, and the "bad" Orient was evident in the corrupted contemporary forms of political unrest and squalor. The next three Chapters question the divide between good and bad, past and present, playing with the language and race of the coloniser and the colonised. They look at texts that move beyond the hermeneutic trap of Orientalism by articulating the complexity of global cultural relations in a postorientalist context.

Said explains how "a white middle-class Westerner believes it his human prerogative not only to manage the nonwhite world but also to own it, just because by definition "it" is not quite as human as "we" are" (Said 1987:108). In looking at how the stereotype functions in colonial discourse, Homi Bhabha explains how Frantz Fanon's Black Skin White Masks (1991) uses the disavowal of difference to turn the subject into "a misfit - a grotesque mimicry or 'doubling' that threatens to split the soul and whole, undifferentiated skin of the ego" (Bhabha 1983:27). The stereotype that depends on a primordial Either/Or "impedes the circulation and articulation of the signifier of 'race' as anything other than its fixity as racism. We always already know that blacks are licentious, Asiatics duplicitous ... (Bhabha 1983:27-28). M. Butterfly, in the next Chapter, subverts these stereotypes by repeating them self-consciously.
Nineteenth century Europe had a vision of Europe being regenerated by Asia. Both concepts "Europe" and "Asia" turn vast geographical areas into treatable and manageable entities, thus making them our Europe and our Asia (Said 1987:115). But, despite the Eurocentric "will to power", "Europe was not about to fuse itself democratically with yellow or brown Asians" (Said 1987:118)\textsuperscript{15}. In the next Chapter Miss Saigon demonstrates how although the American presence in Vietnam is (perversely) turned into a sympathetic relationship between nations, Vietnamese children born of American fathers are still referred to as Amerasians. They are "ours" as belongings but they are not like "us" unqualified Americans.

CONCLUSION

Said's main thesis is two-pronged. At first sight it appears to be contradictory. As I pointed out earlier, it can look as though Said uses the idea of postmodernism (looking at the text and not the author) while also critiquing the motives of the author. But, as Homi Bhabha (1983) explains, Said uses both stances to strengthen his case. That is, there were these different things going on (a textual production of the Orient and colonisation) and orientalist scholarship did serve imperialist ideologies. Orientalism depersonalised the Orient in the manner in which it textualized it.

The texts I examine in this dissertation range from those that are unconscious of their own (orientalist) practices to those that consciously construct themselves as critiques of orientalism. Those that are conscious of orientalism are also (unsurprisingly) conscious of other forms of repression. Chapters Four and Five take Orientalism for granted, as it were. Hanif Kureishi and Salman Rushdie textualise a world that is the
hybrid product of Western colonialism and orientalist practices. It is a world that is one, not something that is made up of a First and Third Worlds or easily discernible and separate entities called East and West. One example of the orientalist Madame Butterfly myth I cite in Chapter Three is a self-conscious construction of a hyper-orientalised oriental-feminine-as-abject that transgresses orientalist representations of Madame Butterfly. It subverts the West’s historically dominant position in representation of what happens when East meets West. It also describes how profoundly conservative representations of Madame Butterfly have been. They have become such a naturalised part of Western culture that the same myths are being used today in popular cultural forms, as in the musical Miss Saigon. What Said refers to as a problem is that the Orient was reproduced as a spectacular form (Said 1987:189) rather than some sort of accurate portrayal. However, as stated earlier, the question is not so much about empirical accuracy, but rather who has the power to represent themselves and others.

In Edward Said's Orientalism it is difficult to determine if orientalism is seen as a psychosis or as a description of how the West came to terms with itself in relation to the East. The confusion springs from uncertainty as to why Said uses psychoanalytic references. Psychoanalytic terms have been useful to describe how psychological experiences are processed, condensed, displaced, and elaborated, in order to make representation possible. The kind of Orient that was constructed in Western consciousness sprang from repressed (subconscious) fears and desires, insecurities and insights, that Europe had about its own identity. The Orient and things oriental were also desired as that (sensuality) which was repressed in nineteenth century Europe. So
orientalism could be seen as a condition that presented itself as a neurosis. But, as Freud (1942) claims, the actual world is ruled by overdetermination, displacement, and substitution. Neuroses are not necessarily "bad". The world is governed by varying degrees of "queerness". Said (1987) writes that, for the eighteenth and nineteenth century, "the Orient becomes a living tableau of queerness". He even describes orientalism as a "closet drama". The next Chapter looks at how an Asian (the generic Asian is intended) exploits a French man's orientalist attitude to construct his own Asianness as so utterly queer that he is able to masquerade and manipulate their queer sexual relations.

Just as Said describes orientalism as having a "line of descent from Lane ... (to) ... Rudyard Kipling" (1987:224), Chapter Six shows how Bharati Mukherjee traces a line of descent from Victorian English novels to contemporary globalism, which could also be seen as American imperialism. In the twentieth century there is an "intellectual imperialism" (Said 1987:245), a cultivated flow of advanced technological, political, and cultural ideas, flowing from West to East. Said later reflects on how this kind of imperialism culminated and solidified in European, or Western, historicism, and how it has developed enough to include antithetical attitudes, like critiques of imperialism, on the one hand while continuing imperialism by direct (territorial) or indirect (cultural) means (1985a:101). Orientalism founded world history itself by maintaining "latent epistemological critiques of the institutional, cultural, and disciplinary instruments linking the incorporative practice of world history with partial knowledges like Orientalism ... and ... continued "Western" hegemony" (1985a:102). Said writes that the apocalypse to be feared was not the destruction of Western civilisation but rather
the destruction of the barriers that kept East and West from each other (1987:263). What was feared the most was contamination, the blurring of boundaries. In Miss Saigon the children were represented as contaminated. They threatened the boundaries between West and East.

In the following Chapters, I will look at a variety of representations that deal with the concepts and lived realities of East and West in the context of postmodern globalism. The influence of the West on the East is such that "the modern Orient ... participates in its own Orientalising" (Said 1987:325). Said's final words are to beware not to replace Orientalism with Occidentalism (Said 1987:328). The next Chapter explores the possibility of falling into occidentalism in its analysis of the Western man's role in relation to his Oriental butterfly. To modify Said's statement, that "for Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma" (Said 1987:59), one could say that today, for the West Islam is an ongoing trauma. This is happening in a climate where economic power is not only inseparable from cultural and political power, but it is upheld in a kind of economic fundamentalism.
1 Spitzer was a prominent philologist who gets mentioned in *Orientalism* (1984:258).


5 Any broad genderisations are intentional, advisedly repeating Said's use of masculine pronouns.

6 A good example that illustrates what *Orientalism* loses in this approach is the way it vilifies Sir Richard Burton together with all his work. Burton's translation of *The Book of the Thousand and One Nights* (1950, first publ. 1855) has been described as "wonderful" by Fatima Mernissi, a prominent Islamic feminist (1994:14). Mernissi shows astonishment that western scholars have scorned Burton's work. Although Said states that Antoine Galland was the first European to translate *The Thousand And One Nights* it is commonly held that Burton rescued the scattered and fragmented stories from possibly being lost. Mernissi uses Burton's translation throughout her autobiography, *The Harem Within* (1994, Doubleday, London). Just as *Orientalism* expresses disdain for Burton's work on the grounds that it is highly sexual, thus exposing its own discomfort with sexuality, so too does Rana Kabbani's *Europe's Myths of Orient* (1988, Pandora, London), which, with much disapproval, goes into detailed descriptions of Burton's activities as a member of one of London's leading sadomasesochists clubs.

7 This parallels Homi Bhabha's ideas of mimicry in "Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse" in *The Location of Culture*, 1994, Routledge, London, pp. 85-92. Bhabha writes: "What I have called mimicry is not the familiar exercise of dependent colonial relations through narcissistic identification so that, as Fanon has observed, the black man stops being an actional person for only the white man can represent his self-esteem. Mimicry conceals no presence of identity behind its mask .... The menace of mimicry is its double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority" (88).

8 See "Disorienting Orientalism" In *White Mythologies*, Robert Young (1990), for an analysis of the problems in Said's theory, especially in the way Said pretends to be Foucauldian while actually assuming a humanist position. This, Young writes, reflects the deep complicity of academic forms of knowledge with institutions of power.


10 See Mahmut Mutman's PhD thesis, "Under the sign of Orientalism (colonialism)", University of California, Santa Cruz, 1992 for an analysis of how the survival of orientalist assumptions have produced antagonistic images of Islam.

11 Ondaatje begins a quest to understand his Sri Lankan past by going there to uncover stories about his parent's generation; "those relations from my parents' generation who stood in my memory like frozen opera. I wanted to touch them into words". Thus he could understand, amongst other things, his father's alcoholism, so as not to repeat his psychoses.

12 Ann Laura Stoler (1991) elaborates on gender specific sexual relations and prohibitions defined in positions of power and personal and public boundaries of race (51-101). She writes that "the markers
for European identity ... no longer appear as fixed but emerge as a more ambiguously fluid, permeable, and historically disputed terrain. ... Colonial control was predicated on identifying who was "white" and who was "native" (53).


14 For an interesting analysis of Hegel's proposal of the master/slave dialectic relationship see Gadamer (1976) Hegel's Dialectic, pages 67-69, where he looks at that relationship as depending on the shifting self-consciousness of the master and the slave (or the servant). This will be taken up in the next Chapter where I will discuss "self-orientalization".

15 Today, Australia seems to be caught in the same dilemma. Asia as a market would regenerate the Australian economy, but conservative ideologues ask do "we" want to change the image of "Australian" from white European to yellow or brown Eurasian?
CHAPTER THREE

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF MADAME BUTTERFLY

The last Chapter showed how Said's writing exposes the ways in which the West has historically constructed itself and the East through particular representational practices. It showed how representation escalated as a material practice specifically during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with modernity, and it suggested that the discourse of modernity is a Western discursive practice. This Chapter will look at the Madame Butterfly myth as an exemplary way of tracing the repetitions and elaborations of the orientalist trajectory of the representation of Oriental woman/Western man and the world order they are made to represent. Throughout that trajectory, the strongest elements of the myth have remained the same while some historical details have changed.

INTRODUCTION

I will look at the Madame Butterfly myth as an orientalist intertext, using Pierre Loti's 1887 text, Madame Chrysanthème (1973) as the originary nineteenth century text, and Boublil and Schonberg's musical, Miss Saigon (1989), as the most contemporary text of the Madame Butterfly narrative. The first text inspired subsequent texts, right through to today, when its basic premises are being unquestioningly re-performed. Nevertheless, there have been significant challenges to the adequacy of the Madame Butterfly myth as a clichéd way of explaining (reproducing) the apparent differences between East and West, and male and female (although different versions of the story
often subsume one set into another). One of the most significant disruptions of the Madame Butterfly story has been David Henry Hwang's play *M. Butterfly*, and David Cronenberg's film of the same name\(^3\), based on the play. *M. Butterfly* subverts common orientalist representational practices. Or, as Wenwei Du (1992) puts it, *M. Butterfly* manipulates the stereotypes that Madame Butterfly had created and presented without question or modification.

In the last hundred years the story of Madame Butterfly has been repeated and elaborated. My use of an unspecified Madame Butterfly parallels and demonstrates the generic, or popular, use of the term that has become mythical. By mythical I mean in the sense that Roland Barthes (1989) explores the idea of mythologies. The "Translator's Note" of *Mythologies* explains how Barthes analyses mythology as spectacle and gesture, in action and representation, and through that Barthes looks at the relations between the abstract and the concrete. In this Chapter I will be looking at different spectacles of Madame Butterfly. In the final section of *Mythologies*, "Myth Today", Barthes writes that "myth is a type of speech chosen by history: it cannot possibly evolve from the "nature" of things" (1989:118). He writes that "(i)t is this constant game of hide-and-seek between the meaning and the form which defines myth" (Barthes 1989:128). The Butterfly moves and reverberates, constantly reforming the meaning and the form of the myth.

In an article that deals with style and genre in a particular production of Puccini's opera, Maria Shevtsova (1995) writes how Butterfly has shifted from Puccini's "Madama" to "Madame" as indicative of a change of society where appropriation is an
inherent part of intercultural transactions. The transactions that surround Madame Butterfly are not only intercultural but also intergeneric and intertextual. Madame Butterfly circulates, moving between cultures, genres, and genders.

The first Madame Butterfly story appears to be the novel Madame Chrysanthème (which was first published in 1887) by Pierre Loti (pseudonym of Louis-Marie-Julien Viaud)⁴. As a naval officer, Loti went to the Middle and Far East and the Pacific, places that provided him with "exotic" adventures and material for his writing. He was a prolific writer who was widely read. Madame Chrysanthème was based on the autobiographical detail of his short stay in Japan as a Naval Officer, and his contract marriage in Nagasaki⁵. After the publication of Madame Chrysanthème a story called "Madame Butterfly", by John Luther Long, was published in Century Magazine (1887)⁶. From this story the American playwright and producer, David Belasco, created a one-act play, Madame Butterfly, which opened in New York in 1900. Apparently, Puccini saw the play in London and wrote the three-act opera, Madama Butterfly. It was first performed on February 17, 1904. The initial reception of the opera was so negative that it became successful only after it had been radically reworked and performed at La Scala in Milan in 1904.

By the middle of the twentieth century the Madame Butterfly myth had gained tremendous popularity and, with the advent of each new mass media technology, the story, the music, the images proliferated. Amongst those productions there was the Hollywood film, The Barbarian and The Geisha (1958), with John Wayne⁷ as Townsend Harris, that was based on the Pierre Loti story. The substitution of an
American for the Frenchman made the John Wayne character a synthesis of Pierre Loti, the naval officer and popular travel writer, and Pinkerton, the American naval officer in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, in the form of Townsend Harris, an actual American naval officer. In 1932 there was Marion Gering's film *Madama Butterfly* that was based on the John Luther Long story and the David Belasco play as well as Puccini's opera. In 1954 Carmine Gallone made the film *Madama Butterfly* that was based on Puccini's opera. There have also been films made of operatic performances, that circulate through video libraries. Mass auditoriums have democratized opera as a genre (Shevtsova 1995:3) and video-tape recordings have further democratized the opera.

In 1988 there was Ken Russell's *Madame Butterfly*, that was a film of Puccini's opera. It added "special effects", especially of Cio Cio San dreaming of the attractions of American culture. It was added to the operatic narrative so seamlessly that, with the staging technology that is now available, her dreaming of a Coca-Cola America is routinely added to staged operas. This follows the classical orientalist pattern of treating an appealing interpretation as "original" so that Russell's interpretation displaces Puccini's "original" opera. Given this context, the American Dream makes the musical *Miss Saigon* looks more like Puccini's "original" opera than if it (the Dream) had been omitted. After all, orientalism is a system where works and authors cite each other, generating their own authority and distributive currency (Said 1987:23). The many versions of Madame Butterfly from *Madame Chrysanthème* to *Miss Saigon* can be read through each other.
The opera Madama Butterfly opens with US Navy Lieutenant B.F. Pinkerton and American consul, Sharpless, finding a house to live in for the duration of their stay in Nagasaki. Marriage broker Goro procures three servants and a geisha wife known as Madama Butterfly, or Cio-Cio-San. Pinkerton and Cio-Cio-San enter a marriage contract for 999 years but subject to monthly renewal. She is rejected by family and friends for having embraced the American's Christian faith and rejecting Buddhism. Pinkerton leaves Japan, and three years later Cio-Cio-San waits for her husband's return. She rejects her latest suitor, the wealthy Prince Yamadori, insisting that Pinkerton has not deserted her and their son. At last Pinkerton's ship, the "Abraham Lincoln", enters the harbour.

Sharpless, Pinkerton, and Kate, his new wife, return to see Cio-Cio-San. Anguished, Pinkerton leaves the others to sort things out. Cio-Cio-San agrees to give up her child if his father will return for him. Cio-Cio-San sends them all away, but her son is pushed back into the room. She blind-folds him, gives him a toy American flag to play with, indicating that he will be going to America with his real father and his American ("real") mother. Then Cio-Cio-San kills herself with the same dagger with which her father had committed suicide.

The dream of reaching America that drives the Madama Butterfly narrative also features strongly in the musical Miss Saigon. Miss Saigon is described by its writers as a modern Madama Butterfly story. In 1989 Miss Saigon opened at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London. It then opened in New York in 1991 at the Broadway Theatre. From there it quickly spread internationally. The publicity for Miss Saigon describes it
as a contemporary version of Madame Chrysanthème/Madame Butterfly, set in Vietnam. It is set in Saigon 1975, Ho Chi Minh City 1978, Atlanta USA 1978, and Bangkok 1978. So Miss Saigon is an interpretation of the fall of Saigon through the Madame Butterfly myth, with the added historical refinement of the orientalist myth of a utopic Europe replaced by America, and dystopic Asia replaced by Vietnam.

There is a segment in Miss Saigon where the Engineer, who is one single character that combines elements of M. Kangourou from Madame Chrysanthème and Goro from Madama Butterfly, dreams of making it to America. The Engineer is a comic, crass character, which does not hide the fact that he profits from the sexual exploitation of Vietnamese women by American soldiers, but the humorous way he is presented somehow makes him "palatable". The audience laughs with him. In his American Dream segment, the stage is dominated by a huge convertible car with a Miss Liberty standing on the front seat, lights are flashing everywhere, and the Engineer sings "What's that I smell in the air? The American Dream". Although American culture is parodied in this segment of the musical, in the end America is still represented as the "logical" or "natural" place for anyone to desire to be. The Engineer's desire to reach America can only be realised by exploiting Kim (a Vietnamese Madame Butterfly) and her situation: she has a son of an American ex-GI father. Her desire for the American Dream is noble and ultimately self-effacing: she sacrifices her son to a "better life" (how it is going to be "better" is never qualified) in America, and herself to death. Her tragic suicide that follows the renunciation of her son to his American father and his "real" wife, his American wife, is clearly a Madame Butterfly narrative and sentiment. She is such a "good" mother (The Mother) that she put her child's well-being before
her own, and has even gone to the extent of killing herself because life without her son
or husband is not worth living.

Naming the main female "Asian" character "Kim" alludes to Rudyard Kipling's Kim\textsuperscript{10}. Just as Kipling's Kim is orphaned and lived like a vagabond, Miss Saigon's Kim is orphaned by the Vietnam war and lives as a bar-girl (prostitute). Through the story of the "Indian" Kim we see a vivid picture of India at the turn of the century. And through the story of the Vietnamese Kim we see a Western picture of the role of America on the world stage at a particular historical time when French colonial power in Vietnam ended and American power climaxed and then diminished as the demise of the Cold War began. That whole shift in global power relations climaxed with the Vietnam war.

Miss Saigon moves effortlessly from depicting American soldiers drinking and whoring at the height of the war in Saigon in 1975 through to 1978 with the USA compassionately wanting to help all the children that were born as a consequence of such encounters during the war. At the start of the musical, Chris (the latest Pinkerton), the male lead who falls in love with Kim, briefly grapples with his conscience over the morality of being in a bar and picking up a prostitute, but then pays for and goes off with her anyway. John (the latest Sharpless) actually pays the Engineer for her, thus briefly functioning as the pimp's pimp. Kim has just been crowned Miss Saigon, in a parody of a beauty contest\textsuperscript{11}. This scene is very much like an early one in Madame Chrysanthème where Loti, after briefly moralising about the
extreme youth of these girls who are being offered to him by their own families, agrees
to pay $20 per month for Chrysanthemay anyway.

The way these women are sought, bought, used, and then abandoned is very closely
tied into the ideology of wanting to "save" the "needy". Dennis O'Rourke's film The
Good Woman of Bangkok (1991) shows how he, as a sympathetic, though always
sovereign, Westerner, goes to Bangkok to film his experiences with Aoi, the prostitute
he hired for the making of the film. He uses her for his film, filming even what she
does not want filmed\textsuperscript{12}. Once O'Rourke has finished with her services (sexual and
professional), he tries to "save" her by buying her a rice farm. Aoi certainly does not
see O'Rourke as her saviour. She sells the rice farm and keeps her job. Chris Berry
writes that he reads The Good Woman of Bangkok "as a cautionary metaphor about
the bankruptcy of the white saviour myth" (1994).

This "white saviour myth" is also played out in the 1960 film The World of Suzie
Wong. The film opens with Robert Lomax (played by William Holden) meeting
Meeling Wong, who is, as it turns out, Suzie Wong posing as a wealthy virgin (played
by Nancy Kwan) on a crowded ferry in Hong Kong. His desire to see the "real" Hong
Kong, coupled with his financial constraints as an unrecognised artist, directs him to a
cheap hotel in downtown Hong Kong that turns out to be a brothel. In the hotel bar he
sees Meeling again. When he speaks to her she denies having ever seen or spoken to
him. She tells him that she is Suzie Wong. As Meeling Wong she wears a modest
white dress. As Suzie Wong she wears a tight red dress. She is tough on the outside.
She talks tough, punctuating everything with "for goodness' sake!", but is consciously
split off from her work on the inside, hence the wealthy white virgin fantasy. Robert Lomax prefers the fantasy virgin to the actual prostitute.

Throughout the film, as Suzie Wong pursues Lomax so does Kay (Sylvia Syms), the bank manager's (Michael Wilding) sophisticated daughter. Kay tries to help Lomax sell his art internationally, while Suzie poses as his model. Kay is the brains while Suzie is the body. Suzie finally convinces Lomax that, although he has only used her as a model and not a prostitute, he had still used her services and now would discard her. She weeps. He declares his love for her. Once they are living together she gives up her work, becomes more modest, and inadvertently reveals that she has a young son. The son dies in a land-slide, and Lomax and Suzie stay together, bonded by the trauma.

Throughout The World of Suzie Wong Lomax repeatedly saves Suzie. He saves her from himself by using her as a visual object rather than a sexual object. He saves her from potential embarrassment about being illiterate when he takes her to an expensive European restaurant and asks her to order. She unwittingly orders very badly and he orders "the same". He saves her from having to keep her son secretively; he proudly tells European tourists that the Chinese baby is his. Most importantly, he saves her from prostitution. After being together for some time they run out of money and she briefly goes back to work. That appears to make him feel so emasculated that he considers giving up his art and getting a job, for the first time since he had arrived in Hong Kong. It is not until she stops working again that he sees fit to resume a serious relationship with her.
In order for a saviour to see himself as such he must first of all see himself as having sovereign power over those he feels it is his duty to save. Trinh T. Minh-ha (1989:89) writes that

The invention of needs always goes hand in hand with the compulsion to help the needy, a noble and self-gratifying task that also renders the helper's service indispensable. The part of the savior has to be filled as long as the belief in the problem of "endangered species" lasts. To persuade you that your past and cultural heritage are doomed to eventual extinction and thereby keeping you occupied with the Savior's concern, inauthenticity is condemned as a loss of origins and a whitening (or faking) of non-Western values. ... Today, planned authenticity is rife ... We no longer wish to erase your difference, We demand, on the contrary, that you remember and assert it. At least, to a certain extent.

In the musical, Miss Saigon, the mission of saving the Amerasian children is headed by a noble black American, John, who sings "they're called bui doi, the dust of life, conceived in hell and born in strife". "Hell" and "strife" do not simply describe the war; they also allude to Vietnam. On stage John leads a choir. They are all dressed in long purple robes and singing in the style of charismatic "spirituals" (a "safe" trope of blackness). They sing of wanting to get back to save the children. The 1995 (Sydney) program for Miss Saigon explains that "the term (bui doi) is used today to refer to the Amerasian children who live on the streets of Ho Chi Minh City". Just as America wanted to "save" South Vietnam from communism, it now wants to "save" the children that were fathered and then abandoned by Americans. The 1989 (London) program includes an advertisement for financial donations for four organisations in the United Kingdom that look after the "Bui Doi" refugees. The 1995 (Sydney) program has a full page of excerpts from Larry Engelmann's Tears Before The Rain (1990), stories told by "the Amerasian children who live on the streets of Ho Chi Minh City". The
children are all quoted as saying that life here in Vietnam is hard and when we get there, life with an American father and family will be "better". These so-called "Amerasian" children are being sought out by the benevolent West because their difference (difference from "real" Americans and "real" Asians, as if there were such entities) can be authenticated through the Vietnam war. That is, they can be authenticated in the name of the father. Their difference presents the West with an opportunity to absolve itself from devastating Vietnam in the 1960s. Miss Saigon does not use any irony in describing the encounter between Chris and Kim as "love". It dismisses Chris's lack of responsibility to the nation he entered militarily and the woman he used sexually as something vague, like "cultural misunderstanding". It also completely ignores John's earlier role in procuring Kim for Chris.

Thus the world is (still, again) divided into the West (what was called the First World) and the East (what was called the Third World). The Western First World is capitalist, democratic, advanced, developed, wealthy, expansionist. The Eastern Third world is merely an effect of, a necessary contrast to, the way the West constructs itself. Also thus is the world divided into male and female, with the female (still, again) being represented as "lacking", as a mere effect of the male.

The myth of America as the land of goodness, freedom, and democracy is perpetuated through the way war in general and, in this case, the Vietnam war in particular is naturalised. This naturalisation of war is a strong element in the way national identity is constructed and maintained through myth. Thus it appears to be entirely feasible to displace blame to the communist north, as a foreign and threatening other, and for
goodness to accrue to the West (even though America was one of the strongest aggressors and lost the war).

All these texts, from Madame Chrysanthème to Miss Saigon, specifically depict an enlightened, liberal, modern, democratic, Christian, active, expansive, masculine West, and its encounter with what it represents as its opposite: a backward, conservative, totalitarian, powerless, timeless, passive, feminine East. In passing from one medium, genre, or continent, to another, some aspects of the Madame Butterfly myth got lost and some survived. Maria Shevtsova (1995:5) writes that

Fortunately, the worst of Loti -starting with his colonialist and racist condescension towards "natives" - got lost in the first transfer across the Atlantic. Unfortunately, the worst in Long - misogyny disguised as high-mindedness - survived the second transfer back to Europe.

In exploring the hundred year old Madame Butterfly phenomenon, this Chapter will focus on three main texts, Puccini's opera Madame Butterfly (1900), Joyce Wadler's book Liaison (1993), and David Cronenberg's film M. Butterfly (1993). These texts serve as a point of departure to explain the idea of the West's construction of the exotic oriental Butterfly. Although they are different media they show how the same myths and fetishes determine, or influence, how they deal with Madame Butterfly. They show how fictional characters map onto each other across genres, how orientalism is often read through those fictions, and how factual people have characterised, or factionalised themselves back onto these recurring (but also always changing) motifs.

PHOTOGRAPHS
One medium that produces extratextual meaning is the photograph. For example, in the 1995 program for *Miss Saigon*, Schonberg describes how he was inspired by a photograph he saw by chance in a magazine. The photograph is of a Vietnamese mother and child being separated so that the child could go to America to live with its ex-GI father it had never seen. Schonberg asks "was that not the most moving, the most staggering example of 'The Ultimate Sacrifice', as undergone by Cio-Cio-San in *Madame Butterfly*, giving her life for the child?" When Schonberg saw the photograph by chance, leafing through a magazine, he was shocked. He immediately experienced what Roland Barthes (1984:27) calls the "punctum ... (the) ... sting, speck, cut, little hole. ... that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)". But without reflecting on what this punctum makes the photograph mean, Schonberg immediately reduces all meaning to its studium, that is, a general, average effect that is invested with the spectator's sovereign consciousness (Barthes 1984:26). The myths that the spectator recognises in the photograph are informed by education, what Barthes calls "knowledge and civility, 'politeness'" (Barthes 1984:28). Barthes writes that these myths aim at reconciling the photograph with society. The spectator, in this case Schonberg, knows that he belongs to society. He knows that he is in an artistic (ideological) position in which he can interpret the photograph. He is part of the dominant meaning-making systems.

Thus Shonberg "naturally" interprets the photograph through the masochistic *Madame Butterfly* myth. It is one that forgets the circumstances that put this Asian woman in such a predicament. In doing so it repeats "Asian woman" as a category, effacing any difference that might be there. These elisions of any complicating differences, this
simultaneous particularisation and universalisation eclipses the actual studium. The inspiration behind Schonberg's whole production is based on a photograph of a woman and child who, as is usual in many grand, sweeping, sentimentalist gestures, have no name. We have only Schonberg's name.

If, as Barthes writes, the photograph is pure contingency, its details represent a raw material, a something that is represented (Barthes 1984:29), then Schonberg's interpretation avoids what Barthes calls the infra-knowledge that we have that the separation of this particular Vietnamese mother (not The Mother [Barthes 1984:74-75]) and this particular Vietnamese child (not The Child [Barthes 1984:74-75]) is being forced by Vietnamese officials. Is the child hand-cuffed to someone? Who? This mother's pain and this child's pain are mediated by a central square of arms. But we cannot see any hands completely. In this photograph of pain and arms and faces, the most complete figure is this mother. The decorations on her clothes catch the light and seem to sparkle and mock the tragedy. Another thing about this photograph is that no-one is looking at me, the spectator, in the eye. This gives the spectator the scope to factionalise.

Barthes connects photography, "the pangs of love", together with pity. It is pity that provokes the first punctum, that which pricks the spectator (Barthes 1984:116). It is the same pity that struck Schonberg, who was moved to imagine that this particular mother and child somehow represented the Madame Butterfly myth of Mother and Child. It is also the same pity that moves John, in Miss Saigon, to plead for help for these hybrid children who occupy an unclear category, described as dirty ("dust").
Their very presence threatens the distinction between the West (America) and the East (Vietnam). As Trinh T. Minh-ha writes "what is at stake (when the unity of imaginary First and Third Worlds is challenged) is not only the hegemony of Western cultures, but also their identities as unified cultures" (1989:98).

Barthes explains that because photographs are so contingent they cannot signify a generality except by assuming a mask. It is the mask that makes a face into the product of a society and its history (Barthes 1984:34). The mask is theatrical, and theatre, as Barthes points out, originated in the cult of the dead: "the painted face in the Chinese theatre, the rice-paste makeup of the Indian Katha-Kali, the Japanese No mask" (Barthes 1984:31). And so photography is usually interpreted in terms of what we romantically call love and death (Barthes 1984:73). That which is photographed is not alive, it is not animated, and yet it animates the spectator (Barthes 1984:20).

So it was this photographic document that was first of all interpreted reductively, then interpreted through the opera, that inspired the musical, that came to be based on a Western perception of the Vietnam war. What is performed is an un-self-reflexive elaboration of the fantasy of Western supremacy, coupled with the masochistic orientalist fantasy of self-sacrificing Eastern femininity, being played out repeatedly as a form of entertainment\textsuperscript{17}. In the film The Heat Is On: The Making of Miss Saigon (1996), Alain Boublil addresses the cast at the start of rehearsals\textsuperscript{18}:

We are not trying to make a musical about the Vietnam war like the movies that have been made about it. This is a love story with the Vietnam war as a backdrop.
Then Richard Maltby, an American who worked on the English lyrics adds:

America had never lost a war. We still thought John Wayne would come over the hill and save the day. There was something dying for America, much bigger than just the end of an event, or a war they had officially pulled out of two years before. This was the end of a vision of America, a dream of America, of its invincibility and of the perfect morality that we clothe ourselves in all the time. It came to an end brutally on that day [the fall of Saigon]. So this moment in time that’s part of the background of this love story has a reverberation in American history that needs to be pointed out from time to time.

In Miss Saigon there is no engagement with what the war meant to the Vietnamese. Vietnam is represented through gorgeous young dancers, a funny pimp, and a cute little boy. The directors’ and musicians’ search for Miss Saigon did not extend to Vietnam. They went to Honolulu, Los Angeles, New York, and Manila in search for Miss Saigon. There is a silence, an aversion of the eyes from Vietnam. To use Said’s (1987) much-quoted quote of Marx’s comments about petty landowners, that “They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented”, so too is the absence of any Vietnamese voice in Miss Saigon very conspicuous. Although Boublil and Schonberg insist that it is not a musical about Vietnam but rather a love story, they use the colonial history of Vietnam while denying doing so, thus fetishizing it. Vietnam is veiled. The presence of an actual whole would spoil the sadistic psycho-sexual fantasy that Vietnam really has no identity other than one that is defined through the pain that is inflicted by an aggressor in the various guises that sexual relations in times of colonisation and/or war can take on.

The producers of Miss Saigon specifically wanted someone for the lead role who was “Asiatic” and “able to sing European music” and “be the most wonderful girl on stage
because the guy's going to fall in love with her at first sight". Hence it is ironic that the person that is supposed to embody the tragedy of the Vietnamese mother (giving her child up to his American GI father) must be young (not "too young", they were concerned not to damage any voices), "Asiatic", and "able to sing European music" or Europeanised (but clearly not European and not Vietnamese, as Homi Bhabha [1995] would insist). They use the idea of Asianness to satisfy the scopic desire for Asian-woman-as-vulnerable/beautiful/available and the idea of the Vietnam war to heighten the sense of violence and danger in the tragedy of what they refer to as love (invasion, impregnation, desertion, a gesture at salvation, and ultimately the fulfilment of self-interest).

In Miss Saigon the Madame Butterfly story is repeated, altered, but certainly not challenged. In M. Butterfly there is something quite different going on. As Peter Conran (in Skloot 1990), in his article on M. Butterfly, puts it, Hwang and Cronenberg have "defiled" the opera by using Madama Butterfly as a means of dramatising transgressions, whereas Boublis and Schonberg's Miss Saigon uses Madama Butterfly to further sentimentalise an already sentimental love story. In M. Butterfly when Gallimard, a French diplomat who falls in love with a Chinese opera singer, finally sees to what extent he has been duped and commits suicide to a cassette tape recording of what has become the signature aria that has become metonymic of the opera, Un bel di vedremo, dressed in a pathos of Madame Butterfly in a French prison, it is his response to his having been "defiled" by the whole Madame Butterfly myth. Un bel di vedremo has even been used as seduction music in films like Fatal Attraction.
Dr Ong Siow Heng (1995) has pointed out that in the film, Fatal Attraction, Dan reminiscing over how he and his father attended the opera Madama Butterfly when Dan was young sets the scene for the Butterfly tragedy. Dan loves and leaves Alex, his mistress, for his real wife and child. When Dan is being stalked by Alex he breaks into her apartment. He shuffles through some papers on her desk and leafs past a New York Book Review, followed incidentally by a libretto of Madama Butterfly, which is followed by a newspaper cutting of obituaries dated September 29, 1959. It is titled “Educator Stanley Forest active in civic affair”. The person in the obituary died at the age of 42 (their age?), “a highly respected professor of history whose prolific career as educator, author and lecturer was well known through the education system, died of a sudden heart attack early Monday evening”. Dan pauses over this article. The film suggests that this woman’s relations with men (father? lovers?) is lethal. So the question of what happens when men and women cannot understand each other is answered with the Butterfly tragedy.

As the Butterfly tragedy gets repeated, one of the elaborations is in the method/weapon of suicide/murder. Madama Butterfly commits suicide with her father’s hari kari knife in private. M. Butterfly commits suicide with his make-up mirror in front of an audience of criminals. Miss Saigon commits suicide with the gun Chris left behind for her to defend herself. Dan’s wife shoots Alex to prevent her lunging at Dan with a knife. In all representations, the child is safe, but only just out of the direct action. The child’s fate depends on the Butterfly’s death and the patriarch’s survival.
MYTHS AND FETISHES

The Oriental woman as Butterfly has become a myth. The strength of the Madame Butterfly myth in opera derives from the structure of opera which incorporates all systems of representation. These systems are linguistic (libretto and program as written text, and voice as utterance), visual (stage sets, costumes, make-up, and now "special effects"), and kinaesthetic (performance and music)\(^{21}\).

In the Madame Butterfly myth the artificially constructed Oriental woman, overlaid with recognisable tropes, has become a fetish\(^{22}\). This fetish both hides, or masks, and allows for a narrative to be told within the field that the tropes demarcate. Nineteenth century writing, as screening or hiding, fetishised its object as a way of controlling the colonised. The fetish provides the coloniser with a coherent fantasy-narrative of domination. The fetishised object, like myth, is not natural, but the values that are attached to it serve to naturalise it. The Madame Butterfly myth has flourished in stories, opera, drama, film, musicals, and narrative fiction because the narrative tells a story that has become myth and the myth relies on a fetishised object. The many ways that Madame Butterfly has been rewritten and reperformed has gone beyond a simple East/West binary, which is characteristic of nineteenth century orientalist discourse. Nevertheless, that is where it flourished. She was, and still is in Miss Saigon, controlled by the Western male coloniser through the prescribed Butterfly narrative.

In this context of the Madame Butterfly myth, the Oriental woman is often fetishised as a doll face that sits atop a kimono. Such a fetish masks the threat of Oriental bestiality. Edward Said\(^{23}\) writes that myth does not analyse or solve problems. It represents them
as already assembled images that are made to stand for a particular kind of person. And the Oriental person is usually mythologised as either one with impossible libidinal energy or a passive doll that is not functional. Carol Lee Wilson (1993) writes that the Oriental woman's body is a site where the narrator plays out, measures, and appropriates exotic culture, and that the theme of the masquerade is a central structuring metaphor for orientalism this century.

As a doll the Oriental woman is seen as lifeless and painted, a work of art. Here we see the link between love and death and theatricality. And this work of art can only be properly appreciated by the cultured European. Homi Bhabha (in Rutherford 1990:08) writes that

the sign of the 'cultured' or the 'civilised' attitude is the ability to appreciate cultures in a kind of *musee imaginaire*; as though one should be able to collect and appreciate them. Western connoisseurship is the capacity to understand and locate cultures in a universal time-frame that acknowledges their various historical and social contexts only eventually to transcend them and render them transparent.

Pierre Loti's entire experience of Japan is related as though he is a connoisseur of Oriental places, things, and especially women. Not only does he carefully describe what he sees in "realistic" detail and makes sketches, but he also comments on how the Japanese, who he thinks cannot *but* stylise, are astonished at his ability to render realism. "Realistic" representations, like photography, transform a subject into a museum object (Barthes 1984:13).

Before Loti even begins to write about the women, he describes the approach to Japan in a highly sexualised way. He ends the first chapter with "The sea, the rigging, the
vessel itself, all vibrated and quivered as if with emotion" (Loti 1973:12) and then writes in the next chapter that "It seemed as if Japan opened to our view, through a fairylike rent, which thus allowed us to penetrate into her very heart" (Loti 1973:13). As Japan comes closer into view he worries about "an untruthful aspect of too much prettiness" (Loti 1973:15), as if it must be a feminine trick. He admires the landscape "as though it were an artificial creation" (Loti 1973:15). Then when he meets the first geisha that is offered to him he exclaims

Heavens! why, I know her already! Long before setting foot in Japan, I had met with her, on every fan, on every tea-cup - with her silly air, her puffy little visage, her tiny eyes, mere gimlet-holes above those expanses of impossible pink and white which are her cheeks.

She is young, that is all I can say in her favour; she is even so young that I should almost scruple to accept her (Loti 1973:56).

Recognising her, knowing her already, is exactly the response to the actual Orient that Said (1987) explains the orientalist has. Through his claims to realism, the nineteenth century orientalist matches what he encounters in the Orient with whatever fictive tropes of the Orient he already knows textually. The nineteenth century orientalist is always already immersed in the representationalism and nascent modernity that he is a part of.

Loti rejects this first geisha because she is too ugly. So he buys his Madame Chrysanthème for $20 per month and he comments that "it seems to me that my betrothal is a joke, and my new family a set of puppets" (Loti 1973:66). Loti's attitude towards his behaviour in Japan is that the fact of his Europeanness and Japan's Japaneseeness establishes a hierarchy where he is beyond any moral or ethical
considerations. His temporary concern for the extreme youth of the geishas is like Chris's momentary objection to using a prostitute (Miss Saigon). Towards the end of his stay in Japan Loti comments that he is becoming Japanised. Nevertheless, right at the end he writes "I infinitely prefer that this marriage should end as it had begun, in a joke" (Loti 1973:321).

As Loti gets to know Madame Chrysantheme, although he does not love her, and he finds her annoying, there are times when he finds her entertaining. Observing her asleep he describes how he prefers her asleep, looking like "a dead fairy; or still more did she resemble some great blue dragon-fly ... pinned to the floor"; and "what a pity this little Chrysantheme cannot always be asleep [dead?] she is really extremely decorative seen in this manner, and like this, at least, she does not bore me" (Loti 1973:120). He seems to prefer beetles and butterflies to his wife:

We have a new and far prettier [than Japanese workmen] invasion: that of the beetles and butterflies ... Butterflies as wonderful as those on the fans. Some all black, giddily dash up against us, so light and airy that they seem merely a pair of quivering wings fastened together without any body (Loti 1973:168).

He also prefers to imagine that the women, like butterflies, have no bodies. Thus these Japanese are an idea rather than corporeal beings. As such, his "marriage" to Madame Chrysantheme can be easily abandoned, annulled. On his departure he has a party, and

Here are assembled five or six little dolls, my neighbours, amusing themselves by dancing to the sound of Chrysantheme's guitar. And this evening I experience a real charm in the feeling that this dwelling and the woman who leads the dance, are mine. ...

... their dollish air has the gift of pleasing me now, and I fancy I have discovered what it is that gives it to them: it is not only their round inexpressive faces with eyebrows far removed from the eyelids, but the
excessive amplitude of their dress. With those huge sleeves, it might be supposed they have neither back nor shoulders; their delicate figures are lost in these wide robes, which float around what might be little marionettes without bodies at all ... (Loti 1973:276-278).

As mentioned earlier, what pleases him is that these dolls, puppets, these objects, are his property to use and dispose of as he wishes. As Roland Barthes (1984) refers to the connection between love, death, theatre, puppets, we can see how the Oriental doll or puppet is always already available, desired, and feared.

Said (1987:137-138) cites Quinet's formulation

that the Orient proposes and the West disposes: Asia has its prophets, Europe its doctors (its learned men, its scientists: the pun is intended). ... Out of this ... both East and West fulfil their destinies and confirm their identities in the encounter. As a scholarly attitude the picture (is) of a learned Westermer surveying as if from a peculiarly suited vantage point the passive, seminal, feminine, even silent and supine East, then going on to articulate the East, making the Orient deliver up its secrets.

As the nineteenth century colonial world was imagined by the West as one where anything of value flowed from West to East, the East was seen as "ours". Said (1987:245) writes that "the Orient is 'our' Orient, 'our' people, 'our' dominions". From such a position of imaginary absolute power it is "natural" for the West to see the Orient and its people in a possessive and voyeuristic manner. The European's "voyage en Orient" (Said 1987) was and, as evident in Dennis O'Rourke's The Good Woman of Bangkok, often still is more like a "voyeurage en Orient". Said (1987:207) also writes that orientalist texts depict a

male conception of the world ... (where) ... women are usually the creatures of a male power-fantasy. They (women) express unlimited sensuality, they are more or less stupid, and above all they are willing.
These women are positioned as an outside, weaker partner of the West (Said 1987, 1985). Asia is thus constituted as an absence. It is a fantasy phallic absence that invites the West to assert its presence.

Loti's writing mobilises some very potent fetishes that both mask and reveal. He describes their faces as masks, bringing together death, theatre, and puppets. They are little dolls who perform a dance. Their inexpressive faces are described anatomically. Their robes are excessively large, stylised, with no back or shoulders, that both hide and suggest delicate figures. The whole figure is voyeuristically imagined as having no body at all. This fetishism is articulated in orientalist discourse, as orientalism is found in writing that deals with questions, objects, qualities and regions. It describes in such a way that the writing acquires its own reality (Said 1987:72). In a review of a 1994 performance of the opera Madama Butterfly, Shevtsova (1995:10) explains that

> whatever their habit, the characters do not appear to inhabit their costumes. Their costumes inhabit them, which is partly why they give the impression of strangeness - of a certain other-worldliness that could suggest a fantasy Japan, but could just as well belong to any fantasy.

There is much ambiguity suggested through orientalised costumes and customs. Shevtsova points to what looks like gendered cross-dressing when European men wear orientalised costumes. And when geishas wear their stylised robes, hair, and make-up they stand in stark contrast, as other, to the men. In Joyce Wadler's book, Liaison, there is reference to how in a country (China) where men dress like women and women dress like men, it's no wonder that Boursicot (the real Gallimard) mistook Shi Pei Pu (the real Song Liling) for a woman. This costume-coding ensures that
European men are always wearing the pants and the Oriental women are always excessively feminised.

The Madame Butterfly myth has naturalised and eternalised the West as a militaristic and tough but always benevolent patriarch and the East as a comfort to his complex, demanding role in the world. The East is, to use Said's (1987) words, represented as feminine, supine, silent, sexualised, at once repulsive and attractive and feared, and, above all, available. Myth emanates from, belongs to, and renews dominant, conservative values. In this myth of the oppressed and the oppressor, Roland Barthes (1989:162) explains that

(t)he oppressed is nothing, he has only one language, that of his emancipation; the oppressor is everything, his language is rich, multiform, supple, with all the possible degrees of dignity at its disposal: he has an exclusive right to meta-language. The oppressed makes the world, he has only an active, transitive (political) language; the oppressor conserves it, his language is plenary, intransitive, gestural, theatrical: It is Myth. The language of the former aims at transforming, of the latter at eternalizing (my italics).

The discussion below of the film M. Butterfly, which is a text that both uses and subverts the Madame Butterfly myth, shows this contestation over the oppressor's exclusive right to meta-language. This is evident in the way it is contextualised with the gestural, theatrical language of Puccini's opera Madama Butterfly, and all that it eternalises in its own mythology-making. Liaison is an interesting mixture of the dominant discourse of the author as journalist and the object of her quest for "truth": the "true" sexuality of the French man and his Chinese lover. In Liaison there is an abundance of available myths that are used in the mass media, as will become evident below.
One particular aspect of Shi Pei Pu that Wadler repeats in Liaison, as if it has "naturally" occurred to the others also, is Shi Pei Pu's small, delicate, expressive hands.

When Wadler first met Shi Pei Pu she wrote that

his hands were not only unusually small and delicate for a man, they were also strikingly mobile. ... within moments we were all tiptoeing around him as if he were some rare object from the Ming Dynasty (307-308 Wadler's italics).

She thus describes her object of study as segmented (the hands are seen to have a life of their own), and as a precious, fragile, oriental object. The hands are somehow too feminine "for a man". This enigmatic person is further objectified as a piece of fragile classical Chinese art. Throughout Liaison Wadler reinforces and, again, naturalises, Boursicot's orientalist fantasies, effortlessly imbuing her own language with the very same tropes that he is condemned for using so foolishly.

Barthes (1989:118) writes that myth is not only writing or speech, but it also consists of photography, cinema, reporting, sport, shows, publicity, all forms that lend themselves to signification. He also explains that

a diagram lends itself to signification more than a drawing, a copy more than an original, and a caricature more than a portrait. But this is the point: we are no longer dealing here with a theoretical mode of representation: we are dealing with this particular image, which is given for this particular signification. Mythical speech is made up of a material which has already been worked on (Barthes 1989:118-119).
Skloot writes that we usually behave the way we do because what we perceive as appropriate behaviour has already been culturally imagined for us. In other words, we pre-read what we read. This explains how

Gallimard [in M. Butterfly] can only act the way he does because he knows and believes in the artistic structure of Madame Butterfly. We can accept (indeed welcome) his suicide because we in the audience "know" it too ... after all, the plot of the opera has been provided repeatedly through story and music to everyone in the theatre (Skloot 1990:62).

The Madame Butterfly story has repeatedly worked over the last hundred years, naturalising war, colonialism, masculinity, democracy, Westernness, Asianness, feudalism/communism, femininity, and many more tropes that support these elements that sustain a particular imaginary world order. Madame Butterfly has its own mythical speech, or discourse, and that mythical speech relies on the very binarisms that generated what Edward Said (1987) describes as orientalism.

Myth becomes a metalanguage that articulates a global sign as a sum of the signs it has mobilised (Barthes 1989:123-124). Madame Butterfly circulates as a global sign. It does not hide its Eurocentrism, its coloniality, or its heterosexuality. The function of myth is to "distort, not to make disappear. ... (T)here is no need of an unconscious in order to explain myth" (Barthes 1989:131). The Madame Butterfly myth condenses certain knowledges about the East and the West. The elements of this myth are linked by associative relations, supported by a sense of depth and common memory (Barthes 1989, Said 1987). While, according to Barthes, myth does not need an unconscious, Said explains that orientalism can be both manifest and latent, and that latent orientalism is very conservative, dedicated to self-preservation (Said 1987:222). The
cultural, temporal, and geographic distance established between the West and the East was "expressed in metaphors of depth, secrecy, and sexual promise: phrases like "the veils of an Eastern bride" or "the inscrutable Orient" passed into the common language" (Said 1987:222). The rest of this Chapter will demonstrate how these phrases (and more) have remained intact in texts like Liaison and Miss Saigon, while other texts, like M. Butterfly, challenge the hermeneutic on which such relations are based.

An analysis of Liaison will reveal that Wadler (re)produces many aspects of the Madame Butterfly myth intact. Barthes writes that "myth is a value, truth is no guarantee for it" (1989:133). The mistake, as it were, that Wadler makes is to insist on a truth. But the two discourses (myth and truth) cannot converge because, as Barthes explains, myth works as a double system: it presents a purely signifying object and also a metalanguage that evokes a purely imagining consciousness. But the meaning and the form always outdistance each other, they are never at the same place (Barthes 1989:133). Myth always means much more than its literal sense (Barthes 1989:134). Myth does not concern itself with confessions "it is an inflexion" (Barthes 1989:140). The French diplomat in Liaison has nothing to confess. The whole myth-making system (colonial France, modern journalism, and science) can only interpret its object through its own established inflexions.

Orientalist myths do not question the histories that have produced certain social/racial/sexual relations. To adapt Barthes' analysis (1989:125, 140-141) of the cover of Paris-Match that features a black Frenchman saluting with his eyes uplifted,
one can say that to read Madame Butterfly purely as symbolic of colonialism would be to renounce the reality of the images. It is not purely an instrument. Conversely, if I read it as an alibi for colonialism, I shatter the myth by the obviousness of its motivation. There is much more going on. But as a myth-reader one would see the Madame Butterfly story as one that is always apparently relevant, ahistorically, aculturally, and naturally.

CHAOS

Madame Butterfly, in all its written/performed forms is always larger than the actual text. Each performance and reading influences not only the text we have before us but the ways in which we interpret past performances and apprehend new performances. This relationship between texts, or intertext, can be vividly imagined in chaos theory. Chaos theory has gained popularity in the recent spate of publications in so-called new science. New science of course is not new (and some would argue that it is not science). However, although my use of it claims some degree of novelty, I would hardly lay claims to any scientificity. Giambattista Vico wrote The New Science (La Nuova Scienza) in 1744. In Said's book The World, The Text, and The Critic, there is a chapter called “On Repetition” which deals with how Vico explains repetition and elaboration as an integral part of human reproduction, as a pattern that is distinct from a divine plan. Said writes that for Vico repetition contains both reason and experience. “Repetition is the frame within which man represents himself to himself and for others” (Said 1984:113). He adds that although there is sameness in repetition, “Vico is sensitive to the losses and gains, the differences in short, within each repeating phase of the cycle” (Said 1984:114). Said compares it with musical techniques of repetition.
(which foreshadows his later publication, Musical Elaborations). He describes Vico's explanation of repetition in terms of filiation, and that history is gentile, made by men (sic) and not God. With human reproduction (filiation) there is repetition but there is also challenge and rupture, crisis and change.

The scientific description of the Butterfly Effect is "sensitive dependence on initial conditions" (Gleick 1989:23). The slightest difference in a set of initial conditions in a system can result in a totally different outcome. And there are always many differences everywhere. Chaos theory does not throw out "process", rather it images systems as being interconnected and nonlinear. It is not as if there is nothing but disorder; there is order in chaos. If first it is acknowledged that all dynamic systems influence each other, then one can see that it is futile to impose a model onto something that is supposed to be a discreet system, and expect to be able to predict (or even read) that system accurately. In his analysis of cultural representations in literature, anthropology and art, David Richards (1994) refers to the structure of chaos where each splitting is caused by, but also annulled by, repetition, tautology or the oxymoron. He writes (1994:234) that “Tautologies proclaim their difference by repeating their sameness; oxymorons insist upon the similarity of difference. ... The oxymoron is the ‘solution’ to the ‘problem’ of tautology”. Thus a reversal, like orientalism in reverse, acts as an oxymoronic ‘solution’ to the ‘problem’ of how to address orientalism without repeating the gesture.

So, rather than looking for a unified theory, what one can do is to look at chaos theory and take into account the Butterfly Effect. The Butterfly Effect explains how
something as small, fragile, and apparently inconsequential as the flapping of a butterfly's wings actually has wide and profound global effects. So when we look at all these Butterfly stories we can see the effects exerted by other texts. What we can see is how Madame Butterfly is still exerting effects in many different directions, at times in unpredictable ways. Skloot refers to how M. Butterfly subverts Puccini's opera while at the same time "altering and expanding its gender reference" (1990:63). The chaotic state of gender identification in Wadler's, Hwang's, and Cronenberg's texts is dealt with below.

In looking at the Madame Butterfly Effect as a global cultural process we can see the transnational interaction of various icons. Arjun Appadurai (1990, 1993) looks at global cultural economies and argues against cultural isomorphism (identical sameness/difference), describing cultural formations as fractal and overlapping. He writes that, because global interactions are disjunctive, we may need to move into chaos theory.

Trinh T. Minh-ha (1991) writes that as knowledge moves around the world, it reverberates and influences other knowledges. She adds that such movement rehashes stereotypes and also constitutes a powerful representational practice. Repetition always carries the possibilities of transformation. She explains that when repetition calls attention to itself as repetition it doubles back, exerting power, then thwarting its own power, repeatedly inflating it only to deflate it better.
DANGEROUS LIAISONS

Joyce Wadler's book Liaison (1993) is a true investigative account of a spy scandal that ran in the press from 1986. Wadler's account is also about love and betrayal and, to build up a sense of dramatic tension, Wadler uses some very powerful orientalist tropes in her descriptions. In looking at Liaison it will become evident that Madame Butterfly has had profound effects on various other discourses.

In 1964 Bernard Boursicot was sent from Paris to Beijing as a minor diplomat. There he fell in love with a Chinese opera star, Shi Pei Pu. From the 1960s onwards China's internal and international politics were very volatile, and so Boursicot was recalled to Paris. Although he had many lovers, including a fiancé and a live-in male lover (that relationship outlasted all others), Boursicot saw Shi Pei Pu as his real wife, especially since she had apparently had his baby. Over those 20 years Boursicot went to China as often as he could to see Shi Pei Pu. During those visits he was talked into handing over diplomatic documents to the Chinese government, with the promise that Shi Pei Pu and their son would be allowed to leave China and go to Paris. Boursicot's dream was that they would be a real French family living in Paris. But he was thoroughly duped. As it turned out Shi Pei Pu was a counter-spy, a man, and, of course, they had no child. The child had been supplied by the Chinese government. Boursicot was tried and found guilty of espionage and Shi Pei Pu was extradited to China from France. Boursicot attempted suicide while he was in jail.24

David Cronenberg's film M. Butterfly (1992) is based on David Henry Hwang's (1988) Broadway play of the same name. Hwang's play is about the Boursicot story.
Cronenberg's film renarrativises that story through Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* story and music, eventually reversing many aspects of the dramatic plot, while also opening up more meanings. In fictionalising the characters it also refictionalises the Butterfly's gender. In the book, Shi Pei Pu presents as a man but tells Boursicot that he is really a she (and that, in Boursicot's own mind, vindicates his desire to make her his legitimate partner and have a family). In the film\textsuperscript{25}, Song Liling (the character based on Shi Pei Pu) presents as a woman, so that the cinematic effect is to put the viewer in the same voyeuristic position Gallimard was in: as a sovereign heterosexual Westerner with an overloaded imagination.

Rene Gallimard is new to China and is young and inexperienced, yet aware of a kind of affiliation he has with the place and the people. From the start, he does not share the other expatriates' cynical and superior attitudes. He seems driven to perform his work well and, eventually, to conduct his relationship with Song Liling with integrity. He has a kind of naivete that, at a personal level, makes him look foolish but also sets him apart from the haughty imperialist atmosphere that hangs around the other expatriates.

Early in the film Gallimard sees Song Liling for the first time performing *Un bel di vedremo*. From their very first meeting, she begins his education of orientalism and heterosexism. Song Liling instructs him in every way, or so he/we think.

The film ends with Gallimard betrayed, committing suicide, dressed up as Madama Butterfly, in a performance in prison. The suicide is performed, just as operatic theatre
is performed. But the film picks up on the description of the old photograph of Shi Pei Pu that is used in newspaper reports. Wadler (1993:283) writes:

In the craziest trial of the year, the box for the accused in la cour d'assises has been transformed into a cage aux folles - a drag queens' box," reports Le Figaro, the conservative morning daily, while France-Soir runs an old photo of Pei Pu in costume which to European eyes is a comic-book rendering of an Oriental seductress: eyes outlined in heavy black makeup, a gown embroidered with fire-breathing dragons.

Both Boursicot and Shi Pei Pu make themselves up as "a comic-book rendering of an Oriental seductress". They both play the part of the woman, as is common in Chinese opera, but they each generate different meanings. Gallimard finally makes himself up as the woman-as-other whom he desires. Although he has no apparent will to dominate, assuage any guilt, or be defiant, by cross-dressing he places the emphasis of his story on seduction and longing “where the desire is not to make the Other over in one’s image but to become the Other” (hooks 1992:25).

The film and play interweave many narratives. They are based on the "true story" of Bernard Boursicot and Shi Pei Pu. Using the discourse of the legal system itself as a means of verification, Wadler writes that when the play opened in March 1988 Pei Pu and Bernard hired American lawyers who argued that their clients' right to privacy had been invaded and their story exploited (291). The Australian newspaper (1993a) ran an excerpt of Liaison together with colour photographs. It has a photo of Shi Pei Pu himself dressed as an "oriental seductress", looking like a parody of himself. The irony is that Boursicot believed that Shi Pei Pu was a woman when he was in men's clothing. Boursicot believed that then she was cross-dressing, pretending to be a man.
The play and film also use Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* narrative and music, and invert and subvert the Butterfly story in many interesting ways. Hwang claims that in the end both Butterfly characters from *Madama Butterfly* and the play die when they realise what they've lost (in DiGaetani 1989:152). But the difference is that the play and the film also extensively use and explain orientalism. In an interview with John Louis DiGaetani (1989:142) Hwang claims that he did not read Said's *Orientalism* until after he wrote the play. He says that “This notion that the East is mysterious, inscrutable, and therefore ultimately inferior, is something that definitely is consistent with themes in Puccini's *Madame (sic) Butterfly*” (in DiGaetani 1989:142).

Orientalism, as a critical discourse, has become thoroughly enmeshed with other discourses, especially those around representation. And when it comes to theorising about representation it is not surprising that Hwang has similar expectations to Said. Hwang says that

eventually one must look past all the cultural stereotyping we do of each other, West to East and East to West, and deal with each other *just as humans* if we're really to reach any point of true understanding (in DiGaetani 1989:146 my italics).

But we cannot have a raw, unmediated view of the world or of people "just as humans". What we see in the above comment and in Said (1987) is a reluctance to accept representation as a technology. So we cannot throw out representationalism, especially in a play, which is a very powerful form of representation.
POSTORIENTALISM: PRAXIS

The Madame Butterfly phenomenon has flourished in stories, opera, drama, film, and narrative fiction. The many ways that Madame Butterfly has been rewritten and reperformed has often gone beyond a simple East/West binary, which is characteristic of nineteenth century orientalist discourse.

Recent popular texts explore sexist-orientalist stereotypes, and suggest that the simple one-way model of coloniser/colonised is no longer entirely appropriate. In other words, a space of difference opens up, where new postorientalist narratives can emerge. Postorientalism takes into account the East/West binary, and also allows for wider readings of texts. It does not for one moment imply that we've all "done" orientalism so let's get on with business as usual. Classical orientalism relies on a history of how the West has othered the East. Now postorientalism acknowledges the actualities of colonisation and the orientalism that both fed that movement and also resulted from it, but it also, additionally, takes into account many more processes of othering.

In these different representations of Madame Butterfly, different cultural artefacts intersect, overlap, and transform, so what becomes really interesting is the present state of representationalism itself. And by representationalism I refer to the self-conscious self-construction of the West as the West that culminated in 19th century cultural forms, supported by the technology that enabled the elaboration of those forms. I also refer to the more recent self-conscious self-construction of the East, or Asia, as a kind of re-articulation of what the West had defined as West and East.
So, as far as orientalism is concerned, it's fairly useless to merely take a moral position as to whether or not a text is orientalist, because a Saidian perspective of orientalism is really based on the written, and specifically the canonical. His is a critique of the power of the canonical text. What I refer to as postorientalism is a disorientation of a Western self-image that has shifted from an imperialist stance (that was ever present in literature and politics) towards one of realising that what we might still call the East is not much affected at all by any of this soul-searching and breast-beating. And this is evident in the different mass media, including the visual and the musical. It is worth noting that Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* opera is performed in China. The *Beijing Review* (1989) reports that

> The Central Opera House whose performances are based mainly on European vocal techniques, has for decades been engaged in creating works with distinctive Chinese features, using both form and experience of European opera as reference. It has also introduced the Chinese audience to world famous operas, classical as well as contemporary, from other countries. Among them ... *Madama Butterfly* ... which won wide acclaim in Hong Kong and Finland.

Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* is a case of the West representing its sovereign self, as mirrored in the idea of the Japanese oriental. As a written text it is orientalist. It is canonical. But, because it is an opera it is also more. Each time it is performed it is in a different historical context and, as I will explain later, each performance reinscribes the oriental mask. We can see from the above quotation that it is not the case that the East is unable to resist cultural colonisation by the West. The East, like the West, is in a powerful position to embrace and/or criticise and/or reject whatever cultural forms it desires. The main question is, rather (as will be elaborated in Chapter Four),
contestation over the grand narrative. And it is the very process of contestation that produces culture.

The reason why Liaison is so strategically useful here is that it relies on and alludes to several discourses and genres, while always searching for a singular, integrated grand narrative. It is a search for "the truth", especially "the truth" about the subject's sexuality. While the text implies that this search is a problem of meaning-that-could-be-understood-if-only-the-right-narrative-structure-could-be-uncovered, I will demonstrate that it is precisely that quest for the right narrative that is the problem, as it were. And I want to use Cronenberg's film to help me demonstrate this, because the film elaborates and negotiates hitherto given meanings of things, things like national allegiance, gender identification, sexual preference, and, most importantly, the ownership of these sites as representations.

Alison Broinowski (1992), an Australian writer and diplomat who writes about how Australians represent Asia, explains that European opera always dealt with exotic fantasies, and so often located them in the Orient that it created a genre in the European imagination. It confirmed and created images of Oriental tyranny, luxury, artistry, and sensuality (1992:104). And "as operatic fashion moved from the Middle East to the Far East, China and Japan were exploited as settings ... (especially as evident in) Madame (sic) Butterfly (Puccini)" (Broinowski 1992:104). Broinowski writes that most of these operas were named after Oriental heroines, almost all of whom met tragic fates. Then she explains that the Asian woman as victim proved to have international appeal. Reasons for this ... include the fantasy of Asia as Illicit Space, alluring and repugnant, where
moral restraints on violence and sex can be abandoned; the hierarchy of races, and of males over females, which is threatened by miscegenation; and the division of the world into East and West identifying one as female, emotional, instinctive, subservient, and exploitable, and the other as male, pragmatic, rational, and dominant (1992:105).

In this paradigm, the sovereign Westerner still imagines Asia as a resource that is there to be exploited. Broinowski brings together many themes that recur in Madame Butterfly (especially in the form of Miss Saigon). The different Madame Butterfly stories deal with power struggles. These power struggles are variously over sites of sexual, gendered, national, and ethnic difference. The struggle for power is more evident in M. Butterfly, where it is evident even in the music. Skloot (1990:60) writes that the opposition between Puccini's Madama Butterfly and the classical music of the Peking Opera allows each to acquire theatrical prominence at strategic points. So what we see in M. Butterfly is an elaboration of the themes we know a priori interwoven with new material.

Broinowski describes "The Butterfly Phenomenon" as the relationship between the powerful Western man and his fragile, perishable, and replaceable Asian mistress. She is "exotic, beautiful, and transient" (1992:106). Broinowski lists books, operas and films that use this theme, where the men love them and leave them.

Cronenberg's M. Butterfly can be seen as a representation of orientalism in reverse (Berry 1994, Morely and Robbins 1992), as a form of revival, that challenges the assumptions that orientalism (and its binaristic reversal) are based on Enlightenment Man (Young 1990) and specifically heterosexual social organisations (Berry 1994). This sort of representation shows an Asianised subject that is transgressing its hitherto
Eurocentred scripts that were frozen. A piece of dialogue early in the film illustrates this:

Song Liling: The oriental woman has always held a fascination for you Caucasian men.

Gallimard: Yes, but that fascination is imperialist, or so you tell me.

Song Liling: Yes, it is always imperialist, but sometimes it is also mutual.

She is actually, consciously, educating him and simultaneously seducing him. And this prefigures the political education he will get when he is involved in espionage. In her dialogues with Gallimard, Song Liling explains orientalism. She explains him back to himself. In Said's (1987) description of this mirroring, a strong, enlightened Europe constructs a weak, ignorant Asia. But in the film and the book the colonial European man ends up looking ignorant and weak, while his other, with full knowledge of orientalism and sexism, constructs himself as the perfect Asian woman, a Butterfly.

The play and the film incorporate Chinese opera so that one can see, as a matter of course, a man playing a woman's role. Song Liling says "Why are women's roles played by men?" The answer is: "Because only a man knows how a woman should act." Hwang (in DiGaetani 1989:146) looks at kabuki theatre and says that "in kabuki they say that a woman can only be a woman whereas a man can be the idealisation of a woman. This is obscene ...". As obscene as it is, it is entrenched in mainstream representations as it is the ideology that is, if you like, by men. Even if Madame Butterfly is a woman she is made to act, like a puppet, according to a male ideal. She represents what Said (1987) describes as a male conception of the world. Roland Barthes puts it rather differently. Comparing the photograph of a theatrical performer
dressed as a woman and the photograph of him without costume, Barthes (1983:53) writes that

the Oriental transvestite does not copy Woman but signifies her: not bogged down in the model, but detached from its signified; Femininity is presented to read, not to see: translation, not transgression; the sign shifts from the great female role to the fifty-year-old paterfamilias: he is the same man, but where does the metaphor begin?

In the film, _M. Butterfly_, Song Liling undresses and shows Gallimard his sex (see below). Thus his body, to be read as sign, translates or shifts from “the great female” (Oriental Woman) to an ordinary naked young man. “He is the same man” but the metaphor has changed. It is this new metaphor that Gallimard cannot accept (again, see below).

In the book Bernard is portrayed as someone with a heightened sense of mystery, adventure, and romance, but also as someone who is a bit simple, or superficial, or easily intrigued. When he is in China he wants to get to really know the real Chinese. Wadler explains how he wants to penetrate those invisible walls that surround social relations. Such a typical and crass allusion to orientalist tropes like the Great Wall of China, East/West relations, sexual relations, and the westerner's failure to penetrate his Chinese lover may suggest that the text is aware of orientalist discourses, but it does not move beyond this, as the film _M. Butterfly_ does.

Both the book and the film show how, in his Chinese Butterfly, at last he has found love, intrigue, exotic, even danger, or, in short, orientalia, all in one object of desire. And on top of that he does not even have to consider his own sexuality. In the film Bernard insists "Will you be my Butterfly?" But, as Hwang says, "Gallimard is in love
with a butterfly, he's not in love with this Asian man" (in DiGaetani 1989:146).
Although Gallimard is willing to learn about the Chinese opera, his story begins with
his fascination for this singer who performs *Un bel di vedremo* and ends with him
performing the ritual suicide to the same music. But this does not merely reaffirm a
cultural myth, it turns it inside out. As Sklloot explains, "Gallimard becomes absorbed
into his own sexual fantasy, one which originated (for him) in an early twentieth-
century Italian opera and which is both re-validated and demolished in his death"
(1990:60). When we hear *Un bel di vedremo* and see Gallimard suicide, the music's
tragic impact is overlaid by Japanese, American, Chinese, and French motifs, including
fragments that we know as we pre-read the film or play, and those included in the
performance.

In *Musical Elaborations* Said warns that "music is not denotative and does not share a
common discursivity with language" (1991:40). And further on he writes: "music is a
negation, a blotting-out of the society that gave rise to it "(Said 1991:48). Modernism
(he writes of Wagner and Paul de Mann) experienced a crisis when it encountered for
the first time a resurgent challenge from the other, the other not as inert object but as
intrusive presence from outside the dominant metropolis. This is explored in *M.
Butterfly* in the dialogue between Gallimard and Liling when they first meet. This
particular scene is crucial because it actually explains to Gallimard (and the viewer) all
about orientalism. It is a very self-reflexive moment; the threshold of the filmic
narrative. The audience understands that this Chinese opera singer warns the
European voyeur that: we all know that orientalness is a Western construction, so you
had better watch out.
Gallimard has just seen and heard Song Liling sing the Butterfly aria from Act 2 *Un bel di vedremo*. After the performance he meets her. He comments on the enormous beauty of the story of tragic love. She explains that the beauty is in the music, not in the story. And she quickly sorts out his cultural confusion between Chinese and Japanese. But we know that this cultural confusion is a pretext for the sexual confusion that follows. In showing him how dangerous his fantasies are, she explains that, in the Butterfly story, if the American sailor was replaced with a short Japanese businessman, and the geisha was replaced with a beautiful cheerleader, and if he left her for three years and in that time she turned down offers of marriage from a young Kennedy, then you would say that she was quite mad.

In the book *Liaison* Shi Pei Pu repeatedly says that *Madame Butterfly* is not a good story for our people* (Wadler 1993:55, 57). It makes the Chinese people look like they easily use duplicity. The film uses the opera to frame (both in the structural narrative sense and also in the way he became incriminated) the story. And the book uses the idea of formalised musical structures to frame its story. The book is presented as a performance. Before the Prologue there is "Bernard's Song". Then in Chapter 3 of Book One, "Love", there is "Duet for Reporter and Spy", which is repeated in Chapters 3 and 8 of Book Two, "Betrayal" and in Chapter 5 of Book Three. Book Two also has a section called "Cacophany", which is a series of letters. So when we read the letters we hear the voices. The book also has "Solo for Spy 'Un bel di' performed by Bernard Boursicot, Fresnes Prison, July 12, 1993". It is a one-page letter. Finally there is "Bernard's Song" again; a refrain. The narrative structure of the opera is maintained and used to interpret the relationship between Song and Bernard.
which is again repeated, with some alterations, in Hwang’s play and again in Cronenberg’s film.

While Liaison strives for the "truth" about the whole episode, it evokes music, love, and tragedy and tells Boursicot’s story in that highly emotional and lyrical context. Liaison mobilises the myths that support beliefs about European colonial occupation of China and cultural/sexual relations. M. Butterfly reads those myths, exposing their naturalness. Cronenberg himself says in interview (1997) that the two main characters in M. Butterfly “are creating the opera of their lives together - they’re creating their own sexuality. ... They’re doing it by the force of their imagination, and their own self-delusion”. Song Liling’s final delusion is that he hopes that as a man, he can still seduce Gallimard.

The film ends with Gallimard, twenty years later, in jail (having been found guilty of espionage) where he performs Madama Butterfly. To the sound of a recording of Un bel di vedremo he dresses up like a Japanese geisha and then makes up his face in an exaggerated, pathetic imitation of theatricality. He bows, and in the bowing position cuts his own throat with the now-hidden make-up mirror.

In film and play Gallimard assumes the role of Cio Cio San, forsaken by her lover, now childless. Song assumes the clothing (costume) of a man. Once this reversal has taken place, Gallimard-as-Butterfly speaks the final monologue:

The love of a Butterfly can withstand many things - unfaithfulness, loss, even abandonment. But how can it face the one sin that implies all others? The devastating knowledge that, underneath it all, the object of her love was nothing more, nothing less than ... a man. It is 1988. And I have
found her at last. In a prison on the outskirts of Paris. My name is Rene Gallimard - also known as Madame Butterfly (in Skloot 1990:61).

This "man" is not just that which is not woman, it is also "just a man". Gallimard has found out that the object of his love is an illusion. Or rather, what disturbed him so much is that it was not the illusion he had constructed. He had, as Hwang says, seduced himself (in DiGaetani 1989:14). Hwang comments that when we fall in love it is often with an ideal rather than an actuality. Perhaps Gallimard was, to use Robert Young's (1995:2) words, "sick with desire for the other". Young emphasises that while the attractions and fantasies of colonial desire were indeed complicit with colonialism itself, the sexual/racial "desire" component of "colonial desire" reflects a profound uncertainty of the coloniser's own (sexual and racial) identity. Slavok Žižek (1994:120) writes that some objects of desire, when they come too close to whatever had earlier been rejected or repressed as “the Traumatic thing” are excluded from the frame of desire. He writes that “if, by any chance, they intrude into the fantasy-space, the effect is extremely disturbing and disgusting, the fantasy loses its fascinating power and changes into a nauseating object” (Žižek 1994:120). In the film, when Gallimard and Song Liling are in the police van and Song Liling undresses himself, exposing his sex and thus exposing Gallimard’s fantasy, and still desiring Gallimard, Gallimard is repulsed and nauseated. Gallimard needs to constantly repeat the colonial hermeneutic, constructing particular representaitons of East/West and masculine/feminine. He needs to do so precisely because they are always under threat. And they are always under threat because because actual relations do not always coincide with those fantasies. To adapt Christian Gundermann’s (1994) description of Pierre Loti’s European masculinity in Aziyade (set in Turkey with a tragic heroine),
Gallimard is unable to accept being the subject of homosexual desire as the object of the "gaze". Gallimard's Eurocentric, stereotypical images of "Oriental Woman" repressed any "others" outside that colonial discourse.

Throughout the film, the scopic gaze constantly falls upon Song Liling. We are driven to know if/when/how she will reveal herself to be a man. That drive, or will to know, that narrative seduction, is finally turned around and thrown back at the viewer. In this final scene the cultural and sexual scopic gaze is reversed. But this reversal serves as an opening rather than a closure. While Gallimard was willing to play with cultural boundaries between East and West, he flatly refused to change his gender boundaries. In dressing up as Madame Butterfly in front of a fairly tough looking bunch of male inmates and guards, his gesture at Japanisation and feminisation is purely within the boundaries of the orientalist myth of tragic love and theatricality. By making himself up as Madame Butterfly he is still acting out his orientalist fantasies about nineteenth century visions of tragic love. So this very pathetic Westerner becomes othered precisely because of his inability to displace the sovereignty of his own sense of self (Bhabha 1990, Berry 1994).

As he transforms himself in front of his little mirror we reflect back to when he first met Song Liling and returned home to tell his wife of his new interest in the opera. They are sitting in bed, talking. There is a sense that there is not profound connection between then. He says that he has just been to the Chinese opera. She replies, with a nasal tone (as she has a cold), that Chinese opera is all atonal squealing. She cannot tolerate any form of Asian culture, only European versions of it. How can he possibly
like it? She opens a fan and begins to hum *Un bel di vedremo*. They both look into the mirror in front of the bed. She looks tauntingly from behind the fan. She represents all that the West has constructed as sexually attractive in Western women. She is blonde, white, educated, worldly, European, dressed minimally in satin, in bed, and sexually available. He is clearly not sexually interested in her. The moment passes.

The two Butterfly scenes that open and close the film are a parenthesis within which the film works. The first is performed despite the history of colonial America, France, Japan, and China. The second, or final, is performed solely for the melodramatic story of tragic love. And so the story ends, with that twist in the old orientalist narrative sustained to the end. Skloot (1990:61) explains that Gallimard escapes prison by escaping from "himself" and getting into "herself", as an androgynous figure despite his earlier denials of sexual ambivalence. By transforming himself, he is also hanging on to the frame of his fantasy. This escape is also similar to Lacan’s example of Zhuang Zi’s escape in dream as a butterfly (in Žižek 1994:46). In the Zhuang Zi story, when the man is dreaming of being a butterfly he does not know if he is not a butterfly dreaming of being a man dreaming of being a butterfly. Slavok Žižek says that the ideological dream hinders us from seeing reality as such. He writes that “the only way to break the power of our ideological dream is to confront the Real of our desire which announces itself in this dream” (Žižek 1994:48). Because Gallimard is unable or unwilling to confront the Real of his desire he cannot break the power of his ideological dream.
As Chris Berry (1994) writes, desire and topography construct each other, so that now the West is beginning to see Asia differently and, as a consequence, is seeing itself differently. Previously Asia was seen as an other that was both hypersexualised and also poor. But now, as we try to break out of the ideological dream, Asia is increasingly expressing itself to the West as different, but not necessarily as the binary opposite to the West, because, of course, binary opposition simply reinforces the discourses of domination. But we need a metaphor for desire that is different to the self/other binary. The dichotomy of self/other no longer works. Berry describes why that metaphor no longer works in Cronenberg's *M. Butterfly*. He writes that Gallimard's hanging on to that metaphor that builds fantasies about "oriental women" just encourages delusions of grandeur.

Even after the unveiling of Song Liling, Gallimard refuses to renegotiate a relationship that might run the risk of him othering himself, that is, publicly as homosexual. He prefers to hang on to the illusion that his relationship with Song Liling is heterosexual. Hwang (in DiGaetani 1989:145) says that Gallimard never had to face his own homosexuality. He explains how in some cultures, including the Chinese, there is an interesting way of avoiding many issues by assuming that "if you have sex with a man and you do the screwing, you are not gay, but if you're screwed, you're gay. ... gay means being a passive homosexual. If you're not passive, you're not gay". This partly explains Gallimard's refusal to be categorised as "gay". As noted in Chapter Two, Derrida writes that "differance (is) a system that no longer tolerates the opposition of activity and passivity". Gallimard’s undecidability indicates that their relationship is not about mastery.
In the book Wadler writes that in China Bernard feels like "a double outcast: cut off from the Chinese, a misfit among the French". So, although he is, if you like, a coloniser, he also has a subordinated self-consciousness, especially in that hypermasculine milieu of the expatriates. Catherine, Bernard's fiancée, claims that "... Bernard has done nothing with his life but live on his story" (Wadler). He "protect(s) his romanesque, to protect himself from the mere mortals. If he doesn't keep this belief in Pei Pu being a woman, it becomes just another homosexual love story" (Wadler). Bernard looks for love with a woman, publicly sanctioned in marriage, as a kind of marker of his being grown up and worldly, away from his youth, when his sexual partners were boys.

In the book, in the final "Bernard's Song", Boursicot writes "My story is true ...". Gallimard says "What I loved was the perfect lie. But it's been destroyed". And this, of course, is exactly what has happened to colonial relations. That lie has been exposed. The goods have not been delivered, ultimately, to either party.

It is interesting to see the way Gallimard erases himself (if I may continue to use Berry's metaphors) from the emergent maps which he rejected. That final scene in the prison refracts back to many parts of the film's own internal narrative and also to narratives beyond the film that suggests more meanings.

Wadler's *Liaison* is an investigative book that was the result of long interviews with Bernard Boursicot and members of his family and friends. It explores the scandal that
broke out when it was found that he was spying for the Chinese government. But what was really scandalous was not the espionage (it was actually very petty and insignificant) but rather that Boursicot had had what he thought was a heterosexual affair for nearly 20 years with a Chinese opera singer, Shi Pei Pu, who, it turns out, was a man. Boursicot claimed that Shi Pei Pu claimed to be a woman, and that he believed it. He also believed that "she" had had a baby by him.

The book is a wonderful example of Michel Foucault's thesis in *A History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction* that "power needs to establish a knowledge of sex" (1984:97); that the truth about sex is extorted so as to achieve a unitary politics of sex; and, of course, that truth is extorted through various forms of confession. Liaison is about the public will to know (epitomised in the judiciary and journalism) and the private will to narrate so as to legitimate (epitomised in an illicit affair). Boursicot is portrayed as being obsessed with stories. He is portrayed as being weak (in mind and morality) because of the ways in which he interprets "real life" through romantic fictions. So it's his "belief in" unrelated romantic stories that is put forward as his pathology, as it were. He believed Shi Pei Pu's stories. That is put into relief against the author's will to know "the truth".

*Liaison* uses many examples of how Bernard saw himself as a literary or fictional character. "His father, Louis, had been a salesman - just like Willy Loman, out there with a suitcase and a smile ... except ... he had only the suitcase, never the smile" (Wadler 1993:21). When Bernard returns to China, is reunited with Pei Pu, her mother, and his son, they decide to tell Bertrand, the boy, "the truth" about Pei Pu
when he turns twenty "Like in the book by Alexandre Dumas, *Twenty Years After*" (Wadler 1993:125). Bernard's father says "he tells us stories he has read in books as if they are his own ... . And he thinks they are true. He introduces himself as the main character in all these stories" (Wadler 1993:128). Even when he holidays in Venice, Bernard sits at Florian's cafe, "beloved of Proust" (Wadler 1993:130). When he is in Paris, living with his new lover, Thierry, Bernard refers to his memory of Pei Pu and their son as "a tragic story living inside him" (Wadler 1993:133). Pei Pu spun stories around everything, every place. He was a romantic. Bernard describes how his twenty year career was described by the prosecutor as a journey that was like Ulysses', no less. Pei Pu says "Never with anyone will you have the beautiful story you have with me" (Wadler 1993:174). Bernard even refers to a young Israeli soldier he has a brief affair with as being like Sal Mineo, a boy in *Exodus* that he desired (Wadler 1993:180). When he is in Belize City (formerly British Honduras in Central America) Bernard sets up a new embassy, ignoring the poverty around him, and imagining that it is something like *Gone With the Wind* (Wadler 1993:197). He learns how to treat women from Stendhal's *The Red and the Black* (feigning indifference so as to attract interest) (Wadler 1993:197). Pei Pu spins tales "Like a Sheherazade" (Wadler 1993:202). Bertrand reveals his "true" identity to Mimi. "Bertrand tells Mimi a story" (Wadler 1993:257). The story about Pei Pu being his mother is astonishing. Then Mimi wonders about Bertrand's version of things "Or are these stories, so much like something out of a boy's adventure book, a lie, a fable, a dream?" (Wadler 1993:259). Bernard is in prison, but thinks that "as soon as everyone understands that this is a love story, he will be released" (Wadler 1993:251). "Marriage will prove to the world this is a love story" (Wadler 1993:252). Bernard thinks "this is a love story" (Wadler
Bernard is not "at peace with his story" (Wadler 1993:260). "Earlier Bernard ... saw himself as the hero of a great love story" (Wadler 1993:271). Bernard "ended up finally a victim of romance" (Wadler 1993:289).

Shi Pei Pu tells Bernard about one of his most famous roles in the Beijing Opera: "The Shadow of the Willow", also known as "The Story of the Butterfly" (Wadler 1993:39-40). The story is about a brother and sister. The brother is sent to school and the sister is not. But the sister is the intelligent and ambitious one of the two. So they cross-dress and she goes to school and he stays home. At school, Zhi Yingtai meets and falls in love with a boy, Lian Shanbo. Her family take her out of school for an arranged marriage. She reveals her sex and gender to Lian and leaves. Lian kills himself. She visits his grave in her wedding dress and throws herself on the grave and dies (Wadler 1993:40). Pei Pu later tells Bernard that the story of the Butterfly is his story too. Pei Pu explains how he was a third daughter in a family. His grandmother declared that his parents had to have a son. If his mother did not have one then his father had to take a new wife. So, on his birth, his parents dressed her as a boy and brought her up as a boy (Wadler 1993:45).

So now Bernard thinks that the reason he was attracted to Pei Pu as a friend is that he is really a woman. The sexual and gender ambiguity is frequently attributed to Shi Pei Pu's Chineseness or, if you like, her oriental femininity. Bernard's lover, Thierry, thinks that "Chinese men always seem more feminine than Western men" (Wadler 1993:209). What turns this portrayal of orientalistic tropes into something new is her very conscious construction of herself as his mysterious, alluring, oriental siren.
Bernard sees that Pei Pu's life is a charade but for what could be called the wrong reasons. Some of the French try to warn him, saying that Pei Pu is a homosexual and a pederast, but Bernard rejects those claims. "It is strange, yes, but then everything in China is strange; the men go about dressed the same as the women, so much is hidden, who knows what really goes on?" (Wadler 1993:54).

In 1989 when Bernard was being questioned about how it was possible to switch allegiance or identification so easily from what he thought was a man to a woman, Bernard replies: "Yeah, why not? He's dressed the same as a Chinese girl, the men and women all dress the same. He shows me his hands, his hands were not the same as a man. His face was without any hair. ... He told me so many times this story of the butterfly. He prepared the field very well". And the interrogator replies "But if someone tells you they are a woman after you have related to them as a man, you can't just switch over like that. How do you make the adjustment in your head?" After more discussion, Bernard says "He was not a sex person. ... He was not human. You could not say he was a man friend of a woman friend; he was somebody different anyway. ... He was not my man friend; he was my friend who had some mysterious story" (Wadler 1993:62-63). It seems that in Bernard's life there is this constant concatenation of real life, literature, music, drama, fantasy, desire, otherness, and such a movement between East and West, masculinity and femininity, that boundaries, such as they are suggested by the categories, blur. "He" and "she" in Chinese is the same thing, "ta". ""That's why Chinese was good for the kind of monkey business we did""
(Wadler 1993:117). And "daily life with Pei Pu was like in the theatre" (Wadler 1993:118).

The movie M. Butterfly is based on the same "truth" as Liaison, and also Hwang's play and Puccini's opera. So it spans all those repetitions and elaborations of the Madame Butterfly phenomenon. But it also elaborates on orientalism. It challenges the authority of both genres (true story and opera) and re-fictionalises the "real" characters as Song Liling and Rene Gallimard. And even before seeing the movie we already know that it's going to be an interesting account of Butterfly's gender, as "M." indicates Monsieur, not Madame (Mme) or Madama (an Italicisation of the French that qualifies the English Butterfly). M. Butterfly the title, and the person who will perform that role, is already disruptive. The Butterfly role changes as the person performing it changes. Skloot writes how "M." both reveals and hides the confused gender of the protagonist. He writes that "what we assume about gender depends on what we see, or don't see" (Skloot 1989:63). The disguise works because of the multiplying of layers of representation: book, play, film, opera, music, theory.

Foucault explores this discursive drive of the will to know so as to fix meaning. That fixing of meaning, especially of sexuality, defines personhood through sexuality as a public discourse. What is of interest here is not so much the incredibility that such an experienced, worldly man as Boursicot/Gallimard did not know the sex of his lover, but rather, that the law and the media just had to determine how he could have not known. In the Prologue to the book Bernard Boursicot says "I wish to make it clear to you that this is about a woman who has passed for a man" (10). When Shi Pei Pu was
caught for espionage by the French the headlines ran 'ESPION OU ESPIONNE?' and so "Two medical experts have been ordered to determine sex" (12-13). But Boursicot explains how in Chinese s/he is the same word, and claims that that was somehow why it was possible for the whole incident to occur.

So the question is: how can the law, medicine, journalism, or any other public, rational, scientific discourse account for such blatant ambiguity? Of course it can't. And that's why we have such clear categories for all human behaviour, and that includes "deviant". Bernard's defence lawyer says "I like fairy tales ... but even if what you say is the truth, truth is sometimes more unbelievable than lying. This is the age of reason. The judge will not believe you. To him this is a spy story" (Wadler 1993:273).

By the nineteenth century, when the first Madame Butterfly story appeared, sex was policed and regulated through public discourses, especially, as Foucault points out, through confession. But *M. Butterfly* resists regulation, and negotiates multiple, or at least less rigid, meanings. Stephen Greenblatt (1991) gets to this idea of negotiation through an examination of the West's encounters with the New World. In describing the power of witnessing, which ties in with Foucault's confessing, he writes that

> (e)verything in the European dream of possession rests on witnessing, a witnessing understood as a form of significant and representative seeing. To see is to secure the truth of what might otherwise be deemed incredible: ...

(Greenblatt 1991:122).

Although public discourses had declared that Shi Pei Pu was indeed a man, Boursicot did not want to see, to witness, because he believed in the place he had been assigned
in his lover's narrative structure. And all he had to confess was that yes, he did hand over what he thought were sensitive documents to the Chinese government, but he did it for love, or, rather, the love story he shared with Shi Pei Pu. It undoes the earlier Butterfly stories that represented the European man who entered Asia (to use Chris Berry's crude pun) with all the sovereignty of the West. Classical orientalism describes the simultaneous desire and repulsion that the West had for the East. And in that relationship the hypermasculine West saw the feminine East as illicit: seductive, fertile, dangerous, and devious. Although Wadler writes that "China is (not) a place for illicit pleasures: Drugs, prostitution, even horse racing are forbidden" (Wadler 1993:26) we know that she is going to refer to other "illicit pleasures". Robert Young writes in *Colonial Desire* (1995:181) that "nineteenth-century theories of race did not just consist of essentialising differentiations between self and other: they were also about a fascination with people having sex - interminable, adulterating, aleatory, illicit, inter-racial sex".

Alison Broinowski (1992:108) describes how these productions reproduce the same theme: "in Illicit Space, the Asian woman is a commodity, a victim, and dispensable". She, like Said, refers to Asia (geographically or culturally) as being seen and treated as an Illicit Space by the West. But that sort of textual interpretation does not take into account resistive strategies that do not fall into the commodity or victim categories. Song Liling was also a spy, and, of course, a man. He claimed that, being a man, he was in the perfect position to construct himself as the ideal woman. In the court scene towards the end of *M. Butterfly* Song Liling explained how he was able to keep Gallimard from knowing his sex. He explained that "he was very responsive to my
ancient oriental ways of love, all of which I invented myself, just for him". Song Liling exposes Gallimard’s orientalist views on what Said calls “oriental sex”. He does this by transgressing the voyeurist’s (Gallimard’s, the court room’s, and, necessarily, the viewer’s) expectations that only the coloniser knows and uses orientalist tropes.

Said (1991a) describes transgression as a crossing over from one domain to another, cutting across expectations, providing unforeseen pleasures, discoveries, experiences. Said is referring to the high degree of professionalisation in the musical discourse that separates and elevates Western classical music from the general society around it. The rigidly elite musical culture of the late nineteenth century rather disparagingly saw Puccini’s operas as "light" and therefore not really worth analysing. But it was its very accessibility that made Puccini’s operas very popular and also open to adaptation, or even transgression. Another thing that made it so popular was also the availability of an Oriental mask, in the performative form of the geisha. So the repeated performance of the geisha by a European as a sexualised, yet ultimately abject Oriental, had always been seen as a straightforward orientalist practice. But with the Oriental performing him/herself as an orientalised object of desire, a space outside the symbolic begins to open up. The same symbols are used, but because they are used in slightly different ways by being combined with other orders of symbols, we get different effects. And so the social, political, and sexual boundaries have to be repeatedly performed and rethought. Representations like Cronenberg’s M. Butterfly work against a static and totalising view of "the East", "the West", sexual orientations, and political allegiances. As a film, it explores the narrative forms that demand recognisable categories as being forms of orientalism.
CONCLUSION

The way we produce and reproduce the Butterfly narrative is an indicator of how we see the Other as an object of fascination, desire, and tragic love. And each time the Butterfly is invoked it sends reverberations in all directions. The Butterfly narrative is no longer a linear grand narrative. Because the way we all see ourselves and each other is in cultural flux, we can no longer postulate a general seamless theory of global cultural processes. Nor can we claim that a particular Butterfly text is an effect of a total historical picture. Rather, it is the unpredictable cause of historical effects. These historical effects, like the refusal to speak or categorise one's sexuality or nationality, are meaningful signs that destabilise final or total meanings.

Until the late 1980s, Asian-woman-as-object was one that was seen to be there to be used and consumed. But recent texts show how the generic so-called West's ultimate Other, the generic so-called Asian woman, is not what she has appeared to be. Once the Asian-as-Other articulates the sexist-orientalist fantasies of the European-as-Self back to him, for his edification, that simple one-way model of coloniser/colonised is no longer appropriate; nor is it erased. The effects of colonisation and orientalization are still there.

The spy story and the film problematize how we can narrativise true stories of love and betrayal without clear consistent categories. Or rather, how can a narrative that is premised on fixed categories be resolved, as it were, in terms of shifting, fluid,
indeterminate categories? To put it another way: how can we move from traditional linear, closed narrative forms to what might be called "transtextuality"?

But now the Butterfly carries many more meanings. And they no longer make up a continuous orientalist narrative. They actually explore the narrative form that demands recognisable categories as being orientalist itself.

The spy story, the play, and the film can be seen as a serious challenge to the Orient that had been represented in the earlier Madame Butterfly texts. There appears to be a transgressive change in that object of knowledge and desire from passive to active, from feminine to masculine. And in that transformation, those binaristic categories lose their clear unambiguous meanings.

It's very easy to bring together nineteenth century orientalism and the representational tropes in European opera. We can frame orientalism as a marker of a particular social history. But when we look at contemporary popular texts, we can see how we have actually witnessed (to use Stephen Greenblatt's idea of eyewitness and negotiation) the explosion of the academic theorising of orientalism out into popular domains. Popular versions of crass orientalism do indeed exist, as we see in Miss Saigon. But so too do forms of counter-orientalism. There are also texts that contain both and that move to yet another position, what Homi Bhabha calls a "third space". David Cronenberg's film M. Butterfly is one such text. And it is a product of, and larger than the whole history of Butterfly productions.
It is too simplistic to label a text "orientalist" and either demonise it or dismiss it outright. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1987) has been a crucial historical corrective to grand Western ideas about canonicity. But now we need to extend and elaborate ways of reading texts like the many Madame Butterfly representations. Cronenberg's film shows not only the effects of the long history of European thought on its colonial other, but it also shows how the West is now analysing and reassessing its relationship with its colonial others. We are well aware of the intimate relationship between humanism and colonialism. Humanism was based on "Man" as a category. It was a category that excluded and Othered women and natives (Young 1995, Trinh 1989) and any form of queerness. We can easily cite texts that reflect this sort of categorisation. In fact, Puccini's opera clearly does this. But Cronenberg's film *M. Butterfly* interweaves many narratives. In looking at both these textual productions of Butterfly we can see how meaning can be both intrinsic and extrinsic to particular works.

Different meaning-making systems have very porous membranes separating them. Sometimes they seep into each other, so that music, journalism, drama, film, and video constantly inform each other. With Madame Butterfly we see a hundred-year-old story being repeated so often under different circumstances so that its effects reverberate. And with each repetition there is a slight change, and each change is repeated, and so on. There is a constant interplay between Puccini's music and the audience. Although the music itself has stayed the same over the years, the dramatic interpretation has changed. The changes that have taken place reflect changing cultural formations and expectations.
Chapter Four continues on with the butterfly metaphor as a way of analysing Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* and the Rushdie Affair as a textual event that has had, and continues to have, global effects. The whole Rushdie Affair is much larger than the book in question. It strikes at the heart of the politics of representation.

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1 Large sections of this Chapter were presented as a conference paper at the Department of English, National University of Singapore, September 1995. A modified version of that paper was also published in *Critical Arts*, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 105-118.

2 Spivak (1988:5, footnote 3) points to how Said (1983:170-172) refers to how Gramsci uses elaboration to mean *e-laborare*, to work out, to refine a prior powerful idea to perpetuate a world view so that a society may perpetuate itself. "Thus elaboration is a central cultural activity ... (and) ... culture serves authority ... not because it represses and coerces but because it is affirmative, positive, and persuasive. Culture is productive, Gramsci says, and this ... is what makes a national Western society strong, difficult for the revolutionary to conquer" (Said 1983:171).

3 Publication details on John Luther Long's story and David Belasco's play appear in unreferenced forms in most of the material I cite, and it has proven impossible to acquire or see either the story or the script of the play in the "original". Nevertheless, the repeated citation of the information regarding both texts as "true" and "accurate" has accrued its own truth value. And this is precisely the function of myth. The film *M. Butterfly* was produced 1992, released 1993, Geffen Company, USA, with Jeremy Irons as Rene Gallimard and John Lone as Song Liling. The pragmatic advantages of using a film on video are obvious, and also film, as a medium, is a good example of an absolutely contemporary form of representation that borrows forms and contents from other genres and texts.

4 Said (1987) lists Loti together with several other significant orientalist travel writers of the late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries (99) and then again as a minor writer of exotic fiction (252). I can only speculate that Said implies that Loti's work on the Middle East is more significant (perhaps "scholarly") than his work on the Far East (as it was "popular"). Because I am using just one of Loti's many texts, and because I am using it strategically, so that I can say something about other texts, I will not address this issue of whether Loti is more or less significant in the Middle or Far East. Loti's *Aziyade* was an autobiographical representation of his encounter with Islam and the Ottoman empire in 176-1877. According to Christian Gundermann ("Orientalism, homophobia, masochism: transfers between Pierre Loti's *Aziyade* and Gilles Deleuze's "Coldness and Cruelty", *Diacritics*, Summer-Fall 1994, pp. 151-167), *Aziyade* is a *‘campy’ subversion of the stable normative masculinity that purports to lie at the heart of the colonialist project. ... Aziyade constructs a ‘masculinity at the margins’ - albeit in the ambiguity of the stereotype itself rather than as an overt critical project - through fetishistic performativity and masochistic subversion of the masculine ego. It is also clear that Loti's text as a realist text is not merely an obsolete reproduction of a dated style but rather that it self-consciously complicates simplistic realist notions of representation. ... it can not be read as a ‘naive text’" (151).

Gundermann writes that there is a crossing of masochism and orientalism in *Aziyade*.

5 This biographical material can be found in Terence Barrow's Introduction to the 1973 edition.

6 This is according to the program for the opening performance of *Miss Saigon*, 1989, Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London.
7 John Wayne also co-directed and starred in *The Green Berets* (1968), which is a crass glorification of America's role as saviour of the world. It is replete with all the clichéd images, including the little Vietnamese boy who represents innocence and who, at the grand ending of the film, is given Wayne's green beret.

8 As with the inaccessibility to original documentation of Long and Belasco's work (at least from here, Australia), this film is not available on video in Australia, so I relied on Dr Claire Colebrook, Murdoch University, for this valuable information.

9 In the 1995 program, Alain Boublil writes that the Engineer was modelled on Goro from *Madama Butterfly* and that he was a "half-French, half-Vietnamese wheeler-dealer, an actual Vietnamese type" (my italics). Thus the Engineer, a hybrid, represents what the innocent little Amerasian children would be doomed to if they are not "saved".

10 Kim (Kimball O'Hara) is the central character in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, 1901.

11 In the 1995 program, Alain Boublil writes that he wanted to have a beauty contest in this, his next musical. "In the opening scene we had only a bar and a bargirl. ... I thought again of my beauty contest, not a real one here but the sort of vulgar imitation that a character like our Engineer might invent as a come-on to American soldiers. Suddenly ... we had our title, *Miss Saigon*".

12 Trinh T. Minh-ha writes of "Western vision as knowledge" (1991:189) as she describes the self-authorisation that occurs within Hollywood cinema. She also goes on to explain that knowledge, as it moves around the world, reverberates and influences others. She writes that when the other becomes at once the object of study and the subject of otherness, there is a desire to expose the wrongdoings inflicted on this other's image and to denounce misrepresentations (1991:188). When this happens what we end up with is a further narrowing of the stereotype. Trinh T. Minh-ha writes that

"the indictment of the master's monologism and of the forms of power he circulates runs the risk of wearing thin as the words of resistance around certain themes on the oppressed become too familiar to the oppressor. There is, indeed, no small, worn-out subject, but only narrow, predictable representation" (1991:190).

She goes on to add that rehashing those stereotypes can also constitute a powerful practice. Repetition always carries the possibilities of transformation. When repetition calls attention to itself as repetition it doubles back, exerting power, then thwarting its own power, repeatedly inflating it only to deflate it better (Trinh T. Minh-ha 1991:190). "Repetition outplays itself as repetition, and each repetition is never the same as the former. In it there is circulation, there is intensity, and there is innovation" (ibid).

13 Sic, as in the way Trinh uses *I* and *We/you* to indicate the empowered enunciating self with capitals, and the object of analysis/research/exploitation with the lower case.

14 Ann Laura Stoller, 1991, "Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power" in di Leonardo (ed.) *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era*, University of California Press, Berkeley, examines this apparent need to help these "malheureux", to save them from their fate. Stoller looks at how it can be seen in the way colonial European women in Indochina in the early 20th century wanted to "save" the "metis" from their mothers. They ran campaigns for "la recherche de paternité" and sought out girls in moral danger and made them into "worthy women". Mestisse girls were instructed away from promiscuity and mestis boys away from militancy. They were all to be made French.

15 Just as Roland Barthes does in *Mythologies* (1989): "I am at the barber's and a copy of *Paris-Match* is offered to me. ... " (125). Then he goes into a now well known semiological analysis of a "young Negro in a French uniform (is saluting)".
16 For a fuller discussion of Asian/Third World woman, see Trinh T. Minh-ha, 1989, Woman, Native, Other, Indiana University Press, Indiana.

17 Christian Gundermann refers to this nexus of the performativity and theatricality of masochism and orientalism in his description of Pierre Loti’s novel Aziyade. Gundermann reads Loti through Gilles Deleuze, Freud, Bhabha, and Lacan.

18 Screened on television on 6 December 1996 on Special Broadcasting Services (SBS TV).

19 In The Making of Miss Saigon shots of Broadway show billboards for “Les Misérables”, “Phantom of the Opera”, and “Cats”. The same team has made all these extremely popular musicals.

20 Whatever criminal or unethical deed Dan commits is framed sympathetically in the film.

21 I have expanded Elizabeth Grosz’s definition of "representation", from Sexual Subversions, 1989, Allen & Unwin, Sydney.

22 These ideas on the colonial construction of the fetish derive from Professor Ban Kah Choon's paper "Fetishes and Other Things: Over-Determination and Literature" at the conference on "Meaning as Production: The Role of The "Unwritten"", National University of Singapore, 7-9 September 1995.

23 Said looks at how Arabs are orientalised through the condensation of radically antithetic qualities (1987:312).

24 The ambiguity of the Chinese opera singer's sexuality is a critical aspect of both texts. So my genderisation of her/him reflects whatever gender is being represented at that particular narrative moment.

25 For the convenience of the availability of film on video-tape, I will refer to the film. This practice further reinforces my thesis about popular orientalism: that the genre has a very profound influence on circulation and influence.


27 In Fatal Attraction Dan exclaims “The words of the operal” as he uncorks the wine he’ll be sharing with Alex.

28 The dictionary definitions of "liaison" are: "an illicit intimacy between a man and a woman" (illicit in this context because it is between two men, one of whom has to believe that the other is a woman), and "liaison office, ... an officer acting as go-between for allied forces or bodies of men under different commands" (the bodies of these two men were indeed under different government and sexual commands, both working as go-betweens).

29 The Gallimards are an established French family, prominent in publishing. Gallimard published most of Foucault's work in French.

30 In Herculeine Barbain (1980) Foucault describes how in the Middle Ages hermaphrodites were determined to have one sex at birth (by the father, who has the power to name) and then at a marriageable age had to declare what sex they were. Then it remained fixed at that until death. By the 19th century, biological theories of sexuality led to medical determination of one, true, unambiguous, constant, fixed sex.
The idea of negotiation as an integral part of cultural production is from Stephen Greenblatt's (1991) Marvellous Possessions.

I stress true stories because Michael Ondaatje has done it in fiction in The English Patient (1992). The English patient can remember history; his own as he 'made it' with Herodotus in hand. The English patient, like Boursicot, was a traitor not so much because he operated as a spy but because he had an affair with his friend's wife. Ondaatje explains that wars and histories are as much about love as they are great deeds performed by great men. Caravaggio finally reveals to the English patient his own identity by saying "You were not the spies, we were the spies..." (254-255).
CHAPTER FOUR

DREAM ANGEL: A BACKWARD READING OF SALMAN
RUSHDIE’S THE SATANIC VERSES

...in the dream ...when [he] dreamed himself awake again she was standing in
front of him with, that loose white hair and the butterflies clothing her:
transformed ... with a rapt expression on her face, receiving a message from
somewhere that she called Gibreel (The Satanic Verses 1988:226).

Thus Mirza Saeed Akhtar, the zamindar of Titlipur, “Butterfly Abode” (Suleri 1989:620),
“Butterfly Village” (Jussawalla 1989:106), or “Butterfly City or Town” (as noted by
Mishra), dreams of Ayesha’s prophetic dreaming. She dreams that the angel Gibreel is
speaking revelation to her.

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter will focus on a very selective reading of Salman Rushdie’s The Satanic
Verses. That novel, and the political furore that still surrounds it since its publication in
1988, is indispensable in this dissertation, as the whole so-called Rushdie Affair is
emblematic of postmodern, postcolonial, and postorientalist concerns. First I will very
briefly look at the framing of Islam by the Western mass media so as to contextualise the
publicity around the novel and the author as a global media event. Then I will do a reading
of one of the last passages of the novel, that of Ayesha the butterfly girl prophet, focussing
on Saladin Chamcha, Mirza Saeed Akhtar (later referred to as Saeed), and Salman Rushdie,
and the narrative worlds they occupy. Saladin Chamcha is the central character from the
start to the end of the novel. Saeed emerges as a significant protagonist in the Ayesha
butterfly story, where he mirrors, as it were, the leap of faith to love and reconciliation

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Chamcha finally makes. Saeed and Chamcha are two of the many biographical characters in the novel. The most conspicuous others are Baal the poet, Bilal the Grandee of Jahilia's radio operator (also an allusion to Saladin Chamcha's one thousand and one radio voices), Salman the Persian, and Gibreel Farishta as Saladin Chamcha's opposite. There is also an omnipresent authorial voice throughout the novel.

Since the fatwa was declared against Salman Rushdie, he and his book have become the central characters in the drama of the Rushdie Affair. Thus the Rushdie Affair, somewhat like the Madame Butterfly myth, has accrued meanings from different sources. And, also like myth, the Rushdie Affair/The Satanic Verses story gets repeated and elaborated, taking certain foundational interpretations for granted, repeating them until they have their own truth value. The story drifts between the author and the book, so that the myth becomes a text that combines the two. I will hitherto refer to this myth as The Satanic Verses, an unmarked title that includes more than the novel itself. Another aspect of the apparent popularity of The Satanic Verses that looks similar to Madame Butterfly is that while the text and its author are well-known, very few people who are in a social and political position to be able to discuss the text seem to have actually read it. Just as Madame Butterfly is always interpreted as meaning Madame Butterfly, Puccini's opera, so too do Salman Rushdie and The Satanic Verses always get interpreted in terms of each other. Amir Mufti (in Burt 1994:308-309) writes that we need to re-examine old notions of literary reception that are based on the image of the solitary bourgeois reader to include various forms of mass consumption, rather than just reading. Mufti claims that The Satanic Verses circulated in the Islamic world through "extracts published in the print media, in English and in translation; commentary in print, on the airwaves, and from the pulpit; fantasticated representation in the popular cinema; rumours and hearsay". I would add that
that is largely how The Satanic Verses has circulated in the West. However, the low levels of literacy in what Mufti refers to as the Third World, combined with high levels of access to electronic media and communication, produce conditions of reception that contradict most genres that require literary engagement (Mufti in Burt 1994:324). Mufti refers to this sort of engagement as "reception by pastiche" as one that reflects the text's pastiche, or hybridity of form. Rushdie uses different genres and forms, from historic Islamic to postmodern Western, thus making the form of The Satanic Verses ambivalent (Mufti in Burt 1994:310). Mufti writes that "Pastiche and formal ambivalence are here the very conditions that enable the literary text to enter the public sphere as political act" (in Burt 1994:310). As a political act, The Satanic Verses proposes that postcolonial identities are profoundly ambivalent, residing in the gaps between an imaginary East and West. Mufti writes that Satanic Verses challenges historical fictions of community and representation.

The Madame Butterfly myth perpetuates orientalist fantasies of Easternness and Westernness. For example, Miss Saigon uses the Madame Butterfly myth to reinscribe boundaries between East and West in that it represents a romantic orientalist fantasy of what happens when East meets West. However, Rushdie looks at the meeting and mingling of Eastern culture and the West. In reference to The Moore's Last Sigh, Rushdie says that when Europe first came to India it did not come for conquest, "It came looking for pepper" (1995). Rushdie shows how the boundaries between the two are rapidly collapsing. This does not mean that such categories no longer exist. Rather, it means that they are not necessarily exclusive. The Satanic Verses is an important postorientalist representation of the hyphen, slash, comma, or hiatus between East and West, or between Islam and secularism3.
THE RUSHDIE AFFAIR: A POSTMODERN MYTH

The Rushdie Affair is now eight years old. It has been an exemplary case of the postmodern condition (if I may use Lyotard's expression). The whole Affair is also emblematic of postcoloniality and postorientalism in terms of the theory and the politics of representation. It has demonstrated that there are different practices of representation and reception. Aamir Mufti (in Burt 1994:333) writes that the Rushdie Affair has shown that there is a coincidence of a political imperative of "holding the audience", the novel's textual form, and the dynamics of contemporary mass communication. The politics of the novel go far beyond the novel itself. It spills into theories of reception and dissemination of representations. And the dissemination of sensational fragments of a complex novel through word-of-mouth and scandal, fosters further fragmentation and transformation.

These fragmented and transformed rumours continue to circulate within and between existing cultural and political discourses. The mass of publicity that erupted onto newspapers, television, the radio, magazines, books, and even a surprise appearance of Salman Rushdie at a rock concert⁴, after the publication of The Satanic Verses in 1988, turned out to be more significant, in terms of representation being political, than the novel itself⁵. Many of the books that were published speculate on Rushdie's predicament and/or the status of The Satanic Verses.

The Rushdie Affair, like the Madame Butterfly myth, is informed primarily by the mass media as it creates and sustains particular images of East and West and, in this case, of Islam and Western imperialism. As documented in Edward Said's Orientalism, the West already has fairly entrenched images of Islam that have developed, especially with the
expansion of the mass media. Since the Arab defeat in 1967 in the Middle East and the successful Iranian revolution, the alliance of common people and the clergy confounded the West (Said 1994:3). Hence the political power of Islam and the fear in the West of that power was already established in and by the mass media when the Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran proclaimed a fatwa on Rushdie on 14 February 1989. So the publication (26 September 1988)\(^6\) and subsequent banning and burning (14 January 1989 in Bradford) made The Satanic Verses a very volatile political literary event indeed. Despite Rushdie's apologies to the offended Muslims (18 February 1989, which were rejected) and objections to the treatment of the author by prominent writers around the world, the fatwa still remains in force, almost a decade later\(^7\).

The fatwa against Rushdie has represented the West's fear of what Said (1985b) refers to as the so-called "return of Islam". It is precisely because Islam is not "out there" in some despotic, isolated, distant place that it has to be anxiously and repeatedly represented as such. Just as Jews were feared as the West's internal others, so too are Muslims feared that way. This fear was invoked by the way the mass media represented Saddam Hussein as a Nazi, a terrorist, and a murderer during Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. George Bush, the then American President, and Margaret Thatcher, the then Prime Minister of Britain, were calling Hussein "Hitler" (Akbar Ahmed 1992:1). In defence of the fatwa against Rushdie, Mushahid Hussain (1990:13) writes that an editorial in the London Guardian newspaper called Khomeini a "bearded bastard". Hussain accuses the West of "Iran bashing". Thus a binaristic argument is drawn up by the media, wherein sides are taken for or against Iran, Islam, Rushdie, and freedom of speech. These issues have been portrayed as if they each have essential and exclusive qualities. For example, Amir Taheri (1990:14) says, "Islam is nearly one billion people of many different nationalities and ethnic
backgrounds". So the "raging Islam of fist-shaking fanatics exists only in the imagination of architects of civilisation conflicts" (Taheri 1990:144). Those architects operate through the mass media. And, ironically, The Satanic Verses is emblematic of such mixtures. Hence The Satanic Verses can be seen as a self-reflexive metaphor for the tensions between postmodern globalism and regional, national, religious, ethnic, and racial particularism. In such an imaginary world, a Western identity would exclude tropes of Islamic culture and an Islamic identity would exclude Westernness. This presents what Daniel Easterman (1990:10) calls a dilemma. He writes that "it is hard to convince a Muslim brought up on negative images of the West ... that a properly secular society ... is a defender of all religions". As each side, as it were, objects to how the media has constructed it, its identity is further elaborated, providing another event.

All of these events have been portrayed in the mass media as if they are a logical product of Eastern isolation from the West. Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait was represented in context of, and thus revived memories of, the American hostage crisis in Iran, which began on November 4, 1979 and sharp OPEC price rises since early 1974 (Said 1985b). Thus the image of the Ayatollah Khomeini was brought to, and demonised in, the Western world through the mass media. Post-cold war dreams of stability disappeared (Ahmed 1992:1) as Saddam Hussein’s posturing further incited Western fears of Islam. These events have figured in the West predominantly as media events. Thus the West has further reinforced its identity as Western and the identity of Islam as a threatening other.

It has been in this mass media environment that the furore around Salman Rushdie and the novel has been playing out. The whole Rushdie Affair has highlighted the power of the mass media and the contestation over its control, because it is through the mass media that
the grand narrative of hegemony, be it Western or Islamic, is constantly re-articulated. It is through the mass media that opinions, ideas, images, and politics are formed, not just aired or reported in some sort of neutral or transparent way. The whole Rushdie Affair can be seen as a postmodern global media event. However, it is also a global argument between “us” and “them”.

A SECULAR AUTHOR/GOD; ONE OF US OR ONE OF THEM?

In his essay, “The Death of the Author”, Roland Barthes (1987:146) writes

We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single “theological” meaning (the “message” of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture ... the writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original.

The Satanic Verses draws from innumerable stories, myths, histories and it challenges the very idea of a single “theological” meaning. Rushdie parodies the “Author-God” in many different ways, and in such powerful ways that his critics seem to believe him.

Edward Said’s thesis of Western representations of the Orient depends heavily on the idea of the author of orientalist texts as being orientalist himself. As noted in Chapter Two, despite his allusions to a deconstructive approach to textual analysis, wherein a text could be said to carry orientalist representations, Said continues to attribute the political qualities of a text to its author. Given this, then, the author is not dead. Nor, indeed, is God. Such a reinstatement of the God/author function leaves no room for interpretation. Everything is absolute. There is no room for doubt. However, The Satanic Verses takes on these issues in the context of colonial relations between India and England, and Islam and the secular world, and the consequent complexities of these identities. And, in writing such an
enormous narrative, Rushdie plays with the omnipotence that accrues to the teller of such a narrative.

Apart from being both and neither Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha, the author playfully asserts his presence; inviting, tempting, seducing the reader to believe in his divine power derived from knowing everything. At the start of the novel, he inserts “Who am I? Who else is there?” (TSV:4). He was the only one who could have witnessed the aeroplane exploding and the two actors’ antics in the air. Then, like Padma in Midnight’s Children (Rushdie 1981), he intervenes again, saying “That’s not it. Listen” (TSV:5). He is telling the story. Who is writing it? The authorial voice says

I know the truth, obviously. I watched the whole thing. As to the omnipotence and -potence, I’m making no claims at present, but I can manage this much, I hope. Chamcha willed it and Farishta did what was willed. Which was the miracle worker? Of what type - angelic, satanic - was Farishta’s song? Who am I? Let’s put it this way: who has the best tunes? (TSV:10).

The omnipresent voice also plays with the subjectivity of the author/God in relation to the reader in the passage on the human and angelic conditions. It concludes: “I know; devil talk. Shaitan interrupting Gibreel. Me?” (TSV:93). And the ambiguity of who is seeing, hearing, speaking, and writing remains.

The ambiguity surrounding truth and subjectivity, authority and submission, permeates The Satanic Verses. Whenever the narrator asks of God what kind of idea He is, he also intones “What kind [of idea] am I?” The whole novel insists on the need for the freedom to doubt. Further into the narrative, Saladin Chamcha decides to stop thinking of himself as evil:

One of the most direct implications of the author-as-God is in a minor, though very important character, Salman the Persian, the Prophet Mahound’s scribe. He is responsible for writing the Satanic Verses into the Book. In his description of the political effects of this narrative strategy, Aamir Mufti (in Burt 1994:314-315) says that Salman the author is associated with the doubt, apostasy, and treachery of Salman the scribe. Thus Rushdie’s critics could not see how the novel could not be publicly identified with Islam and the Muslim world.

In a statement made at a public meeting of “American writers in support of Salman Rushdie” on 22 February, Edward Said (in Appignanesi and Maitland 1989:175-177) poses the question that the angry Islamic world was asking:

Why must a Moslem, who could be defending and sympathetically interpreting us, now represent us so roughly, so expertly and so disrespectfully to an audience already primed to excoriate our traditions, reality, history, religion, language, and origin? Why, in other words, must a member of our culture join the legions of Orientalists in Orientalising Islam so radically and unfairly?

Many Islamic communities saw The Satanic Verses, as Said points out, as a self-representation of Islam for the West; one that would feed the West’s worst fears of Islam, its global other. However, the world is not made up to neat, separate, mutually exclusive essences like “Islam” and “the West” or “us” and “them”, and, as Said says, “Rushdie’s work is not just about the mixture, it is that mixture itself”. It demonstrates that what appear to be opposites are actually embedded in each other. Hence the very idea of an “us” can only be sustained together with a “them”. As Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe
(1996) explain the "us" and "them" of politics, we cannot overcome the "us/them" distinction but we must revise how one negotiates the "us/them" relation. The other is no longer seen as an enemy, but rather as an adversary. That is, we can disagree but never question their right to defend their position. An adversary is legitimate. In other words, identity can accommodate otherness.

Many of the attacks on The Satanic Verses argue that because Islamic morality cannot accommodate otherness, neither can Islamic politics (this will also be illustrated in the next Chapter). However, morality is also political. In his staunch defence of the outrage expressed against The Satanic Verses, Akbar Ahmed (1992) says that it is an insult to the Prophet, his family and some of the holiest names in early Islam. The formula central to Islam: "no Prophet, no Quran, no Quran, no Islam" (Ahmed 1992:169-70). However, this formula is true of all religions. For example, no Christ, no Bible, no Bible; no Christianity. Ahmed also claims that Rushdie's, and his supporters', response to the furore has been to sneer "What do these illiterate Muslim louts know of such fine things" (as literature and creative writing)\(^\text{10}\). Probably the most significant claim is that "there was no hope of dialogue" (171). And it is precisely that lack of dialogue between religious and secular discourses Rushdie writes about. Religious and secular discourses are ensembles of practices, and it is only by looking at the conflict and diversity within and between different practices and politics that we can learn to live together, or, as Rushdie concludes in The Satanic Verses, that Saladin Chamcha can live with conflicts and differences within himself. Living with difference is difficult to do. While Rushdie embraces orientalist tropes and reworks them productively, Ahmed (1992:173) writes that "Rushdie stays suspended to eternity in his unreal, invisible world; punished, like some legendary creature in The Arabian Nights, every moment of the day, for his writing" (Ahmed 1992:173). Rushdie himself
refers to The Arabian Nights as an example of the terrible weight that is put on the narrator to get the story right, otherwise s/he gets killed by the whim of the listener.

Rushdie has been represented, indeed has represented himself\textsuperscript{11} in the Western mass media as one of \textit{us}, a secular sceptical European. He has been represented in radical Islamic responses as one of \textit{us}, a Moslem, albeit renegade, and therefore he ought to have known better than insult the Prophet. Feroza Jussawalla accuses Rushdie of disavowal from Indian authors in his quest to identify with European ones (1989:11-113). Much of the debate in the media has revolved around a simple, though no less dangerous, discourse of “\textit{us}” and “\textit{them}”, “\textit{inside}” and “\textit{outside}”. Sara Suleri (1989) writes that it is too simple to subsume interpretation of Rushdie’s text in terms of “\textit{us}” and “\textit{them}”, because The Satanic Verses is both postmodern and also profoundly religious and historical. My reading of The Satanic Verses (below) sees the novel as compassionately attuned to desire, and that desire comes in various guises, from the erotic to the religious\textsuperscript{12}. The novel reaches that point by working its way through a pastiche of orientalist tropes, inverting the orientalist hierarchy, and thus transgressing both Eastern and Western ideas of the authentic and the divine\textsuperscript{13}.

THE POSTMODERN

Postmodernity is important in looking at how the Rushdie Affair has either reinforced orientalist views of the world or if it has pushed representations of the world towards a postorientalist perspective. Postmodernity postulates a world view without boundaries; one that is transnational and largely evident in the mass media. And, as Peter van der Veer (1989:104) points out, Islamicisation is also a transnational process, and it is recognisable all over the world. The Satanic Verses has done more than cross boundaries. As a postmodern text it has displaced the paradigms of modernity, and as a postorientalist text it
has displaced the paradigms of orientalism. Thus, in a novel that deals with the
construction of identity and the denomination of the “alien”, the effect has been to do
precisely what it critiques (van der Veer 1989:104).

Postmodernism doubts the objectivity, or givenness, of any discourse that realism and
modernism rested upon. It doubts the superiority of high culture over low or popular
culture. It doubts the authority of a text. It doubts that established styles are better than
playful creativity. The narrator of *The Satanic Verses* clearly indicates a reading position
that demands doubt, “the opposite of faith”, and satire, as Baal the satirist names the
unnamable, risks all to stop the world from going to sleep. It has been precisely the radical
doubt of postmodernism that Islamic fundamentalism has sought to counter (Ahmed 1992).
Postmodernism assumes that scientific truth is constructed, not discovered (note the attack
on Lamark and Darwin in *The Satanic Verses*). Postmodernism radically doubts
everything. It turns certitudes upside down in order to investigate what is going on in
power relations. It challenges the grand narratives of religious, racial, ethnic, and national
absolutisms and proposes a decentred world where diversity is the norm, not the exception.
Rushdie’s writing questions who has power over the grand narrative “because those who
do not have power over the story that dominates their lives, power to retell it, rethink it,
deconstruct it, joke about it, and change it as times change, truly are powerless, because
they cannot think new thoughts” (Rushdie 1992:432). Throughout *The Satanic Verses*
there is a contestation between oneness-as-grand-narrative (monoculturalism, constant
subjectivity, clear distinction between good and evil) and multiplicity (hybridity, slipping
multiple subjectivities, confusion between death/birth, sleep/wakefulness, dream/illusion,
good/evil, fact/fiction) and a general blurring of boundaries. It exposes the postmodern,
postcolonial, postoriental, metro-cosmopolitan condition, and shows how it is
incommensurate with fundamentalism of any sort. Rushdie's writing expresses the "provisional nature of all truths" (Rushdie 1992:12) that cultural, political, geographic displacement forces the migrant to face. He says that meaning, like postmodernity itself, "is a shaky edifice we built out of scraps, dogmas, childhood injuries, newspaper articles, chance remarks, old films, small victories, people hated, people loved" (Rushdie 1992:12). Saleem (in Midnight's Children) says that "illusion is itself reality".

Questions of the illusion or reality of authority, absolutism, and revelation in relation to the sacred text abound in The Satanic Verses. The authority of Islam depends on the authority of the Book, the Koran. Any attempt to doubt, question, or tamper with the text itself is seen as a serious transgression. Apart from blatantly describing the author of his narrative as godlike, and apart from naming the whores in the town brothel after the Prophet's wives, and apart from naming the Prophet Mahound after the false prophet, one of Rushdie's apparently gravest sins has been to vulgarise, in the form of Western postmodernism, Islam. Other Islamic artists have attempted to popularise the Koran through different media. For example, Adel Darwish retells Koranic stories in cartoon form, so as to make them more accessible to children. Darwish was accused of corruption and blasphemy by the Tunisian clergy (Darwish 1990:4). Thus the problem is not only content but also form. To use Marshall McLuhan's well-known expression, in this instance it was understood that the medium is the message. Hence, because The Satanic Verses is a postmodernist text, it is deemed by its Islamic critics to be anti-Islamic because postmodernism, as mentioned earlier, promotes doubt. Feroza Jussawalla puts it in another way, saying that "Rushdie has become a victim not of the Muslim world so much as of the indeterminacy, which is the condition of post-modernism, whereby authority has been completely wrested from the author and in his absence has been placed in the hands of warring factions of readers"
(1989:107). Jussawalla says that meaning rests with the reader in cross-cultural situations. However, meaning rests with the reader in all situations. Also, different interpretations do not necessarily lead to "warring factions". Jussawalla laments the loss of the singularity The Satanic Verses is so sceptical about. The narrator in The Satanic Verses writes: "One, one, one. Amid such multiplicity, it sounds like a dangerous word" (TSV 103), exposing the postmodern postcolonial, metro-cosmopolitan condition, and showing how it is incommensurate with fundamentalism of any sort.

Postmodernists play what Lyotard describes as incommensurable language games (1984). A world that is made up of incommensurability is one that has been abandoned by God. A novel that explores incommensurability is an attempt to give the incommensurability between a person and the world a concrete form (Nawal El Saadawi 1989). Without this sort of possibility, to concretise the slipperiness of identity into narrative, there is the possibility of becoming dangerously fragmented. This is especially evident in Gibreal Farishta's descent into paranoid schizophrenia. Gibreal cannot comprehend God and fit the God-idea into some kind of rational, earthly order. If God cannot be comprehended, how then can we be sure of anything? We cannot. And that is what Saladin Chamcha finally comprehends. Lyotard writes that the grand narrative has lost its credibility and that most people have lost their nostalgia for that lost narrative. He writes that "the social subject itself seems to dissolve in this dissemination of language games" (Lyotard in Larrain 1994:107). Lyotard describes how "terroristic" simplifications are totalising. Similarly, Rushdie describes how

Society was orchestrated by ... grand narratives: history, economics, ethics. ... they sought ethical satisfactions in the oldest of the grand narratives, that is, religious faith (TSV 537).
Fredric Jameson (1981:29) writes that “master narratives [like grand narratives], with their seamlessness and closure, take on ‘theological’ significance”. Postmodernism has exposed the political power of the grand narratives and highlighted the importance of the role of language in how it textualises, or worlds, the actual world. Thus, if the world is an ever changing ensemble of language games, then the world itself is an ever changing ensemble of discourses.

Postmodernism is not without its critics. Habermas (1987) claims that postmodernists do what modernists did; they enshrine novelty and define themselves in terms of difference with their immediate past. Habermas (1990) also accuses postmodernists of deluding themselves and ignoring their heritage derived from Classical values. Critics have claimed that Rushdie does what orientalists did, enshrining himself in terms of his profound knowledge of, and implied power over, things oriental, especially Islam. They accuse him of ignoring his cultural and religious heritage, placing himself above the more mundane culture that is most people’s actuality. Feroza Jussawalla (1989:109) accuses Rushdie of espousing “an ‘Orientalist’ schema”, asking “is Mr Rushdie, the prophet of anti-colonialism, guilty of the Orientalism of colonialist discourse? (1989:111), and answering that “the anti-Orientalist has turned into an Orientalist!” (1989:999), citing Rushdie’s “positional superiority” (1989:111) as the evidence for his apparent orientalism. Aijaz Ahmad (1992:174) describes Rushdie as having a gargantuan ego and dreams of grandeur. Rushdie’s detractors seem to have missed the irony and humour in The Satanic Verses, as it is both a profoundly Islamic book and also very postmodern (Suleri 1989).

Postmodernism permeates The Satanic Verses from ideas (What kind of idea am I?) through to technology (the postmodern maternal body of the female hijacker, with grenades.
instead of breasts, who gives explosive birth to immigrants). Postmodernism sees communications technologies as different means of dispersing the symbols and images of culture. As these symbols and images are dispersed either locally or globally, they become their own reality, or hyperreality, as they represent culture as the technological reproduction of symbols. So too does The Satanic Verses revel in the hyperreality of the cinema, radio, air travel, and the book, indeed the word itself and the author of the (W)word (H)himself. The Satanic Verses takes this idea of technological scattering of symbols and images of culture to an extreme. It opens with the scattering of people from an exploding aeroplane (modern technology gone mad), through the sky (the air space through which the media are transmitted), and onto the shores of England (whence the seeds of modernity could be said to have been scattered with the Industrial Revolution).

Air space is the birth canal for re constituted postmodern subjects. It is how “newness comes into the world”. It is also in the air space between nations that transnational film, radio, and ideas cross over and blur boundaries. In The Satanic Verses air space is one of the “defining locations” of this century;

the place of movement and of war, the planet-shrinker and power-vacuum, the most insecure and transitory of zones, illusory, discontinuous, metamorphic (TSV:5)

It is in a space of dream/sleep/air that migration and hybridity are narrated in The Satanic Verses. It is also in television’s (air) space that the hijackers of flight AI-420 expect to appear, to be watched by millions of people all over the world. It is through air/dream space that the cinema resides. In the essay, “The Location of Brazil” (1992:118-125) Rushdie looks at Terry Gilliam’s futuristic movie, Brazil, wondering if Brazil exists at all. He concludes that Brazil exists in the cinema itself, “because in the cinema the dream is the
norm” (Rushdie 1992:125). And this reference to dream and flying relates to Rushdie’s ongoing discussion on migration. He makes the connection between the world of the imagination and the physical world as evident in “real frontiers, as they are neither political nor linguistic, but imaginative”. Slavoj Žižek (1994:46) writes that in its depiction of a totalitarian society, Brazil’s hero remains outside the symbolic social network in his dreams of being a man-butterfly, like the man in the Zhuang Zi myth (Chapter Three). The dream is an escape from the ideological nightmare that surrounds him. The ideological nightmare in Brazil is modernity gone mad, as evident in the industrial commodification of time as well as actual people. The perverse commodification of time and bodies is parodied in the older women’s attempt to stop the process of ageing by having so many uglifying face-lifts that they thus unmistakably mark their old age. And so the slick, modern, capitalist adage that “time is money” applies as their sense of age/time is their plastic surgeon’s money.

If modernity could be seen as the era of industrial production, one that commodifies time itself, then postmodernity could be seen as a proliferation of information and signs that explode the very idea of time, like the universe itself. Postmodernity is marked by the return to the industrial centres of their emissions, albeit refracted signs and/or colonial peoples. Thus urban centres become cosmopolitan. It is precisely because these centres are cosmopolitan that Conservative governments, like that of Margaret Thatcher, need to anxiously and repeatedly describe them as homogenous. Such unity is not the lived reality of the metropole. The metropole has increasingly been defined through the hyperreality of its self-imagining in the cinema, music, style, fiction, histories and myths.

The Satanic Verses plays with the idea of hyperreality in its use of dream/sleep and revelation/hallucination. It does so not only through Western myths of hyperreality14 but
also Islamic myths\textsuperscript{15}. Thus the two previously warring halves (Western and Islamic) learn to live together in a postcolonial postmodern identity that defines itself in change and movement. This is mirrored in the Indian and English halves of Saladin Chamcha that are finally reconciled after he has been to hell (London as an illegal immigrant/devil) and back ("home" to Bombay to be at his father's deathbed). The \textit{Satanic Verses} is about the experiences Chamcha goes through in order to become reconciled with the opposing parts of himself. The narrator comments that one can see Chamcha's early, naive self-made Englishness as either a betrayal of his "real" or "authentic" self, or as a clever way to survive the Anglocentric world he lives in:

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

A man who invents himself needs someone to believe in him, to prove he's managed it. Playing God again, you could say (TSV:49).

Chamcha exemplifies the mutations migrants experience as either inevitable or self-styled ways of being in the world. Chamcha's hyperreal transmogrification into a repulsive goaty devil was the result of the duplicity involved in this Indian wanting to be a proper Englishman.

So too has Salman Rushdie's predicament become hyperreal, as one of the dominant images of the author has been as the d/evil itself. That image took on such truth value that there has been a blurring of distinctions between the real (the author) and the unreal (his fiction). During the Rushdie Affair, Salman Rushdie was graphically depicted as being the Devil himself. Oscar Grillo\textsuperscript{16} parodies the way Rushdie was constructed by his detractors
by drawing him with horns, pitchfork, tail, cloven hoofs, and his eyes exaggerated into looking large, sleazy, and evil. He holds a steaming hot book and wears a dapper jacket, dress shirt and bow tie. The drawing brings together all the reactionaries' worst, most hysterical fears. They fear that Rushdie is evil personified because he has shown just how smart he is. He has written a book that questions Go(o)d and (D)Evil in religious and secular terms. His book questions the divinity of The Book, the Koran (which opens with "This Book is not to be doubted")\(^ {17} \). Even Appignanesi and Maitland (1989:3), in their chronicle of the debate that surrounded the publication of *The Satanic Verses*, write that after the success of *Midnight's Children* "his appearance took on a glowering, saturnine quality as his beard grew, his hair receded and his eyes glared under hooded lids. ... he emerged as someone who was driven, obsessive". And so he emerges through the mass media as having taken on the guise of the Devil himself\(^ {18} \). Thus the media, like or including, *The Satanic Verses*, implode the boundaries between fact and fiction.

**A READING OF THE SATANIC VERSES**

This implosion of the boundaries between fact and fiction in and about *The Satanic Verses* becomes increasingly evident upon examination of almost any given episode within the novel. I will focus on the episode of Ayesha, the butterfly girl prophetess, which occurs towards the end of the novel. That episode blurs the boundaries between magic and realism, fiction and history, and eroticism and the sacred. It is also the last episode which really explores dreaming.

I will trace back through the representations of Ayesha in *The Satanic Verses* (the Empress of Desh, one of the whores in the village brothel, and the butterfly girl prophet) to see how
male desire has mythologised a historic figure. I will look at the historic Ayesha through Fatima Mernissi’s (1991) account of the role of women in Islam. Through those two readings I will see how male desire can be clearly seen in the way Saladin Chamcha finally opens himself up to the chaos of life. Before the final narrative resolution of The Satanic Verses, where Saladin Chamcha reconciles with different aspects of himself, there are two other narrative resolutions that are relevant to my reading. They are Mirza Saeed’s death/rebirth and Gibreel Farishta’s suicide. They will be dealt with below. Another aspect of male desire is the repressed desire shown in the figure of the Imam. This is also explored in history (Mernissi) and fiction (Rushdie and Nawal El Saadawi, an Egyptian writer who is also, like Rushdie, very political). The symbolic relationship between Ayesha¹⁹, a dominant but repressed figure, and the Imam, the carrier of the public, conservative, patriarchal face of Islam, will unfold below.

In The Satanic Verses the central relationships are conducted and explained in terms of dreams, and the symbolic reality of the dream/er spills into the subject’s physical, visceral reality. In the butterfly sequence of The Satanic Verses Ayesha, the girl prophet who is clothed in and eats butterflies, comes upon Gibreel as he sleep/dreams and leaves no trace. The other main characters who have a strong dream relationship with Gibreel leave the angel traumatised. Ayesha does not fight with Gibreel, like Mahound does, nor does she insist on slavery, as the Imam does (TSV:234). Their religious authority is attained through struggle whereas hers is vindicated by the return of the butterflies to Titlipur. This event showed that great things were possible, even for the disenfranchised, weak, and suppressed like herself: an epileptic, but chaste, orphan.
Ayesha claims to have been instructed by God to lead the people of Titlipur, her village, on a pilgrimage to Mecca by land and on foot. This entails walking through the sea. Most of the people believe her and follow. Mirza Saeed Akhtar, the zamindar of the village, is worldly and sceptical. He begs his wife, who is dying of cancer, not to follow; or, if she must, to do so in their air-conditioned car. The pilgrimage goes ahead and they all follow Ayesha. Despite police protests, they all (except Saeed) walk into the sea and drown. When Saeed is later dying, he catches a glimpse of the waters parting and the faithful going to paradise. At this point of his death, he submits (Islam) to the same faith that moved the pilgrims.

Sara Suleri (1989:619-620) interprets the story through a historical account. She writes that

The “Ayesha” episode is based on an actual historical event that occurred in Pakistan. The “Hawkes Bay case” took place in February 1983, when thirty-eight Shia Muslims walked into the Arabian Sea, expecting the waters to part, which would allow the pilgrims to walk on to Basra and finally on to the sacred site of Karbala. They were inspired by a young woman, Naseem Fatima, who claimed to be in direct visionary contact with the twelfth Imam. By the time the Karachi police reached Hawkes Bay, most of the pilgrims had drowned: the police proceeded to arrest the survivors, on the grounds that they had attempted to leave Pakistan without visas. In the notoriety that followed the Hawkes Bay case, as Akbar Ahmed writes in *Pakistan Society: Islam, Ethnicity, and Leadership in South Asia*, ‘rich Shias, impressed by the devotion of the survivors, paid for their journey by air for a week to and from Karbala. In Iraq, influential Shias, equally impressed, presented them with gifts, including rare copies of the Holy Quran. Naseem’s promise that they would visit Karbala without worldly means was fulfilled’.

Suleri adds that Rushdie’s fictionalisation of that incident renders magic realism obsolete. However, magic is needed in Saeed’s leap of faith. She says that the episode is told with such affection that the prophet as woman rearticulates the “powerful erotics of faith”
(Suleri 1989:620). But that only becomes evident after the initial description of his erotic relationship with his wife, and the confusing eroticism he feels when he first sees Ayesha.

Suleri favourably interprets this episode as a combination of eros with faith, reflecting Mernissi’s valorisation of sexuality. Both Suleri and Mernissi deal with male desire and sexuality in Islam, thus countering the well-known orientalist myths of the Prophet’s sex life. However, Feroza Jussawall, a critic who expresses outrage at every narrative turn of The Satanic Verses, reads that episode through other popular texts that, to him, represent “cheap sex”. Jussawalla (1989:106) writes that a Muslim audience is not likely to mistake Rushdie’s hordes of butterflies as magic realism derived from Garcia Marquez “but fully able to identify the butterflies of the Hindi film song ‘Titli Udi’ from the ever-popular film Suraj (1966). To an audience familiar with this culturally coded ‘sign’, pairing the visionary Ayesha with this cheap Hindi film song is a blasphemous act”. Jussawalla sees popular culture as “cheap” and mere association with it as “blasphemous”. Jussawalla’s discomfort with eros is very similar to the Imam’s (which will become evident below).

Both Jussawalla and Suleri interpret the Ayesha butterfly scene in ways that refer to other texts, other mass media representations. Suleri’s interpretation is based on historical reportage and thus leans on the myth of history-as-truth, and then goes on to elaborate her own interpretation of Ayesha as the carrier of eroticism and desire. Jussawalla’s interpretation is based on the myth of Hindi-song-and-film-as-popular, and then goes on to argue that an Indian readership or audience of The Satanic Verses would also be part of Hindi film audiences, and thus open to offence. Both Jussawalla and Suleri invoke other audiences and different interpretations.
Like the many Madame Butterfly stories that make up or challenge the myth of the role of woman in representation, the stories of Ayesha also locate her as a dream woman, as both the source of desire (the desire to represent) and its ultimate, unattainable goal (using Teresa de Lauretis’ [1984] cinematic terminology). The Ayesha butterfly story begins with male desire and fear. Fear is represented as a fear of submission, sublimated in Saeed’s fear of Islam (or “Submission”, a literal translation for the Arabic word “Islam” [Malak 1989:17]). The story ends with his ultimate submission to faith. Mirza Saeed’s desire appears to be for the butterfly girl, Ayesha. But because he loves and desires his wife, he is confused about the lust he feels for Ayesha. However, it turns out that the desire he feels is a longing for his own disavowed faith. So, like Zhuang Zi’s butterfly myth, his desire turns out to be the devout follower he dreams of being. He protests too much against Ayesha’s power, repeating that he is a resolutely modern secular man, not like the simple villagers who blindly follow Ayesha, accepting and following the prophecies she dreams. Although she is pious, her dream, as it turns out, is not divine. And, although he is radically sceptical, his dream ultimately leads him to being open to the possibility of faith. It is an optimistic ending.

Saeed’s fear and desire of submission is very different to the Imam’s. Whereas Saeed is ultimately open to change, to submit to love, the Imam’s only love is for power. Both Saeed and the Imam fantasise and fetishise Ayesha, the ultimate woman, into what they love and fear the most. The optimism of Saeed’s final submission to love is contrasted with the Imam’s. The Imam’s Ayesha in The Satanic Verses, is the Empress of Desh. This Ayesha is his nightmare fantasy. Whereas Saeed’s Ayesha is a butterfly girl, the Imam’s Ayesha is a huge black angel. The story of the Imam indicates what happens to desire
when it is repressed and finally expressed in the desire for power. Ayesha appears as the only image the Imam, who lives in London in exile, keeps on his wall. Ayesha is a historic figure and the only thing he hates more than her is history itself. He believes that “history is the intoxicant, the creation and possession of the Devil, 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” (TSV:210). The Imam fears and hates modernity, strong women, and Westernness. The most evil thing he seeks to keep out of his apartment is “foreignness, Abroad, the alien nation” (TSV:206). He keeps himself surrounded by bodyguards. “Paranoia, for the exile, is a prerequisite of survival” (TSV:207). The Imam claims to speak for God through Gibreel, and, because by this stage of the novel it is clear that Gibreel is a schizoid dreamer, it is also clear that the voice the Imam hears indicates his own delusions of power. The faithful that follow the Imam do so out of fear. He mistakenly sees young men becoming “martyrs” as a sign of love. Gibreel weeps and says “This isn’t love ... It’s hate” (TSV:214). The Imam says “They love me ... because I am water. I am fertility and she (Ayesha) is decay” (TSV:214). Then Al-Lat, the pagan goddess that was made divine so as to attract the masses, bursts out of Ayesha, like a huge mythical monster, a black angel. Al-Lat and Gibreel fight each other. She crashes to the ground. The Imam then has absolute power and grows monstrous, “lying in the palace forecourt with his mouth yawning open at the gates; as the people march through the gates he swallows them whole” (TSV:215). His final victory is to announce the end of Time. This story of Ayesha describes the fear among clerics of the power of women. The Imam’s claim to be water, and the way he devours the fearful faithful, stands in stark contrast with the way Ayesha leads the faithful to water and the way they willingly walk to their deaths,
having seen miracles. The Imam’s violent fear of sexuality also stands in contrast with Ayesha’s ease with her beauty and nakedness.

To turn briefly to the historical Ayesha, Fatima Mernissi (1991) tackles the complex problem of Islam, women, power, history, and theology. She writes how Ayesha was the Prophet’s favoured wife, although his favour was also captured by the beautiful Maria the Copt, who gave him a son, Ibrahim. His first wife was Khadija, who was also his first adherent. And, as Mernissi (1991:103) writes “This is the way Islam began, in the arms of a loving woman”. She says that “The first Muslim community was not led by an asexual man completely consumed by the quest for power” (Mernissi 1991:105). The Prophet was concerned about sexuality and desire, and lived in places where there was a “spatial osmosis between living quarters and mosque” which gave women direct access to spaces of politics (Mernissi 1991:113). Ayesha’s political and military role has been largely ignored in Islamic history, even though she led an armed uprising against the caliph who ruled at that time (Mernissi 1991:4-5). She was an intelligent, strong, beautiful woman, to whom people referred for clarification of the Koranic verses. Thus women are fanaticised and dreamt, but absent as significant historical subjects.

In her exploration of the Islamic tradition of misogyny (1991), Fatima Mernissi says that although women (along with dogs and asses) were deemed by the Imams to be distractions during prayer time, obstacles between men and God, Ayisha herself said that she had laid on the bed between the Prophet and the qibla (object that symbolises Mecca), thus constantly rehumanising the Prophet and their relationship. The Prophet was said to have preferred the company of women to men, and that of Ayesha above all others. The Imams were scandalised that the Prophet and Ayesha tried to liberalise pre-Islamic beliefs of
women as the source of all negative forces (due to their sexuality). Another provocative representation of relations between an Imam and female sexuality appears in Nawal El Saadawi's novel, The Fall of The Imam (1988). The author says that she was pursued by this story though she thought that she dare not write it. It is about Bint Allah (Daughter of God) who is raped by the Imam, becomes pregnant, and is executed as a whore. The Fall of The Imam begins and regularly returns to the moment of the girl's death, like a nightmare from which she will not awake. At the final moment she recalls her mother's face-as-god, and her mother's life and execution as her own. Just like Rushdie's Imam, El Saadawi's Imam's status depends on the extinction of any deviations from his own orthodoxy. He too is protected by his own thugs, doubles, script-writers, and rubber masks. Just as El Saadawi's Imam is responsible for countless deaths and untold repression and misery, Rushdie's Imam in exile is responsible for the execution of Al-Lat/Ayesha and the death of many believers.

Rushdie's representation of Ayesha as symbolic of man's repressed desire is clearly illustrated in The Satanic Verses in the episode where Ayesha appears as a whore with eleven others in the brothel called the Curtain (a reference to the hijab, the veil). Without going into this in detail, it is worth noting Rushdie's attack on the repressive treatment of women that is carried out in the name of Islam. That the twelve whores took on the names and the mannerisms of the Prophet's wives attracted vast numbers of clients (and critics, also "clients" of such passages). However, when the brothel is raided, the women are treated like criminals. Fatima Mernissi describes how the wearing of the hijab was a practical response to sexual aggression in Medina when it was in a state of civil war. The hijab was a way of discerning between free women and slaves. However, the hijab ended up representing the exact opposite of what the Prophet wanted to bring about: to establish
barriers as a way of controlling violence (Mernissi 1991:184-185), not as a form of violence in itself. Peter van der Veer (1989:103) writes that naming the brothel “The Curtain” is a reference to male sexual fantasies of the system of female seclusion. He says that Islam is the religion of the male God, Al-Lah, that subjugates the female, Al-Lat. These repressions and substitutions are different forms of violence. Most of the violence in the Ayesha butterfly girl sequence in The Satanic Verses is in Mirza Saeed’s traumatic experience from committed secularism (on his fortieth birthday, one of the many biographical notes in the novel, and also the age the Prophet received revelations) towards a final glimpse of reaching Mecca. At the point of his own death, after witnessing the villagers’ and his wife’s deaths, he “made a different choice, and at the instant that his heart broke, he opened” (TSV:507).

The nexus between death and desire, mediated through violence, permeates the relationships in The Satanic Verses. Ayesha tells the villagers that it is the angel’s will that they must all pilgrimage on foot to Mecca Sharif, over dry land and through the ocean. She says that the archangel Gibreel’s message is also a command, that “everything is required of us, and everything will be given” (TSV:225, 235).

Ayesha’s desire to submit to her dream angel’s every command, together with the image the reader has of her young near-nakedness, clothed in elusive butterflies, and her “look”, all work together to present her as an enigmatic figure that is a chaste child as well as being a woman who is well aware of her sexual power. When Mirza Saeed Akhtar first sights Ayesha on his lawn, we see her from his point of view. His “white kurta [not him] “must have caught her eye” [thus he is passive, innocent, perhaps foolish in his middle-age, but not a seducer] she “looked right into his face. And did not immediately look down again.
Nor did she get up and run away, as he had half expected. ... she simply resumed her strange meal [of butterflies] without taking her eyes from his face” (TSV:219). The way she eats the butterflies is portrayed in pornographic detail, as the butterflies go "willingly towards ... their own deaths". She “threw her head back and flicked them into her mouth with the tip of her narrow tongue. Once she kept her mouth open, the dark lips parted defiantly, and Mirza Saeed trembled ... . When she was satisfied that he had seen this, she brought her lips together and began to chew” (TSV:219-229). Because Mirza Saeed insists on interpreting the world from a purely secular perspective, seeing Ayesha as a fetishistic spectacle of sexuality, he does not understand that that scene foreshadows the ultimate scene of submission, of the villagers walking in complete faith to their death, like the butterflies, into the sea, also a metaphor for female sexuality, which parts like lips.

Thus the final magical episode is both highly erotic and also highly sacred. It is narrated in a very visual, or cinematic way. The narrative of the butterfly story parodies the “theological” that Gibreel Farishta finally performs in and believes in, thus marking the beginning of his final disintegration. Gibreel Farishta performs Gods, finally losing the distinction between his waking reality and his dreaming/acting. He could see the closure of the gap between Heaven and Hell as he shocks his audience into disbelief. However, Ayesha’s “theological” performance, based on a sublime combination of faith and eros, leads her audience towards belief.

The strong cinematic quality of the novel begins with Gibreel Farishta as a Bombay movie star who hallucinates/dreams that he can see/dream as though he sees everything through the lens of a movie camera, the postmodern dream machine. As an actor and camera operator he is both the eye, the subject, and the object of (his own) desire. As there is a
general conflation throughout the novel of Gibreel Farishta, Saladin Chamcha, Mirza Saeed, God, and narrator, the narratorial point of view easily assumes a cinematic point of view. Thus the narrative is driven by male desire, producing Ayesha as what Teresa de Lauretis (1984:13) refers to as “woman as text, as pure representation”. However, this model of narrative desire is also subverted in the novel. After the Ayesha butterfly sequence, dreams, flying, magic, and myths are left behind. The final story of Saladin’s father, Changez’s, death, written in the discourse of realism, is more in keeping with nineteenth century conventions, as Sara Suleri (1989:623) says, than with the postmodernity of the opening of the novel. It is about Saladin Chamcha’s reconciliation with his father (more autobiographical implications) on his deathbed in Bombay. He also becomes reconciled with his sense of place, in postcolonial India, and self, with his modern radical politicised Indian lover, and his change of name back to Salahuddin. Chamcha, who is like a young version of Mirza Saeed, finds (secular) ways of living with his own histories, his own brown male body, and his own relationships with a schizoid world made up of irreconcilable differences. Just as the world is schizoid, so too are the two halves of the novel’s hero, personified in Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta. And each half is also schizoid. However, whereas one resolves the split, the other cannot. Chamcha is finally able to manoeuvre through a world that has been abandoned by God, but Farishta is not able to do so. They hyphen in the term “Anglo-Indian” personifies diaspora (Mishra 1995a) and exposes cultural schizophrenia. Once that cultural schizophrenia is exposed, Chamcha is no longer under its pathological influence. However, Gibreel Farishta, for all his talk of change and death/rebirth, retains resolute belief in his Indian divinity. Chamcha, like Mahound, sees the intransigence of the idea of nation, unlike Gibreel, whose hallucinations betray a collision between cultural schizophrenia and colonial history (Suleri
Chamcha discovers love for and reconciliation with his father, his homeland, and his re-racinated body. His story is about submission to love and the messiness of the world. It is about being able to occupy a postorientalist position in the gap between East and West.

While Saladin Chamcha finds a new way to live when he discovers a subjectivity he is comfortable with, Gibreel Farishta finds that the subjectivity he ends up with is impossible to live out. The divine Angel Gibreel who flies through the opening scenes of the novel finally turns out to be the exterminating Angel Azrael. In spite of all of Gibreel’s loud slogans of metamorphosis (“To be born again ... first you have to die” [3]), he “wished to remain, to a large degree, continuous - that is, joined to and arising from his past ... so that his is still a self which ... we may describe as ‘true’ ... whereas Saladin Chamcha is a creature of selected discontinuity’s, a willing re-invention” (TSV:427). Gibreel’s fall to evil was accompanied, if not caused, by his idea of self as resisting homogeneity and hybridity, wanting to be pure (TSV:427). Maintaining such purity is a falsity, and such falsity is evil (TSV:427). Gibreel and Saladin are “conjoined opposite ... each man the other’s shadow(?) - One seeking to be transformed into the foreignness he admires, the other preferring, contemptuously, to transform” (TSV:426). Neither character turns out to be the sort of person he desires to be.

Just as Song Liling, the lover of the French diplomat, Rene Gallimard, in the film M. Butterfly (Chapter Three) turns out to be “just a man” and certainly not the precious butterfly he insisted on believing in, so too is Ayesha’s revelatory angel, Gibreel Farishta, a schizophrenic with delusions of divinity24. Gibreel is a burnt out Bombay movie star who believes that he carries the divinity of the roles he played for so long. Gallimard could not
cope with the reality that was finally revealed to him; that his butterfly was a man. Gibreel was unable to cope with the reality of his schizophrenia; that the voices he was hearing were not divine. Gallimard finally commits suicide by slashing his throat with the make-up mirror he uses to make himself up like the oriental butterfly he fanaticised. He uses the object that bears his reflection as an oriental dream fantasy, which turns out to be his nightmare. Gibreel finally commits suicide by shooting himself in the head with a gun provided by the genie in Saladin Chamcha’s father’s oriental lamp. Both men are the theatrical, hysterical, and ultimately self-destructive conclusion to closed narratives. Both suffer fetishistic misrecognition of who they are, mistaking the images they see reflected through others for themselves.

The mirror as an object and the mirror phase as a psychology are important elements in representation. In 1948 Jacques Lacan proposed that as children acquire language and enter a world of imaginary and symbolic meanings, or a phallic world order, they also undergo what he calls the mirror phase. This phase can be repeated and elaborated, in many contexts, throughout one’s life. When the child looks into the mirror it sees parts of itself as a representation of a whole body which is simultaneously ‘me’ and ‘not me’. As such, the experience is said to be traumatic. This trauma is then repeated as the person seeks out an ideal that would perform the function of perfectly mirroring the ego. Noel Sanders (in Kress 1988:146) uses Lacan’s theory to look at how visual representations work semiotically. He writes that identification with a movie, advertisement, or fashion image performs this function of arriving at an ideal identification, with the image that was thwarted in childhood and constantly resought after. Žižek (1994:104) writes that to achieve self-identity, the subject must identify with the imaginary other, thus experiencing alienation and seeing identity outside the self, into the image of a double. Žižek (1994) says
that the person one usually identifies with is by no means necessarily glamorous. Žižek (1994:105) points out a difference between imaginary identification and symbolic identification.

Imaginary identification is identification with the image in which we appear likeable to ourselves, with the image representing 'what we would like to be', and the symbolic identification, identification with the very place from where we are being observed, from where we look at ourselves so that we appear to ourselves likeable, worthy of love [italics in original].

Both Rene Gallimard and Gibreel Farishta looked to dominant glamorous images with which to identify. Their downfall was an inability to come to terms with the gap between imaginary identification and material actuality. Saladin Chamcha also identified with dominant images. However, when he finally saw the gap between his symbolic identification with Englishness-as-Good and an imaginary identification with “home”, he was able to negotiate between the two, thus finding an image of himself from which he was not alienated. That phase of the narrative is not cinematic, as the narrative point of view is the same as, not alienated from, the protagonist. Chamcha was ultimately able to live with what Deleuze and Guattari (1982) describe as partial objects, lack of primordial totality and homogeneousness.

To take the idea of “partial objects” literally, Chamcha’s genie lamp both is and is not a magic oriental object. His father warns him that you can rub all you like, but it won’t produce a genie. But the lesson Chamcha finally learns from his father and his genie’s lamp is to accept his postcoloniality as both and neither Indian and English, religious and secular. Gallimard and Gibreel could not accept their material actualities. Just as Gallimard ends his nightmare using a (Lacanian?) mirror, so too does Gibreel end his nightmare using a (Freudian?) gun. They both disclose that the colonial narratives they believed in and lived
by turned out to be illusory. Neither the French diplomat nor the Bombay movie star could adapt to postcolonial uncertainties.

Saladin eventually learns to adapt to postcolonial uncertainties. However, before that happens he goes through a very painful experience of being alienated from himself. He becomes the devil. That process of alienation begins with his Anglophilia. When he is thirteen years old his father offers him an English education. They fly to England together and on the way Saladin begins to lose faith in his father, accusing him of inverting time. This loss of faith is like the loss of faith that causes Gibreel Farishta's metamorphosis. The inversion of time is also an inversion of the world and it occurs as Salahuddin and his father fly to London:

How far did they fly? Five and a half thousand as the crow. Or: from Indianness to Englishness, an immeasurable distance. Or, not very far at all, because they rose from one great city, fell to another. The distance between cities is always small; a villager, travelling a hundred miles to town, traverses emptier, darker, more terrifying space (TSV:41).

In other words, the cultural difference between cities of different countries can be less marked than the cultural difference between a village and a city in the same country. Class difference is more marked than cultural difference between metropolitan centres. The distance between Bombay and London became marked by the distance between the son who stayed in London and the father who returned to Bombay. Living in London, Saladin gradually lost his "childhood father-worship and ... (became) ... a secular man, who would do his best, thereafter, to live without a god of any type, which would fuel, perhaps, his determination to become the thing his father was-not-could-never-be, that is, a goodandproper Englishman" (TSV:43). His classmates tease and exclude him. "And that was when he began to act ... until he fooled them into thinking he was okay, he was
people-like-us" (TSV:43). By the time he finished school “his transmutation into a Vilayeti was well advanced” (TSV:44). He despises everything back home. Changez disapproves of Saladin’s acting career. He comments that he “Might as well be a confounded gigolo. It’s my belief some devil has got into you and turned your wits” (TSV:47). In one of their correspondences his father wrote “A man untrue to himself becomes a two-legged lie, and such beasts are Shaitan’s best work” (TSV:48). Years later, when Saladin returns to Bombay as an actor with the Prospero Players, Changez refers to Saladin as “This actor. This pretender. He has made himself into an imitator of non-existing men” (TSV:71).

Prospero, in Shakespeare’s play The Tempest, was the right Duke of Milan. Just as Prospero was banished by his brother Sebastian and set adrift and washed up on an island, so too did Saladin desert India and live in England. The island in the play was inhabited by spirits of the air and Caliban, a creature of the earth. Caliban is a savage and deformed slave, the feared Other. In England, Saladin sought to transform himself, making himself a creature of the airwaves. However, he ended up like Caliban, deformed and misunderstood, finding his master’s language useful to “know how to curse”. One of Prospero’s best known lines is that “We are such stuff/ As dreams are made on”. Prospero discovers that although life is largely illusory, it is nonetheless marvellous. So too does Saladin, at the very end of the novel, when he is transformed back from the Devil (Caliban), accept the illusory aspects of life and accept life, as it is, as marvellous. The play is full of metamorphoses and understandings gained through recognition. Reality is understood through illusion. When the magic ends, Prospero returns home to Italy, having passed through the enchanted island in order to renew and strengthen his sense of reality. As mentioned earlier, when the magic ends in the novel, Saladin returns home to Bombay, having passed through a strange metamorphosis, with a strengthened sense of reality.
Before that final optimistic transformation, Saladin simulates English/ness in the role of the Indian doctor in *The Millionaireess* by George Bernard Shaw (TSV:49)\(^\text{25}\). After the first performance one of Saladin’s childhood friends, Zeenat Vakil (Zeeny), barges into his dressing room and accuses him of selling out to the imperialists by “singing ’Goodness Gracious Me’ like Peter Sellers or what” (TSV:51). Saladin Chamcha betrays his ethnic origins by performing an English notion of Indianness. Zeeny invites Saladin to “escape from all these palefaces and come out with us wogs” (TSV:51). He becomes her “project” as she wants him to be a politicised Indian, rather than a deserter. Saladin Chamcha’s political re-education by a beautiful, intelligent, assertive, and highly politicised woman is something that also happens in Hanif Kureishi’s fiction. In Kureishi’s novel, *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990) Karim, the main protagonist, is politically re-educated. Karim's first stage performance in London was as Mowgli, in Kipling's *The Jungle Book*. Jamila, who trains for urban guerilla warfare, like Angela Davis, calls the play "completely neo-fascist. ... You were just pandering to prejudices. ... Actually you've got no morality, have you? You'll get it later, I expect, when you can afford it" (157). Just as Saladin pursues Englishness as a higher goal in life, so too is Karim getting drawn into the same social and political values as the white supremacists who live in and for the suburbs.

Zeeny, like Jamila, understands that as a young modern liberal woman, being Indian means being political. She tells Saladin “You types got no culture. Just wogs now ... (and now) ... Suddenly he wants to be Indian after spending his life trying to turn white” (TSV:54). She understands his desires and disapproves of his politics. He has
been away from Bombay for so long that he does not know his way around, and that is symbolic of how fragmented his sense of identity is. He describes himself to Zeeny as

‘An Indian translated into English-medium. When I attempt Hindustani these days, people look polite. This is me’. Caught in the aspic of his adopted language, he had begun to hear, in India’s Babel, an ominous warning: don’t come back again. When you have stepped through the looking-glass you step back at your peril. The mirror may cut you to shreds (TSV:58).

When he flew back to London, on the way “he felt, with deep relief, the tell-tale shiftings and settlings in his throat which indicated that his voice had begun of its own accord to revert to its reliable, English self” (TSV:73). He was relieved to leave Bombay behind. Returning to London in a buttoned suit to what he expected to be an ordered, contented life was to return to “the real world” (TSV:74). As it turns out, “the real world” is chaotic and unpredictable, full of surprises, especially in the form of inversion.

Inversion of opposites occurs throughout The Satanic Verses. However, rather than reinforcing binarism, inversion describes how opposites are embedded in each other. Inversion and repetition also allow for change to take place with each repetition, as mentioned in Chapter Three. The two most conspicuous opposites are Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha. Gibreel Farishta is a handsome, extroverted Bombay movie star. Saladin Chamcha is a conservative Anglophile who mimics voices on the radio. They both make a living in the modern media. As they fall through the air they intertwine and intermix and become two struggling, interchangeable parts of the same displaced self:

Gibreelsaladin Farishtachamcha, condemned to this endless but also ending angelicdevilish fall, did not become aware of the moment at which the processes of their transmutation began (TSV:5).

Gibreel and Saladin fall through the sky with many immigrants who are described as:
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 (TSV:4).

By crossing oceans and air space they change and are made over again. Just as things are not all good or all evil, migrants are not all powerless victims. "They impose their need on their new earth, bringing their own coherence to the new-found land, imagining it afresh" (TSV:458). Whereas for nomads journeying itself is home, for the migrant the journey is "a necessary evil; the point is to arrive" (TSV:94). These two migrants survive a horrific journey and arrive in the right place (England) but also in the wrong place (washed up on the beach). Their arrival proved to be particularly problematic for Chamcha. The police and immigration officials take Saladin Chamcha away, as he looks a mess, has bad breath, and is growing goat's horns. He declares they are mistaken, "I'm not one of your fishing-boat sneakers-in, not one of your ugandokenyattas, me" (TSV:140). If he had landed at Heathrow Airport then he would have been processed officially as a migrant (van der Veer 1989:100). However, by landing on the coast he is processed unofficially as an illegal immigrant. The officials do not even question Gibreel, "a more respectable gentleman you couldn't wish to see, in his smoking jacket and his, his well", his halo (TSV:142). Gibreel does not just look good, he looks Good, like Ariel, a creature of the air. However, upon migration Chamcha loses his refined voices and manners, and transmogrifies into the Devil, or, like Caliban, a disgusting, offensive, brutish creature of the earth.

Thus Chamcha is apprehended by the police, taken into custody and treated brutally, not so much because he is turning into a goat, but rather because they think he is an illegal immigrant, a much more threatening alien. He feels humiliated because he "had gone to
some lengths to become - a sophisticated man! Such degradations might be all very well for riff-raff from the villages ... but he was cut from different cloth!” (TSV:159). Saladin passes out and later wakes to find himself in a sanatorium. There, under the cover of night, he meets others, England’s others who had been mutated into snakes, water-buffalo, a manticore, partial plants, giant insects, some built partly of brick or stone, men with rhinoceros horns instead of noses, women with necks like giraffes’. When he asked how they, the authorities, do it, one whispered “They have the power of description, and we succumb to the pictures they construct” (TSV:168). Whoever has power over the production of representation has the power to construct others’ reality. But having been described as, and transformed into, such a creature Chamcha has had to accept his own bodily actuality. He finally sees that he will never be a good and proper Englishman.

Saladin Chamcha had denied his brown body by enunciating Englishness. However, this denial of his Indianness was punished, but he could not understand why. After all, he had dedicated his life to not merely pursuing but to becoming English. In his pursuit of “the good”, he was punished and rejected by the very world he tried so hard to be part of (TSV:256-257). He felt as though he had been cast out of proper London and into hell, “the bosom of his people” (TSV:257). He denies that they are his people. However, now that he has been away from London and returned in mysterious circumstances, he finds that the English are not his people either. His English wife does not want him any longer, and the people he worked with (like Mimi Marnoulion) and for (Hal Valance) are not his people either.

And this realisation influences his desires. In that sanatorium, surrounded by other transmogrifed beings, “it did not occur to him that his metamorphosis must be continuing,
because he was actually entertaining romantic notions about a black woman” (TSV:170). All the mutants escape the sanatorium and Chamcha runs off with his physiotherapist, Hyacinth Phillips, who urges him to run east. Thus his re-enculturation begins in Hell (London) as he turns into his own worst fear (an alien) and finds his desires changing.

Before the aeroplane explosion Chachma’s most cherished prize of Englishness was his white English wife, Pamela Lovelace. Like Rosie, in Hanif Kureishi’s film Sammy and Rosie Get Laid (1987), Pamela Lovelace works in a community relations council, and has more of a social consciousness than her husband. However, the women in both couples recognise that the marriage is not working. Pamela reflects that “It had been a marriage of crossed purposes, each of them rushing towards the very thing from which the other was in flight” (TSV:180). She was fleeing from the hypocrisy of her privileged middle-class upbringing, and he was fleeing from identity as a Bombaywalla. Mr Sufyan’s Shaandaar Café, where Pamela’s lover in Saladin’s absence, Jumpy Joshi, and Hanif Johnson regularly meet, is, as Angela Carter (in Appignanesi and Maitland 1989:12) observes “like something out of a Hanif Kureishi film”. Except for the blue eyes and that he is an accountant, Hanif (Kureishi?) Johnson is in many ways like Sammy in Kureishi’s Sammy and Rosie Get Laid. He is a slick blue-eyed, brown-skinned Asian man, a hybrid, a lawyer, a local boy made good. Hanif says that Jumpy hears voices. He also tells of “a piece of paper with some verses written on it” (TSV:186). Are the voices and the verses satanic or angelic? The verses are titled “The River of Blood”. Hanif tells everyone that

He says a street is a river and we are the flow; humanity is a river of blood, ...
‘In our very bodies, does the river of blood not flow?’ Like the Roman, the ferrety Enoch Powell had said, I seem to see the river Tiber foaming with much blood. Reclaim the metaphor ... Turn it; make it a thing we can use.
The difference between Hanif and Jumpy is marked in language. Hanif, like Sammy (which will be elaborated in the next Chapter), knew "the language of desire"; he was in perfect control of the languages that mattered: sociological, socialistic, black-radical, anti-anti-anti-racist, demagogic, oratorical, sermonic: the vocabularies of power. ...[he does not know about] The real language problem: how to bend it shape it, how to let it be our freedom, how to repossess its poisoned wells, how to master the river of words of time of blood as Jumpy Joshi does (TSV:281). For Jumpy "Language is courage: the ability to conceive a thought, to speak it, and by doing so to make it true" (TSV:281).

Both Salman Rushdie and Hanif Kureishi represent race relations in Thatcherite England in the context of Enoch Powell's well-known anti-immigration. That speech has entered the mythology of England's xenophobia since the second world war. Enoch Powell's fear of non-white immigration emerges as a fear of messy multiplicity or of becoming culturally schizoid. As England's destiny was once an imperial one, with the end of empire, especially with independence given to India and Pakistan, Powell was concerned as to what was going to take its place. Powell grew to recognise that Britain never really was a great empire. He saw that England's decline into "her own private hell" had been a dream process, just as the myth of empire was "our own private heaven" (Powell in Nairn 1977:268). Tom Nairn (1977:269) writes that as the English began to know themselves, English nationalism was re-born, "in the obscene form of racism". The only new experience England had after the war was the non-white immigration of the 1950s and 1960s. In his speech of 1968 Powell tried to define Englishness in relation to an "internal enemy". However, because England's Indians and West Indians mostly filled unskilled and low status jobs there was an odd contrast with the traditional victim of right-wing
nationalism, the Jews. Although both groups were important to the British economy, there was talk of deportation and repatriation of the most conspicuous (non-white) immigrants.

Influenced by Enoch Powell’s deportation rhetoric, Margaret Thatcher took up an anti-immigration posture in a pre-election speech. Avtar Brah (1996:37) writes that in a television interview in January 1978, Thatcher pledged that if she was elected her party would “finally see an end to immigration” because “this country might be swamped by people with a different culture”. What is meant by “a different culture” is code for “non-white”, and the alarming prospect of being “swamped” conjures up all kinds of fears. However, this rhetoric is not based on the statistical facts of immigration patterns. This rhetoric betrays a pathological fear of change. It also betrays a belief that England is (or once was) unified, homogenous, constant, self-sufficient, indeed Great, and any wavering from that ideal would cause England to disintegrate into schizoid chaos.

Such schizoid chaos is exemplified in Gibreel Farishta. Like the deportation rhetoric of Powell and Thatcher, psychiatrists at a clinic Gibreel Farishta ends up in try to restore him, like a “going home” or a “reverse migration” (TSV:347). They all try everything to reconstruct in Gibreel a boundary between dreaming and waking. However, “the doctors had been wrong, he now perceived, to treat him for schizophrenia; the splitting was not in him, but in the universe” (TSV:351). It was the whole universe that had gone mad and he was just trying to survive. As Avtar Brah (1996) points out, in relation to Asians in Britain, it is always supposed that the meeting of different cultures (which itself presupposes that cultures are recognisably consistent and unique) causes clashes, conflicts, and problems. Thus the migrant becomes overdetermined, representative of “problems”. However, “the problem” is in the supremacist belief in
continuity and homogeneity, rather than the migrant. When the migrant does not fit
hegemonic visions of subjectivity, then identity begins to splinter and in some instances
disintegrate. However, that disintegration can occur either in the migrant or the nation.
The Satanic Verses explores different possibilities in that process through different
characters and different situations.

One of the many stories of migration in The Satanic Verses is that of Hind Sufyan, of
the Shaandaar Cafe. She leaves her husband, Muhammad Sufyan, when he joins “the
devil themselves, the Communist Party” (TSV:248). She leaves for England, with their
two baby daughters. They “had to endure all the privations and humiliations of the
process of immigration; and on account of this diabolism of his that she was stuck
forever in this England and would never see her village again” (TSV:248). Sufyan later
joins them in England. However, her eventual success with the Shaandaar Cafe caused
“Everything she valued ... [to be] upset by the change; [it all] had, in this process of
translation, been lost” (TSV:249). Her language was now alien to her. Familiar places
were now gone. Social customs were different. She felt inadequate as a wife and
mother. Her daughters had grown into rebellious teenagers. And she lost her own
identity and became representative of “one-of-the-women-like-her” (TSV:250). She
became the overdetermined migrant woman; one without an identity or history.

At the risk of overdetermining her again, Hind Sufyan can be compared to a historical
Islamic figure, Hind Bint ‘Utba. Fatima Mernissi (1991:116-118) describes her as a
strong and influential woman who played a central role in the Meccan opposition to
Muhhamad. She was one of the few opponents condemned to death by the Prophet.
Also she is reputed to be cannibalistic, as she apparently ate the liver of Hamza, the
Prophet’s uncle, who had killed her uncle, and plotted the death of her father, ‘Utba. Hind hated this new emergent Islam, because it had decimated her clan. However, finally she reluctantly accepted Islam. She had no choice. Just as the few historical representations of Ayesha are confined to describing her as the Prophet’s wife, as if it were an inert fact, so too are historical representations of Hind confined to describing her as a wild cannibal.

Another interesting comparison can be made between Rushdie’s Sufyan family, as the representative migrant Indian family, and the Vadheras, the representative migrant Indian family in Bharati Mukherjee’s Jasmine (Chapter Six). While the Sufyans are bizarre but sympathetic characters, Mukherjee characterises the Vadheras’ dependence on the maintenance of Indian culture, especially through Hindi and Urdu VCR tapes, as a regressive cultural practice. She sees such cultural maintenance as stubborn resistance to popular American culture. Mukherjee writes that “Flushling, with all its immigrant services at hand, frightened me. ... The Vadheras ... had retired behind ghetto walls” (145). Jasmine is on a quest to leave her Indianness behind; to deny it and acquire Americanness (as is discussed in Chapter Six), whereas Hind’s act of fortressing herself in the Shaandaar Cafe is so that “she could stay in touch with events in the ‘real world’” (TSV:251) of her own people and also of the bizarre novel itself. Hind’s “real world” is a messy place inhabited by her own people. Whereas Jasmine’s, like Saladin Chamcha’s, idea of “the real world” excluded his own people.

Apart from the early Saladin Chamcha, the other Indians in The Satanic Verses recognise their migrant culture in each other. However, Chamcha transmogrifies into a devilish goat as a kind of (divine or devilish?) retribution for having denied his Indianness. Sufyan and
Jumpy discuss Saladin’s predicament, listing all the dreadful things that happen to many others: "wrongful arrest, intimidation, violence ... illegal detention, unknown medical experimentation ... psychological breakdown, loss of sense of self, inability to cope. We've seen it all before" (TSV:252-253). Sufyan says to Saladin "Where else would you go to heal your disfigurements and recover your normal health? Where else but here, with us, among your own people, your own kind?" (TSV:253). They are very sympathetic and supportive, identifying with Saladin's horrific experiences and mutations. However, later, when Saladin is on his own he says "You're not my people. I've spent half my life trying to get away from you" (TSV:253). This sort of denial of parts of his identity exposes the gap between his imaginary identity of who he would like to be, even if it is in negative terms of not being like his own, and his own material, bodily actuality.

The massive gap between Saladin Chamcha's actual brown Indian body and his imaginary Englishness is exposed when his old employer, Hal Valance, creator of The Aliens Show, tells Saladin that there is no work for him in the show any more because the audience includes "ethnics". The irony, of course, is that as a compounded alien now (goaty, immigrant) he is more alien than the "ethnic" he denies, and Hal thinks, he is. Valance tells him "Audience surveys show ... that ethnics don't watch ethnic shows. ... They want fucking Dynasty, like everyone else. Your profile's wrong, ... it's just too damn racial" (TSV:265). Although Chamcha had spent so long trying to deracinate himself, and despite all the postmodern fantasies of televisual dreams, he was still his brown body. When he tries to simulate being English he can only do the voice. His voice is "white" but his body is not. It is alien. As an alien, he cannot perform a simulacrum of televisual alienness. He would risk alienating the audience. The audience would feel the discomfort of being confronted by its own identity. It would be put in a position where it could not forget its otherness. Another
comment that exposes the anxiously maintained imaginary borders between cultural identities is one of Mimi Mamoulian’s throw-away lines: “Try being Jewish, female and ugly sometime. You’ll beg to be black. Excuse my French: brown” (TSV:261)²⁸. This draws together the (English and French) colonisers’ most recurring nightmares of otherness: black, brown, woman, ugliness. Though, of course, she uses all these obstacles aggressively to put the devil himself in his place.

The migrant Jew-as-other also figures in the family history of Gibreel Farishta’s lover, Allelulia Cone. Her mother refers to Otto, father and husband, as “strictly a melting-pot man ... When he changed our name I told him, Otto, it isn’t required, this isn’t America, it’s London” (TSV:298). (Chapter Six shows how Jasmine is clearly a melting pot person, changing her name and identity, constantly trying to be more American.) Cone strenuously denied his Jewishness, changing “Cohen from Warsaw, into Cone. Echoes of the past distressed him; he read no Polish literature ... because for him the language was irredeemably polluted by history. ‘I am English now,’ he would say proudly in his thick East European accent. ... [as a] pantomime member of the English gentry” (TSV:297). Cone, like Chamcha, could not see that the bodily marked migrant (accent, skin) could only mimic Englishness. However, unlike Chamcha, Cone held no illusions about the goodness of the world, or, as Chamcha thought, that Englishness was itself goodness. Cone says that

the most dangerous of all the lies we are fed in our lives ... ([is] the idea of the continuum). Anybody ever tries to tell you how this most beautiful and most evil of planets is somehow homogeneous, composed only of reconcilable elements, that it all adds up, you get on the phone to the straitjacket tailor. ... The world in incompatible ... 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 (TSV:295).
This Jewish diasporic Londoner knows, has seen, that the world is fragmented and inconsistent with the very enunciations it makes about itself through official discourses. That is why he repudiates his Jewishness and Polishness, because for him, that identity had been polluted. But he also worries about the identity of the modern city. He says that it “is the locus classicus of incompatible realities. Lives that have no business mingling with one another sit side by side upon the omnibus” (TSV:314). And, of course, lives that are different to each other do sit side by side on the bus, as do different identities together in the same person.

Urban realities become compatible in the various flows the media are dispersed in and through capitalist enterprises. In Thatcher’s England, money is colour-blind. In The Satanic Verses Hal Vance, the crass television tycoon who owns a Union Jack waistcoat and flies the flag over his agency, refers to a “Mrs Torture” (TSV:266). Hal, who wants to sell the nation, admires the size of what “Maggie the Bitch” (TSV:269) is trying to do. She is trying to invent a whole new middle class, to

bring in the new. People without background, without history. Hungry people. People who really want, and who know that with her, they can bloody well get. ...

New professors, new painters, the lot. It’s a bloody revolution. Newness coming into this country that’s stuffed full of fucking old corpses.

These hungry people who really want are like the Pakistani businessmen Hanif Kureishi characterises, especially in the film My Beautiful Laundrette (Chapter Five). They are the sort of migrants Margaret Thatcher’s England wants. However, the sort of newness they bring with them is a new kind of greed, one that is mutually exploitive. In this kind of scenario, both England and its migrants exploit each other.
It is not only businessmen who reflect on Thatcherism. The repercussions are also felt acutely by the disenfranchised. Mishal Sufyan, daughter of the proprietors of the Shaandaar Cafe, which is located in Brixhill (Brixton and Southall [Peter van der Veer 1989:10] or Brixton and Notting Hill), describes the strange street scenes to Saladin Chamcha, who is confined to an attic room to hide his goatiness. She says “Thatcherism has its effect” (TSV:284) as she describes how “The emphasis is on small scale enterprises and the cult of the individual, right? In other words, five or six white bastards murdering us, one individual at time” (TSV:284).

Although Thatcher’s economic rationalism is not based on colour, it is no coincidence that increased racially motivated violence flourishes in such an environment. In Thatcher’s England, “tints” were increasingly being blamed for crime, and around the Shaandaar Cafe everyone was dreaming the devil into being. “Illegal migrant, outlaw king, foul criminal or race-hero, Saladin Chamcha was getting to be true: (TSV:288). Chamcha’s state shows “the mutability of everything” (TSV:288). Chamcha finally accepts that “I am ... that I am. Submission” (TSV:289). And, of course, Submission is name of the new religion. Saladin finds that he has become an exaggerated version of what he tried so hard to deny: not only the racist English vision of foreign-as-evil, but also a universal vision of evil-to-be-feared.

The critique in the novel of the violence of racism and religion is further complicated in a spectacular scene in Pinkwalla’s nightclub, Club Hot Wax. It is done through a concatenation of Powell and Thatcher, and an evocation of James Baldwin29 and the Nation of Islam in America. Although Enoch Powell, amongst others, appears as a wax effigy in the night club, it is “Maggie” who gets melted down in the microwave oven in “Hell’s Kitchen”. She is the one who is most often selected by the patrons for this ritual.
As she melts down Pinkwalla says “The fire this time” (TSV:293), echoing and re-temporalising the title of James Baldwin’s novel, The Fire Next Time (1970, first published in 1963). Baldwin begins and ends his book with “God gave Noah the rainbow sign, No more water, the fire next time!” Baldwin writes of his encounter with the Nation of Islam through his close friendship with Elijah Muhammad (leader of the Nation of Islam in the USA from whom Malcolm X broke away and founded his own black-nationalist organisations and then his own version of Islam⁹). At the end of The Fire Next Time Baldwin writes that at Elia’s table they

talked about God’s - or Allah’s - vengeance ... [and that] the intransigence and ignorance of the white world might make that vengeance inevitable ... historical vengeance, a cosmic vengeance, based on the law that we recognise when we say, ‘Whatever goes up must come down’. If we ... are to end the racial nightmare, ... and change the history of the world (88-89).

The crowd at the Club Hot Wax demand symbolic vengeance against political leaders, whose intransigence made vengeance inevitable. They demand and get Maggie’s melt-down and then carry on dancing. But when Saladin Chamcha is there for the night, at the height of his devilish-goatishness, the effect of him thrashing about, destroying the place and melting all the effigies down is that he becomes once again “humanized ... by the fearsome concentration of his hate” (TSV:294). This is a turning point in Chamcha’s desire.

As Chamcha’s desire changes, through a kind of baptism of fire, from his pursuit of all things English towards a more open-ended and complex reality, so too does London. The life of London itself has lost its sense of self by not rejecting the burden of its past and by not accepting its impoverished future (TSV:329). Thus Gibreel interprets London, as a “tortured metropolis” (TSV:320). He sees that the city itself had metamorphosed into
Shaitan, and Alleluia Cone into an evil temptress. And so he turns to God in his quest to save Proper London. He would redeem this city using his London A to Z (TSV:322), a book that is used as a kind of bible; a guarantee to get you wherever you want to go in London. However, his holy aspirations are soon confronted by the persistent messiness and undecidability of actuality.

CONCLUSION

It is precisely the acceptance of the messiness and undecidability of actuality and the need for love, rather than some sort of cool detachment, that finally enables Saladin Chamcha to be reconciled with the different parts of himself. After trying so hard to be “inside” Englishness, as exemplified in his adult life with Pamela Lovelace (to repeat and elaborate Chris Berry’s [1994] pun), through repression and denial, his whole body is transmogrified into complete foreignness and ugliness. In trying to be English, he was betrayed by his own body. To be free he had to let go of certainties and make a final leap into an imaginary world that is defined by colonial histories and postcolonial hybridities. Chamcha finally moves through his world of England and India as an “insider” and an “outsider” of both. These are the sort of adjustments Rene Gallimard could not make (Chapter Three). He could not reconcile the different parts of himself and find a way to live. The Satanic Verses represents hybrid identities in the postcolonial world as a metaphor for the modern world.

“The Satanic Verses” (novel and affair) exemplifies how the world is incommensurate; that there are no universal trajectories of desire. The Satanic Verses exemplifies global cultural flux and, like the butterfly effect, it is not an effect of a total or universal historical picture. Rather, as mentioned in the conclusion of Chapter Three, the butterfly effect is the unpredictable cause of historical effects which continue to destabilise absolute meanings.
Or, to put it another way, the scope and intensity of the effects of the publication of The Satanic Verses has clearly indicated several things about the present state of representation. Some of the most urgent are: that representation is political; that identity is not an inert thing, but rather a site of contestation; that the articulation of hybridity can threaten social and political structures that rely on fictions of unity and coherence in order to maintain power.

The site of contestation of that power can be seen in the Rushdie Affair, as fictions of a unified West and of a coherent Islam are still unresolved. Because The Satanic Verses is transtextual and transcultural, it transgresses certainties about identity and, consequently, about power. The Satanic Verses begs the question as to who has the authority to represent any fixed or universal reality.

Because The Satanic Verses challenges universalism, especially in relation to Islam, the whole affair has pushed orientalism into the political and popular domain. It has challenged both Western and Islamic ideas about canonicity. As the Satanic Verses myth circulates, it demonstrates that the boundaries separating Western and Islamic imaginary universes are just as porous as the boundaries between different genres. The novel, the mass media, academic writing and debating, and public opinion all inform each other. Just as Puccini’s Madama Butterfly music of 1901 has stayed the same over the years, so has The Satanic Verses novel. And just as the Madame Butterfly myth has been repeated and modified, so has the Satanic Verses, so that now, as mentioned in this Chapter, a brief, glib newspaper entry is apparently sufficient to bring the world up to date as to the present state of the Rushdie Affair. On the one hand, such mass media short-hand maintains an orientalist view of the world whereby the West is kept posted on how implacable Islamic regimes are. On
the other hand, the novel continues to sell, the author continues to publish and sell well, and cultural changes continue to take place.

_The Satanic Verses_ not only represents hybridity but it is itself also a hybrid text, made up of many different kinds of texts. The novel is also about cultural diversity (heterogeneity). It is about how multiple differences can both reflect and create a vibrant diasporic metacosmopolitan consciousness that is transnational. Rushdie typifies the cultural condition that is the result of migration and he looks at how cultural and textual identity is multiple. The text itself is about cultural difference, and the various responses to the text have highlighted how sometimes those differences are incommensurate and hostile.

_The Satanic Verses_ is a text that embodies cosmopolitan metropolitan postcolonial culture as it worlds and is worlded by diasporic hybrid characters. _The Satanic Verses_ exposes myths of assimilation and unity. It exposes myths that support patriotism, fundamentalism, and racism. In exposing these myths, Rushdie uses a combination of humour and parody, and in doing so, runs the risk of being read seriously.

The Rushdie Affair led to contestation over whether _The Satanic Verses_ is, in fact, orientalist, as _the_ grand colonial narrative, or whether it works against grand narratives. The diasporic scattering of people has problematised English/ness-as-subjectivity and what it means to be or speak English in postcolonial nations. Representations of difference are no longer representations of either total empowerment or total disempowerment. Rather, postorientalist representations like _The Satanic Verses_ mobilise orientalist tropes and colonial histories and myths to reinscribe new realities. They bring "newness into the world" (TSV). Such representations show how desire destroys meaninglessness and
absurdity. It is not the sort of destructive desire evident in the various stories of the Imam in *The Satanic Verses*, nor is it the chauvinistic desire for one's civilisational other that is evident in such representations as *Miss Saigon* or *Madama Butterfly*, but rather it is the productive desire to love and be loved so as to mean something. This is evident in *Midnight's Children* where the narrator says at the start that he has to work hard to "end up meaning ... above all things, I fear absurdity". And so different forms of desire are negotiated through different textual relationships.

The next Chapter shows how Hanif Kureishi, as novelist and scriptwriter, looks at desire in textual and sexual relationships. He describes how Englishness has become infiltrated by tropes of Asianness, and how Asianness has for centuries carried tropes of Englishness. Both Kureishi and Rushdie represent subjectivity as hybrid, as identity is not necessarily contained by geo-political boundaries or by nationalistic ideologies. It is as if representation itself has become hybridised as an integral aspect of postmodernism itself.

One of the conditions that gives writers like Hanif Kureishi and Salman Rushdie a special relationship to the worlds they inscribe is their "insider/outsider" status (Brennan 1989). They are both inside and outside two cultures and, as such, their writing subverts the demarcation between insider/outsider and between East/West, Asian/British and, in the case of Kureishi, straight/gay. Their position is symptomatic of transcultural and transnational politics. Both Rushdie and Kureishi occupy and describe in their writing what Homi Bhabha calls "the third space". They are cultural hybrids and their writing explores the actual hybridity of cultures that seek to appear unified. As Asians in England they both occupy and represent a postorientalist metropolitan world. In that environment, although the repressive discourse of orientalism is still present in many institutional discourses,
instances of counterorientalism are also evident. Their representations question, and in doing so displace binaristic categories.

The next Chapter will subvert the butterfly effect as a metaphor for the global effects of a small movement. It will introduce a very different kind of butterfly, Britain's former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, the "iron butterfly". While the oriental butterfly was a Western fantasy of Asianness (as gentle, soft, submissive, sensual), the iron butterfly was a British fantasy of Greatness (as strong, tough, dominating, cool), or indeed a Great fantasy of Britishness. It will look at Hanif Kureishi's films and novels, which were mostly produced under Thatcher's regime, to see how the very hybridity that ideas of Britishness or Westernness sought to repress or marginalise have erupted and provided new ways of imagining the world. The next Chapter will elaborate on hybridity, intertextuality and sexuality as forms of diasporic consciousness that are crucial to textual production, especially of postorientalist texts. Hanif Kureishi's films and novels, like Rushdie's texts, also explore identity in postcolonial, postmodern, metropolitan society. They look at how identity is multiple and fragmented, adding the indeterminacy of sexual identity to the postoriental "formula". Chapter Five focuses on Kureishi's latest novel, The Black Album, at it is precisely about the Rushdie Affair.

1 In attempting to research some of the now-long-term implications of the identity of East and West throughout the politics that surround Salman Rushdie's The Satanic Verses, I decided to interview friends and colleagues. I found it impossible to interview anyone personally. The Muslims I approached were afraid for themselves, their families, and their careers, to be associated with it in any way. They all claim not to have read it, yet they all had a lot to say about it, until, that is, I turned on the tape-recorder or started writing notes. All the non-Muslims I approached claimed to have read it but all said that they needed to re-read it so as to be able to say anything about it. They felt caught out, as it were. Despite my reassurance that no identities would be disclosed and that I was not interested in what they thought of the novel itself, nobody complied.

This small scale, personal observation illustrated a few things about the massive popularity of The Satanic Verses. The text both attracts and repulses its readers. It attracts non-Muslim readers because it is chic to
read subversive material, even if you cannot understand it. It attracts Muslim readers because they are fascinated to know just how much this Rushdie knows about Islam. Non-Muslims associate themselves with it because the publicity around it has described it as a very postmodern text. Muslims dissociate themselves from it because the same publicity describes it as offensive to Muslims. Positions are drawn up by reportage in the mass media and it appears that all one can do is occupy one’s prescribed role.

2 The title is intentionally unmarked to as to denote how a specific text, just as the opera did, becomes a myth.

3. At the time of publication of Rushdie’s book of short stories, East, West (1994) he was interviewed on radio by Robert Dessaix (Books and Writing, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Radio National, 26 November 1994, also reported in ABC Radio 24 Hours magazine, December 1994 pp.56-60). Dessaix asked Rushdie what he meant by saying that he inhabits the comma in the title East, West. Rushdie replied that at times he feels like a hiatus between two cultures, like one of the characters in his stories, who refuses to make a choice between the two. He said that he felt like a hinge between these cultures, that that position is a gift for him as a writer, where he has two positions he can dream and write from. Another journalist asked him if the title could have had a slash instead of a comma. Rushdie replied that he didn’t feel like a slash, he felt more like a comma.

4 Time magazine (August 23 1993, p.86) reported that during a U2 concert at London’s Wembley Stadium; Rushdie came out on stage, in from of 7,000 screaming rock fans.

5 In order to find out to date publication and sales details of The Satanic Verses I telephoned the Australian head office of Penguin. After reassuring my informant that personal details would be confidential we could proceed. He told me that there are no accurate figures readily available, as the American publisher of the novel has set up a consortium and it changes premises frequently and leaves no personal details available to anyone. My informant estimated that in Australia alone well over 30,000 copies of the novel have sold. It continues to sell steadily.


7 In The Australian newspaper (February 15-16 1997, p. 20) there is an up-date on the eighth anniversary of the fatwa against Rushdie in the “World Round-Up” section: “Rushdie bounty”, Tehran: Attempts by the Iranian Government to play down the increase of the bounty to kill Salman Rushdie by an Iranian religious foundation suffered a setback after the country’s Revolutionary Guard insisted that the novelist be murdered”. It is interesting to note that there is no longer any need to explain why Rushdie is being sought.

8 For a thorough examination of how the Western media create and sustain orientalist images of Islam, see Edward Said’s Covering Islam: how the media and the experts determine how we see the rest of the world (1985b) Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.

9 Once again, the genderisation of the generic author is intentional and in keeping with another aspect of Said’s thesis, that the orientalist represents a masculinized vision of desire/repulsion of a feminised Orient.

10 Akbar Ahmed, titled “anthropologosis”, presents a six-part television program, “Living Islam” (Compass, Special Broadcasting Service, starting 5 November 1995) which focusses on what it means to be a Muslim in today’s world. It opens with negative television images of Islam, including mass rallies, a crashed aeroplane, the burning of an American flag, and the burning of The Satanic Verses. Ahmed refers to these images as being “simplistic stereotypes”.

11 The Australian newspaper (14 February 1997, p. 15) carries an article written by Rushdie. He
comments on the mythological beginning of the very idea of Europe and its “civilisation”, writing that “Europa was an Asian Maiden abducted by a God, who changed himself, for the occasion, into a white bull, and was held captive in a new land that came, in time, to bear her name”. Rushdie adds that today we are free of myths and gods and “The loss of the divine places us at the centre of the stage, to build our own morality, our own communities; to make our own choices; to make our own way”. Such an unmediated life, especially for an artist like Rushdie, is an impossible ideal. We (whoever he thinks we is) are not necessarily free of myths and gods.

12 Note my avoidance of “sacred” and “profane”. That debate is one of the many I avoid, as it is not central to my dissertation.

13 Because this dissertation is not in literary theory, as such, I have not dealt with the magical realism in Rushdie’s writing.

14 Here I refer to the kinds of urban myth-making systems Umberto Eco (1987), Jean Baudrillard (1992), and Roland Barthes (1989) write about.

15 The idea that reality is formed and informed through dream/illusion stretches from pre-Adamite mythology to Freudian theories, which are themselves based on ancient mythologies. Sigmund Freud writes that “the ancients, who conceived of dreams as divine inspirations, had no need to look for stimuli; for them a dream was due to the will of divine or demonic powers, and its content was the product of their special knowledge and intention. Science, however, immediately raised the question whether the stimuli of dreams were single or multiple” (1942:37-38). The question of “whether the stimuli of dreams were single or multiple” relates the newly discovered interconnectedness of psychology and physiology. And as these two interconnected aspects are used to seek to understand dreams, Freud also refers to how, because in dreams memory does not work as well as in the waking state, one can then be confused by illusions. Vision in dreams are also influenced by the retina. Wundt (in Freud) says that we see outspread before our eyes innumerable animals and objects when “the luminous dust in the dark field of vision has assumed fantastic forms”. This is very similar to Edward Lane’s reference to El-Kzawenee’s thirteenth century description of the Jinn, good and evil spirits, as “aerial animals, with transparent bodies, which can assume various forms, and ... God ... created the Angels of the light of fire, and the Jinn of its flame, ... and the Sheytans of its smoke, ... and that [all] these kinds of beings are [usually] invisible to man, but that they assume what forms they please, and when their form becomes condensed they are visible (Lane 1987:29). Lane’s demonology describes how God created the Jinn two thousand years before Adam and they were governed by forty kings, all named Suleyman (Solomon or Salman). They inhabited the earth and were blessed by God until they offended their prophets. God sent an army of Angels to drive them away to the islands and imprison any who remained. One of the prisoners was a young Azazel, who grew up among the Angels, learned their knowledge, and eventually governed them. It was disputed whether he was an Angel (made of light) or an evil Jinn (made of fire). But he alone would not prostrate himself before Adam, so God transformed him into Sheytan. All Sheytans are the children of Azazel, the Jinn. All Jinn will die after humans but before the general resurrection. So too will all the Angels, the last of whom will be the Angel of Death, Azrael (Gabriel, Jebrael, Jibreel, of Gibreel). But not all Jinn will live this long. Many are killed by shooting stars, hurled at them from heaven.

Thus Gibreel Farishta, as a Bombay movie star, learned the knowledge of the Angels. However, the viewers/readers do not know whether he is an Angel or a Devil, as he appears as an Angel but shares evil dreams with the prophets. He is finally his own Angel of Death. One cannot tell if a being is a good Angel, an evil Devil, or an empty hallucination. Lyotard questions how it can be known that it is God giving the orders as angels themselves are vulnerable to this kind of blindness (1988:108-109). He also writes that the obligation felt by the one who receives God’s instructions should be considered a scandal, as obligation deprives one of one’s (God-given) free will.

16 In Daniel Easterman’s article "A Sense of Proportion", in Index on Censorship, April 1990, Vol.
19, no. 4, pp. 9-11.


18. As mentioned in endnote no. 6, Time magazine (August 23 1993:86) reported that during a U2 concert at London's Wembley Stadium, Bono, the lead singer, disguised "as a devilish character called Macphisto" (in the MacDonaldisation of the world, the hamburger chain has been seen as the embodiment of evil) telephoned Salman Rushdie. Rushdie came out on stage and calmly said "Real devils don't wear horns". Bono embraced the writer, saying, "I bow to the superior man". Three months later, The Australian Magazine, a lift-out from The Australian newspaper (November 6-7 1993 pp. 60-64), ran a story on U2 concert tours, including two photographs of Bono with Rushdie on stage. David Breslauer writes that "Some bands are ruined by drugs and others by drink. U2 are the first in rock history to overdose on critical theory".

Discussions about the difficulty of identifying Good from Evil have appeared in other significant texts. In The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner (1824, 1881), James Hogg explores whether or not Good and Evil do, indeed, exist as two separate influences. Like Rushdie, Hogg got into trouble with the authorities for being seen to challenge the singularity of the Bible ("Wrignon's anxiety about "the red-letter side of the book of life" produces a devil whose "bible" is "intersected with red lines, and verses", Introduction xvi) and for introducing the idea that religious pamphlets could contain "lies and blasphemy" (223). The first edition had apparently offended Longmans, the publishers, so they refused Hogg's next piece. John Carey writes in the Introduction that "the novel remains indecisive about whether the devil was a delusion or an objective figure (1981:xiv). An anonymous reviewer (in the Appendix, 1981:256-258) describes it as a "strange tale of Diablerie and Theology". The reviewer regrets that Hogg "did not employ himself better than in uselessly and disgustingly abusing his imagination, to invent wicked tricks for a mongrel devil, and blasphemous lubrications for an insane fanatic". The reviewer claims that the text is neither poetically nor theologically convincing; it is neither fantastic enough nor is it factual enough to be convincing. The way Hogg plays with the reader's sense of "reality" is like Rushdie's in that one does not know if the protagonist is dreaming or hallucinating. The concluding "Editor's Narrative" claims that it is hard to tell if it is "either dreaming or madness", and that the young Laird of Dalcastle was wretched for having been "a religious maniac, who wrote and wrote about a deluded creature, till he arrived at that height of madness, that he believed himself the very object whom he had been all along describing" (254).

Robert, the young Laird of Dalcastle, in his "Confessions of a Sinner", writes that he replied to Gil-Martin (the Devil) "in the words of the venal prophet" (152) so we realise that Robert's delusions of divinity are mirrored in the Old Testament story of Balaam (as noted by Hogg 1981:260). Balaam was a non-Israelite prophet and diviner. Balaam states that he will utter only what God inspires, guided by an angel, who commands him not to curse but to bless Israel. Balaam remains faithful to God and blesses the people of Israel.

The narrative of Memoirs and Confessions is repeated and elaborated in Emma Tennant's The Bad Sister (1978). Some details, like making the she Devil a lesbian vampire, and other aspects of gender politics, are changed, while other details, like naming the he Devil Gil-Martin, remain the same, and other details, like the father's name, Michael Dalzell, and him being a Tory-voting landlord, directly recall Hogg's textual details. But the central theme, the difficulty of sorting out Good from Evil and reality from hallucination, remain the same.

In 1819 Percy Bysshe Shelley (in Mortimer 1992) wrote:

The Devil, I safely can aver,
Has neither hoof, nor tail, nor sting;
Nor is he, as some sages swear,
A spirit, neither here nor there,
In nothing - yet in everything.
He is - what we are; for sometimes
The Devil is a gentleman;
At others a bard bartering rhymes
For sack: a statesman spinning crimes;
A swindler, living as he can;

A thief, who cometh in the night,
With whole boots and net pantaloons,
Like some one whom it were not right
To mention; - or the luckless wight,
From whom he steals nine silver spoons.

19 Unless specified or obvious from its context, the ambiguity as to whether Ayesha is Rushdie's fiction or Mernissi's history is intended.

20 Rana Kabbani (1988:14-15) describes how the Prophet was “described as an arch-seducer, who wore purple, coloured his lips, and delighted in scented things and colition . . . (and that he had) . . . a plan for general sexual profligacy as an instrument for the destruction fo Christianity”.

21 “Desh” is the Hindi/Urdu word for “nation” or “country” (as noted by Vijay Mishra). So the Imam’s loathing for Ayesha is jealousy or (desire for) her power.

22 El Saadawi spent time in prison for publishing what is considered subversive writing. She criticises male power and corruption and the brutal ways women are treated, in the name of Islam. See Memoirs from the Women’s Prison (1991, first published 1983, translated into English 1986), The Women’s Press, London.

23 Georg Lukacs (1971:88, 89) writes that “the novel is the epic of a world that has been abandoned by God”. He refers to “the divinities of impediment” in Indian mythology. Although they impede the hero along the way, the hero, like Saladin Chamcha always passes the test. Although Lukacs is looking at such writers as Cervantes, Achilles, Dante, Goethe, Arjina and Homer, Lukacs’ comments are remarkably adaptable to Rushdie’s writing. Perhaps this is because Rushdie’s writing embraces aesthetic and political aspects of the novel from Indian and pre-Islamic and Islamic mythology to magical realism and postmodernism. Because such writers display a “textual attitude” toward the East, Said damns them in his own Dantesque inferno of orientalism.

24 In an oblique reference to Deleuze and Guattari’s Anti-Oedipus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia (1982), Spivak (1989b:8) writes that The Satanic Verses could be subtitled “Imperialism and Schizophrenia. Not because Empire, like Capital, is abstract, but because Empire messes with identity”.

25 George Bernard Shaw also wrote Pygmalion, which is about Professor Higgins taking on a poor flower girl, Eliza Doolittle, as a “project”, transforming her though a change of accent/voice/vocabulary so that she could “pass” among the elite as one of them. It was not done out of benevolence, but rather out of a creator’s vanity, “taking on the creator’s role” (TSV:49).

26 Information on Enoch Powell is taken from Tom Nairn’s The Break-Up of Britain, 1977, NLB, London.

27 Although post World War Two emigration from Britain to Commonwealth nations far outnumbered immigration (Trevor Lee 1977:2), because large numbers of the immigrants were non-whites, there was a general impression that Britain was being “swamped”, first by Africans and then by Asians. By the late 1950s it was estimated that the number of non-white immigrants to Britain
from different parts of the Commonwealth had reached over 200,000. Donald Wood in Institute of Race Relations 1960:3) claims that by 1958 there were approximately 210,000 "coloured" immigrants in Britain (115,000 West Indians; 25,000 West Africans; 55,000 Indians and Pakistanis; 15,000 "other coloured Commonwealth citizens". Information taken from House of Commons report 5 December 1958). Rex and Tomlinson (1979:39) claim that in the period 1955-1960 there were 219,540 immigrants from the West Indies, India and Pakistan: 96,180 from Jamaica; 65,270 from the rest of the Caribbean; 33,070 from India; 17,120 from Pakistan, plus others.

As citizens of the Commonwealth, people could move in and out of England without official registration, so it was very difficult to keep track of population movements and settlements. Rushdie writes that today, in balck communities, although over forty per cent of the population are not immigrants, the word "immigrant" is still made to mean "black immigrant", "and even British-born blacks and Asians are thought of as people whose real 'home' is elsewhere" (1992:132).

28 In his latest novel, The Moore's Last Sigh (1995), Rushdie's central character is a Moorish, Jewish bastard from the south of India.

29 In Hanif Kureishi's novel, The Black Album, DeeDee Osgood comments that Shahid, her student/lover, missed her James Baldwin lecture, when she played Miles Davis (155).


31 Gaston Bachelard (1969:211-212) writes that "outside and inside form a dialectic of division ... . It has the sharpness of the dialectics of yes and no, which decides everything" (211). Bachelard quotes Jean Hyppolite as speaking of "a first myth of outside and inside" in which the formal opposition of the two terms lies "alienation and hostility between the two" (212). Bachelard goes on to explain that once one moves away from a geometric idea of inside and outside then the dialectics of inside and outside multiply and diversify (216).
CHAPTER FIVE

HANIF KUREISHI
POSTORIENTAL METROPOLITAN CULTURES:
MORE SATANIC VERSES

"She flutters like an iron butterfly and is unpopular, cool and hard" - Warsaw radio (in George Malcolm Thomson 1980:255).

"She" is Britain's former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. If, as noted in Chapter Three, something as small and fragile and apparently inconsequential as the flapping of a butterfly's wings has wide and profound global effects, then when the "iron butterfly" flaps her wings the effects are often brutal. This Chapter will look at Hanif Kureishi's texts as expressions of, and part of, popular culture¹. Popular culture in England in the 1980s and 1990s was produced and engaged with in context of Thatcher's regime of Victorian values and domesticity (Iain Chambers 1990:28). It was largely the legacy of Enoch Powell's ideology about the decline of the British Empire that made Thatcherism possible (Ranelagh 1992:183,186). While Powell was overtly racist, Thatcher did not even acknowledge the social and cultural differences that made the economy (the only field in which she operated) an uneven playing field. Thatcher's "cool and hard" dog-eat-dog regime for Great Britain provided attractive business opportunities for entrepreneurs willing to take advantage of the situation.

Hanif Kureishi's novels and films are relevant to popular forms of orientalism and postorientalism as they deal with what is happening to Britishness in terms of politics, race, and sex. In his unpublished paper about how Asian "truths" are
constructed through neo-Confucianism, especially in context of the economic success in East Asia, Chua Beng-Huat (1990:6) describes the Confucian package as consisting of hard work, education, pragmatism, self-discipline, family orientation, and collectivism. The general “Asianisation” (to include Buddhism and Islam) of these values is an orientalist strategy that posits innovative (post)modernity as a Western practice, and conservative tradition as an Asian practice. However, apart from collectivism, all these values are not only Victorian (Chua Beng-Huat and Chambers) but also Thatcherite (Chambers). Kureishi’s representations show the undoing of Britain’s desire for what Arjun Appadurai (1990) refers to as cultural isomorphism and the emergence of disjunctive, fractal, and overlapping cultural formations. Such formations display infinite complexity, becoming distinctive, yet never really repeating themselves; indicating disorder, yet also signalling a new kind of order (James Gleick 1988).

INTRODUCTION

Hanif Kureishi’s texts show how colonialist/orientalist binary opposition is evident in both Islamic fundamentalism and also Thatcherite economic fundamentalism (or economic rationalism), and he displaces this binarism with tropes of popular culture as a site of resistance. Hanif Kureishi represents postcolonial metropolitan Britishness as a complex cultural formation that is ex-centric, open-ended and multi-ethnic, with overlapping histories and traditions, in which positions and identities, including that of the “national” cannot be taken for granted, and are not interminably fixed but tend towards flux (Chambers 1990:27). Kureishi’s novels and films show how this new kind of Britishness is emerging despite entrenched, conservative, Anglo-centric, backward-looking, and stereotyped ideas of the
national culture as "English", which is based on a homogeneous unity in which
history, tradition and individual biographies and roles, including ethnic and sexual
ones, are fixed in the national epic, in the mere fact of being "English" (Chambers
1990:27). Kureishi pushes national, ethnic and sexual identity beyond the
paradigm of sameness and otherness, so that it is no longer seen as fixed. Thus
racial and sexual binarism can be exposed through theories of orientalism and
replaced by hybridity (Bhabha 1995), and English and Asian/Islamic binarism can
be replaced by postorientalism. Hanif Kureishi's films and novels confront, and
also work around, historically and socially constructed racial, sexual, class-based,
gendered, generational, national self/other relationships. Kureishi moves beyond
the self/other binary and shows how dynamic culture actually is. Live
contemporary culture is always in motion; it always changes; it always embraces
and inscribes various forms of difference. It repeats and elaborates narratives,
keeping them dynamic so that they act as transcultural transactions. Culture is
difference, as a practice that positions the self liminally (Bhabha 1990:209). Not
only are many of Kureishi's Indian and Pakistani characters in positions of
liminality, so are many of his white English characters. And their liminality is not
just another position, or just a position of otherness or alterity, rather it is what
Leonard Quart (in Dixon 1994) describes as "choreographed discord". Kureishi
ironically subverts all our social categories - oppressor-victim, black-white, male-
female, and hip-straight (Quart in Dixon 1994:248). The ambiguities, ironies, and
contradictions in Kureishi's films that Quart points to can also be found in his
novels. These tensions and celebrations, or perhaps "tense celebrations", are found
throughout the texts I will look at.
In all of Kureishi's texts there are some very strong themes that are conspicuously repeated and elaborated. The most dominant theme that influences all the others is an exploration of the sub-continental Indian-Pakistani diaspora in England and the hybrid identities that that diaspora produces. The Chapter Four looks at how Salman Rushdie's novel, *The Satanic Verses*, and the politics that surround it, made it *the* literary event of the late twentieth century. The whole episode has called into question a myriad of issues that surround cultural production, consumption, and involvement. Kureishi's fiction, like Rushdie's, is made up of narratives of diasporas and confirm that what Vijay Mishra (1996:442) calls postmodern ethnicities, are here to stay. The postmodern nation state is a complex formation with multiple, fragmented repertoires which include diasporic, hybrid forms. Postmodern identity is a complex formation with multiple, fragmented repertoires which include diasporic, hybrid forms. The difference between Kureishi's and Rushdie's fiction is that while they both deal with racial/ethnic/cultural difference, Kureishi adds sexual difference. Kureishi's fiction opens up the gap between sexual identity and fantasy and sights "improper places - spaces of impropriety" (Lesley Stern 1982:60). Kureishi explores these spaces as they appear in pop culture. This is especially evident in his novel, *The Black Album* (1995) which is a pastiche. It is a novel about a novel. It revels in music, drugs and sex, in a historical way that contextualises postmodernity with the cultural/political revolutions of 1968. As a novel it is very self-consciously literary and also very visual. Like *The Satanic Verses*, it goes in several directions at once, demonstrating that meaning, like postmodernity itself, is, to repeat Rushdie's expression, built on scraps. *The Black Album* shows how since the 1960s with the
presence of youth movements, feminism, popular culture, and an increasingly visible (especially in the mass media) non-white population, Britain has seen itself decline from its former dominant imperial position.

This Chapter will focus on an analysis of *The Black Album* as that novel explores the nexus between popular culture and Westernness in context of the Islamic fundamentalist response to Salman Rushdie’s novel, *The Satanic Verses*. Akbar Ahmed (1992:36) explains that it is the failure of the materialistic model (Marxist or capitalist) that has fuelled Islamic revivalism. The way Kureishi treats Islamic responses to *The Satanic Verses* in *The Black Album* is in context of Islamic revivalism in the West. One of the characters in *The Black Album*, Riaz, says “Without religion society is impossible ... There’s no morality” (The Black Album, referred to as TBA below:33). To which Chad adds “There’s only extremity and ingratitude and hard-heartedness, like beneath this Thatcherism” (33). The novel explores the incommensurability of postmodernity and Islam. Kureishi brings together the Islam/West debate of the Rushdie Affair, and re-articulates it through pop culture. As mentioned in Chapter Four, many publications about *The Satanic Verses* are circulated as so many “truths”. *The Black Album* fictionalises responses to the whole Rushdie Affair. It is interesting to note that *The Black Album* does not mention Salman Rushdie or *The Satanic Verses* by name, thus demonstrating the point made in Chapter Four, that the whole Rushdie/Satanic Verses intertext is much bigger than the author and his text. Instead, *The Satanic Verses* is referred to as “the book” and Salman Rushdie is referred to as the same author as that of *Midnight’s Children*. 
This Chapter will also detour through Kureishi's films My Beautiful Laundrette (1986) and Sammy and Rosie Get Laid (1987), and the novel The Buddha of Suburbia (1990). These texts are exemplary cases of diasporic consciousness and hybridity as the postmodern condition. And, as they deal with the main characters identifying as Asian and British, they are also postorientalist. All of his texts deal with life in postcolonial metropolitan England, where hybridity is the norm. It is not a new "ethnicity" but rather a set of new discursive sites. Hybridity depends on the idea that difference is inevitable and it suggests ways of living with differences. In Kureishi's texts there are many sets of differences. When these differences overlap there emerges what Homi Bhabha (1990) refers to as "the third space", where one lives with difference. Kureishi's texts highlight the differences in the main social and sexual categories he confronts. In his texts there are typically two generations (the middle-aged parents and the young adult children), there is heterosexuality and homosexuality (which is often disrupted by more ambivalent forms of sexuality), there are the Anglo-English and the Pakistani-English (which also becomes complicated in Sammy and Rosie with the presence of Rosie's black African-English lover), there is class difference, and there are political differences. As Kureishi repeats these various themes, he also transforms them.

Chapter Two looked at an imaginary world that has been divided along an East/West axis. In such a world the West emerges as a dominant world power. That power is balanced by an imaginary Orient, or East, that is constructed as its civilisational other. The Madame Butterfly texts discussed in Chapter Three are about different versions of such a world where the Western First World sees itself
as capitalistic, democratic, advanced, developed, wealthy, expansionist, masculine, and white, and it represents the Eastern Third world as despotic, developing, poor, feminine and vulnerable. Chapter Three also looks at texts that have subverted the traditional orientalist narrative. This Chapter will look at texts that show how vestiges of the historical East/West construction still survive, but they survive despite the representation of actualities that resist such binarism. Orientalist texts take the incommensurability of Islam and popular Western culture as a given; as binaristic and mutually exclusive. I argue that Hanif Kureishi's texts can be theorised through the idea of postorientalism, where that space between East and West, whether it is a gap or overlap between Islam and secularism, becomes a productive zone.

All these "Asian" ficto-biographical life stories would have hitherto been written by the colonisers, describing "Asians" either as peasants-in-mud-huts (Kureishi 1986) or as hip Hindus (Rushdie 1994), or as cool, nodding, Maharishi/Ravi Shankar look-alikes (Kureishi 1990, Rushdie 1994, Spivak 1989a). The last two decades have seen the emergence of texts that move beyond dealing with ethically or racially based differences within Western metropolitan centres, as such identities are redefining identity itself. Some of these texts are produced from what might be called migrant and diasporic communities. They have contributed towards reshaping English/ness and, in the case of Hanif Kureishi's work (and Salman Rushdie's), Asianness. This redefinition is of Anglo-Asians who refuse to negate their own particular histories of diasporic fragmentation and who also refuse to assimilate into either an ideal "Asianness" or "Britishness". Kureishi's (and Rushdie's) texts are peopled with different kinds of Asians: those who conform to
hegemonic visions of the nation, and those who do not. Those who conform, as Iain Chambers (1990:28), referring to Bhabha's work on mimicry, writes, "become the mirror of a homogeneous, white Britain; (as) the invisible men and women of the black diaspora and the post-colonial world who are required to mimic their allotted roles in the interpretative circle to which they have been assigned". Those who refuse to mimic dominant identities are constantly negotiating their own identity in the postmodern metropolitan culture in which they live.

The Black Album explores the personal and cultural tug-of-war going on in the main character, Shahid, as he goes from Kent to London to go to university to simultaneously forget and also understand who he is (Stacia 1997), "to distance himself from the family and also to think about their lives and why they had come to England (TBA:7). In his dealings with the white English and the Islamicists, Shahid tries to define his own culture. He is attracted to both and is also somewhat sceptical about both. He struggles over how, to use Rushdie's words, "identity is at once plural and partial" (1992:15). Kureishi writes that:

Shahid was afraid his ignorance would place him in no man's land. These days everyone was insisting on their identity, coming out as a man, woman, gay, black, Jew - brandishing whichever features they could claim, as if without a tag they wouldn't be human (TBA:76).

Shahid's search is for an identity that can simultaneously embrace Islam and popular Western culture. Just as Saladin Chamcha in The Satanic Verses resolves the two warring halves of himself (Western and Islamic) so that he can live a postcolonial identity, so too does Shahid finally decide to live in the face of risk, change, movement and undecidability. Like Chamcha, Shahid finally opens himself
up to the chaos of life, embracing new situations. Homi Bhabha’s theory of hybridity is very much about how one approaches newness and change. He says that

hybridity is precisely about the fact that when a new situation, a new alliance formulates itself, it may demand that you should translate your principles, rethink them, extend them. On the Left there’s too much of a timid traditionalism - always trying to read a new situation in terms of some pre-given model or paradigm, which is a reactionary reflex, a conservative ‘mindset’ (Bhabha 1990:216).

An illustration of this “timid traditionalism” on the Left is found in one of the characters in The Black Album, Dr Brownlow. He is a middle-aged leftist who has just been made redundant from teaching postcolonial history at the university on which the whole narrative focuses. He is also Deedee Osgood’s estranged husband (and Deedee is Shahid’s lover). At the height of the furore about the burning of "the book", the Islamicists are seeking out Deedee, threatening violence, and Shahid goes to her place to warn her. Shahid finds Brownlow there, drunk, taking his books and records as he is finally moving out. Brownlow is frantically looking for his record of the Beatles’ Hey Jude ([1968], which was the biggest selling single at the time). In reference to love, politics, ideas, and religion Brownlow says to Shahid

Everything I believed in has turned into shit. There we were, right up to the end of the seventies, arguing about society after the r-revolution [when drunk, Brownlow develops a stutter, reminiscent of the famous movie producer in The Satanic Verses, Whisky Sisodia, who made many pronouncements about ‘The Trouble With The English’ - Chapter Four], the nature of the dialectic, the meaning of history. And all the while... the British people didn’t want e-education, housing, the a-arts, equality... Because they’re a bunch of fucking greedy, myopic, c-cunts [the working class]... I can’t say they’ve betrayed us... They’ve b-b-betrayed themselves! (243)
Thus Brownlow betrays that he still believes in the ideologies of nineteen-sixties radicalism and nineteen-seventies optimism as a pre-given model or paradigm. He cannot "translate" his ideologies to suit present social and political actualities. His identity is more fixed than the "foreign" students he patronises. Brownlow's stale old Left traditionalism is mirrored in Riaz, the radical self-appointed charismatic leader of the Islamic brotherhood at the university. Riaz is as patronising as Brownlow, as he "loved 'his people', but unless offering assistance, he appeared uncomfortable with them" (TBA:173). Neither Riaz nor Brownlow really understand the need for change as the only constant.

Many of the other protagonists embrace hybridity as a normal state of affairs where "belonging" involves identification through place and relationships. When one moves from one place to another, whether it is from a village to a city or from one nation to another, then one often experiences a profound sense of loss. Rushdie explains that although it is normally supposed that when one is "translated" from one place to another much is lost, he clings to the notion that something can also be gained (1992:17). Shahid, in The Black Album, concludes, after the book burning and the fire bombing of a bookshop and his rejection of the Islamic brothers, that "There was no fixed self; surely our several selves melted and mutated daily? There had to be innumerable ways of being in the world" (TBA:228). However, Chad, one of the Islamic brothers, had changed his identity from being Trevor Buss, who had been adopted by a white couple. Trevor meets Riaz at university and changes his identity to Chad, and his practices from the excesses of popular culture to strict observance of Islamic practices. He switches
from one kind of identity to another, avoiding messy complications. As a child, he sensed that he did not belong in white society, and the brotherhood offered solidarity and a strong sense of Islamic identity. Deedee Osgood laments that “Trevor Buss’s soul got lost in translation” (TBA:107). He felt “homeless”, with “no country” (TBA:108). In embracing Islam, Chad rejected pop culture, especially music, saying “Pop music is not good for me. Nor for anyone” (TBA:19). He vilifies Prince with an “insider’s” knowledge, saying to Shahid “you got *The Black Album* ... Not many people have. Hey, you got the bootleg CD too” (TBA:19). Shahid asks “Want to hear it?” and Chad replies “Never!” (TBA:19). He is afraid of being seduced back into pop culture. Chad sees pop culture as Ferozza Jussawalla (Chapter Four) sees it as “cheap” and “blasphemous”. For Chad it is all addictive: drugs, music, alcohol, sex. Chad refuses to negotiate the inside/outside overlap or gap. Just like Gibreel Farishta’s (Chapter Four) talk of change and actual wish to stay continuous, so too does Chad repress his former self. He can only be either Trevor or Chad, never a hybrid.

**POPULAR CULTURE**

Kureishi’s representations of what happens when popular culture meets Asian “truths” illustrate what gets lost and gained in cultural translation. Music is very important in Kureishi’s work. Music punctuates his novels. Each mention of a song or a band or a record or CD provides a cultural/historical context that amplifies the meanings of an event or experience. For example, the first time Shahid waits for Deedee to get ready to go out, he recognises the tune she is listening to, the first track of *Beggar’s Banquet* (1968); “it was a song Chili
[Shahid’s older brother] often played while he was dressing in the evening”. There is no mention of The Rolling Stones, so the popularity of pop culture is taken for granted and thus illustrated. “Beggar’s Banquet” is also important in context of the violence around the Rushdie Affair as it was the song that apparently inspired members of the biker organisation, Hell’s Angels, to murder an audience member at a Rolling Stones concert at Altamont in 1969. In a special issue of The Australian Magazine (1993c) called “1968 the year that changed the world”, Glenn A. Baker describes “Beggar’s Banquet” as “a dark, brooding, intentionally satanic work that would be blamed for inspiring the hostile environment that led to a graphically filmed murder at the Stones’ Altamont Speedway concert the next year” (1993c:18). This suspicion of the demonic powers of pop culture permeates The Black Album, as it was precisely how The Satanic Verses was framed by Islamic extremists (as popular/demonic) and used as a pretext to express all sorts of repressed and confused hostilities. Above all, pop culture, as evident in postmodernity, has been demonised by Islamicists. In both Kureishi’s earlier novel, The Buddha of Suburbia, and his latest, The Black Album, the central character loves music and dancing. Dance music in England in the 1970s (which is the temporal/cultural location of Buddha) was heavily influenced by African-American and Hispanic rhythms and, as body rhythms, helped form gay culture (Chambers 1986:165). Karim, the main character in The Buddha of Suburbia, withdraws from his family. He enjoys the night time alone with his records in his bedroom. Karim’s lover, Charlie, is a Ziggy Stardust imitator who fronts a glam rock band, and later transforms into a feral Sid Vicious parody as he enters the world of punk (Jayne Margetts 1997). Similarly, in The Black Album Shahid reads a lot of fiction
and particularly likes Madonna and Prince, especially his *The Black Album*, which
is dance music.

Just as *The Satanic Verses* shows air space as one of the “defining locations” of
this century, so too does *The Black Album* show how pop music (air-waves) has
been one of the “defining locations” of postmodernity. The very title of his novel,
*The Black Album*, is the same as Prince’s (then) bootleg (repressed) compact disc
(CD). The title also reflects Salman Rushdie’s title, *The Satanic Verses*, as a
reference to another repressed (bootleg) text. And both Kureishi’s and Rushdie’s
novels are about the repression or denial of doubt, or multiple meanings and
interpretations, as that which stops critical thinking, especially in the East/West,
Islam/secularism overlap. In the turmoil of trying to work out where he belongs,
the narrator comments that Shahid “believed everything; he believed nothing ...
sometimes all crashed into chaos ... How many warring selves were there within
him? ... [he was] lost in a room of broken mirrors” (TBA:147). Broken mirrors
further fragment the already fragmented self. He seeks a whole self. He sees bits
of himself reflected in his lover, Deedee, and his love of music, literature, drugs and
sex. And he sees bits of himself reflected in the Islamic brothers who recognise
and resist Western cultural imperialism. Throughout the novel Shahid looks for a
sense of cultural belonging, to ultimately find that he belongs with pop culture
where fragmentation, change, undecidability are the norm. Like Saladin Chamcha
in *The Satanic Verses*, Shahid was ultimately able to live with partial objects. By
the end of the novel, the narrative is just beginning, as it were. It ends with a very
cinematic moment, as Shahid imagines that he and Deedee would be together,
visiting the places where he had grown up, then returning to London to go to a
Prince concert. They would stay together “Until it stops being fun”.

The Black Album, like The Satanic Verses is not only intertextual, as it refers to
other texts and other genres, but it is also transtextual, as it evokes many texts
simultaneously. Just as Rushdie’s The Satanic Verses is the repressed text of
Islam, so too is Kureishi’s The Black Album the repressed text of pop music. That
is, it discloses its source of inspiration (a previous text that has become canonical in
its own genre) and then goes on to undo the conventions by which the previous
text is recognised. (This will be explained below.) Prince’s black album has no
title, no name or illustration. It is not even an album, in the sense that records were
albums. It is a CD with a plain black paper sleeve as a cover. The disc itself
carries just the numbers and the names of the tracks. It is a chromatic reversal of,
and a tribute to, the Beatles’ (1968) album called The Beatles, which was and is
much better known as “the white album”. It too was sparse and simple, with
simple songs. It was produced when The Beatles had found their new Indian
guru, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, whose lectures on Transcendental Meditation had a
profound influence on The Beatles’ lives. Just as the Beatles were influenced by
Eastern philosophy, so too was Shahid, in The Black Album, influenced by
Western postmodernism. John Lennon referred to the white album as the first
unselfconscious album since Yellow Submarine. Turner (1996:152) writes that
“The Beatles had perhaps laid themselves open to misinterpretation by mixing up
the languages of poetry and nonsense”. John Lennon in particular had done this.
When interviewed and asked about song writing “John replied that the work was
done for fun and laughs" (Turner 1996:152). Recurring lyrics on the black album are “play with me”, which is both sexual and also playful (in the more sanitised sense of the word). The need for fun and laughter while dealing with serious issues runs through Rushdie’s and Kureishi’s work. Kureishi parodies the revelation of the sacred Koranic verses to the Prophet in that Shahid, plays with, and transforms, Riaz’s “verses” just for fun (elaborated below).

The transtextuality of The Black Album continues. Just as radical Islamic fundamentalists interpreted The Satanic Verses and the whole Rushdie Affair in such a way that they committed murder and acts of violence and destruction⁶, so too did Charles Manson, the self-appointed leader of the notorious Manson “family”, interpret the Beatles’ white album in such a way that he felt justified in committing multiple murders. Manson interpreted two of the songs, “Piggies” and “Helter Skelter”, as warnings of an uprising against the white establishment. “Piggies” was written in mockery of the middle-classes. However, Manson wrote “pig”, “pigs”, or “piggies” on the victims’ walls in their own blood. The Beatles were horrified at Manson’s interpretation of what they saw as a tame song that was intended to be humorous. When Paul McCartney wrote “Helter Skelter” he wanted to write something that would “freak people out” in terms of their musical expectations with strong, innovative music (in Turner 1996:167). Manson interpreted the song as a warning to America of racial conflict. According to Steve Turner, Manson saw the Beatles as the four angels of the New Testament book of Revelation who were warning of a holocaust and advising followers to escape into the desert. Manson saw this uprising as “Helter Skelter”, rather than a spiral fair-
ground slide that Turner says most British listeners would see it as. Manson wrote “Helter Skelter” in blood at another of his murder scenes. Charles Manson also interpreted the Beatles’ song “Revolution” in his own peculiar way. John Lennon wrote “Revolution” in response to the revolutionary factions that emerged in the 1968 students’ and workers’ demonstrations. As the most politically conscious of the Beatles, Lennon was a target for Leninist, Trotskyist and Maoist groups who wanted more moral and financial support for their causes. “Revolution” was Lennon’s reply: that the only significant and lasting revolution will come from inner change, not violence. So too does Shahid conclude that the extremist Islamicists’ violent revolution against American imperialism was not the best way to go about changing and improving society. In an open letter published in a Keele University magazine (in Turner 1996:169), student John Hoyland said of the Beatles’ “Revolution”

In order to change the world, we’ve got to understand what’s wrong with the world. And then - destroy it. Ruthlessly. This is not cruelty or madness. It is one of the most passionate forms of love. Because what we’re fighting is suffering, oppression, humiliation - the immense toll of unhappiness caused by capitalism.

This assumption that the destruction of “the enemy” is a form of “love” is reminiscent of Rushdie’s description of the Imam in The Satanic Verses who thought that the young soldiers who were willing to kill and die for the new religion, Submission (Islam), were expressing pure love. Repressed eros was turned into deadly violence. There are similar sentiments in The Black Album where Riaz moves his followers to acts of violence against “the book” and anyone who defends it. Riaz has a “standard argument about the crimes committed by
whites against blacks and Asians in the name of freedom" (TBA:224). This line of argument is closely tied in with the Islamicists’ fear and loathing of eros in not only sexuality but also in art: literature, music, style, and so on.

The whole Rushdie Affair has highlighted issues around the power of popular culture, or the political effects of the popularisation of cultural icons that are considered sacred. In response to Shahid’s love of novels, Chad says “There’s more to life than entertaining ourselves!” (TBA:21). He refuses to see the connection between art and life. However, it is precisely through Shahid’s interest in pop culture that he and Deedee Osgood, his teacher, meet and seduce each other. They share the same musical and cultural taste. She has pictures of Prince, Madonna and Oscar Wilde pinned over her desk, and she encourages Shahid to talk about Prince. He says Prince is

half black and half white, half man, half woman, half size, feminine but macho too. His work contains and extends the history of black American music, Little Richard, James Brown, Sly Stone, Hendrix ... (TBA:25).

It is through their mutual interpretations of such cultural icons as emblematic of the practice of explicit liberation politics that Shahid and Deedee begin their affair. The Islamic brothers, especially Chad, insist that Shahid’s lack of commitment to Islam is the result of his listening to too much pop music, especially Prince, and his desire for Deedee Osgood and indulgence in all forms of Western popular culture. The brothers try to steer Shahid away from Deedee, and Chad says “Get clean! Gimme those Prince records” (TBA:80).
Some of the characteristics of, and people’s reactions to, both Prince and Madonna can be mapped onto Shahid and Deedee. All four perform and politicise their sexuality. Like Prince, Shahid identifies as “half black and half white ... feminine but macho too”. He enjoys Deedee making-up his face. She does this to the sound of Madonna’s song “What are you looking at?” from her CD, Vogue. They have sex and simulate pornography. Like Madonna, Deedee, in the narrator's words, turns herself into pornography for Shahid. However, she does so “without losing her soul” (TBA:119). It is a sublime combination of mimicry of pornography and eros. She represents herself as pure representation. They both mimic the patriarchal ideal of woman, thus mocking what Tania Modleski (1991:155) refers to as the law of gender itself. Shahid sees Deedee as a street-wise woman who turns both academic and bedroom culture into exciting popular culture. This parallels the way Shahid eventually finds his identity reflected in popular culture as fragmented. Just as Madonna has a large female following in the male-dominated musical press (Chambers 1986:176) so too does Deedee have a large female following in male-dominated academia. Deedee’s “groupies” are devoted, “dressing as she did and studying her as if she were Madonna” (TBA:167), continuing this chain of simulation. In representing herself as male desire, Deedee also performs representation and sex as politics. Just as Deedee performs pornography for Shahid as a sign of radical sexual freedom, so too does Rosie, in the film Sammy and Rosie Get Laid, perform her thesis on kissing, in front of her husband and father-in-law, who had just arrived from Pakistan, and with Danny Victoria, whom she had just met. This frames their sexual encounter later in the
film, when Rosie, in make-up, Madonna-like bustier and black stockings, kisses and licks Victoria from above, explaining her preference for a "hard" tongue. Thus she performs pornographic tropes, expressing her desire in terms of phallic power.

While Shahid admires Deedee, the Islamicists feel threatened by her overt liberation politics, especially as the narrative describes her attempts to discuss "the book" in class when the fatwa is pronounced. Chad says "One of our girls was twisted against the truth by the post-modernists" (29). The Islamicists accuse Deedee of "taking lovers among the Afro-Caribbean and Asian students. ... The college knows she is having it away with two Rastamen. For political reasons she selects only black or Asian lovers now" (TBA:228). Tahira, one of the group of Islamicists, adjusts her scarf and says "Our people have always been sexual objects for the whites. No wonder they hate our modesty" (TBA:228). Bell hooks (1992) explains how Madonna appropriates black culture as a sign of radical chic and then repressively exploits it. Hooks says that Madonna's envy of blackness is part of her imitation of, fascination for, flirtation with, and envy of phallic power, specifically white phallic power. To put it simply, she is seen to dominate people of colour and white working-class women. She portrays marginalised groups as "defective" and then proceeds to dominate them. Arguing against claims that Madonna performs a strong feminist message of sexual liberation, hooks (1992:163-164) says that Madonna's work "was not a display of feminist power, this was the same old phallic nonsense, with white pussy at the centre". While Madonna apparently aligns herself with the repressed, her subject position is always constructed as that of the "quintessential 'white girl'" (hooks 1992:159).
The Islamicists see Deedee as quintessentially white and repressive. Hooks asks if Madonna is plantation mistress or soul sister. Although Deedee presents herself as soul sister, the Islamicists clearly see her as plantation mistress. While Shahid is impressed with Deedee’s knowledge and experience of “what his mother called ‘wrong things’, pop music and drugs” (TBA:56), the Islamicists see her in the same way that hooks sees Madonna. Hooks (1992:161) says that Madonna perceives male stars like Prince to be the standard against which she measures herself and hopes to transcend. However it is Shahid who sees Deedee as a strong, liberated, exciting woman, against which he measures himself. The Islamicists refer to her as a “pornographic priestess” (TBA:228). By referring to her as pornographic, the fundamentalists are exposing their own masturbatory fantasies. But when she offers herself explicitly as pornography to Shahid it is a simulation, like Madonna’s public simulation of sex, that makes their own private sex exciting.

Kureishi represents this Islamic rejection of pop culture and postmodernity as something that is founded on a rejection of Western imperialism. However, although fundamentalist sloganeering seems to offer an account of imperialism, it offers no theoretical perspective on the ways in which differences are constructed and provides no basis for a political practice that might negotiate those differences. Chad asks “Has she said why our beliefs are always inferior to hers and yet she lectures everyone about equality?” (TBA:229). After describing why they are offended by Deedee and her insistence on discussing “the book”, the group becomes violent. That is the only solution offered. At that point Shahid decides to leave them. The brotherhood’s reaction to Deedee’s attitude to “the book” is very
much like Akbar S. Ahmed’s (1992) defence of the aggressive responses to “the book” and its author, as mentioned in Chapter Four. Ahmed (1992:169) writes that “No Muslim could condone or be comfortable with the insulting manner in which the Prophet, his family and some of the holiest names in early Islam were depicted”. Chad says “that book been around too long without action. He insulted us all - the prophet, the prophet’s wives, his whole family. It’s sacrilege and blasphemy. Punishment is death” (TBA:169). This discussion of “the book” and what Deedee Osgood represents to Muslims occurs on the day of the demonstrations against, and the public burning of, the book. That morning she holds up a copy of “the book” in class and wants to discuss it. Desks are thumped until she can no longer conduct the class. The Islamicists see it as “Democracy in action ... we have to be listened to. Our voices suppressed by Osgood types with the colonial mentality. To her we coolies, not cool” (TBA:217). When Deedee tries shouting Riaz down at a public gathering, he says “Are the white supremacists going to lecture us on democracy this afternoon? Or will they permit us, for once, to practice it?” (TBA:224).

Kureishi explores these problems, of the apparently irreconcilable differences between Islam and postmodernity, through Shahid’s dilemma: “He wanted to appear neutral but knew that wasn’t possible. ... He was someone who couldn’t join in, couldn’t let himself go” (TBA:225). Shahid is unable to remain neutral in this increasingly polarised world (Stacia 1997). Akbar S. Ahmed (1992:171) writes of his own position, as perceived by Muslims through the mass media, that “In this atmosphere, even to hint a dispassionate analysis of the situation was to
risk being labelled disloyal to the cause, a traitor to the community”. When Shahid sees them burn the book, “He wanted to crawl back to his room, slam the door and sit down with a pen; that was how he would reclaim himself. This destruction of a book - a book which was a question - had embodied an attitude to life which he had to consider” (TBA:227). That question, the central question in *The Satanic Verses*, is “What is the opposite of faith? Not disbelief. Too final, certain, closed. Itself a kind of belief. Doubt” (TSV:92). And that question is integral to the question that punctuates *The Satanic Verses*: What kind of idea are you? How do you treat your enemies when you win? It was then that it began to occur to Shahid that

How could anyone confine themselves to one system or creed? Why should they feel they had to? There was no fixed self; surely our several selves melted and mutated daily? There had to be innumerable ways of being in the world. He would spread himself out, in his work and in love, following his curiosity (TBA:274).

The Muslim brothers find all art dangerous, especially fiction and popular music, claiming that it corrupts and thus leads to amorality and to drugs, and so to complete destruction. But they also fear the flattening, or deculturing effect of Western imperialism. They fully understand what is going on but will not admit any criticism of or deviation from their own orthodoxy. In his argument against the Western mass media, Ahmed (1992:177) says that many Muslims react to self-styled radical scholars in a paranoid and hysterical way, seeing the West as a force whose sole purpose is to dominate, subvert, and subjugate them. This sort of occidentalism derives almost entirely from movies, television, and the tabloid press which portray stereotypes. One such stereotype is of “Western women as
characterized with their legs wide open, waiting for sex on car bonnets” (Ahmed 1992:178). This is the sort of stereotype through which Deedee is interpreted through by the Islamic brotherhood. Kureishi does not shy away from or merely react to such stereotypes. For example, Deedee tells Shahid that she likes to masturbate while reading Crash, James Ballard’s (1973) novel that depicts precisely the above⁷. However, Deedee’s performance of pornography is, like Ballard’s (and Cronenberg’s), a simulation, so that is both is and is not pornography.

Kureishi (like Ballard) probes the meanings and experiences of pornography as an expression of postmodernity. As pointed out in Chapter Four, it is in the blurring of the boundaries between fact and fiction, eros and the sacred, that desire is located. So too in The Black Album is it in the blurring of the boundaries between the “fact” of the sexual encounter between Shahid and Deedee, and the “fictions” of pop culture that their desire is located. The sexual relationship between Shahid and Deedee is very political. They both push experience until it overflows, like popular culture itself, with its promise of “something more” (Chambers 1986:177), especially in context of “gender-benders” like Prince and the explicit iconography of Madonna. By scrutinising the furore around The Satanic Verses in context of these two icons of pop, The Black Album explores power and pornography. However, it does not represent pornography as always already phallic power, but rather as a mode of playing with and thus subverting that power. It shows that deadly violence, as in the fatwa and the mood for violence it invited, is part of legitimate violence (like “good sex”) (Lesley Stern 1982). The Black Album
shows how attitudes to violence and attitudes to sex are not unrelated. The Islamic Brothers in *The Black Album* seek to repress sexuality by repressing pop music, and they seek to control politics by controlling what is studied, read, and discussed. The Islamic Brothers in *The Black Album* are anti-intellectual, and Shahid is an aspiring intellectual.

MORE SATANIC VERSES

Ayesha, the butterfly prophetess in *The Satanic Verses*, says that revelation comes to her as “The archangel sings to me ... to the tunes of popular hit songs” (TSV:497). As mentioned in Chapter Four, Ayesha, in all her manifestations in *The Satanic Verses*, is comfortable with eros and is prepared to surrender everything to what she believes in. So too does Deedee. And just as the Imam in *The Satanic Verses* fears and loathes female sexuality, as epitomised in Ayesha, so too do the Islamic brothers fear and loathe Western liberalism, popular culture, and feminist, postmodernist ideologies, as epitomised in Deedee Osgood. They see Shahid’s relationship with Deedee as his moral and political downfall.

Not only can Shahid and Deedee be mapped onto Prince and Madonna, they can also be mapped onto Salman Rushdie’s collection of Prophets and anti-Prophets, and Ayeshas as saints, goddesses and whores. Shahid begins his career in versifying when he teaches himself to typewrite at the age of fifteen:

To increase his speed, he copied passages from his favourite writers: Chandler, Dostoevsky, Hunter S. Thompson. When he grew weary of keeping the place, he altered their words and had their characters do
what he required. On Papa’s notepaper he began writing stories
(TBA:72).

His first story was “Paki Wog Fuck Off Home” which was about his experiences at
school. His mother was outraged and “Papa asked why he had started writing
‘such damn bloody things’” (TBA:75). Thus Shahid reminisces as he starts work
on transcribing Riaz’s verses, “A Heretical Artist”. When Shahid first met Riaz, he
asked Shahid to type out his poetry, saying “It’s God’s work”. Shahid comments:
“With your name on the title-page”. To which Riaz beams “Yes ... I am entirely to
blame”. Later, when Shahid “began to type Riaz’s words ... staring at the screen
[he] couldn’t avoid falling into a dream-like state”. It was in a dream-like state that
the Prophet heard God’s words, or verses, through the Angel Gabriel. Thus
Kureishi parodies (just as Salman Rushdie does in The Satanic Verses) how some
of the verses the Prophet apparently heard were from Satan, rather than God. As
explained in the previous Chapter, the authority of Islam depends on the authority
of the Book, the Koran, the sacred verses, and the Prophet. And any attempt to
doubt, question, or tamper with the text itself is seen as a serious transgression.
Shahid’s tampering with Riaz’s verses is seen as a transgression against the author
as a godlike figure. One of Shahid’s gravest sins was to vulgarise the holy man’s
verses. Shahid agrees to and at first does not have time to type Riaz’s poetry, as
he meets and spends time with Deedee. However, when he does begin, he plays
with it, allowing the voices of popular culture and his new passion for Deedee to
become part of his transcription of Riaz’s verses.

He had begun typing Riaz’s work in good faith. But there were certain
words, then phrases and verses, he couldn’t bring himself to transcribe.
Once he’d begun not-transcribing, he’d got carried away. He’d been
enjoying himself with Deedee; it seemed natural to express the puzzle of this wonder (TBA:234).

Chad, who is sent to collect the poetry, is outraged at this discovery. Shahid says “I was playing - playing with words and ideas”. Chad replies “some things ain’t funny”. And Shahid says “Usually they’re the funniest” (TBA:235). That is why Salman Rushdie got into so much trouble with The Satanic Verses, for doubting everything and playing with ideas, especially those that are deemed to be sacred. Gibreel Farishta, in The Satanic Verses, dreams and listens, waiting for revelation, and ends up wondering: What kind of idea am I? He wonders if the three new female angels, Lat, Manat, and Uzza are really divine. As Shahid toils over Riaz’s verses he reflects that

Writing could be as easy as dreaming ... When it dried up, he found it best to wait, and it would begin again. ... How come, when he read the words over, they were only a muffled echo of what he wanted to make sharp and clear? Would it ever improve? Was he fooling himself, should he give up? Surely Prince, from whom music gushed without respite, never felt like this? (TBA:148).

Just as Gibreel does not know if he is sleeping, dreaming, or hallucinating, so too does Shahid dream, write, fantasise, create. For a break, Shahid looks at New Directions, a pornographic magazine, and while masturbating he wonders why “the ironically bawdy Thousand and One Nights, full of farts, impotence and trickiness, such banal tales were riveting. Maybe pornography presented a complete and uplifting adventure, like the world in children’s books” (TBA:149). Thus Kureishi plays with a classical orientalist text so as to reclaim it. Rushdie also uses The Thousand and One Nights (which is the same collection of stories as The Arabian Nights) as an example of the terrible seriousness of story-telling; just like Sheherazade,
one must get it right each time. But Rushdie also tells stories for pleasure and fun. Shahid realises why Riaz would not find his prank funny: "his laughter was always astringent and sardonic ... Like pornography, religion couldn't admit the comic" (TBA:150). The Imam in The Satanic Verses also has no sense of humour, and mistakes hate for love.

Kureishi, like Rushdie and Mernissi, criticises repression that is carried out in the name of any single, narrow, exclusionary practice. Also like Rushdie and Mernissi, Kureishi defends religious practices that enhance positive social values. One of Deedee’s fears of the Islamic brotherhood is that “They’re devoid of doubt” (TBA:110). Yet Shahid reminds her that they, the Pakistanis, are the victims and the brotherhood is just trying to protect them. An example of how Shahid is open to newness can be seen in how he describes a visit to a mosque:

Men of so many types and nationalities - Tunisians, Indians, Algerians, Scots, French - gathered there, chatting ... Here race and class barriers had been suspended. ... The atmosphere was uncompetitive, peaceful, meditative (TBA 131-132).

However, when Shahid left the mosque and stepped out into the London street he saw "a sharp transition; he found it difficult to reconcile what went on in the mosque with the bustling diversity of the city" (TBA:133). This theme of London as attractive because of its jostling diversities as a postcolonial postmodern metropolis is found in varying degrees in all of Kureishi’s representations. His representations of place are shown through relationships of people with each other and how they “world” where they are.
COUPLEDOM

Kureishi's films and novels also look at legitimate and transgressive coupledom. Transgressions are represented mainly through miscengenation and the crossing and blurring of class boundaries. There are two arresting filmic scenes that synthesise this in two of Kureishi's films, My Beautiful Laundrette and Sammy and Rosie Get Laid. The scene in My Beautiful Laundrette is just before the grand opening of the laundrette. While Omar and Johnny are making love in the office, we see behind them, through a two-way mirror, Nasser and his mistress, Rachel, dancing and kissing. Both couples are transgressing social codes, but in different ways. Questions of miscengenation and unfaithfulness apply to both couples but they raise different social issues. And also the effect of the two-way mirror is inverted. Instead of the position behind the mirror being one of voyeuristic power, those behind it are seen by the camera, from behind, and those in front of the mirror are not hiding anything at all. Neither couple needs to see an idealised reflection of itself. On either side of the mirror we see these two couples invert what Ann Laura Stoler (1991:53) calls "the sexual interface of the colonial encounter". Although the two Pakistani men assume the coloniser's position, albeit in an inverted way, taking on "native" lovers, exploiting the local business environment, and setting their own agenda, they are still not so very powerful. In Thatcherite England their brown bodies mark them as diasporic subjects, their sexual activities are clandestine, and their success in business largely depends on coercive and illegal practices.

Nasser's family turns a blind eye to the young men's homoeroticism. Spivak reduces it to "nothing more than all of that Greek stuff when boys could be boys
and so on" (1989a:82) and all that was already established by "all that Greek crap"(84). Kureishi says that he "hadn't set out to explore issues around gayness ...
I preferred just to take it for granted, the way we do in our lives now" (Interview with Jane Root, 1985). The above "we" can be either homosexuals or heterosexuals, or it could encompass both, thus loosening up the notion of a collective "we". This "we" can be seen as a non-sovereign self that is always being displaced and aware of the other in itself (Bhabha 1990). Spivak's scathing reference to (Michel Foucault's) "boys being boys" is interesting in context of what Kureishi himself writes about his work. He writes that "people always think that the taboos in British society are to do with death and sex, but really they are to do with money and thinking. ... In England, people talk about their sex lives all the time but no one discusses political issues" (1986). Foucault writes that "what is peculiar to modern societies, in fact, is not that they consigned sex to a shadow existence, but that they dedicated themselves to speaking of it ad infinitum, while exploiting it as the secret" (1976:35). While we may think that we are sexually liberated because we talk about sex, we are actually made to talk about nothing but sex. Sex is now regulated through public discourses. And, while homosexuality is evident in Omar's relationship with Johnny, it is Johnny's past involvement with neo-fascists that bothers the family. Johnny is regarded by Omar's father as a pariah. It was Johnny's presence in the race riots that contributed to Omar's mother throwing herself on the train track (like the totally disillusioned Anna Karenina); the same train track that took Tania away from Nasser (a move Anna Karenina should have made when she was younger), while he was visiting Omar's Papa.
Instead of the gayness in *My Beautiful Laundrette* being pivotal, it is the patriarch's white English mistress, Rachel, that presents a threat to the status quo. Faith in the family ideal/ideal family is not the issue. Tania had said to Omar "Families. I hate families". And then at the opening of the laundrette, Tania says to Rachel "I don't mind my father having a mistress, but I don't like women who live off men. ... that's a pretty disgusting parasitical thing, isn't it?" But Tania has double standards. Ironically, she is prepared to marry Omar and use his money so as to escape her father's family. She says "I want to leave home. I need to break away. You'll have to help me financially". Despite what Papa tells her, that "you've got to study ... for us education is power", money rather than knowledge is power in Thatcherite England. Salim says "... we're nothing without money". But it is precisely their apparent difference that keeps them locked into diasporic conditions, and that is why education does not necessarily offer upward mobility. In *The Black Album* the two main academics are white while Shahid, despite having made it to university, betrays the fact that he does not know the discursive rules of that particular cultural field by addressing his teacher as "Miss" when he first meets her.

The most significant parts of Shahid's education occurred through his political and social involvement with the Islamic brotherhood, and through his social and sexual involvement with Deedee.

**COLLECTIVE REPRESENTATIONS**

All of Kureishi's films and novels work as collective representations, so that finally we're not really sure who the central character is (Spivak 1989a). Nor are we really sure about the boundaries that demarcate one text from another, as the meta-
fiction grows. However, Leonard Quart writes that Kureishi and Frears, the director of both Laundrette and Sammy and Rosie, "consciously avoided allowing their films to become either politically didactic or schematic" (in Dixon 1994:242). While the same characters can shift from being exploited to exploiters, and the same situation can move from being advantageous to dangerous, Kureishi's films and novels do repeat themes, but they also elaborate each repetition enough to avoid being schematic. They can be seen as didactic, but that does not detract from their capacity to question and provoke, and especially to entertain.

Spivak explains how Sammy and Rosie is about the variety of alliances and their fragility. She looks at this in a few broad themes: race, postcoloniality, and being gay, and how they are different experiences in the USA and the UK. While the experiences vary in each environment there are still issues that are fairly universal. Spivak warns that it is difficult to make clear, especially in the United States, "that the question of race and post-coloniality are not identical" (1989a:80). The racial question is not just one of histories, representation, and power relations between identifiably different social groups, but it is always undisputably one of chromatics. In Sammy and Rosie Danny Victoria epitomises the race/class/sex nexus.

Spivak cites the way Danny Victoria is used in Sammy and Rosie as a "refferent for radical innocence" (1989a:85). He is the "authentic" black (African) and becomes the lover of Rosie, "the British ideological subject of radicalism" (Spivak 1989a:81). Also, the person playing the part of Danny Victoria is Roland Gift, the lead singer of the band "Fine Young Cannibals". So, as the referent for blackness, Danny Victoria is the referent for a blackness that has already represented itself as
part of postmodern metropolitan popular culture. Although Rosie is white and bourgeois one cannot help but like her. Spivak observes that Rosie loves all the "right" people: lesbians, blacks, Pakistanis, the poor, all the disenfranchised. She does all the "right" things: she is a social worker, is downwardly mobile, sexually liberated, expresses her (collective) social consciousness, exposes Rafi's corrupt past, and so on. Deedee Osgood, in The Black Album, is also "the British ideological subject of radicalism". She also is white and bourgeois and takes on a non-white lover. Deedee, like Rosie, is additionally a postmodern intellectual who can afford to be recklessly exploratory, sexually and politically. In short, they can be everything that the non-white women around them are not. In Rosie's case, the non-white women around her become somewhat empowered (learning about contraception, expressing lesbian love) in her world, in her home, through her benevolence. Deedee also benevolently shares her world; she shares her house with students. Both Deedee and Rosie appear to be liberated from the constraints of conservative forces around them; however, both have male lovers and both perform the tropes of male desire.

Spivak's discussion on lesbianism and gaiety clearly indicates her own preference for Sammy and Rosie over Laundrette. She says that "lesbians play a role which is much more than the gay couple" (1989a:83). But when Danny Victoria introduces himself to Rafi (and the audience) he says that "my friends call me Victoria". So Rosie's affair with him is, in a way, a symbolic lesbian affair and this suggests that although her affiliation with lesbians is politically correct it is fairly tokenistic. So while lesbianism in Sammy and Rosie Get Laid is one of many elements, is it really as dominant as Spivak implies it is? What about the interesting relationship
between Sammy and Rosie? Or Rafi and Rachel? Or Rosie and Victoria? In
*Sammy and Rosie*, Danny Victoria and Rosie are like a pair of brackets or
parentheses between which many of the other characters perform in a sliding scale
of radicalisms. And their coupledom is an allegorical extension of race and class.
But their union could also be read as either ironic or simply naïve. Their union and
happiness is smooth, wrinkle- and wart-free, while the union of Johnny and Omar
in *Laundrette* is contentious, not because they are gay, but because Johnny has a
fascist working-class background. And if, as Spivak reminds us, imperialism itself
was marked by class then the subversiveness of Omar’s triumph in having his white
working-class lover clean his floors is not at all matched by Rosie becoming
Victoria’s lover, as she has to convince him that she is ideologically radical enough
for him. In the *Laundrette* days, when there was “money in muck” (Nasser), you
could get rich and powerful in either Pakistan or England. There was hope. But if
you are black, then it is a different story. *Sammy and Rosie* is about the futility of
middle-class whites trying to be sympathetic towards the disenfranchised, and the
futility of the disenfranchised trying to "make it" in white society. Sammy is an
accountant, he works for artists, musicians, discjockeys, "the cream of the scum for
Sammy". Rosie is a social worker, she sees the street riots as "an affirmation of the
human spirit" (Sammy). They can afford to be sympathetic.

... WHILE LONDON BURNS

As noted in Chapter Four, James Baldwin’s reference to “the fire next time” is
never far from the many images of London burning with race riots. As long as
Sammy and Rosie's flat is a safe haven from the fires of destruction, it is shown
with soft classical Western music. This is starkly contrasted with the noisy,
menacing, crowded streets that are literally on fire. Even out in public, during the riots\textsuperscript{9}, Sammy and Rosie walk around as if they have an invisible protective barrier around them. They are never harmed. But whatever Sammy and especially the caring Rosie do, London still burns while they "get laid". They care about each other and social issues, but they don't let anything interfere with "getting laid". Stephen Frears visually reinforces the importance of coupledom with a horizontally split screen view of the three couples, each with someone else's partner, "getting laid". With a Rastafarian group singing the Motown hit, "My Girl", as the screen splices with the three couples, the whole picture turns red. They burn with sexuality and London burns with disorder. London burns not only with the fires of destruction, but also with the fires of passion. Kureishi's London is not, as Aijaz Ahmad claims, "a terrifying vision of inner-city life in England" (1992:176). It is the passionate and disorderly London that Sammy and Rosie love\textsuperscript{10}. But finally, after Rafi's suicide, they do not find passion "out there", in the streets and in other lovers. Spivak reads the ending of the film "not as a declaration for the act of heterosexual love but rather as a premonition that the idea of such a coupleship is defunct" (1989a:85). However, the film ends with them in each others arms, grieving. The complexity of Sammy and Rosie's relationship is mirrored in the social situations around them. Although she is politically correct and he is a successful accountant, they both still finally cannot escape the system. By then they are part of that system. They are implicated in the wrongs they are trying to right. Ideals are messy.

Relationships are also messy. For instance, Rafi's relation to London changes from "throwing anti-colonial bricks" at Alice's house in his youth, to becoming an
Anglophile, and then to returning to Pakistan to become powerful and wealthy. Now that he is at risk, he is wanted for the part he played in a very corrupt government, he romanticises London as "the centre of civilisation". London is being fire-bombed by its own white people. Victoria explains that "we have our own domestic colonialism here because they don't let us run our own communities". What distinguishes "us" from "them" is power and money, not just race. In his book *My Beautiful Laundrette and The Rainbow Sign* (1986) Hanif Kureishi refers to an affluent and powerful "English-speaking international bourgeoisie" in Karachi that he got to know on his first visit to Pakistan. He writes about the closeness and the distance of the English and the Pakistani societies, as Pakistan is redolent with monuments, Oxford accents, English books and newspapers, alcohol and videos, and England is full of Pakistanis. As Cherry says in *Laundrette*:

"every day in Karachi, every day your other uncles and cousins are at our house for bridge, booze and VCR. ... Oh God, I'm so sick of hearing about these in-betweens. People should make up their minds where they are."

As if it were that simple. English, as an active agent of imperialism, was resisted, for instance, in the nationalist movement in Egypt. Early this century English and French were being replaced with Arabic in schools and universities as a part of the Arabic nationalist movements. What has developed from this pan-Arabic movement was a parallel Islamist movement. And often Islamicisation has meant Arabisation in places like Pakistan. Kureishi writes:

"... the news was now being read in Arabic, a language few people in Pakistan understood. Someone explained to me that this was because"
the Koran was in Arabic, but everyone else said it was because General Zia wanted to kiss the arses of the Arabs (1986:16-17).

Kureishi laments what has been done to Pakistan in the name of Islam during the authoritarian 1980s. Ironically, it was during this period of conspicuous nationalism that patriots were going abroad. During his visit to Pakistan, Rahman, a friend of Kureishi’s uncle’s explains:

I tell you, this country is being sodomized by religion. It is even beginning to interfere with the making of money. And now we are embarked on this dynamic regression, you must know, it is obvious, Pakistan has become a leading country to go away from. Our patriots are abroad. We despise and envy them. For the rest of us, our class, your family, we are in Hobbes’s state of nature: insecure, frightened. We cling together out of necessity. ... we are taking a great leap backwards (Kureishi 1986:18).

This splintering off of national, civil, religious, and international identity provides the background for Kureishi’s work on class, culture, and identity. In My Beautiful Laundrette Papa, the now derelict alcoholic intellectual says to Nasser, the unscrupulous businessman: "This damn country has done us in. That’s why I am like this. We should be there. Home." Nasser replies: "But that country has been sodomized by religion. It is beginning to interfere with the making of money. Compared with everywhere, it is a little heaven here." This sort of ruthless business ethic also appears in The Black Album. Shahid’s father was a self-made business success as a travel agent. He felt powerful in his role as an agent that moves people all over the place, especially between Karachi and London. Neither of his two sons joined the business for long. Shahid had intellectual aspirations, while Chile was a vacuous, crass, flash “play-boy”, until he was ruined by drug
abuse. However, the Pakistani business community was welcomed by the exploitative capitalist Thatcherite culture. The relationship between ruthless business practices, or the making of money, and race and class, is explored by Kureishi in the ways he represents inner city London and its suburbs.

ENGLISH SUBURBIA

Kureishi's writing has an interesting relationship with myths of English/ness and suburbia. These myths are comically explored in *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990). It is set in inner London and its suburbs, and New York. It deals with Englishness and being Indo-Anglian in Thatcherite England. It opens with:

> My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost. I am often considered to be a funny kind of Englishman, a new breed as it were, having emerged from two old histories. But I don't care - Englishman I am (though not proud of it), from the South London suburbs and going somewhere. Perhaps its the odd mixture of continents and blood, of here and there, of belonging and not, that makes me restless and easily bored. Or perhaps it was being brought up in the suburbs that did it (3).

The opening sentence, ending with the poignant "almost", declares that being born and bred somewhere is not really enough to give you a sense of belonging to a place. It is not enough when you have an Indian name and, as we find out later, dark skin and frizzy hair. Throughout the novel, Karim tries to understand whether it is his Indianness, and all the racism that he experiences, or the dreariness and petty materialism of the suburbs where, "it was said that when people drowned they saw not their lives but their double-glazing flashing before them" (*The Buddha of Suburbia* [referred to as TBS below]:23), that made him so unsatisfied and restless. Karim's father, Haroon, also referred to as "God" by Karim, is also
dissatisfied and restless. At first it is not even imaginable for him to actually leave his histrionic teenage sons and dreary wife, who is "only English", so he leaves them imaginatively, culturally, symbolically. He reinvents himself so as to appeal to Eva, the arty, hip, English woman who deludes herself that she is not suburban, who would deliver him from suburbia. Kureishi sees suburbia as being stifling and petty. Yet he is just as critical of people like Eva who “didn’t see there could be nothing more suburban than suburbanites repudiating themselves” (TBS:134). Karim looks at the thinness of suburban materialism. He comments that

This was the English passion, not for self-improvement or culture or wit, but for DIY, Do It Yourself, for bigger and better houses with more mods and cons, the painstaking accumulation of comfort and, with it, status - the concrete display of earned cash. Display was the game (TBS:75).

Conspicuous consumption was a national obsession, or a form of nationalism. So while Karim was sceptical of Haroun’s, his father’s, instant Buddhism, or self-orientalisation, it was better than any available alternatives. Haroon reverses the exploitive dynamic of orientalism, flaunting the exoticised differences attributed to him (Morley & Robbins 1992), offering Buddhist philosophical babble to the bored, deracinated, ageing hippy English. Eva invites Haroon to address a group of interested friends on Oriental philosophy. She finds Haroon and Karim "so exotic, so original". During the first “performance”, while Haroon is taking the group through yoga and meditation, Karim is upstairs making love to Eva’s son, Charlie. Karim desired Charlie because he wanted to be him. After their love-making in the attic, Karim wanders into the garden only to find his father and Eva making love. He questions "Was I conceived like this, I wondered, in the suburban night air, to the wailing of Christian curses from the mouth of a renegade Muslim
masquerading as a Buddhist?" (TBS:16). Haroon's revived sexuality with Eva is paralleled with Karim's exploratory sexuality with Charlie. Karim says

     my father ... was so terrified that I might turn out to be gay that he could never bring himself to mention the matter. In his Muslim mind it was bad enough being a woman; being a man and denying your male sex was perverse and self-destructive (TBS:174).

Then he says "Indian men have lower centres of gravity than Accidental men. ... We live from the correct place ... From the guts, not from the head" (TBS:193). This substitution of "Accidental" for "Occidental" describes Western masculinity as random, one of nature's accidents. But he is also satirising racist discourse that says that white men are this, black men are that, Indian men are the other. Haroon is sure of what he is and he knows how to exploit what others think he is.

Haroon's masquerades were easy. In the 1960s a significant aspect of bourgeois hippydom was a naive Indian mysticism, expressed in sitar music, sandalwood Buddhas, brass ashtrays and elephants, and going barefoot. Although Karim sees through his father's self-orientalisation, he does not condemn it as phoney, but finds it amusing. He observes that "He was certainly exotic, probably the only man in southern England at that moment (apart, possibly from George Harrison) wearing a red and gold waistcoat and Indian pyjamas" (TBS:31). In a newspaper article "far east, far out" (Sydney Morning Herald December 29 1994) Salman Rushdie describes how, in "beads and bedspread jackets. I started nodding my head a lot, wisely. In the quest for cool, it helped that I was Indian". But being cool and Indian was limited for Karim to knowing the names of the Maharishi and Ravi Shankar. For his first night out with his newly mystical Dad, Karim wore
"turquoise flared trousers, a blue and white flower-patterned see-through shirt, blue suede boots with Cuban heels, and a scarlet Indian waistcoat with gold stitching around the edges" (TBS:6). These re-creations of 1960s hippy style show how integral tropes of Indianness were to the emergent Western counter-culture. But while the tropes, as cultural objects, were easily absorbed into style, the actual people, as national subjects or as objects of desire, were not always so assimilable.

With his growing awareness of being "Indian", Karim reflects that

in some way these were my people, and (that) I'd spent my life denying or avoiding that fact. I felt ashamed and incomplete at the same time, as if half of me were missing, and as if I'd been colluding with my enemies, those whites who wanted Indians to be like them. ... He [his father] wasn't proud of his past, but he wasn't unproud of it either; it just existed, and there wasn't any point in fetishizing it, as some liberals and Asian radicals liked to do. So if I wanted the additional personality bonus of an Indian past, I would have to create it (TBS:212-213).

Karim is acknowledging the paradox that although ethnic or racial authenticity is a bogus, it is nevertheless in those terms that we identify each other. Towards the end of the narrative Karim begins to understand and accept his father, who made him feel that "You couldn't let the ex-colonialists see you on your knees, for that was where they expected you to be. They were exhausted now; their Empire was gone; their day was done and it was our turn" (TBS:250). However, it takes some time for Karim to work out who he is and what he wants, just like Shahid in The Black Album and Saladin Chamcha in The Satanic Verses.

The process of a protagonist finding out who he is and what he wants occurs in context of what is politically and socially opportune. A backlash against successful "minorities" is flagged in Buddha, as Karim gains fame as an actor. Boyd, a fellow
actor says to Karim "If I weren't white and middle class I'd have been in Pyke's (a famous director) show now. Obviously mere talent gets you nowhere these days. Only the disadvantaged are going to succeed in seventies' England" (TBS:165). This statement captures the backlash of being young, white, middle-class, and male. Spivak explains how instead of saying that one cannot speak because one is white etcetera "why not develop a certain degree of rage against the history that has written such an abject script for you that you are silenced?" (in Harasym [ed.] 1990:62). Dr Andrew Brownlow (The Black Album) is white, middle-class, and male, though no longer so young. He symbolically repudiates his privilege by supporting the underprivileged. But when his work is described by the Islamicists who follow him, they say that they like him because he turned against his own privileged upper class origins and now helps them "the underprivileged niggers and wogs an' margin people". It is not clear if the Islamicists have taken on the same racist discourse under which they suffer or if they see through Brownlow's benevolence. Brownlow patronisingly pities the poor who live in what he sees as ugly squalor in the estates. However, Riaz, the leader of the group says that these people have more than their "brothers in the Third World, as you like to call most people other than you" (TBA:95). They witness the end of Communism as the Berlin wall falls, and bemoan Thatcherism as "extremity and ingratitude and hard-heartedness". They fear the end of religion with the death of God.

CONCLUSION

The Black Album is a lively, contemporary elaboration of a vision of life in London that Kureishi began a decade ago with My Beautiful Laundrette. This Chapter showed how each of his texts have repeated and elaborated concepts like hybridity,
diaspora, and home. They do this through problematising the concepts that stand behind them: race, culture, and sexuality. He satirises both the English and the Pakistanis and explores those who live on the so-called margins, the disenfranchised and young people like himself, who are trying to create their own rich, complex, contemporary cultures.

Akbar S. Ahmed (1992) argues that from the Gulf War in 1990 to the ongoing fatwa against Salman Rushdie (since 1989) Islam has, throughout the 1990s, been constructed as a "criminal" culture. Ahmed (1992:5) asks how a religious civilisation like Islam, which relies on traditions, copes in an age which self-consciously puts aside the past and exults in diversity? He questions how European imperialism continues to affect Muslim culture and thinking. These are issues that Kureishi explores in his fiction. But Kureishi also turns the above questions around and explores how postmodern societies are being transformed by the diasporic phenomenon.

Benedict Anderson describes how exile and nation-statehood worked closely together, especially in the nineteenth century, to form new imagined homes and new organised, systematic deployment of powers and resources (1994: 315, 319-320). It has been the mass movement of people around the world that has given rise to either new and different cultural formations or old and frozen ideologies. Either way, exiles, immigrants, or expatriates who do look back must do so in the knowledge that physical alienation from "home" means that whatever is reclaimed is always a fiction, an imaginary homeland (Rushdie 1992:10). Rushdie writes that "(m)igrants must, of necessity, make a new imaginative relationship with the world,
because of the loss of familiar habitats” (1992:125). And the plural, hybrid, metropolitan results of such migrations must also necessarily make new imaginative relationships with the world. It is just as absurd for the old white English to hang on to their nostalgia for fixed, pure Englishness as it is for non-whites like Indians and Pakistanis to long for a pure, safe culture.

The next Chapter looks at how the central protagonist in Bharati Mukherjee’s novel, *Jasmine*, seeks to erase her own plurality or hybridity after migrating from India to America. She does indeed make a new imaginative relationship with the world, but it is a “melting pot” world that demands assimilation rather than diversity. *Jasmine* accepts those demands and tries to be American. For her, being American means not being Indian. *Jasmine*, repeats a contemporary globalist paradigm which both produces and consumes a world view that is split between a capitalist, democratic First World (the West) and a backward Third World (the East). Whereas Saladin Chamcha turns into a nightmare of the devil itself when he tries to be properly English, *Jasmine* continues to strive for the American dream. To Chamcha England was the real world. But it was based, like Mukherjee’s *Jasmine*’s fascination with late Victorian English canonical texts, on childhood fantasies of Proper England. The success of Chamcha’s mimicry of the English was largely illusory. So is *Jasmine*’s. However, *Jasmine* ends with *Jasmine* continuing to pursue the American Dream, even though it is clearly a nightmare.

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1 Hanif Kureishi and Jon Savage edited *The Faber Book of Pop* in 1996. In his review of both Kureishi’s *The Black Album* and *The Faber Book of Pop* Simon Hughes (1997) writes that “it is
through the medium of music each generation defines itself through the noise they make. In this progression, pop is usurped by rock which in turn is put down by punk until the whole thing explodes in a postmodern diaspora. ... Pop culture IS”.

2 The novel, The Buddha of Suburbia, was made into a film of the same name and released in 1996. The screenplay was written by Hanif Kureishi and Roger Mitchell. The director was Roger Mitchell. The film was screened in Australia at the Gay and Lesbian Film Festival and has not yet been released on video. Unless specified otherwise, I refer to the novel. If there is any ambivalence, then it is intended to refer to both the novel and the film. Any information about the film comes from Jayne Margetts (1997) internet review of the film.

3 "They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented" (Marx in Said 1978).

4 When I use "Asian", "Indian", "Pakistani", "African", or any hyphenated combinations, I refer to the subjects that are interpellated through the very discourses that racialise or ethnicise themselves and others. So too when I use "English" I refer to the subject position that coincides with nationalist visions of a hegemonic Englishness.

5 This information on The Beatles and Charles Manson is taken from Steve Turner’s (1996) A Hard Day’s Write and Vincent Bugliosi’s Helter Skelter.

6 Details of radical responses to the publication of The Satanic Verses are available in Appignanesi & Maitland’s book The Rushdie File (1989).

7 Crash was made into a film by David Cronenberg in 1996.

8 Ranelagh (1992) and Rex and Tomlinson (1979) provide historical information on those riots. In April 1981 there were street riots in Brixton against racism and poverty. In June and July 1981 there were riots in Toxteth, Manchester, Southall, Reading, Hull, Preson, and Brixton (again). Although these riots created (and reflected) an atmosphere of crisis, Thatcher remained unmoved. In 1983 there were more riots in Toxteth. These riots were at the culmination of many years of vilification and violence. A few notable instances are: in 1949 there was an attack by whites on a black men’s hostel in Deptford; in 1958 there were racial brawls in Nottingham; in 1958 white youths attacked blacks and their property in Notting Hill; in 1965 Ku-Klux-Klan groups were active in the Midlands and London; in 1970 there was an outbreak of “Paki bashing” in London; in 1976 and again in 1977 the Notting Hill carnival led to race riots.

9 Representative of the race riots in Brixton.

10 Similarly Salman Rushdie (1991:117) describes London as a place where the legacy of brutal actuality of British colonial imperialism is juxtaposed with some positive instances of what life can be like in parts of England:

This is England. Look at the bright illuminations and fireworks during the Hindu Festival of Lights, Diwali. Listen to the Muslim call to prayer, ‘Allah Akbar’, wafting down from the minaret of a Birmingham mosque. Visit the Ethiopian World Federation, which helps Handsworth Rastas ‘return’ to the land of Ras Tafari. These are English scenes now, English songs.

Rex and Tomlinson (1979) explain how the Handsworth area of Birmingham is an old white working-class area and is particularly interesting to look at because it had become a “black” residential area with mostly West Indian immigrants from the 1950s. By the 1970s Handsworth became regarded by the white population as a “problem area”.

PhD Thesis 1997

Maria Degabriele
In *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* Sammy says to his father (who despairs at what has become of England) "None of us are English. We're Londoners, you see". His father does not see. *The Buddha of Suburbia* ends with:

And so I sat in the centre of this old city that I loved, which itself sat at the bottom of a tiny island. I was surrounded by people I loved, and I felt happy and miserable at the same time...
CHAPTER SIX

BHARATI MUKHERJEE'S JASMINE: NEO-ORIENTALISM

Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* is prefaced with a quote from James Gleick's *Chaos*:

The new geometry mirrors a universe that is rough, not rounded, scabrous, not smooth. It is a geometry of the pitted, pocked, and broken up, the twisted, tangled, and intertwined.

By aligning itself with chaos theory, there is a strong implication that *Jasmine* looks at life in terms of repetition and elaboration. Gleick describes how Mandelbrot found that the degree of irregularity in patterns remains constant over different scales, thus displaying "regular irregularity" (Gleick 1989:98). Chaos theory looks at nature and continues to find patterns that are both regular (recognisable, somewhat predictable) and irregular (odd, never absolutely predictable). My own application of some chaos theory to cultural productions (especially in Chapter Three) found that culture, as a dynamic process, is always changing (irregular) yet it necessarily always is produced, performed, consumed in particular political, historical, social, and economic contexts (regular). Like many other Mukherjee stories, *Jasmine* traces a life that changes through an individual's ruptures, not through changes that come about as consequential of political, historical, social, or economic specificities. In the same breath, as it were, Gleick (above) adds that "such odd shapes carry meaning". In other words, although this universe is rough and scabrous, such geometry still carries very strong and clear meanings.
Jasmine is particularly relevant to my thesis on postorientalism in that, because it is written in a post-Saidian, postcolonial, postmodern political and cultural environment, it promised to be another contemporary example of postorientalism. However, the story of Jasmine's life is the story of the American Dream: that anything is attainable; you can be anything you want to be in the New World. Such a romantic fiction ignores histories of colonisation, identity politics, and the effects of class and gender. It also ignores, as demonstrated in Chapter Three, that the so-called Third World's apparent desire for the American Dream is symptomatic of the legacy of colonisation. Jasmine's compliance as the exotic other is her ticket to the American Dream (Grewal in Nelson 1993:191). Grewal also writes that as the story develops, Mukherjee's Jasmine erases the colonial history, ethnic identity, race, and class of the immigrant woman as she is transformed, through romantic fantasy, from an Indian village girl to an American woman. Grewal adds more Gleick, in order to put Mukherjee's quote into a perspective that more accurately elaborates chaos theory:

The trajectory of a system may be chaotic but it is not arbitrary; it is always sensitive to the starting point of the system.

To repeat some of the points I made in Chapter Three, chaos theory does not throw out the idea of "process", rather it sees systems as being interconnected and nonlinear. It is not as if there is nothing but disorder, rather, there is order in chaos as dynamic systems influence each other. It will also be useful to refer again to Arjun Appadurai to the effect that global interactions are disjunctive and cultural formations are fractal and overlapping. I will apply these theories to Mukherjee's Jasmine to see if it is, indeed, affiliated with "the new geometry", or perhaps more closely affiliated with neocolonial history and geography.
Chaos theory looks at how minute alterations can cause enormous changes. The local and the global significantly influence each other. Grewal’s quote from Gleick (above) explains the Butterfly Effect: “sensitive dependence on initial conditions” (Gleick 1989:23). Mukherjee’s notion of chaos theory and the Butterfly Effect misses the point, as it were. Hanif Kureishi’s and Salman Rushdie’s fictions explore how newness enters the world. However, Mukherjee’s fiction repudiates the migrant, diasporic consciousness that negotiates cultures as a way of creating newness. Mukherjee’s narrative of change as fracture, dislocation, and finally assimilation, repeats (without much elaboration) the colonial master narrative of simple, inhuman geometries (to adapt Gleick’s words). Such shapes fail to resonate with the way culture organises itself: in order and disorder. Although Jasmine is, in parts, about large scale mass movements of peoples, it ultimately reinforces American cultural imperialism.

INTRODUCTION

Chapters Four and Five looked at the postcolonial, postmodern, postoriental condition, where protagonists survive once they have come to terms with their identities as fragmented. This Chapter will look at how Bharati Mukherjee’s Jasmine ignores the politics of multiplicity and fragmentation. Jasmine constructs neo-orientalist narratives of otherness. I will be using some of the theories of Aijaz Ahmad, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and various essays edited by Emmanuel Nelson to analyse Jasmine in context of postorientalism.

As mentioned earlier, the texts in this dissertation can be read contrapuntally (Said 1993:78-79). They can be read to see both what they claim and what they omit. That
is, what is omitted can be read in another, contrapuntal text. This sort of reading can take both the process of imperialism and resistance to it into account. To illustrate this point, Charlotte Bronte's reference to India in *Jane Eyre* is made because it is possible because of British power in India at that time, and not just because of Bronte's fancy (Said 1993:78).

Reference to *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations* is made in Mukherjee's *Jasmine* because of the profound influence of the English language in India. It also embodies the geographical and cultural movement of Jasmine from India to America, through English. However, on closer inspection, Mukherjee's Anglophilia looks more like a way out of identification with the so-called Third World: an imaginary place of poverty, illiteracy, ignorance, superstition, mindless factional violence, and so on. The Third World "poor" have what Albert Memmi (1965:107) calls "native languages" and the middle classes have "cultural languages". In context of *Jasmine*, one could reorder Memmi's classification to call the "cultural language" English. Jasmine's relentless drive for English/American (and that split/conflation is itself interesting) modernity is ruthless, often violent, and mostly mediated through men. In this Chapter I will look at how modernity and patriarchy are constructed in terms of each other in *Jasmine*.

The British Empire and the English language flourished in the nineteenth century with the establishment of different institutions, social movements, and increasing migration. The demography of urban centres is a direct result of these movements. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of high imperialism much of the world was colonised, nations were found and by the twentieth century many were finally
decolonised as they founded their own nationhood. Now, in the late twentieth century, so-called Western nations like America and England are having their histories articulated by immigrant, postcolonial voices, or by voices that are sensitive to the national others\(^2\). Those voices articulate a national and artistic identity that is multiple and fluid. Timothy Brennan refers to the United States of Mukherjee and the Britain of Rushdie as examples that have provided cosmopolitan challenges to national cultures (Brennan 1989:50). But while Rushdie has, indeed, challenged both British and Indian/Pakistani notions of national culture, Mukerjee has further reinscribed her urbane elitism and complicity with an imperialistic world view that constructs a modern, desirable America in relation to a backward repulsive India.

Brennan sees both Rushdie and Mukherjee as writers who “hover between borders” and, especially Mukherjee, write of “partial transfer” (Brennan 1989:33). I will argue that Mukherjee writes of her imaginary subaltern’s desire for complete, not partial, transfer or transformation of herself. Mukherjee’s narrative does not reflect on the global impact of colonisation. Rather, Jasmine simply does not like what she is born into and does anything to escape. Her escape or solution is into a deracinated romantic fantasy. Rather than contemplating the incompatibility of competing realities, as Rushdie does, Mukherjee’s Jasmine strives for one at the expense of the other.

Rushdie (1992:427) says that literature is a discursive place where “the struggle of languages can be acted out”. In Mukherjee’s writing there is no struggle of languages, but rather the only struggle taking place is to attain ever more “proper English” (Rushdie 1988), as the ultimate commodity. While Rushdie’s English contests who
has the power over the grand narrative (Rushdie 1992:432), Mukherjee’s English is
complicit with its power to dominate other narratives / narratives of otherness.

In referring to such writers as contributing to cosmopolitanism, Timothy Brennan
writes that it is different to the kind of cosmopolitanism Antonio Gramsci describes³.
Gramsci’s concerns are that the intellectuals whose voices come from Rome, the
ultimate metropolitan centre, as it was the centre of the Roman Empire and also the
Catholic Church, are imperial intellectuals who manage classes all over Europe

is based in part on real social changes, not merely predictable
concessions to dominant culture by writers interested in carving out a
career, or in escaping the suffocating atmosphere of a domestic culture
which foreign travel has made seem “backward”.

Brennan’s inclusion of Mukherjee is problematic insofar as Jasmine is very much
about how suffocating and backward India is in relation to America. Aijaz Ahmad
dismisses Mukherjee as representative of right-wing people who have migrated from
the peripheries to the centre in order to avoid, rather than pursue, politics and scholarly
endeavour (1992:207-208). Ahmad criticises Said’s, Rushdie’s, and Mukherjee’s
complicity with First World capitalism and its exploitation of the Third World for
literary raw material. Nevertheless, Said and Rushdie have, in their own way,
contributed to dismantling “proper English” as the dominant way of imagining and
inscribing the world. Mukherjee’s role is more problematic.

Urban centres are often looked at as places that carry the effects of imperialism. Paul
Gilroy (1987) looks at black urban culture as belonging to both London and the former
colonies. Hanif Kureishi and Salman Rushdie look at London in terms of colour and class in Thatcher’s reign. They describe how life in London is multiple, with historical and geographical resonances. Today, urban centres are all populated with mixtures of people, including precolonial indigenous people, colonial social and political structures, and postcolonial cultures. Mukherjee’s America is a place where history and class are constantly being erased.

Mukherjee has been celebrated as a writer who challenges what has become traditional ways to represent the “national” (Brennan 1989:34). Nevertheless, Bharati Mukherjee’s writing presents many serious problems about intellectual responsibility, subalternity⁴, the economic and representational relationship between the so-called Third and First Worlds, and the continuation of orientalism. Migrant writing is not new⁵. There are many writers who describe migration, changes of identity, displacement, and all the personal and social problems that attend migration. However, Mukherjee’s writing is romantic fantasy that uses, or perhaps exploits, Third World material for a First World audience (Banerjee in Nelson 1993). She uses some aspects of the experiences of migration to spin a tale of the American Dream which posits a norm of self-development and suppresses the issue of class (Grewal in Nelson 1993:182, 183).

Bharati Mukherjee migrated from India to America and writes of the experiences of an immigrant underclass that struggles to survive in an intellectual rootlessness (Brennan 1989:34). Timothy Brennan refers to Mukherjee and other writers (and Salman Rushdie, as representative of them all) as “Third-World cosmopolitans” who “allowed a flirtation with change that ensured continuity, a familiar strangeness, a trauma by
inches” (1989:viii-ix). I will argue that Mukherjee’s *Jasmine* expresses the expectation of change, permanent change that disrupts continuity and causes extreme trauma.

The narrative of *Jasmine* is told by twenty-four year old Jane Ripplemeyer in perfectly idiomatic American English. It is the story of how she starts life with so little and ends up with so much. It is also about how an individual can triumph against all odds, surviving several transformations of identity, surviving poverty, illegal migration and rape, having to murder, and lie in order to achieve the ultimate goal: American citizenship and love with a white middle-class man.

Jyoti, as she was first named, was born in Hasnapur, Punjab, India. Despite her meagre education, she wants to learn, to have English. At the age of fourteen she meets and marries Prakash Vijh, a modern young Anglophone. They are happy together as he coaches her out of tradition. They plan to go to America together but he is killed in a terrorist bombing. She goes anyway (illegally) so as to burn his things and then throw herself on the pyre. She gets to America but on her first night she is raped. She kills her rapist, slashes her tongue and drifts on. She is picked up by Lillian Gordon whose life work is to help illegal immigrants. Next she is taken in by an Indo-American family, the Vadheras, who are so very Indian that she cannot bear it and leaves. She then takes a position as nanny for Duff, daughter of Taylor and Wylie Hayes. They are liberal minded and treat her as a member of the family, an equal. Taylor falls in love with her, his wife leaves him, but Jasmine, as she is known then, must leave as she recognises one of the terrorist bombers from India. She goes to Iowa where a banker, Budd Ripplemeyer, falls in love with her and leaves his wife to
live with her. He is shot and becomes disabled. She finally becomes pregnant. But then Taylor turns up with Duff and they run off together.

MOCK SUBALTERNITY

Mukherjee spins a tale of the transformation of an Indian village girl to a confident American woman. *Jasmine* is articulated in an orientalist paradigm of binaries with the trajectory of the narrative moving from one to the other. The narrative drives Jasmine from India to America; from the Third World steeped in tradition to the modern First World; from a lack of English to an abundance; from a world of poverty and ignorance to a world of comfortable security and education. And Jasmine’s race for modernity is peculiarly deracinated.

Mukherjee homogenises Indians in India and migrants outside India as an underclass, in ways that reinforce her own upper-middle-class status and privilege (Alpana Sharma Knipling in Nelson 1993). Mukherjee repeats hegemonic cultural orders that are dominated by the theme of the desirability of things Western, and all that implies. Knipling challenges Mukherjee’s claim to be simultaneously both “we” and “other”. Knipling says that the Other is a Western creation and appropriation, and uses Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak to support her view that Mukherjee uncritically supports “the imperialist project of ‘serving the Other’ (turning the Other into a self, giving the Other a voice, speaking for the Other)” (in Nelson1993:147). Mukherjee represents Indian peasants in what Bhabha calls an authorised version of otherness. Knipling accuses Mukherjee of “first giving herself the authority to speak for others, then concealing it” (in Nelson 1993:147); of disguising the thinking function of the writer and suppressing the urban upper-class bourgeois agency that domesticates the other (in Nelson
1993:148). Just as the so-called Third World produces the wealth and possibility of
cultural self-representation of the First World (Spivak in Harasym 1990), so does
Mukherjee, clearly located in a First World America, exploit her “authentic” Indian
past, in Third World India, (as Jyoti) so as to represent herself as Jane Ripplemeyer, a
transformed woman.

ENGLISH

Mukherjee’s young peasant character, Jyoti, unquestioningly asserts that “to want
English was to want more than you had been given at birth, it was to want the world”
(Mukherjee 1990:68). Throughout the novel Jasmine attains English through the men
in her life, moving step by civilisational step, from one man to another, finally attaining
“real” English by running off with a white American academic. This occurs after
several transformations, through a self-justified trail of violence. The whole novel is
about the American Dream: that anyone can achieve anything, thus letting systemic
repressions like imperialism, capitalism, sexism, and orientalism off the hook, as it
were. Jasmine dismisses any resistance to the imperial reaches of English as
unenlightened native resistance to modernity.

In India, Jasmine meets Prakash during the riots among the Hindus, Sikhs, and
Muslims. Although the social and political problems that have reverberated since the
partition of India and consequent tensions are crucial in terms of identity in India,
Jasmine uses instances of hostilities between Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims as a vehicle
for the central character to meet her first husband. The hostilities are described as if
those hostilities were the result of differences, so that Prakash, with his added
difference from those around him, stands out from the crowd, as it were. Jasmine,
with all her apparently evolving political consciousness, does not engage with how
Hindu fundamentalism led to the torture and murder of Sikhs and the open hostility
towards Muslims. When Jasmine first hears Prakash in lively political discussion with
her brothers and a Sikh extremist she instantly falls in love with his English speech.
Her love for him is further confirmed when her brother informs her that he spoke
“First-class English” and that “He’ll move to America in a year or two” (Mukherjee
1990:68). She knew that she “couldn’t marry a man who didn’t speak English .... To
want English was to want more than you had been given at birth, it was to want the
world” (Mukherjee 1990:68). Her new emergent identity depends entirely on the
acquisition of English.

In her transformation from Indian/ness Jasmine also learns American body language.
She is taken in by Lillian Gordon, who looks after illegal immigrants. Lillian is not “a
missionary dispensing new visions and stamping out the old; she was a facilitator who
made possible the lives of absolute ordinariness that we ached for” (Mukherjee
1990:131). She calls her Jazzy and teaches her how to talk and walk American. She
learns to mimic American mannerisms so as to “pass” for an American. But mimicry,
as Franz Fanon (1970) and Homi Bhabha (1994) point out, problematise the difference
or slippage between race and culture. Regardless how close or successful the mimicry
is, it is never quite “the real thing”. Mimicry transforms the colonial subject into a
“partial” presence (Bhabha 1994:86). Even when she settles down with Bud
Ripplemeyer, his family see her as always being from “over there”.

The ambivalence that is part of mimicry cuts both ways. Lillian sees Jasmine off to
New York, where she stays with the Vadheras, the Punjabi family with whom Prakash
had corresponded. There she feels suffocated by their "artificially maintained Indianness". Once there she reflects: "I felt my English was deserting me" (Mukherjee 1990:144). Their mimicry of Indianness is an example of what Ien Ang (1993) refers to as focussing on "where you’re from" rather than "where you’re at. Jasmine wants to live very much in the present, resisting the hegemonic positioning of the migrant’s sensibility. She briefly struggles with the ambivalence that characterises what Ang calls "the diasporic imagination" (Ang 1993:35). In her American clothes Jasmine is taken for a student. She wants to distance herself from everything Indian (Mukherjee 1990:145). Yet as long as she stayed with the Vadhera family she "was spiralling into depression behind the fortress of Punjabiness" (Mukherjee 1990:148). The Vadhera’s "had kept a certain kind of Punjab alive, even if that Punjab no longer existed. They let nothing go, lest everything be lost" (Mukherjee 1990:162). Jasmine sees the Vadhera’s retention of their Punjabi identity as a shortcoming. She ridicules their needs, values, and beliefs.

Rather than living with the complexities of multiple identities, Jasmine seeks a simple American identity. She eschews the hyphen, complexity, or, as mentioned in relation to Salman Rushdie in Chapter Five, the comma between East, West. Jasmine leaves all traces of the East behind so as to become Western. However, her Westernness is always a mimicry because "to be Anglicised is emphatically not to be English" (Bhabha 1995:87). So for Jasmine to speak English is not the same as being American; unqualified and unhyphenated.

Jane transforms herself into an American by avoiding Indians\(^6\). Du (her adopted Vietnamese teenage son) secretly finds and maintains connections with Vietnamese in
Baden. Jane compares them: "My transformation has been genetic; Du's was hyphenated. We were so full of wonder at how fast he became American, but he's a hybrid ... a Vietnamese-American" (Mukherjee 1990:222). She says "I was afraid to test the delicate thread of his hyphenization. Vietnamese-American: don't question either half too hard" (Mukherjee 1990:225). How had her transformation been "genetic"? What does she mean by "genetic" especially in context of her final acknowledgment that American families are what you make them, when she runs off with Taylor, his adopted daughter, and her own artificially inseminated pregnancy. Such questions are not raised in the novel.

Jasmine traces a life from India to America through English. The novel constantly refers to language as a means of becoming and being. Darrel, Jasmine's American brother-in-law thinks that in India she spoke Indian. He does not know that "Indian" is not a language. She reflects that he won't understand if she explains, because "(h)e comes from a place where the language you speak is what you are" (Mukherjee 1990:10-11). There is no indication of the irony that speaking English in America means being American. On arriving in America Jasmine finds this English-speaking world is not at all what she expected. On her first day she experiences squalor, filth, rape, self-mutilation and murder. American is not quite English. And so she tries out different identities. But her quest is for Americanness and achieving that through the coloniser's language is not problematised.

The English language / English world promised a way out of the village in which she was born. Amongst her first few English language books there was Great Expectations. Later in her life she refers to Bud, her invalid American partner in
Iowa, as her Rochester and herself as Jane Eyre: "I think maybe I am Jane with my very own Rochester" (Mukherjee 1990:236). Edward Said (1983:273) writes that "Rochester's wife, Bertha Morris, is a West Indian, a fact by no means incidental to her bestiality; yet she must be exorcised (or controlled) before Rochester can marry Jane". Bud Ripplemeyer's wife is a very plain, middle-aged white American. She must be "exorcised (or controlled)" before Bud can marry his Jane. The same imperialist violence is being repeated, albeit in an inverted cultural order. Said adds that the treatment of Bertha Morris is "Bronte's way of telling us that denizens of the outlying Empire are useful as a source of wealth or as a moral ordeal for English men and women to experience, but never are they people to be accepted into the heart of metropolitan society" (Said 1983:273). The treatment of Bud Ripplemeyer's wife, and the many others Jasmine uses to attain what she wants, is Mukherjee's way of telling us that denizens of America are "useful as a source of wealth" and as a means to an end.

In *Jasmine* there is this imaginary life whose momentum is carried forward by the Victorian English fiction of Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*. *Jane Eyre* (1847) circulated in the British Empire at a time when geopolitical colonisation was already clearly established and cultural imperialism flourished. Jane's general "mission" in life as a woman was to be a care-giver and as a penniless orphan she ought to have been in servitude. Similarly Jasmine, as an illegal immigrant with no green card, should have been caught up in the invisible under-class of exploited workers. *Jane Eyre*’s education at Lowood Institution gave her the language, a particular kind of English, and the whole critical apparatus that goes with it, to engage with, rather than be subsumed by, the world at large; the public, male domain. Even when she came so
very close to accepting St John’s proposal to be his wife, a missionary’s wife in India, she could not accept such an absolutely powerless position subordinated to him in a loveless union. She was prepared to go as a missionary in her own right, by his side. But he, and society, could not accept that a young unmarried woman accompany a young man to such a distant, threatening, yet attractive place as India. Similarly, but with an obvious twist to it, Jasmine was persuaded to go to America with her young Indian husband, but ended up going alone. Just as Jane Eyre positions an imaginary India as one of the furthest, in terms of culture, imagin/able/ary outposts from Victorian England, so too is America portrayed in Jasmine as one of the furthest possible imagin/able/ary places to go from a Punjabi village.

In Jane Eyre India is considered one of the most worthwhile places to go because there is so much missionary work to be done there. It is full of barbaric pagans, and so insupportably hot; a Dantesque inferno. In the same sort of discourse, America in Jasmine is the wildest place to go. It is full of Godless materialists; also infernal. India is not considered an appropriate place for an independent-minded Jane Eyre. Nor is it an appropriate place for Jasmine, a hundred years later.

Jane Eyre finally refuses to go to India and seeks out her true love, Edward Rochester, and marries and cares for him, now an invalid, ennobled by his baptism of fire, maimed and cured of his vanity. Jane becomes his vision and speech, as she interprets the world for him. Jane Ripplemeyer refuses to retain any tropes of Indian culture, and refuses to marry Bud Ripplemeyer, even though she uses his name. Although Jane cares for Bud for a while when he becomes an invalid she finally deserts him.
Edward Rochester loves Jane Eyre because she is different to the other women around. It is that difference that attracts her to Rochester. Bud Ripplemeyer also loves his Jane because she is different to other women. Both Janes stand out from the other women around them. They are both apparently unusual women. They are both strong-minded and strong-spirited. They somehow transcend the historical, economic, and political limitations other women have to contend with. But other women in general in both novels are represented as being unaware of their own (abject) position.

Adrienne Rich (1986) looks at how Virginia Woolf compared Jane Eyre to Wuthering Heights. Rich quotes Woolf as saying that

The drawbacks of being Jane Eyre are not far to seek. Always to be a governess and always to be in love is a serious limitation in a world which is full, after all, of people who are neither one nor the other. ... (Charlotte Bronte) does not attempt to solve the problems of human life; she is even unaware that such problems exist; all her force, which is the more tremendous for being constricted, goes into the assertion, “I love”, “I hate”, “I suffer” ....

Indeed the narrative of Jasmine moves precisely on the lines of her love, hate, suffering, in relation to each of her life movements and events, always in relation to men. Jasmine seems unaware of the problems that exist around her and, often, because of her. While the story of Jane Eyre begins with her being motherless, Jasmine is not. Mukherjee inexplicably places Joyti beyond the pull of her village so that she leaves her widowed mother (who is not developed fully as a character) to find a mother figure in Lillian Gordon, who takes in illegal immigrants and teaches them how to be real, new, Americans. Lillian Gordon was a modern woman who “had a low tolerance for reminiscence, bitterness or nostalgia” (Mukherjee 1990:131). Thus Jasmine’s actual
mother, like the other village women she describes, is represented as lacking (English, Americanness, modernity, self-reliance, mobility, power) while Lillian Gordon has such an abundance of these qualities that she bestows them upon illegal immigrant women. Even amongst these women there appears to be a civilizational hierarchy:

The Kanjobal women didn’t speak any English. ... Lillian taught us all to cook ... to clean toilets, ... and to scrub pots and pans ... so we could hire ourselves out as domestics. At the end of a week, Lillian said ... “Jazzy, you don’t strike me as a picker or a domestic.” The Kanjobal women looked at her intently, nodding their heads as if they understood. “You’re different from these others” (Mukherjee 1990:134).

Jasmine is different from other immigrants because she completely transforms herself. However, transformation is not a solution (Jain 1991:8). Jane Eyre also sees herself as different from societal prescriptions. Nevertheless, Jane Eyre affiliates herself with, not apart from and superior to, other women. She reflects:

It is vain to say human beings ought to be satisfied with tranquillity: they must have action; and they will make it if they cannot find it. ... Nobody knows how many rebellions besides political rebellions ferment in the masses of life which people the earth. Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel ... (Bronte 1985:141).

Despite Jane Eyre’s circumstances, being an orphan and poor, she remained determined to live her own life according to conscious choices, rather than succumbing to some vague notion of fate. Jasmine begins with an astrologer foretelling Jyoti’s widowhood and exile. She rebels, shouting “No! ... You’re a crazy old man. You don’t know what my future holds!” (Mukherjee 1990:3). Then the narrative traces her widowhood in India and self-imposed exile to America. Once in America, her fate changes. She determines her own life. However, the cost of Jasmine’s self
determination is the murder of one man, the seduction of two married men (for which she claims no responsibility) and then the desertion of one for another. Despite her goal of self-determination, it seems that love is something that just happens to her. She claims no responsibility.

In contrast, Jane Eyre’s strength lay in her self-determination, especially in love. She rejected marriage with St John Rivers, as it would have been loveless, and she chooses to marry Edward Rochester. In the courtship between Jane Eyre and Edward Rochester, he sings:

My love has sworn, with sealing kiss,
With me to live - to die;
I have at last my nameless bliss:
As I love - loved am I! (Bronte 1985:301).

Jane objects to his melodramatic advances, saying “I had as good a right to die when my time came as he had: but I should bide that time, and not be hurried away in a suttee” (Bronte 1985:301). She had already seen that he is acting like a “sultan” might towards a “slave”, bestowing gold, gems, and silks upon her. She resists, saying “I would not exchange this one little English girl for the Grand Turk’s whole seraglio - gazelle-eyes, houri forms, and all! ... away with you, sir, to the bazaars of Stamboul”(Bronte 1985:297). The power of Jane’s resistance to Rochester’s dominant posturing derives from comparing him to one of the most threatening images in the Victorian repertoire; that of imaginary “oriental” gendered roles. In describing him thus, Jane is describing the power that he tries to exert over her whole being. The strongest element in her strategy of resistance is her insistence on being a strong, sensible, and assertive English woman.
While Jane Eyre is an English woman, Jasmine strives to become an American (modernised) version of that kind of woman. Jasmine’s mimicry of Americanness provides a space where she can ambivalently revel in her own self-constructed attractive orientalia. Six months after Jasmine meets Bud Ripplemeyer he “was a divorced man living with an Indian woman in a hired man’s house five miles out of town. Asia had transformed him, made him reckless and emotional” (Mukherjee 1990:14). Previous to meeting Jasmine, Bud’s idea of “Asia” was that it was just a soy-bean market and the Great Wall of China (Mukherjee 1990:14). But it is Jasmine who “made him reckless and emotional”. Jane is “Asia”. She says.

Bud courts me because I am alien. I am darkness, mystery, inscrutability. The East plugs me into instant vitality and wisdom. I rejuvenate him simply by being who I am (Mukherjee 1990:200).

Once again, there is no evidence of irony. Jasmine is given a subjectivity that somehow moves from rural India to urban America, through English. As Guha (1988:3) points out, elitism in India is the ideological product of British rule, and elitist narratives count British writers among their main protagonists. Mukherjee avoids the politics of elitism and reproduces a grand narrative that celebrates “advancement” and Anglocentric embourgeoisement.

GOD IS NOT ENGLISH

The combined elements of Anglicisation and secularisation were very strong components of British imperialism. Although it was not until during Victoria’s reign that “India” became “British”, the process of Anglicisation began with the English education of the Indian ruling class. Aijaz Ahmad (1992:77) writes that English is
used in the process of class formation and social privilege. Thomas Babington Macaulay, as president of the Committee of Public Instruction in Bengal in 1823, was part of a process of promotion of native education. In the notorious “Minute on Education” Macaulay refers to “a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect” (Benedict Anderson 1991:90, Sara Suleri 1992:122). Although Jasmine is “Indian in blood and colour” she is indeed “English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect”. It is with this historical background that Jasmine’s desire to migrate to America is normalised and naturalised. In other words, Jasmine repeats many aspects of entrenched orientalist discourse, replicating what Aijaz Ahmad (1992:15) refers to as certain notions of canonicity that run in tandem with the bourgeois, upper caste dominance of the nation-state.

Just as the migrants in Salman Rushdie’s The Satanic Verses find that once they migrate away from home they are abandoned by God, so too do Jasmine and her young husband expect to escape God by leaving India. While Rushdie’s migrants despair at the loss of God that is an inevitable consequence of migration, Mukherjee’s village Indians migrate so as to escape God/home. English is not God’s language, it is, to use Vico’s notion of the secular, the world’s language. In Mukherjee’s India God is cruel, but in America there is no God. In Rushdie’s India and Pakistan God is an integral part of being, and in England there is no God. In Kureishi’s England God has been replaced by money. In America Jasmine strives to attain that global money-God.

In relation to God in India, the narrator, Jane, says that “(a) daughter had to be married off before she could enter heaven, and dowries beggared families for generations. Gods with infinite memories visited girl children on women who needed to be punished
for sins committed in other incarnations" (Mukherjee 1990:39). As the fifth daughter of seven children she says that "My mother's past must have been heavy with wrongs" (Mukherjee 1990:39). As an adult in America Jasmine survives. "My grandmother may have named me Jyoti, Light, but in surviving I was already Jane, a fighter and adaptor" (Mukherjee 1990:40). Her mother complains that "God's cruel ... to waste brains on a girl. And God's still more cruel, she said, to make a fifth daughter beautiful instead of the first" (Mukherjee 1990:40). There was not enough dowry money to go around, and at school she was clever in Punjabi, Urdu, and English. She remembers that Shane was "about an American village much like Punjab, and Alice in Wonderland ... gave me nightmares". "... I remember Great Expectations and Jane Eyre" (Mukherjee 1990:40-41).

Jasmine's politicisation is narrativised in terms of her anglicisation. For example, when she begins to become more politicised during the riots, she resumes the habit of listening to All-India Radio English-language news. She borrows Vimla's (her friend's) father's copy of The Hindu and finds "how much English, how quickly, I'd forgotten!" (Mukherjee 199064). It is ironic that although Jasmine becomes somewhat politicised, it occurs through English, a vehicle for, and product of, British imperialism. But she does not make any connection between factional violence and British rule of India. Or, as Debjani Banerjee (in Nelson 1993:170) puts it,

Mukherjee clearly does not regard political unrest in India as a necessary step in the fortification of a newly independent nation. It is more likely, however, that Mukherjee does not want to acquaint her audience with the fractured histories of Third World countries, which, if analysed closely, often reveal uncomfortable moments of complicity for any Westerner.
Banerjee goes on to explain that Mukherjee refuses to look closely at the violence and the problems of the Third World. While I share Banerjee’s ambivalent comments in reference to Fredric Jameson’s classification of Third World texts as a form of national allegory and the reference to Aijaz Ahmad’s anxiety about the totalising effect of Jameson’s classification of texts, I would add that Mukherjee also conforms to dominant ways of describing North America, or the First World. Mukherjee does indeed read Indian history in terms of a lack (Chakrabarty cited in Banerjee), but she also reads American history in terms of plenitude.

Similarly, the narrator does not acknowledge the abyss between her own privileged position as a virtual necessity for the acquisition of the kind of English that makes social mobility possible, and the virtual impossibility for a widowed village girl to make the kinds of transitions the whole narrative hinges upon. Jasmine’s desire to escape the civilizational limits of Hasnapur is explained as a response to her family’s loss of property after the partition of India.

The Partition Riots are such a presence in the family’s memory that, although Jasmine had not been to Lahore, “the loss survives in the instant replay of family story ... Nothing is fair. God is cruel. Now I hear these words as love’s refrain” (Mukherjee 1990:41). Her family had lost their “big stucco house with porticoes and gardens ... farmlands, shops. ... In our family lore Lahore was magic and Lahore was chaos” (Mukherjee 1990:41). This passage in Jasmine is reminiscent of Salman Rushdie’s Midnight’s Children. Saleem Sinai’s much loved Bombay he was forced to leave, following partition, is also a noisy, chaotic, magical place. Remembering that past, in both texts, is an act of love. Jasmine’s father’s life was ruined by their forced
migration from Punjab. She is tougher. She can see that the “pitcher is broken. It is the same air this side as that” (Mukherjee 1990:43). Once things change, you cannot change them back again. Once the illusion of a unified “home” is shattered, you find you can make some other place “home”. As quoted in Chapter Four, the narrator in The Satanic Verses says “when you have stepped through the looking-glass you step back at your peril. The mirror may cut you to shreds” (Rushdie 1988:58). Saladin Chamcha describes himself as “an Indian translated into English-medium” (Rushdie 1988:58). The difference between Mukherjee and Rushdie is that Rushdie mobilises shattered old forms as a way of reinventing the present, as one that includes bits of old and new. And also, Saladin Chamcha was so intent on making himself into a proper Englishman that he did not know who or what he was until he finally returned to India. Anne Brewster (1995:117) points out that Mukherjee sees Rushdie as a writer who chooses to live as a dispossessed exile rather than embracing psychological citizenship and nationalism, like herself. However, as noted in Chapter Four, the only (certainly not to diminish it) exile Rushdie lives in is one that has been necessitated by fundamentalists’ reactions to his book, which ironically was precisely about the impossibility of seamless, unified, coherent, continuous psychological “belonging” (Chapter Five).

Although Jasmine is widowed by a terrorist bomb, she attempts to fulfil the dream she shared with her husband by making the break and going to the New World. She planned to then burn her husband’s things and throw herself on the pyre. During her first night in America, everything she had expected to accomplish is desecrated. She is raped, she slashes her own tongue, and then she murders her rapist. As if, by mutilating her tongue, she could live in a world where there is no language. Her
response to rape as a bodily colonisation is to physically mute herself against the
dominant male coloniser culture (Crane 1993:124).

There is an interesting discussion between Jasmine and Taylor, her American lover
who is an academic. He likes to call her Jassy. He finds it incredible that such an
intelligent, modern young woman as Jasmine actually believes in God, the simultaneous
vastness and minuteness of the universe, and the relative insignificance of an
individual's life. Taylor thinks it is "very, very, very Indian, Jassy" (Mukherjee
1990:59). When she suggests that her role in the universe might be to enlighten him,
he is offended at the implication that he is, in his words, "a narrow-minded American
bigot" (Mukherjee 1990:60).

A very different response to Jasmine's Hindu beliefs can be seen in the comic
encounter between Jasmine and Dr Mary Webb, who parodies academic discourses of
fascination for oriental exotica. Mary had seen Jasmine at the bank and invites her to
lunch. Mary is interested in spiritual channelling, out-of-body experiences, and
reincarnation. She assumes that because Jasmine is Indian then she must share these
interests. Mary belongs to a "group" led by Ma Leela, who is the reincarnation of a
depressed, battered wife suicide. Mary believes she is a reincarnated Australian
Aboriginal who speaks tribal language (verified as sounding "Abo"
11 by an Australian
member of the music department [Mukherjee 1990:124]) and remembers eating giant
kangaroo and throwing boomerangs and living in a cave. Mary says "This can't be
new or bizarre to you. Don't you Hindus keep revisiting the world?" (Mukherjee
1990:126).
Although Jasmine exposes some kinds of orientalism, it nevertheless falls into the same ways of representing the central character. For example, “Bud courts me because I am alien. I am darkness, mystery, inscrutability. The East plugs me into instant vitality and wisdom. I rejuvenate him simply by being who I am” (Mukherjee 1990:200). Jasmine shapes her subjectivity as overdetermined as exotic. Or, as Anne Brewster (1995:119) puts it, “she embraces different versions of the ‘exotic’ … in doing so she subsumes various immigrant experiences under the stereotype of that tough, hustling, ‘grabby and greedy’ battler, whom she has also called the ‘conqueror’, the ‘minor hero’, the ‘new pioneer’”. Jasmine is free to reconstruct herself depending on her circumstances. However, she constructs herself according to hegemonic notions of otherness. Trinh T. Minh-ha (1989:89) writes that

> Today, planned authenticity is rife; as a product of hegemony and a remarkable counterpart of universal standardization, it constitutes an efficacious means of silencing the cry of racial oppression. We no longer wish to erase your difference, We demand, on the contrary, that you remember and assert it. At least, to a certain extent.

Jasmine’s authenticity, both her Indian exotica and her American modernity, is, indeed planned according to hegemonic demands for safe, melting pot stories of migration and assimilation. Her self-exoticisation grants her the mobility and opportunity (Koshy 1994:77). Jasmine’s agency and subjectivity is informed by an authorial consciousness that moved from a sense of liminality and exile (when she lived in Canada) to a sense of American citizenship-as-identity (Kristin Carter-Sanborn 1994, Susan Koshy 1994).
NAMING AND IDENTITY

The theme of naming is central in the narrative structure of *Jasmine* and in the subjective positioning of Jasmine. As she is named and re-named by other people, Jasmine’s identity changes:

Bud calls me Jane. Me Bud, you Jane. I didn’t get it at first. He kids. Calamity Jane, Jane as in Jane Russell, not Jane as in Plain Jane, But Plain Jane is all I want to be. Plain Jane is a role, like any other. My genuine foreignness frightens him. I don’t hold that against him. It frightens me, too. In Baden, I am Jane. Almost (26).

That final “almost” is like the “almost” at the end of the first sentence of Hanif Kureishi’s *The Buddha of Suburbia*. Karim says “My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost” (3). In both cases, “almost” qualifies their identity and indicates that they do not fit any sort of nationalist model of identity. That “almost” indicates that while we know that Western nations are multicultural, a singular model of identity is still in place. Jane is exoticised as dark and Indian.

Much of the novel is about how identity is always relational. First she is named Jyoti by her grandmother. Then Jasmine by Prakash. He changes her into a “new kind of city woman. To break off the past he gave me a new name: Jasmine. ... Jyoti, Jasmine: I shuttle between identities” (76). Prakash is benevolently compared to *Pygmalion*:

*Pygmalion* wasn’t a play I’d seen or read then, but I realise now how much of Professor Higgins there was in my husband. He wanted to break down the Jyoti I’d been in Hasnapur and make me a new kind of city woman. To break off the past, he gave me a new name: Jasmine (77).

Even though Prakash resists repressive feudalism and plans to go to America he is still part of the patriarchal reconstruction of this woman. Getting away from India meant
that “we could say or be anything we wanted. We’d be on the other side of the earth, out of God’s sight” (85). Even though Jasmine identifies as a woman, she nevertheless negates the political role of gender. **Jasmine** begins to look at woman as a symbolic object of exchange (Spivak 1988:28) but then ignores the political and social importance. She does this by elevating herself as an individual (read: bourgeois) above and beyond the ideological pull of her circumstances. She does not make the link between patriarch and transnational capitalism. Spivak (1988:31) writes that

> the figure of the woman, moving from clan to clan, and family to family as daughter/sister and wife/mother, syntaxes patriarchal continuity even as she is herself drained of proper identity. ... the dissimulation of her discontinuity ... (is) the repeated emptying of her meaning as instrument”.

Jasmine’s discontinuity is part of the Anglophone patriarchal continuity that drains her of her identity. From aligning herself with Eliza Doolittle, Jasmine then aligns herself with Jane Eyre. Just as Rochester had changed Jane’s name to the diminutive Janet, so too had Bud changed Jasmine’s name to the shorter Jane. Soon after arrival in America Jasmine was named Jazzy by Lillian Gordon, then Jase by Taylor Hayes, and then Jane by Bud Ripplemeyer. None of the identities are of her own making. All her changes are made through men. “I have had a husband for each of the women I have been. Prakash for Jasmine, Taylor for Jase, Bud for Jane. Half-Face for Kali” (Mukherjee 1990:197). Later she wonders “How many more shapes are in me, how many more selves, how many more husbands?” (Mukherjee 1990:215). Despite Jasmine’s utter dependence on men, Mukherjee claims that “Jasmine is a very real feminist” because “she feels deeply, she’s intelligent, she knows exactly what she has suffered and she is able to change her life (in Vignisson 1992:163). Mukherjee explains that she is not interested in what she refers to as feminist rhetoric (in Vignisson 1992:163). She is not
interested in the nexus between hegemony and racism as a pressing issue. Susan Koshy (1994:71) looks at Mukherjee’s feminist themes and states that

In a strange alliance of liberal feminism, capitalism, and neocolonialism, Mukherjss’s critique of the patriarchal practices of indigenous and diasporic Indian culture gets narrativized, in Jasmine, as the emancipatory journey from Third to First World, a journey into the possibilities of a “developed” subjectivity characterized by individualism, autonomy, and upward mobility.

It is as if Jasmine’s success depends on her ability to construct her own subjectivity “outside ethnicity” (Koshy 1994:79). She manipulates aspects of her ethnicity so as to fulfil her man’s fantasy and taste for exotica.

After leaving the Vadheras, Jasmine goes to a live-in job with Taylor and Wylie Hayes as the “caregiver” of their daughter Duff. Taylor teaches at Colombia University. Taylor calls her Jase. This is a happy period of her life. She says that

Jyoti was now a sati-goddess: she had burned herself in a trash-can-funeral pyre behind a boarded-up motel in Florida. Jasmine lived for the future ... . Jase went to movies and lived for today. ... For every Jasmine the reliable caregiver, there is a Jase the prowling adventurer (176)

After all Jasmine has been through she finds that there are no absolutes. As Salman Rushdie (1990) writes, there are no certainties or fixed realities, especially for the migrant, who has had to translate a whole life. But Jasmine does not translate. She leaves one life behind and lives another, and another. She accepts each one that is invented for her.
INSIDE / OUTSIDE

A recurring theme that is common to texts that deal with the spaces between East and West is the subject’s status as insider and/or outsider. While Kureishi’s and Rushdie’s texts are full of characters who negotiate that space variously as a gap or a slash or a cultural in-betweenness within the West, Mukherjee’s Jasmine sees herself as either an outsider or an insider. As an outsider her whole desire is to become an insider. She wants to assimilate into the American mainstream. Mukherjee refers to herself (in Vignisson 1992:160) as “very much a new world citizen” and “a pioneer”, thus describing her own elite immigrant status and her desire to be a metropolitan American, certainly not a minority (also in Brewster 1995). She wants to be “tough”, like “the first white settlers” who wrested the country “from someone else” (in Vignisson 1992:160). It is ironic that that “someone else” was the indigenous American, misrecognised and misnamed “Indian” by the “settlers” of the New World. The fifteenth century European search for a passage to the East (so as to avoid having to deal with the Arabic middle-men who negotiated the trade between East and West) was responsible for the settlement of America. It was there that Europeans encountered non-Europeans they described as “Indians”. They negotiated and explained their difference by lumping them all together and thus suppressing all differences among them (Stuart Hall 1992b:304). The discovery of the passage to North America was the materialisation of a dream of finding Eden or Paradise, where one could have fame, fortune, and a new identity (Chua in Nelson 1992:51, Suzanne Kehde in Brown and Gooze 1995:70-77). The “discovery” of America marked the beginning of global mercantilism. Chua 13 adds that
This dream of North America persists today, taking a reverse direction and appealing to individuals in Third World Commonwealth countries who conceive of migrating to North America as a passage to a better life, larger liberty, and swifter pursuit of happiness.

It is not really a “reverse direction”. It is perhaps more of the same: exploitation. But it is read as a “reverse” if the identity of indigenous Americans continues to be misread and conflated with subcontinental “Indians”. This irony also appears in the way the classic American story of upward mobility is displaced onto another classic American story, the narrative of outward mobility, or the pioneer tale (Koshy 1994:80). In the pioneer mythology, the boundary between here and there or inside and outside is the Western frontier. It is beyond that frontier that there are America’s internal others, American Indians. Jasmine’s journey west also parodies the American Western genre where she rides into every sunset. And each of these symbolic sunsets is also the prelude to a new dawn (Crane 1993:130). Jasmine leaves her older, crippled, partner/America, “greedy with wants and reckless from hope” (Mukherjee 1990:241).

The Ripplemeyers see Jane as “very foreign” (Mukherjee 1990:7), as someone who is from elsewhere. Old Mother Ripplemeyer refers to “out there” and Jasmine reflects:

Out there. I am not sure what Mother imagines. On the edge of the world, in flaming deserts, mangled jungles, squelchy swamps, missionaries save the needy. Out There [sic], the darkness. But for me, for Du, In Here, safety. At least for now (Mukherjee 1990:21).

To the Ripplemeyers she is simply foreign because she “might look a little different … a dark-haired girl” in a naturally blond country. (with) … a “darkish complexion” … from a generic place, “over there” …” (Mukherjee 1990:33). She refers to the Baden farmers as simple, silent, unashamed people who, despite their isolation, know how to
live decent lives. They do not seem to mean any harm. Jasmine is so very passive with the Ripplemeyers that it is hard to believe that she is the same person who defied all expectations of her in India, murdered and cheated in America, to finally be content, at least for some time, with the Ripplemeyers.

The narrator describes her early life in India as if it did not match the social reality around her. She was an outsider. Then it was in America that she was somehow able to be herself, Jane Ripplemeyer. This self was interpollated by a middle-aged white American farmer, a subjectivity that stands for conservative, mainstream America. This is another instance of Mukherjee equating feminism and westernization, where she reproduces Eurocentric assumptions about the subjection of Third World women (Koshy 1994:77).

Another theme that recurs across representations of the contemporary global movements of people and cultures is the war in Vietnam. Right wing Western representations portray America’s present attitude towards Vietnam as benevolent. For example, as explained in Chapter Three, Miss Saigon suffers from amnesia about how America and its allies (including Australia) devastated Vietnam, lost the war, and now wants to “save” the children who were fathered by GIs. Miss Saigon represents America as Vietnam’s benefactor. Similarly, but with a twist, Jasmine represents America as a global benefactor, because in America everyone is free to remake themselves, or so the hegemonic discourse goes.

Jane and Bud adopt a Vietnamese teenager, Du. Through Du’s and Jane’s foreignness, she realises how little Iowans know of the outside world. The remarks that are made
in relation to their race and ethnicity indicate that what little the locals do know is
dangerous. There is a historical reference made to America’s involvement in the war
in Vietnam. Du’s history teacher, Mr Skola (Mr School?), remarks that the kids he
 teaches are fast learners, just like the kids in Saigon. He says that he tried speaking
Vietnamese with Du, but Du “just froze up” (Mukherjee 1990:29). Jasmine says to
herself: “His history teacher in Baden, Iowa, just happens to know a little street
Vietnamese? Now where would he have picked it up?” (Mukherjee 1990:29).
Chapter Three looks at how the musical Miss Saigon takes the same imperialist
attitude America had, and largely still has. One of the many examples of this is the
way the narrative is carried forward by the American ex-GIs’ desire to repossess their
Amerasian children and give them a “better” life. Jasmine criticises, albeit very weakly,
small town Americans’ attitude that the war and all its effects, is over. Du’s
displacement is a direct consequence of the war in Vietnam.

DEATH / REBIRTH
One of the recurring themes in representations of migrancy and diaspora is a twin
theme of death and rebirth. Death and rebirth also figure strongly in orientalist
representations. Suicide as an act of honour figures in the orientalist Japanese myth of
committing hari kari with a knife (or the modern equivalent of death by gunshot, as the
myth is repeated in contemporary forms). The tragic death of Madame Butterfly
makes it possible for her son to have a new life in America. So too does the tragic
death of Kim, in Miss Saigon, make it possible for her son to go to America with his
ex-GI father. Chapter Three looks at the masochism implied in representations of the
emotional pain and final death of these “Oriental Women”, who sacrifice everything for
the future well-being of their sons’ future in America. That Chapter exposes how

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Western representations still often uphold patriarchy and modernity over and above diversity and counter-hegemony. Chapter Four looks at how Salman Rushdie represents death and rebirth as the East enters the West, thus focusing on diversity and challenging Western hegemony. The twin theme of death and rebirth in *Jasmine*, however, is problematic.

The opening words of Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* are “‘To be born again,’ sang Gibreel Farishta tumbling from the heavens, ‘first you have to die’” (Rushdie 1988:3). While *The Satanic Verses* is about the transmutation that begins, but does not end, with migration *Jasmine* is about the rupture that occurs, but never quite heals, with migration. The narrator in *Jasmine* says “(t)here are no harmless, compassionate ways to remake oneself. We murder who we were so we can rebirth ourselves in the images of dreams” (Mukherjee 1990:29). She is running away and dreaming of a “better” life. But, just like the fantasy of a “better” life in America in *Miss Saigon*, that dream is a *dangerous romantic fantasy*.

CONCLUSION

In speaking for the other, the subaltern, the Punjabi peasant woman, Mukherjee orientalises Jyoti’s Punjabi world as abject, backward, limited, limiting, violent, peopled with helpless women and oppressive men, except the English-speaking, modern Prakash who “improves” (modernises) her. She also orientalises Jane’s experiences of herself in America as an exotic, dark beauty who innocently causes middle-class marriages to fall apart as the men fall in love with her. First Wylie leaves Taylor because she sees him falling in love with Jase, then middle-aged Bud leaves his middle-aged wife because he falls in love with Jasmine the moment she walks into the
bank. The momentum or driving force behind Jasmine’s many transformations from the implied backwardness of Punjabi village life to the apparent progressiveness of American life is English: English language and English literature. But what the novel takes for granted and does not acknowledge is that only a Jane Ripplemeyer could have written about a Jyoti.

Jane Ripplemeyer narrates the story of Jyoti’s fortunate escape from home as if her desire to leave her Punjabi village and go to America was understandable. No questions asked. How different is this perspective of the relationship between India-as-backward and the West-as-progressive to Salman Rushdie’s (1994) short story “Good advice is rarer than rubies”14. Although Rushdie’s story is about Miss Rehana’s application to migrate to England to marry Mustafa Dar, the contrast is with Mukherjee’s (imperialist) assumption that migration from the so-called Third World to the West is a rational choice, an unquestioned “good”. Muhammad Ali, an old “facilitator” meets Miss Rehana outside the British Consulate. He tries to fast-track her application for entry into England. She takes all his advice and goes against it in order to fail her application. He sees the failure as a tragedy. She explains that the engagement was arranged when she was very young, and now, having gone through the motions of applying to go to England, she can go back to Lahore to her job as ayah to three boys in a comfortable house. She is happy, whereas Jyoti is unhappy and dissatisfied with her Punjabiness and its concomitant lack of modernity and English/English-speaking men.

Jane has more sympathy for American social ills than those in India. For example, in one of her monologues, Jane says “The farmers around here are like the farmers I grew
up with. Modest people, never boastful, tactful and courtly in their way” (Mukherjee 1990:11), and so on. But she remembers that her father’s farm was dry, grey and crumbly, only improved by Vancouver Singh who improved the soil because “he had gone to agricultural school in Canada” (Mukherjee 1990:62). Thus Punjabi farmers are represented as ignorant while for the American farmers “experience leads to knowledge, or else it is wasted” (Mukherjee 1990:33). But even so, in the novel’s civilizational chain of being, the American farmers are more ignorant than American bankers, like Bud, and even he is somewhat lower on the social scale than Taylor, an academic. This elitism which permeates Jasmine stands in stark contrast with The Buddha of Suburbia where the main protagonist refers to how writers like Conrad, Dickens, Kipling write a world where subject positions are determined by colour, race, class, gender, and sexuality. Both Hanif Kureishi and Salman Rushdie criticise fundamentalism, Islamic and economic. They, to repeat T.S. Eliot (Introduction) examine and argue with the ideas with which they do not agree. However, The way Bharati Mukherjee plunders her “Third World” experience to construct a civilizational other for a “First World” audience can be seen to reflect Said’s (1987) thesis that the West has constructed and exploited the East since the period High Imperialism, and continues to do so in various forms of textual production.

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1 Many of Mukherjee’s stories are about displacement. Her first novel The Tiger’s Daughter is about Tara Lal Banerjee who returns to India with her American husband. Her second novel Wife is about Dimple Dasgupta’s experiences of the tensions between american culture and traditional Indian culture. Then Darkness and The Middleman and Other Stories were published before Jasmine.

2 This movement is inseparable from the subaltern studies project, published as Selected Subaltern Studies, edited by Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 1988. It articulated previously suppressed accounts of historical events from minority groups. It is a perspective that acknowledges the agency of change as being located in the insurgent, or the subaltern.

3 For a detailed description of Gramsci’s contribution to a cultural critique of empire see Timothy Brennan’s article “Literary Criticism and the Southern Question” in Cultural Critique, 1988 (Winter

4 I have taken the idea of subaltern/ity from Ranajit Guha & Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (eds.) (1988) Selected Subaltern Studies. In the foreward, Edward Said writes that “subaltern” has political and intellectual connotations. Its opposite is “elite” or those in power. Said writes that it is derived from Gramsci’s usage in the Prison Notebooks. History always involves the interplay between the elite and the subaltern. In the case of India’s history it is not just the power play between the British overlords and the Indian nationalists. An Indian elite had been trained by the British so that when India was decolonised there remained British rule.

5 In 1990 I wrote an Honours thesis on “Multicultural Women’s Writing in Australia” (Murdoch University, Western Australia). It is a semiotic and textual analysis of the position of non-Anglo Australian women writers. It also problematised the discursive positioning of “migrant” and “woman”.

6 By “Indians” the narrator refers to subcontinental Indians, not native Americans.

7 Said (1993) writes of the relationship between Australia, as a penal colony, and England through Dickens’ Magwitch. Said writes that Dickens could not have foreseen a tradition of Australian literature that includes Peter Carey. Peter Carey (1994) mentions that “Magwitch is our goddam [sic] ancestor”.

8 I invoke Dante advisedly so as to invoke Said’s (1978) references to the orientalist discourse Dante uses to legitimate his treatment of the Orient as alien, licentious, and degenerate.

9 For a thorough reading of the trial of Warren Hastings see Sara Suleri’s The Rhetoric of English India (1992) in which she describes the failed impeachment of Hastings in terms of the impossibility of speaking the unspeakable, or addressing the arbitrary power of the colonial administration of India in the eighteenth century. Suleri refers to Edmund Burke’s discourses on India as “sublime”: long, theatrical speeches before the Houses of Commons and Lords. The more Burke’s speeches tried to evoke power relations in British India, the more he evoked the power relations implicit in the very discourse he was constrained to use. See also Homi Bhabha’s (1995) drawing together of the issues of English/writing/governance through J.S. Mill, Warren Hastings, and Macaulay’s “syntax of deferral”.

10 Unlike Salman Rushdie who constantly refers to Alice in Wonderland as a source of influence and inspiration for much of his writing.

11 “Abo” is used as a term of abuse for Aboriginal Australians.

12 Ralf Crane (1993) refers to “the melting pot culture of the United States” (126) ... [where] ... “It is only by letting go, rather than clinging to a cultural identity as do the Indians transplanted into North American settings in Mukherjee’s early short stories, that Jasmine achieves a degree of freedom” (130). Crane implies that the only way to “freedom” is through assimilation.

13 Chua also provides useful demographic data on the Indian content of the Asian population as it grew in both Canada and North America.

14 In East, West (1994).
CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has shown how postoriental texts unfold where myth, drama, music, gossip, and many other aspects of the everyday circulate. I have analysed several texts and several genres which deal with the East/West problematic. As far as orientalism is concerned, I have analysed, criticised and then reworked Said’s now classic definition. Said’s Orientalism provides a foundational vocabulary for critiquing the West’s construction of the East. However, it was the gaps and silences in Said’s work that led me to develop a theory of postorientalism which posits that we are now in a position to use tropes of Easternness and Westernness without necessarily falling into a binaristic deadlock. My theory goes beyond Gyan Prakash’s (1990) description of postorientalist historiography which looks at East and West as relational rather than essential. My theory also goes beyond Said’s thesis of orientalism which maintains the opposition between East and West. I have found that some texts use orientalist tropes as a means to destabilise the power relations Said claims are inherent in any representation. The rendering conspicuous of orientalism in the texts I call postorientalist highlights this process of destabilisation. One of the main differences between postorientalist texts and orientalist texts is then often found in whether or not the intermingling of Oriental and Occidental is taken for granted. Postorientalist texts reappropriate tropes of Easternness and Westernness in the representation of identities that are characterised by their being plural and transnational. Such texts question whether duplication and dissimulation are always facts of representation. Postorientalist texts play with the chain of desire and dissimulation. Postorientalism
looks at the undecidability of all identities, especially in relation to globalism and mass communication where East and West become undecidable codes.

While it is abundantly clear that some texts are blatantly orientalist, these orientalist texts should neither be vilified nor ignored, for they are at the heart of the postorientalist texts I cite. The texts examined show the ambivalence in the postcolonial encounter. They also show that beneath or beyond the orientalist discourse of power, postorientalist discourses oppose and subvert dominant visions of the world. As the selection of texts in this thesis shows, postorientalist texts self-consciously play with the sites of textuality (which is a feature of postmodernity) and the sites of East and West. For example, Miss Saigon and Jasmine do deal with East/West. However, the way in which they do so repeats and reinscribes Western hegemonic views of the world. Postorientalist texts also deal with East/West but in doing so they explain and elaborate orientalism back to the coloniser.

Postorientalism does not form a coherent and simultaneous body of texts. Postorientalism looks at the interplay of the appearance and dispersion of concepts of the East/West world view Said critiques in Orientalism. Postorientalism explodes the myth of what happens when East meets West. It subverts the East/West impasse of orientalism, where issues of power over representation are contested and the paradox of particularism and globalism emerges as a legacy of postmodernism. Postorientalist representations show how East and West are not clean, mutually exclusive categories. Cultural systems are hybrid and dynamic, and postorientalist texts speak to that cultural, racial, and sexual hybridity. It is in that space between powerful orientalist symbols and ambivalent postcolonial signs that the hybridity of the postoriental
resides. To repeat the reference made to Homi Bhabha (1995) in the Introduction, it is in the space between the signifier and the signified that hybridity occurs and alterity is inscribed in the othered self. And it is this othered self that moves through postorientalist narratives, images, and dreams.

The choice of texts in this dissertation provides an eclectic range that spans various genres over the period of over one hundred years, from European high imperialism. It ranges from the contemporary musical, Miss Saigon, to contemporary novels, like Jasmine, The Satanic Verses, and The Black Album, to the nineteenth century novel Madame Chrysanthème and the early twentieth century opera, Madama Butterfly, and films, like M. Butterfly, and The Good Woman of Bangkok. These texts explicitly invoke other texts that explore the East/West encounter across time and cultures. For example Miss Saigon invokes Madame Chrysanthème, Madama Butterfly and images of the Vietnam War. Jasmine invokes Jane Eyre and postcolonial histories that cross English, Indian, and North American boundaries. The Satanic Verses invokes The Koran and numerous histories, mythologies and theories. The Black Album invokes The Satanic Verses and many pop cultural icons. The film M. Butterfly invokes the opera, the spy/sex scandal, and critical orientalist discourses. The film The Good Woman of Bangkok invokes the clichéd images of Bangkok-as-global-sex-capital that are used in Miss Saigon.

All the texts in this dissertation deal with the violence of certain kinds of encounter. Chapter Three shows how the Madama Butterfly myth is founded on a sadistic masculinist colonial Western fantasy of Eastern femininity as masochistic. There is a chain of repetition and elaboration of the Madama Butterfly story of maternal self-
sacrifice, from Puccini's opera to Boublil and Schonberg's contemporary musical, which self-consciously repeats the romance with Oriental feminine pain. Schonberg makes a historical interpretation of Loti's nineteenth century text, *Madame Chrysanthème*, as foundational of Madame Butterfly, and uses it as part of the raw material for *Miss Saigon*. *Jasmine* also draws on historically and culturally embedded interpretations of Eastern tradition and submission and Western modernity and dominance. Chapter Six shows how Jasmine's mood for violence reflects the violence in the Madame Butterfly myth. Jasmine's violence is framed as a way of dealing with difficult relations. Imperial relations are mapped onto sexual relations. For example, when Jasmine arrives in America, kills her rapist, and slashes her own tongue, she is then apparently free to dominate America(ns), leaving a trail of pain wherever she goes. Whereas Madame Butterfly's ultimate sacrifice for her American lover and their son was her own death, Jasmine's ultimate sacrifice is to abandon her disabled American partner and Vietnamese son. Jasmine breaks the repressive mould that shapes the perfect Oriental woman as submissive and self-sacrificing and opts to save herself and her artificially inseminated pregnancy, a germination of modernity in this Indian woman's body.

Strategies of encoding modernity on Asian women's bodies in *Miss Saigon* are limited to showing semi-naked dancers in bars (sites of sexual violence) and uniform Mao suits outside the bars (sites of political violence). When Kim and Chris become lovers, they share her world which is depicted as being very gentle, feminine, and traditional. *Miss Saigon* repeats and reinforces all the classical orientalist myths of Madame Butterfly and also represents and carries the globalisation of dominant ideologies. It embodies and updates the whole Saidian thesis, that the West represents itself and the
East as West and East, in ways that reflect and maintain particular power relations. The film *M. Butterfly* picks up the same orientalist clichés and subverts them. It plays with the idea of colonial desire, disturbing the taken-for-granted Madame Butterfly myth as universal and fixed. Because Rene Gallimard lives his relationship with Song Liling through the Madame Butterfly myth, he can only live and die within the limits of that story. In death he subverts the Madame Butterfly construction of perfect, eternal femininity by making himself the object of his own Madame Butterfly love story. The violence Gallimard experiences is the violence of fixed, closed narratives, like the traditional Madame Butterfly narrative. Such a story demands a ritual feminine self-sacrifice. However, Bernard Boursicot’s final refusal to enter the juridical and journalistic discourses of the “truth” of his and his Butterfly’s sexuality enables him to insinuate himself as the object of emergent discourses of sexual undecidability, or transtextuality.

Such undecidability and transtextuality emphasises the in-betweenness that is evident in popular culture. For instance, the use of film and mass media references in *The Satanic Verses* pushes its meaning beyond the confines of the very categories it uses so that different genres, like cultures as meaning-making systems, seep into each other. Such a text is cross-generic and cross-cultural. Similarly, the anchoring of fictional characters onto contemporary rock music icons who then map onto novelistic characters in *The Black Album* amplifies the meanings of that novel well beyond the usual parameters of fact/fiction, literature/pop culture and, of course, East/West. What I describe as postorientalism does not do away with recognisable tropes of Easternness and Westernness rather it repeats and elaborates such tropes, at times inverting or subverting them, and generally playing with them. This playfulness
mirrors postmodernity, where fragmented identity is the norm and simulation is itself a creative act or process because there are no "originals".

The Black Album plays with several "originals", like the Beatles' "white album", Rushdie's The Satanic Verses, and Kureishi's own fieto-biographical characters. Many of Shahid's friends' reactions to other, previous, "original" texts including, Prince's sexually explicit "black album", are indeed violent, and such violence climaxes in their reactions to The Satanic Verses. Meanwhile Shahid's relationship with Deedee Osgood explores the violence that underlies sex. A critique of violent relations is prominent in The Satanic Verses as Rushdie describes how "newness enters the world", through explosive births in hyperreality and through the violence of diaspora which continuously transforms societies. As pointed out in Chapter Four, the final irony of Rushdie's writing against violence is the violence subsequent to the publication of The Satanic Verses. The whole Rushdie Affair finally serves to reinforce precisely the point made in The Satanic Verses, that is, that repressed creative, or libidinal, energy can take a very destructive turn.

Inverting the cultural order of imperial violence in the form of occidentalism, which was also illustrated in the Rushdie Affair, does not solve the problem, it merely repeats and reinscribes more deadly violence. Jasmine inverts imperial violence and in doing so it remains in a binaristic paradigm. However, Jasmine also points towards the possibility of more flexible postcolonial possibilities. While Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine is, indeed, orientalist, it is also symptomatic of wide histories of colonisation, nationalism, decolonisation, and postcolonialism. However, while Rushdie critiques and parodies the desire for English/ness, especially in the character Saladin Chamcha in
The Satanic Verses, Bharati Mukherjee’s Jasmine’s desire to learn English is what Banerjee calls “an elitist impetus ... a peculiarly postcolonial inheritance as a signifier of desire” (1993:169).

My discussion of Rushdie’s The Satanic Verses, Kureishi’s The Black Album and Mukherjee’s Jasmine are case studies of the differences that exist between the British social text and the American social text. Spivak (1989) points out that the United States had no history of nineteenth century territorial imperialism that parallels Britain’s experiences. She says that imperialism itself was very class marked. The experiences of Asians in Britain are represented as being mostly those of the working class, as exemplified in Hanif Kureishi’s and Salman Rushdie’s texts. And when Kureishi’s British born Asians do make it to university, they do so with a very strong subaltern consciousness. Salman Rushdie’s British Asians are also painfully aware of their subalternity as they explore what is happening to them as a result of migration.

In contrast, Bharati Mukherjee’s American Asians fulfil all the neocolonial expectations of Asian-migrant-as-abject, but her central protagonist is somehow endowed with a humanist consciousness that enables her to transcend all material and historical circumstances.

Rushdie’s and Kureishi’s texts represent and reproduce the hybridity that is inherent in cultures that are influenced by colonial orientalist practices. Whereas they critique the construction of Asianness, Mukherjee’s Jasmine participates in her own orientalising. Despite her desire to be American it is precisely her Asianness, as presented to her lovers, she uses in order to forge sexual relations with white American men. They are her Pinkertons, O’Rourkes, Lomaxes, and Chrises. Even though Jasmine’s Bud is her
vulnerable Rochester, she uses and then discards him in order to go off with a younger, able-bodied American and his daughter, so that they can be a “real” family, just like the “real” French family Gallimard wanted with Song Liling and their son. Jasmine’s life with a disabled pig farmer and an adolescent Vietnamese foster son did not map onto her ideal American dream.

Just as a sadistic psycho-sexual fantasy drives Miss Saigon so too is Jasmine’s identity defined through the pain/pleasure she experiences in America. While Jasmine and Miss Saigon re-assert a Western self-image of the state of affairs between East and West, Rushdie’s and Kureishi’s work disorientate the taken-for-granted gulf between East and West and produce culture as residing in between East and West, so that one sees that postoriental identities are profoundly ambivalent. As a closed narrative, Miss Saigon concludes with melodramatic hysteria and destruction. M. Butterfly parodies such histrionics. Rushdie’s and Kureishi’s texts end with an openness to uncertainty or undecidability. And Jasmine ends with destruction, desertion and the start of yet another episode of the love/family cycle.

Postorientalist cultural formations are disjunctive, fractal, and overlapping, providing sites of resistance. Orientalist cultural fantasies seek continuity, uniformity and discreetness, seeking to conserve fantasies of past glories.

The contemporary subject, as illustrated in the selection of texts in this dissertation, is located at the fissure between identities. Yet it is not between identities, as such, but rather ends up being at the very centre of the structure of identity. It will not do to declare that there is no such thing as East and West. The texts I have referred to as
postorientalist exist in the space *between* East and West. They have disrupted the fictions that rely on clean, neat, coherent, exclusive categories and they disrupt, challenge and displace hegemonic flows of power. Postorientalist texts use and displace the paradigms of orientalism. Because they are transtextual and transcultural they disrupt the power in representations of fixed realities. Postorientalist texts live not only in novels and films but also in music, dreams, fantasies, myths, scandal and gossip.
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