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Salman Rushdie's concept of wholeness
in the context
of the literature of India

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Introduction

Why is it worthwhile to explore the concept of wholeness? One answer to this question is that wholeness is something we are all striving for and thus seems to be of central importance in our lives. Although we sometimes use different words to describe what we mean by wholeness, our alleged synonyms or descriptions all tend to emphasise the positive meaning associated with it.

One specific synonym, unbroken, shows particularly well these positive associations.

For a long time many people have believed in the myth that we were once whole, but lost our wholeness and should now endeavour to retrieve it.¹ A reason why this is desirable is that something that is united and not fragmented is usually in the position to function as it should. In human beings, the capability to function properly can only be generated when the individual meets adequate standards of health and well-being. In fact, there has now emerged the term wholistic – originally spelled holistic - health, which is defined as whole person health or simply as wellness. This stance explains how ‘health’ is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word ‘haelth’, which in turn comes from ‘hal’, the latter meaning ‘sound’ and ‘whole’.² The verb ‘heal’ is derived from ‘haelen’, which means ‘restore to wholeness’ or ‘health’. This is another indication that wholeness has always been considered as central to health and that this view is now consciously supported.

Unfortunately, the myth of wholeness has developed over time in ways that have led to a conception of the term, which has been revealed to be both unfeasible in its application to reality and also undesirable. Over time, wholeness has been increasingly equated with uniformity, stasis and oneness and as an ideal worth aspiring to. Associations with divinity have often been made as well in this context. The question arises now how we can successfully utilise this idea of wholeness in view of a world in which everything seems to be in motion, in which we confront inconsistencies in ourselves and in others and in which we find chaos, disaster, destruction, partition and fragmentation from which we can hardly escape. Not only do we often face difficulties understanding others, but we also very often find it hard to make sense of ourselves, being puzzled about actions and thoughts that seem very much out of character. It seems that uniformity is lacking in our identities. We sometimes appear to be very unpredictable. This is exactly because we are not static but

¹ Fietz, Lothar. Fragmentarisches Existieren – Wandlungen des Mythos von der verlorenen Ganzheit in der Geschichte philosophischer, theologischer und literarischer Menschenbilder. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1994: 3.

beings that constantly undergo metamorphoses. This is especially the case in the context of migration, which often results in the emergence of divided loyalties and hybridities of languages and cultures. Can we still think of oneness here?

The myth of wholeness suggests perfection and flawlessness in our selves and the world. But this seems in many ways to contradict our daily experience: We only need to watch or read about the latest news events in order to become aware of how far away we are from perfection. Racial, ethnic or religious hatred, fundamentalism or gender discrimination next to other forms of discrimination that are based on hierarchical ways of thinking render hope for the creation of ideal beings and an ideal world almost ludicrous.

It therefore seems important to re-conceptualise the idea of wholeness if we want to continue allocating it a central position in our lives. In my attempt to develop new ways of conceiving wholeness I especially want to focus on the relationship between the whole and its parts. The myth of human wholeness seems to suggest that parts of a person appear to be completely compatible, harmonious and consistent so that they are almost obliterated to the eyes of other persons. There seems to be the underlying assumption that wholeness gets lost if the parts are of a different nature. They would then become fragments, a term that emphasises that brokenness of things by implying the lack and deprivation in them. In contrast, I want to demonstrate how parts can be other than consistent without having to lead to the disintegration of the whole, the person. Instead of regarding the parts as fragments and thus as deficient, I suggest to see them as facets and thus as contributors to something positive. The various aspects of the self could and should thus be viewed as something valuable. Instead of stasis, I will stress the interaction of these facets and will show how it is the constructive interplay between them that leads to wholeness.

It is also crucial to keep in mind that wholeness is not so much an attribute we naturally have or suddenly and accidentally acquire, but that it is something we have to work towards – that it involves developmental processes individuals need to embark on. Whether we achieve wholeness or not depends on the attitudes we adopt towards aspects of our identities such as gender identity, communal identity, national identity and many more.

I want to show in the following both, how wholeness can be acquired, and reveal the conditions and contexts under which it can be lost. It should be noted that certain conditions in the post-colonial (and migration) context have a particularly strong influence on the probability of achieving wholeness and that they can also prove to be particularly difficult or

² “Health as Wholeness: Wholistic Health as whole Person Health or ‘Wellness’”. 13 Dec 2004. <http://www.holisticeducator.com/wellness.htm>: 1.

easy to tackle. Various Anglo-Indian texts as well as Salman Rushdie's works will serve as examples to demonstrate this situation.

I. Wholeness through the interaction between different aspects of a person's psyche and between an individual and society

In order to develop an idea of wholeness of a person it is crucial to focus at first on identity. In the following, the constitution of a person shall be discussed by presenting philosophical and psychological approaches. It is only then that an account of wholeness can be developed, which will include considerations of how it can be gained and lost whilst identity is preserved. Furthermore I will use theoretical stances that centre on the individual in their social and cultural context. The interaction between individual and society will have repercussions on both sides: While the individual is shaped by their environment, they also transform the environment they live and act in, which will have crucial influences on the possibility of attaining wholeness.

I.1. Personal identity in focus

It seems useful to begin examining theoretical approaches to identity – and more specifically, to wholeness – by presenting a few philosophical reflections on the theme. To start with, it should be asked why it seems so crucial to us to know of what personal identity consists.

Firstly, our concern with life makes us enquire what the events are that allow us to exist and those that cause our death.¹ It thus seems to be elementary to learn about the conditions necessary for identity, as this knowledge concerns our survival as persons, on which we can to some extent exercise our influence.

Secondly, our special relationships to persons we are close to usually entail the desire to know as much about the other person as possible, as they play such a central role in our lives. We are thus eager to find out about the uniqueness and particularities of a person.²

Finally, personal identity concerns the area of punishment and ethics. In order to hold someone responsible for a crime and punish the person, we need to know what connection there is between the person who committed the crime and the person we catch at a later time.³

Identity accounts in Western philosophy have over the centuries since Aristotle's time often stipulated not just the existence of, but also a relatively clear separation between, mind and body.⁴ Furthermore, the mind was regarded to be superior to the body and the same was said about the relation between reason and emotions. René Descartes was a philosopher who tried to explain how such a dualistic account of personal identity should be understood: To Descartes, reason seemed to be the source of all knowledge, which includes self-knowledge.⁵ Reason being located in the mind, he thus elevated the mind as the only criterion really necessary to personal identity. He also used the rather religious term 'soul' for what he considered as being the essence of man. By considering the soul as an immaterial substance, which could theoretically exist without the body,⁶ he could make space for his belief in God and the immortality of the soul. At the same time Descartes could not help but notice the

¹ „Is Personal Identity a Useful Concept?“ [Smiley Ben's Homepage](http://www.smileyben.com/words-essays/27.php). 25 Oct 2004. <http://www.smileyben.com/words-essays/27.php>: 4.

² Attallah, Moataz Mohammad. “Relative Identity – An answer to the Question ‘In what, if anything, does personal identity consist?’” [Phil 220 Philosophic Thinking](http://biotsavart.tripod.com/philtwo.htm). 01 Nov 2004. <http://biotsavart.tripod.com/philtwo.htm>: 2.

³ “Is Personal Identity a Useful Concept?” [Smiley Ben's Homepage](http://www.smileyben.com/words-essays/27.php): 4-5.

⁴ “Human Nature and Personal Identity.” 01 Nov 2004. <http://www.ipfw.edu/phil/faculty/Estevez/PersonalidentityandHumanNature.ppf>.

⁵ Descartes, René. “Discourse on the Method of Properly Conducting One's Reason and of Seeking the Truth in the Sciences.” [Discourse on Method and the Meditations](#). Transl.: Sutcliffe, F.E.. London: Penguin, 1968: 53.

⁶ Ibid: 76.

intense interaction between mind and body and observed how deeply intertwined they are,⁷ a discovery that seemed to make it difficult for him at times to maintain his dualistic theory.

John Locke, although maintaining Descartes' dualistic stance and an underlying religious orientation, tried at least to tackle the rather vague-sounding conception of an immaterial substance by explaining its alleged necessity. Being an empiricist, he explained that the ideas we receive in our minds through sensation and reflection, such as those of a certain colour or texture, need to inhere in something, as it seems inconceivable how they could subsist by themselves.⁸ He concludes that the foundation for such ideas must be a substratum or substance, but is at the same time not able to explain its nature other than through its function: "For our idea of substance is equally obscure, or none at all, in both: it is but a supposed I know not what, to support those ideas we call accidents."⁹

While Descartes has established thought and reason as identity criteria, Locke believes that it is consciousness and particularly its element memory that is absolutely essential to our identities.¹⁰ When mentioning memory he means memory of personal events and experiences, which is different from factual memory, which relates to historic events in which the individual in question was not involved. Furthermore, it is long-term memory Locke has in mind when he designates it as indicator of personal identity, as the span of a lifetime comes into focus here.¹¹

While memory seems in most cases a good indicator for personal identity, it is also a very precarious one, which can be shown in many other cases: Memory is unreliable and persons sometimes forget almost entire episodes of their lives or events others might have deemed important. It seems ludicrous to claim that just because a person cannot remember having performed a certain action in the past, they cannot be the same person.¹² The personal memory criterion is therefore insufficient to determine personal identity. Besides, personal memory always refers back to an event, wish, inclination, thought or other phenomenon in one's life so that memory does not merely seem to produce but also to presuppose personal identity.¹³

⁷ Descartes. "Meditations." Discourse on Method and The Meditations: 159.

⁸ Locke, John. An Essay Concerning Human Understanding. 1690. col. Alexander Campbell Fraser. Vol.1. New York: Dover, 1959: 390.

⁹ Ibid: 406.

¹⁰ Ibid: 198.

¹¹ Stewart, Wayne. Chapter 8: Personal Identity. Metaphysics by Default. 01 Nov 2004.

http://mbdefault.org/8_identity/default.asp: 3.

¹² Locke. An Essay Concerning Human Understanding: 451-52.

¹³ Vesey, Godfrey. Personal Identity. ed. D.J. O' Connor. Problems of Philosophy. London & Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1974: 60-61.

Another empirical thinker, David Hume, then departed radically from the dualist account of his predecessors and repudiated the idea of an immaterial substance as an essential part of our identity as well as that of memory as the decisive criterion. Hume argued that we do not have a clear idea of such a substance through reflection or sensation – for an empiricist the only way to knowledge – so that we should abandon the idea of a substratum and of a self.¹⁴ No-self theories have already existed for a long time in the East, such as the anatta doctrine by Gotama Buddha.¹⁵ The latter stressed how a person is “nothing but a changing combination of physical and psychical phenomena, and has no real existence in itself.”¹⁶ In a similar way, Hume explained how we conceive a substance as a collection of simple ideas that are united by the imagination, and deceive ourselves in this way.¹⁷

However, Hume fully acknowledged that objects have a certain coherence that needs to be accounted for and could not merely be explained by the random association of impressions. He observed some constancy in the simultaneous or consecutive occurrence of various phenomena, which he explained through the principle of causation.¹⁸ The different phenomena or perceptions are thus linked together by the relation of cause and effect, and mutually influence and modify each other. We seem to encounter a “complicated connected bundle”¹⁹ of events here. As causation involves change and movement, a person may vary in character and dispositions as well as in their impressions and ideas without losing their identity. As long as the various parts of a person are still connected, they can endure changes without losing their ‘personhood’.²⁰ It is thus the relation of ideas identity depends on: The relations produce identity by providing easy transitions.

Although Hume still maintains that a real union of parts, to which the relation of parts seems to give rise to, is a fictitious idea, he insists, like Locke, on the existence of the will, which he seems to regard as a regulatory principle. Discussing the terms liberty and necessity by taking his principle of causation into account, he states that a motive or intention to perform an action is the necessary precondition to action taking place.²¹ Necessary causation lies at the root of our action. If this were not the case then it would be difficult to hold someone

¹⁴ Hume, David. A Treatise of Human Nature. 1739-40. Mineola, New York: Dover Philosophical Classics, 2003: 174, 179.

¹⁵ Taylor, Richard. “The anatta doctrine and personal identity.” Philosophy East and West. Vol. 19. UP of Hawaii. 01 Nov 2004 <http://ccbs.ntu.edu.tw/FULLTEXT/JR-PHIL/taylor.htm>: 1.

¹⁶ Ibid: 4.

¹⁷ Hume. A Treatise of Human Nature: 11.

¹⁸ Ibid: 139-40.

¹⁹ Moses, Greg. The Problem of Personal Identity. 01 Nov 2004. <http://members.optusnet.com.au/~gjmoses/persidr.htm>: 4.

²⁰ Hume: A Treatise of Human Nature: 186.

²¹ Hume, David. “An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding.” Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals. 1748. Ed. P.H. Nidditch. 3rd ed. New York: Open UP, 1975: 90-91.

responsible for a crime, as the person's action would then be completely arbitrary and inexplicable even to the person who committed the crime. There would be no connection in such cases between a person's inclinations and the performed action so that everything would come down to chance. It was very important for Hume to emphasise that persons are – even without a self that has been conceived as an immaterial substance – moral agents who should justify their actions.

He postulated the will as the basis on which morality takes its beginning: Even though an action needs to be preceded by a motive or inclination in order to be correctly linked to a specific person, a person has the capacity to act or not to act according to these influences they feel in them. I would even go a step further than that and regard the will as regulatory principle in a much more comprehensive sense: The will, which is influenced by reason, emotions, preferences and other aspects in us, also acts back on these influences by controlling them, suppressing some of them and elevating others to the status of motive for action. This is, in my opinion, an earlier stage in which the will plays a predominant role. In this way, a person can be regarded as a moral agent without having been described in dualistic terms.

I want to explain and develop some more aspects of Hume's view of personal identity by introducing the terms of psychological connectedness and functionalism. Psychological connectedness can be described as the holding of direct psychological connections such as memory links, the connection between intention and action and enduring dispositions.²² Psychological continuity thus resembles closely Hume's account of causality and demands overlapping chains of strong connectedness. This view on identity is supplemented by functionalism, which identifies beliefs, desires and other psychological states by their causal functions in the interaction of such states.

Naturally, a term like 'strong connectedness' is a relative and vague term and this makes it difficult to decide at what exact point psychological connectedness is too weak for a person to continue to exist. It seems, however, at least an indication to say that personal identity is lost when a massive and discontinuous loss of psychological connectedness occurs,²³ which might be the result of an accident, a stroke, operation, trauma or another sudden life-changing event. The person might then appear completely changed and there is no causal chain that could be identified as the explanation for such a change.

²² More, Max. Part 1: Reductionism, Cause, and Identity. Chapter 1: Causal Conditions for Continuity. The Diachronic Self – Identity, Continuity, Transformation. Dec 1995. 15 Nov 2004. <http://www.maxmore.com>.: 3-4.

²³ More. Part 1: Reductionism, Cause and Identity. Chapter 2: The Terminus of the Self. The Diachronic Self ... Transformation: 13.

However, if changes occur more gradually and we can still detect some – although significantly reduced – psychological connectedness, we should rather speak of person-stages instead of different persons. The concept of person-stages allows for considerable transformations persons undergo during their lives. Person stages are phases in peoples' lives.²⁴ Transformationism should be seen as a vital part of a personal identity approach that is of a non-static nature, and psychological connectedness makes room for it.²⁵ The former clearly recognises that remaining without change is a universal impossibility,²⁶ and that humans are instead shaped by what the world is made of, namely by impermanence, instability and decay.²⁷

Transformationism can integrate both, connectedness and continuity.²⁸ Connectedness naturally matters to us, as most of us would regret losing all our current memories even if continuity were maintained. Continuity is the element that emphasises change and it seems that we are interested in personal continuity as well because in general we are concerned much more about our future self-phases than what could merely be explained by our interest in connectedness.

One reason for our concern about personal continuity is that many of us value our lives as a whole and not just the present situation of our lives. This enables us to commit to long-term projects, be they scholarly or commercial, which might take many years to complete. Focusing on the course of life also makes it possible to make personal commitments such as those concerning relationships and families. Doing so means that we actively influence future phases of our lives so that there emerges an intention-connectedness between it and our current phase.

Another reason for our concern with personal continuity is that we might care about an ideal self. This involves keeping all those of our characteristics that are considered values and other additional abilities and dispositions we long to have. Our ideal identity thus gives direction to the development of certain personality traits. Aiming for an ideal self entails not paying too much attention to connectedness, as the latter would noticeably slow down the process of change.

²⁴ Shoemaker, Sydney. "Personal Identity: A Materialist's Account." Shoemaker, Sydney & Swinburne, Richard. *Personal Identity*. Great Debates in Philosophy. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984: 75.

²⁵ More. Part 2: Transformation, Concern, And Value. Chapter 3: A Transformationist Account of Personal Continuity. *The Diachronic Self... Transformation*: 18.

²⁶ Attallah. "Relative Identity ... consist?" *Phil 220 Philosophical Thinking*: 3.

²⁷ Cottingham, John. *On the Meaning of life: Thinking in Action*. London: Routledge, 2003: 32.? check page number

²⁸ More. Part 2: Transformation, ... Value. Chapter 3: A Transformationist Account of Personal Continuity. *The Diachronic Self... Transformation*: 17-18.

Even if we do not go as far as to strive for an ideal self, we tend to value a progressive pattern of life as a whole if we care for continuity. We thus look out for a pattern of growth and seek to explore new personal attributes. Self-transformation as a project that is motivated by constructive values implies a disposition towards novelty, an appreciation of improvement as well as a readiness to accept uncertainty. We will then concentrate on processes of development, maturation, improvement and exploration.

All these motives for working towards personal continuity can be seen as attempts to make a life a meaningful whole instead of merely being satisfied with a meaningless succession of states and experiences. In contrast, bestowing meaning on pursuits in isolation, irrespective of other individual pursuits and often irrespective of the moral status of the former, fosters instability.²⁹ Meaningful lives require a self-conscious structuring of our selves and our activities.³⁰ There also has to be some degree of unified agency, as we do not merely deal with a bundle of individual desires and preferences. It is life plans that structure projects, desires, principles and actions. In adopting such plans, we consider ourselves less as person-stages and more as enduring selves despite the probability of a certain reduction in connectedness.

It is however important that the kind of changes that occur in us are of a constructive nature. We thus have to distinguish between deteriorative changes and augmentative changes: While deteriorative changes weaken or destroy some personal characteristics without providing a compensatory addition, augmentative changes do not completely destroy an existing attribute, but change it or enhance it.³¹ Augmentative changes usually involve less reduction in connectedness than deteriorative changes do in aspects of self. As a rule, we regard deteriorative changes as undesirable, as we do not want to lose characteristics we value, and developmental changes as desirable, as we believe that we undergo a change for the better.

It is vital for personal continuity that change is integrated, which is the case when a new characteristic is brought into harmony with our existing condition. We would then speak of assimilation as functional integration, assimilation concerning the person as a whole. Functional integration involves interdependence that entails close interaction, such as those between sensory inputs and behavioural outputs.³² Parts of us must influence each other in an organised and self-conscious way. Assimilation is then a process starting with something that

²⁹ Cottingham. On the meaning of life: 27.

³⁰ More. Part 2. Chapter 3: A Transformationist Account of Personal Continuity. The Diachronic Self ... Transformation: 30.

³¹ More. Part 2. Chapter 4: Technological Transformation and Assimilation. The Diachronic Self ... Transformation: 1.

³² Shoemaker. "Personal Identity: a Materialist's Account." Shoemaker & Swinburne. Personal Identity: 92.

is only slightly integrated and moves towards highly integrated parts in a person,³³ which are revealed in relatively consistent and coherent sets of beliefs and values, which usually lead to rational actions.³⁴ John Ralston Saul mentions at this point the use of our various capacities like those for common sense, reason, intuition, imagination, memory and ethical behaviour, stating that the controlled interaction of these aspects strives towards equilibrium. He regards this process as absolutely essential: “The process of seeking equilibrium is the essence of civilization.”³⁵ At the same time we need to keep in mind that we will not reach complete integration or equilibrium, as then there would be stasis at the end. Both, integration and equilibrium should always be regarded as dynamic and therefore as processes if we want to acknowledge them as belonging to our reality as human beings.

Furthermore, there are limits to the degree of change that is possible for a person to assimilate. There are variations regarding the scope of change that can be possibly undergone between individuals, with the upper limit being determined by our common genetic, neurological and biological nature.³⁶ If a person embarks on changes that exceed their ability to assimilate, their minds first start to compartmentalise, which means that subsystems of beliefs, desires and values are created that are internally coherent but do not cohere well with each other.³⁷ Mental states from different compartments either do not relate to influence action at all or, if they do, result in behaviour that seems incoherent and irrational.

If a lack of assimilation becomes too overwhelming, personalities will disintegrate or fracture.³⁸ This is meant when we speak of the end of a person’s existence in this context, which we explained earlier by insufficient inner connectedness. There can be different reasons that lead to disconnectedness and fragmentation: The personality sometimes fragments as a result of the dissolution between elements of the self. This might be the result of the loss of personal aspects, which leaves gaps that pose an obstacle to an overall functioning of the personality aspects that are still present. Such fragmentation can be gradual or sudden. Another reason why disintegration occurs can be the introduction of discordant elements that cannot be assimilated.

Theories of psychological connectedness and continuity take into account that our psychologies are physically embodied and that alterations in our physical nature can have

³³ More. Part 2. Chapter 4. Technological Transformation and Assimilation. The Diachronic Self... Transformation.: 12.

³⁴ Shoemaker. “Personal Identity: a Materialist’s Account.” Shoemaker & Swinburne. Personal Identity: 96.

³⁵ Saul, John Ralston. On Equilibrium. 2001. Camberwell, Victoria, Australia: Penguin, 2002: 14.

³⁶ More. Part 2. Chapter 4: Technological Transformation and Assimilation. The Diachronic Self... Transformation.: 8.

³⁷ Shoemaker. “Personal Identity: a Materialist’s Account.” Shoemaker & Swinburne. Personal Identity: 96.

repercussions on our identity.³⁹ Physical existence is thus deemed significant,⁴⁰ but in an instrumental way. This is due to the functional roles parts of the bodies play. Identity is thus regarded as relative, which corresponds to the current scientific trend.⁴¹ Neither the particular matter that constitutes the body nor the specific form of it has intrinsic significance for personal identity. It is for example possible that psychological connectedness or continuity might be preserved through other means than through our present physical constitution in the future, for example through the working of a teletransporter.⁴²

However, this is presently not the case. In addition, we confront interconnectedness between physical parts and psychological states, which makes it possible to avoid the traps of dualism.

The arguments in favour of psychological continuity and connectedness as decisive identity criteria seem convincing to me also in view of the fact that we can successfully – although often subconsciously - direct our everyday lives and our relations with others on the basis of the assumption of the veracity of these arguments.

³⁸ More. Part 2. Chapter 4: Technological Transformation and Assimilation. [The Diachronic Self... Transformation.](#): 8.

³⁹ Ibid: 23.

⁴⁰ There is another source worth pointing out here: Bernard Williams discusses the importance of the body / physical existence in respect to personal identity in: [Problems of the Self](#). Philosophical Papers 1956-72. 1973. London & New York: Cambridge UP, 1973: 10-11.

⁴¹ Attallah. "Relative Identity... consist?" [Phil 220 Philosophic Thinking](#): 2.

⁴² "Is Personal Identity a Useful Concept?" [Smiley Ben's Homepage](#): 9-10.

I.2. C.G. Jung on structure and functions of the human psyche

Jung defines identity by presenting the interplay of various factors that make the development of identity possible, but presents these factors not so much as outside factors, but as determinants seated in each person's psyche. These factors or aspects of a person's psyche constitute and form very much a person's way of thinking, feeling and behaving. Important determinants for Jung are the unconscious as well as the conscious part of a person's psyche, which are seemingly opposites, but are in continued close interaction with each other, complementing and also compensating one another.¹ This union of conscious and unconscious contents is called 'transcendent' function by Jung. By giving us the reasons for this kind of relationship, he already introduces some of the main features of the conscious and unconscious as well as their interaction: The contents of consciousness must attain a certain intensity called the 'threshold intensity', which enables them to be integrated in consciousness instead of falling into the unconscious. Consciousness furthermore exercises an inhibition (censorship) on all incompatible material, which sinks into the unconscious. The unconscious contains combinations that are fantastic and that have not entered consciousness, but which will do so in the course of time and under suitable conditions. Whereas consciousness is concerned with the momentary process of adaptation (which is never achieved once and for all), the unconscious contains both forgotten material of the individual's own past as well as the inherited behaviour traces that constitute the mind's structure.

The one-sided use of one's consciousness, which can often be seen in our behaviour, is of an ambiguous nature:² On the one hand, the directedness of consciousness (which implies one-sidedness) is of the utmost importance in order to achieve any goals in life and develop certain ideas, for example in science and technology. On the other hand, Jung argues quite convincingly, basing his statements on his principle of the complementing function of the unconscious, that the sole one-sided use of consciousness leads to an immense tension between the two parts of the psyche. This tension often entails a sudden, uncontrolled eruption of unconscious contents into consciousness, which makes directed actions impossible to be performed: "The further we are able to remove ourselves from the unconscious through directed functioning, the more readily a powerful counter-position can build up in the

¹ Jung, Carl Gustav. The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche. 1960. Ed. Sir Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, Gerhard Adler, William McGuire. Trans. R.F.C. Hull. 2nd Edition. Vol. 8. The Collected Works. London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969: 69.

² Ibid: 71.

unconscious, and when this breaks out it may have disagreeable consequences.”³ The regulating counter-influence of the unconscious has here been lost.

Jung stresses the fact that the unconscious could not be completely discovered in all its various facets and thus be brought under control so that such eruptions into consciousness could not take place any longer. Thereby he distances himself from Freud’s positivistic belief that we will finally be able one day to understand the complexity of our psyche. Freud neglected to acknowledge that it is not in nature with the normally unknown state of the unconscious to be completely explored. The term ‘transcendent function’ should by now have become much clearer in its meaning: “It is called ‘transcendent’ because it makes the transition from one attitude to another organically possible, without loss of the unconscious.”⁴ Jung names creativity as a means of connecting consciousness and the unconscious.

Naturally, the confrontation between the ego, which is defined as the continuous centre of consciousness, and the unconscious must be a many-sided one, as both parts embody many different aspects that have all to be taken into account. Consciousness can thus be continually widened. It is therefore relative and can show a whole scale of intensities.

It is now of importance to focus further on the structure and the contents of the unconscious, as the unconscious is obviously the one part of the psyche that is the most enigmatic to us due to its greater inaccessibility. Jung distinguishes various different parts of the unconscious, especially two main parts, which are the ‘personal’ and the ‘collective unconscious’. The ‘personal unconscious’ is the receptacle of all lost memories and contents that are too weak to appear in consciousness or contents that have been repressed because it is too painful for the individual to be reminded of them. These can be either thoughts or emotions, which are related to the individual’s personal history.

The ‘complexes’ seem to me to make the transition between ‘personal’ and ‘collective’ unconscious’: On the one hand, they are personal psychic elements differing in every person, on the other hand the phenomenon of their mode of existence is a general one. To understand this, we have to look at Jung’s definition of them more closely: The term ‘complex’ has actually been introduced by Jung. He states how the constellation of a complex points towards a disturbed state of consciousness.⁵ In such a case, there is no longer any unity of consciousness and the will is diminished in its power. Thus, the complex must possess some force that exceeds at times our conscious intentions, otherwise there would not be a disunity of consciousness. Compulsive thinking and acting are typical characteristics of the active

³ Ibid: 71.

⁴ Ibid: 73.

⁵ Ibid: 96.

complex. During that time the individual cannot be held fully responsible for their actions. Jung sums these findings up in his definition of a complex being “the *image* of a certain psychic situation which is strongly accentuated emotionally and is, moreover, incompatible with the habitual attitude of consciousness.”⁶ It is remarkable that these complexes have a powerful inner coherence, their own wholeness and a high degree of autonomy. They are not fully under the control of consciousness and thus behave like foreign intruders there. Due to this fragmentation there is friction and disharmony between consciousness and this part of the unconscious. The complex can often be suppressed, but appears again at the first opportunity it gets. Jung even goes as far as stating that in principle there is no difference between a fragmentary personality and a complex. In both cases one deals with a lack of control of the acting subject. The only difference might be that it is not certain if complexes also (like the split-off part of the fragmented person) have their own consciousness. Even so, they reveal their characters as *splinter psyches*. They often appear, for example, in personified form in dreams. They can also appear as voices in the case of psychoses. I will deal with this phenomenon in the next chapter. Often they appear due to a so-called trauma, which splits off something of the psyche. This means that it is completely rejected by consciousness. The emotional shock is often a moral conflict, which derives from the inability to accept the whole of one’s nature. Due to the unconsciousness of the complexes, they gain in power and even assimilate the ego, which results in a momentary alteration of personality. If the complexes continue to act in such a way, the result tends to be a dissociation of the personality. However, Jung stresses that “complexes are not entirely morbid by nature but are *characteristic expressions of the psyche*”⁷, which means that they have occurred in all peoples and in all epochs. Jung attributes a great importance to the complex in respect to its repercussions in so far as he calls it “the architect of dreams and of symptoms”⁸, thus rejecting Freud’s view of the dream being the main path to the unconscious. By giving complexes a more crucial role, Jung and other modern psychologists have opened up a psychic taboo area cohabited with hopes and fears. They are now counted among the normal phenomena of life and make up the structure of the unconscious psyche. Even though they are considered to be fragments and lead a more or less autonomous existence, in my opinion it depends on the attitude of consciousness towards them if they become more powerful or not. If consciousness accepts their existence as something that belongs to the psyche as a whole, they can rather be seen as an enrichment of the personality by pointing out the issues and aspects the latter

⁶ Ibid: 96.

⁷ Ibid: 101.

⁸ Ibid:101.

should deal and come to terms with. Only the sharp increase in power of the complexes poses a real danger to man, which causes mental illness.

I now turn to Jung's understanding of the 'collective unconscious', which makes up a deeper area of the unconscious and which is crucial to Jung's understanding of man's psyche. The 'collective unconscious' is made of qualities that are not individually acquired, but are inherited. This concept thus presupposes that the individual consciousness is not a *tabula rasa*, but consists of repeated functions that have been created a long time before and are inherited in the brain structure.⁹ These inherited structures work in the same way in every individual. As a result, the forms they take on are identical; only the expressions in different persons can be very diverse, as the forms are filtered through individual consciousness. Jung claims that it is due to this fundamental uniformity of the unconscious psyche that human beings are able to communicate with each other, thus transcending the differences of individual consciousness. Jung mentions for example concordances in the realm of so-called fantastic ideas – for example religious or superstitious ideas -, thereby stressing that the ideas themselves are not inherited, but that there is a disposition to react in the same way as people have always reacted which is inherited.

Jung, focussing on the constitution of the collective unconscious, claims that the latter can itself be separated into different layers: One layer Jung mentions here is the instincts as impulses to carry out actions from necessity, without the involvement of consciousness¹⁰. One can here think of the well-known 'fight-or-flight'-instinct by which is meant the readiness to either run away or defend oneself in case of danger. Besides these instincts, there is another layer, which is situated even deeper in the unconscious: this layer consists of what Jung calls "the *a priori*, inborn forms of 'intuition', namely the *archetypes* of perception and apprehension, which are the necessary *a priori* determinants of all psychic processes:"¹¹ The archetypes cause man to perceive and apprehend the world in patterns that have become specific for humanity. However, it is difficult to determine the number of archetypes, as we are normally not aware any longer to what extent our conventional concepts are based on archetypal modes of perceptions. Due to our differentiation of thinking, the primordial images have been obscured so that they often do not appear in their original form any more, but in a highly altered shape. The number of archetypes (provided each archetype is significant in a certain way) is important insofar as a high number of them would pose a serious limitation to consciousness and would attribute an even more outstanding role to the collective

⁹ Ibid: 110.

¹⁰ Ibid: 130.

¹¹ Ibid: 133.

unconscious than what is already done by the archetypes' mere presence. The archetypes determine the form and direction of instinct. They are mythological motifs or primordial images, which is why the myths of all nations can be regarded as their real exponents.¹² The non-rational origin and nature shall be explained later on when I will describe the archetypes that Jung places most importance on and which seem to be crucial to me to the understanding of Salman Rushdie's works. To sum up what I have said about the structure and nature of the collective unconscious I here insert a quotation by Jung himself: "The unconscious, on the other hand, is the source of the instinctual forces of the psyche and of the forms or categories that regulate them, namely the archetypes."¹³

To comprehend Jung's understanding of personality and wholeness, it is crucial that we now, after having acquainted ourselves with the basic nature and structure of the psyche, turn towards the laws that govern the psychic processes and forces. Therefore, we have to take a closer look at Jung's understanding of energy: Psychic energy as a term has long been in use.¹⁴ Jung takes up two of the basic conceptions of energy - firstly, as specific motion or force when actual, secondly, as a state or condition when potential. We might not be very well acquainted with the use of the term 'energy' in its latter meaning, but it becomes perfectly comprehensible and vital to integrate it when we look at Jung's more specific definition of the term: Energy is potential when we speak of specific achievements, possibilities, attitudes or aptitudes, which are its various *states*. It thus contrasts the dynamic aspects of the psyche, which are instinct, wishing, willing, affect, attention and capacity for work, which make up the psychic *forces*.

As we know that both conscious and unconscious processes are part of the psyche, we also have to allocate our concept of energy to such a broad basis that it comprises both aspects. The psychic process is simply regarded as a life-process by Jung, which entails that the concept of psychic energy is transformed into the broader one of life-energy, the latter including psychic energy as a specific part. I consider this broadening of the concept as a development of the view on energy, as it defines the role and function the psyche has in the human organism, thus giving us a greater context. Even though admitting not to have empirical proof of it, Jung considers it highly probable that the psychic and physical are essentially connected through reciprocal action. In order to differentiate the psychological use of life-energy from other uses of the term (for example the uses of it in physics and biology), Jung gives it the name 'libido'. The psychic and the physical are linked with each other by

¹² Ibid: 152.

¹³ Ibid: 158.

¹⁴ Ibid: 14-15.

their interaction and overlap, but cannot be identified with each other or described in too close symbiotic terms.

Within the context of the conservation of energy, Jung points out the principle of equivalence, which says that for a certain amount of energy used to bring about a certain condition, there is an equal quantity of energy that appears elsewhere.¹⁵ According to the principle of equivalence, a conscious value that disappears always produces a substitute formation, an equivalent value that appears elsewhere. The difficulty here is that this substitute formation is not always a conscious one, so that the person is not aware of the new psychic fact, which is thus uncontrolled and can develop a kind of self-dynamism.

The most important point of my analysis here is that Jung's understanding of the principle of equivalence includes the idea of development. Development, however, can only occur in the case of substances undergoing changes, "which, from the energetic standpoint, appear as systems of energy capable of theoretically unlimited interchangeability and modulation under the principle of equivalence, and on the obvious assumption of a difference in potential."¹⁶ Substance is here defined as the expression of the energetic system.

Jung purports a final point of view where causes like energy changes are seen as means to an end. The final point of view thus shows a forward direction.

Jung now mentions a complementary proposition to the principle of equivalence in the theory of energy, namely the principle of entropy: This principle gives us the reason for the transformations of energy described before, which is a difference in intensity. Opposites or so-called differences in intensity are considered by Jung to be a law that inheres in the nature of man. We here deal with partial processes that make up a relatively closed system, which regulates itself. The psyche is regarded as such a closed system, in which transformations of energy lead to an equalization of differences. It is important to see that although a balance between opposites is desirable, it is undesirable to achieve entropy almost completely (an absolute entropy is not possible). This is the case because it makes it almost impossible for new developments to occur and leads to an almost static personality, which is against the natural dynamic make-up of the psyche and its oppositional structure. As a result of this disturbed energy process one finds these cases of nearly accomplished entropy mainly in mental disturbances whose main characteristics are their excessive seclusion from the environment.

¹⁵ Ibid: 18.

¹⁶ Ibid: 22.

Jung mentions now two of the most important phenomena of psychic life, which are the progression and regression of libido.¹⁷ It can be conceded that they can be linked to the attitude types of extraversion and introversion¹⁸ insofar as “progression, as adaptation to outer conditions, could be regarded as extraversion”¹⁹ and “regression, as adaptation to inner conditions, could be regarded as introversion.”²⁰ However, it is important to note the differences, which lie in the fact that regression and progression are dynamic processes, whereas extraversion and introversion are the forms resulting from these dynamic processes. He defines progression as the daily advance of the process of psychological adaptation. The demands of environmental conditions are satisfied here. This necessarily involves an attitude, which is directed and one-sided in so far as the environment is the sole factor that directs the individual’s behaviour without the observation of the latter’s own needs (even though they sometimes coincide). This one-sided attitude is not a static one either, as environmental conditions change and thus the demands on the individual in respect to the latter’s adaptation to it. It seems to be convincing when Jung claims that the pairs of opposites are united in the co-ordinated flow of these psychic processes. Otherwise this directed progression would not be possible: “Hence it is essential for progression, which is the successful achievement of adaptation, that impulse and counter-impulse, positive and negative, should reach a state of regular interaction and mutual influence.”²¹

Regression, on the other hand, is the backward movement of the libido. It occurs when opposites collide and are thus deprived of value and depotentiated. The loss of value is the only thing that consciousness notices. However, there is now an increase in value of all the psychic processes that are not concerned with outward adaptation and therefore are seldom present in consciousness. The unconscious contents are now the ones in charge of the psyche and manifest themselves indirectly, for example in the form of disturbances of conscious behaviour. The value of these formerly unconscious contents that come now to the surface are useless from the standpoint of adaptation. This is also why they are kept at a distance by the directed psychic function. They are often partly immoral, unaesthetic and of an irrational and imaginary nature. Obviously these contents are the indicators of the individual’s personal needs, which demand their right. It shows that an individual cannot be content by merely satisfying the requirements imposed on them by society. This observation will to some extent

¹⁷ Ibid: 32

¹⁸ Jung. Psychological Types. Ed. Read, Fordham, Adler and McGuire. Transl. H.G. Baynes and R.F.C. Hull. Vol. 6. The Collected Works. London & Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971: 330-407.

¹⁹ Jung. The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche: 40.

²⁰ Ibid: 40.

²¹ Ibid: 33.

be confirmed in the following chapter, in which the individual's place in society is further highlighted.

Jung stresses that although these formerly unconscious contents might be of a rather unpleasant nature due to their unused and undifferentiated condition, they are never only negative: "... it will be found that this 'slime' contains not merely incompatible and rejected remnants of everyday life, or inconvenient and objectionable animal tendencies, but also germs of new life and vital possibilities for the future."²² We find that Jung rejects a simple dualism that views one part of psychic contents as merely negative and useless. Jung's important contribution to psychology is the greater emphasis on the complexity of the human psyche. The unpleasant psychic contents are crucial and useful to the extent that the individual's own needs demand attention as well so that the individual can act in a more controlled and harmonious manner with themselves and display a greater part of their psyche. "In other words, regression leads to the necessity of adapting to the inner world of the psyche."²³ Both functions, the adaptation to one's inner world and to society, have to be fulfilled in order to avoid psychic disorders that result from the one-sided use of one function only. Regression makes us aware of this: "This seems to me to indicate that regression is not necessarily a retrograde step in the sense of a backwards development or degeneration, but rather represents a necessary phase of development."²⁴

It is apparent that progression and regression are dynamic processes, which are conditioned by the qualities of matter. They can be called transitional stages in the flow of energy and are not to be seen as a simple dichotomy, as for example it is possible to see progression and the adaptation that ensues from it as a means to regression, to a manifestation of the inner world in the outer. This would happen in the ideal case of adhering to both forms of adaptation.

Not only is the movement itself of the energetic process important, but also its value intensity, whose meaning Jacobi tries to explain. She states that the value intensity defines the meaning content, which is measured by the constellation in which an image appears in every individual case.²⁵ Constellation is the importance of an image in relation to its context. Thus the mother-image, appearing for example in a dream, will have a higher importance to a person suffering from a mother complex than to one suffering from a father complex. This constellation that measures the meaning content and thus the value intensity will be particularly important in Rushdie's presentation of dream images of various characters in his novels. We will thus

²² Ibid: 34-35.

²³ Ibid: 36.

²⁴ Ibid: 37.

²⁵ Jacobi, Jolande. *The Psychology of C.G. Jung*. 1942. 7th Edition. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968: 58-59.

much better understand the significance that the various dream images have for the person in a certain context.

The basic structure and processes of the psyche as outlined above serve Jung as tools to track down more characteristics of the psyche's structure and further processes. These findings shall then be used for developing ways of therapeutic treatment in case of disturbing and / or serious disorders in someone's psyche and also for coming to a conclusion how the original goal of attaining 'wholeness' can be achieved. Jolande Jacobi stresses exactly this two-fold aspect of Jungian psychology when she declares that "apart from its medical aspect, Jungian psychotherapy is thus a system of education and spiritual guidance, an aid in the forming of the personality."²⁶ Jacobi shows Jung's scientific approach as being more comprehensive than most others. An example of this is that Jung adds the final viewpoint to the already existing causal one, which is traditionally used by scientists, thus stressing the individual's capability for development as well as showing that every individual needs a goal in life. It should be of interest here to see how Jung shows and thus tries to prove (which he has to if he wants to give his defence of his principle of finality more weight) that there must be other principles beside that of causality by presenting the phenomenon of synchronicity as an acausal connective principle. Jung defines the synchronicity principle as follows: "Above all, it is the fact of causeless order, or rather, of meaningful orderedness, that may throw light on psychophysical parallelism...it is contained in a psychically relative space and time, that is to say in an irrepresentable space-time continuum."²⁷ Jung recounts instances where all conscious activity and all sense perception have certainly been suspended, but where consciousness, reproducible ideas, acts of judgment, and perceptions can still continue to exist. These cases have for example been those of coma patients who could later tell others what happened at the time when they were unconscious. It seems that the angle of vision has been altered. Taking these findings as a basis to form a conclusion, Jung states that

synchronicity is a phenomenon that seems to be primarily connected with psychic conditions, that is to say with processes in the unconscious. Synchronistic phenomena are found to occur ... but are extremely difficult to verify objectively and cannot be statistically evaluated (at least at present).²⁸

Jung regards synchronicity as a special instance of psychic orderedness and refines his definition of the principle by saying: "The meaningful coincidence or equivalence of a psychic and a physical state that have no causal relationship to one another means, in general

²⁶ Jacobi. *The Psychology of C.G. Jung*: 60.

²⁷ Jung. *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*: 506.

²⁸ *Ibid*: 511.

terms, that it is a modality without a cause, an ‘acausal orderedness’.”²⁹ It is important here to see that even though there is no causal relationship between these events they are still called to be meaningful. Jung displays these instances of psychic orderedness that relate to synchronicity in his use of archetypes, which show this kind of *a priori* orderedness Jung spoke of and which shall be focussed on more closely later on. Jung calls the events of synchronicity ‘creative acts’, “the continuous creation of a pattern that exists from all eternity, repeats itself sporadically, and is not derivable from any known antecedents.”³⁰ Jung admits that meaningful coincidences are naturally thinkable as pure chance, but says also that this explanation becomes increasingly untenable in case of their multiplication. We would probably regard these instances as ‘miracles’, as they do not correspond to our idea of what reality is like. Jung thus broadens our understanding of the reality of both the world and a person and their capacities and is now in a position to justify his claim of possible human development much better (a broader conception of man necessarily enables the latter to develop themselves to a greater extent).

Human development, however, can only go as far as the individual structure of the person allows it to go. It cannot exceed the possibilities that are inherent in an individual and that are different from those inherent in another individual.³¹

What consequences does this new account of synchronicity now have on our view on the nature of the human mind in respect to its liability to change? The individual is obviously ‘fixed’ insofar as their psyche shows a kind of orderedness. Part of this orderedness is expressed in patterns that are the same in each individual. In addition, every individual has their own individual structure. However, Jung goes beyond mentioning these patterns and describes synchronicity furthermore as unconscious processes. These he calls creative acts,³² which means that development can now take place in the sense that various individual characteristics that have hitherto been suppressed and at least been partly unconscious as well as archetypal images now enter consciousness and interact with the contents there. The adoption of completely new characteristics from outside during an individual’s lifetime is thus not possible according to Jung.

Jung applies his theory of the unconscious to dreams and their interpretation. I have already alluded to the importance of dream images in Rushdie’s works. Thus, the context in which dreams occur needs to be elucidated first. Jung first of all mentions how the origin of dreams

²⁹ Ibid: 516.

³⁰ Ibid: 518.

³¹ Jacobi. *The Psychology of C.G. Jung*: 69.

³² Jung. *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*: 518.

is different from that of conscious contents: "... they do not arise, like other conscious contents, from any clearly discernible, logical and emotional continuity of experience, but are remnants of a peculiar psychic activity taking place during sleep."³³ However, he points out that they have some links with consciousness nevertheless in that impressions or thoughts of the previous day or days are often dealt with in dreams. Thus, in a way we can see some kind of continuity in dreams, which points backwards (towards the past). Nevertheless, it is important to emphasise that dreams also orientate themselves forwards, as they try to exercise their influence on people's future behaviour. The structure of the dreams is also essentially different from the one we encounter in conscious contents: The combination of ideas is fantastic here, as it is in contrast to our reality thinking, especially to logical sequences of ideas that we are used to. It is certainly right when Jung says that it is quite characteristic of man that they often consider dreams to be meaningless due to both their origin and their peculiar structure. He asks us, however, to understand that it is our difficulty in understanding the dream and the content, and not the insufficiency of the dream itself that often prevents us from dealing with dreams in a way that would be useful to our development of personality. This view ties in with Jung's elucidation of the standpoint of finality, which says that every psychic phenomenon has a goal or purpose. The underlying main aim is normally an enrichment of an individual's personality.

At the beginning of this chapter I briefly described the functions of consciousness and the unconscious and mentioned the complementing function of the unconscious to consciousness. This is exactly what happens in the instance of dreams. They are examples of how the unconscious comes up with a completely different viewpoint and how this leads to a necessary psychological adjustment that makes a properly balanced action possible at all. In dream analysis, Jung's final view concentrates much more than his predecessors on the special significance of each symbol in the different individuals. There are no fixed meanings of symbols according to the final standpoint, but the dream-image rather expresses a specific psychological situation³⁴ (which must be a different one for every individual). Jung demands an integration of the context and background of an individual into the interpretation of a dream symbol. This conditionalism should be seen as an important contribution to a better understanding of dreams.

This conception of symbols shows that the dream content must always be of a manifold nature, as the individual's situation as well as his background are complex factors that are

³³ Jung. *The Structure And Dynamics of the Psyche*: 237.

³⁴ *Ibid*: 246.

taken into account: “From this standpoint, the significance lies precisely in the diversity of symbolical expressions in the dream and not in their uniformity of meaning ... symbols.”³⁵

Again, Jung claims that typical motifs in dreams are of more significance due to their resemblance to the motifs of mythology. This relates to the vital role he attributes to the archetypes of the collective unconscious. We can assume that recurrent dreams, which some people have, are also rather significant dreams.³⁶ Significance seems at least to be the most plausible explanation for their repeated occurrence.

It is the nature of dreams that they express themselves in the language of parable or simile. Knowing this, the great use of dreams in literature is hardly surprising.

The dream is not a mirror to the unconscious in general, but only to “certain contents, which are linked together associatively and are selected by the conscious situation of the moment.”³⁷

This is important because the individual’s personal situation is thus taken into account more closely once again. The way to do so is again by the process of complementation: “... because the dream contains its unconscious complement, that is, the material which the conscious situation has constellated in the unconscious.”³⁸ The situation a person finds themselves in thus becomes clearer and in this way changes a person’s attitude for the better. Therefore one can conclude that dreams contribute to the psyche’s self-regulation by bringing up repressed, neglected or unknown contents, which do not only complement the conscious contents, but also have a compensatory function in respect to them. Religious compensations are given particular emphasis.

In contrast to Freud, Jung claims that not all the dreams are of a wish-fulfilling and sleep-preserving nature. Rushdie will take up this point by showing dream sequences of a nightmarish quality to the sleeper. It should be obvious that the final orientation of the unconscious is not a parallel to the conscious intentions in that their contents are often mainly contrasting, especially in the case of a very one-sided consciousness. The dream then is a purposive defence-mechanism of the psyche, “since it furnishes the unconscious material constellated in a given conscious situation and supplies it to consciousness in symbolical form.”³⁹ We can say that these dreams have a prospective-final meaning that should lead to the solution of real conflicts and problems, which have been displayed by symbols beforehand. Here, the unconscious gives rise to an anticipation of future achievements.

³⁵ Ibid: 246.

³⁶ Ibid: 283-84.

³⁷ Ibid: 248.

³⁸ Ibid: 249.

³⁹ Ibid: 253.

In consequence, Jung's argument is compelling when he says that the unconscious is not less significant than consciousness. In the case of the existence of a defective conscious attitude Jung attributes an even higher value to the unconscious, as it is in this case that the unconscious exercises not only a compensatory, but also very much a guiding function. Often, a conscious attitude is defective in respect to the expression of one's own character, but shows a very good adaptation to the environment. The function of the dream here can be called reductive or negatively compensating, as it tries to reduce the individual's exaggerated adaptation to their environment. Insofar as it aims at a better observation of one's own needs, the function is at the same time a prospective one.

Jung now mentions another very important kind of dream, namely the reaction-dream. This is a dream that deals with objective events that have caused a trauma, which is both psychic and physical. Such a dream is essentially a reproduction of the trauma that seems to bring back a split-off, autonomous part of the psyche. The content of the trauma only disappears after the traumatic stimulus has exhausted itself.

Furthermore, telepathy is another dream-determinant. Here a powerfully affective event is anticipated 'telepathically' in space or time. This dream-determinant would also be another instance of synchronicity, another instance where space and time have become relative factors. Again, Jung rejects the assumption of chance as being the reason for such a phenomenon with the plausible explanation that the high frequency with which the phenomenon occurs makes this seem very unlikely.

Especially these last two types of dreams I mentioned should prove Jung's viewpoint that a dream need not necessarily be wish-fulfilment. Jung's definition of a dream being "a *spontaneous self-portrayal, in symbolic form, of the actual situation in the unconscious*"⁴⁰ is thus much more comprehensive than Freud's standpoint.

Jung also discovered very soon that an isolated dream is sometimes very difficult to interpret and can be analysed in a much more effective way by considering its contents in the context of other dreams.⁴¹ Jung was thus the first one who analysed a whole series of dreams. The order of the dreams in this series does not always coincide with the order of meaning, as the actual order of dreams is a radial one, the dreams clustering round a centre of meaning. This centre of meaning around which the dreams cluster implies that there is a definite goal involved in this process, a goal that has at its heart the development of personality. Jung calls "this unconscious process spontaneously expressing itself in the symbolism of a long dream-

⁴⁰ Ibid: 263.

⁴¹ Ibid: 289.

series the individuation process.”⁴² The term ‘individuation process’ also implies that it is vital that the personal unconscious is dealt with first before tackling the collective unconscious via dream analysis.⁴³ The same applies to fantasies, visions and delusional ideas, which can also display groups of images that have appeared in a great number of people for a long time.

It should be of interest that Jung discovered that there is a typical structure of dreams, which resembles that of a drama. Significantly, Jung uses the terms used in drama to describe the various stages: In the exposition, there is normally a statement of place as well as a statement about the protagonists and in more rare instances a statement of time. It shows the setting, the persons involved and the dreamer’s situation at the beginning of the dream. The second phase then is the development of the plot. The situation creates tension here. The third phase is called the culmination or peripeteia where something decisive happens or a great change occurs. The fourth and last phase is the so-called lysis, which is the solution or result produced by the dream-work – a solution that has been sought by the dreamer. Jung claims that this division of the dream into four phases is typical. Dreams have allegedly normally a dramatic structure.

Jung describes two different levels of dream interpretation, the subjective and the objective level. Like the subjective meaning that refers to the meaning of a dream element for the dreamer themselves, so does the interpretation on the subjective level also concentrate on the person of the dreamer, here by conceiving “all the figures in the dream as personified features of the dreamer’s own personality.”⁴⁴ The objective level, however, takes the figures in the dreams not as a symbolic expression for the dreamer’s psyche, but for what they are, namely concrete objects or persons. The question now is in which cases we have to apply the objective and in which cases we should use the subjective level. Jung gives us a rough guideline when he says that we should use the objective level when the dreamer dreams of a person or an object that is of importance to him, whereas we should apply the subjective level when the persons or items appearing in the dream do not seem to be important. This seems to be a reasonable orientation, but I want to emphasise that this can only be a very rough one and that I will show instances where both levels of interpretations are of great use.

The symbolic expression of the dreamer’s psyche in various figures can be explained by the common process of projection. We constantly project the contents of our unconscious into the persons and objects surrounding us. The consequence of this process is that we are mistaken

⁴² Ibid: 289-90.

⁴³ Jacobi. *The Psychology of C.G. Jung*: 82.

⁴⁴ Jung. *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*: 266.

about the reality of the objects and persons around us and that we can only diminish the unreality of these ideas by becoming conscious of the projections that have taken place. I use the past tense here because we cannot help projecting ideas on others, as it is the nature of unconscious contents to be projected. But we can possibly see through them after they occurred. “In this way everyone creates for himself a series of more or less imaginary relationships based essentially on projection.”⁴⁵ Jung also calls this kind of relationship “magical” or “mystical”⁴⁶, as there are many fantastic elements involved. This relationship based on projection is not a problem as long as we finally become aware of the symbolic value of the object. The dream-image has often very little to do with the real object. To a certain extent we are prisoners of our ways and scope of understanding ourselves: “We understand another person in the same way as we understand, or seek to understand, ourselves. What we do not understand in ourselves we do not understand in the other person either.”⁴⁷ Jung’s method of interpretation on the subjective level becomes now, before the background of the process of projection, much more comprehensible. Jacobi calls this method “one of the most important ‘instruments’ of Jung’s dream analysis”, as “it enables us to understand the difficulties and conflicts of the individual in his relation to the outside world as a mirroring of his intrapsychic processes and may thus help him to take back his projections and to solve his problems within his own psyche.”⁴⁸ The nature of the dream symbols can be seen as “transformers of energy.”⁴⁹

I just want to mention the symbol of water as a symbol with various common meanings, of which I present two: The symbol of water could – among other meanings - stand for the process of rebirth as well as for the mother-figure. Water has been regarded since ancient times as the source of life, the sea being the symbol of generation. Christ was baptised in the river and experienced his ‘rebirth’ there. In addition, in the Vedas the waters are associated with maternal attributes. These are just two among numerous examples of the projection of the mother-image upon water. Jung points out the magical qualities of the mother, which also get projected on the water. Unfortunately Jung does not explain these magical qualities in more detail. He mentions that the sea in dreams also signifies the unconscious and adds that “the maternal aspect of water coincides with the nature of the unconscious, because the latter

⁴⁵ Ibid: 264.

⁴⁶ Ibid: 265.

⁴⁷ Ibid: 266.

⁴⁸ Jacobi. The Psychology of C.G.Jung: 93-94

⁴⁹ Jung. The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche: 48.

(particularly in men) can be regarded as the mother or matrix of consciousness.”⁵⁰ So we have several meanings associated with the water-symbol, which are in this example all connected with each other.

In my textual analysis ‘rebirth’ as a symbol itself will be of great significance. Psychic transformation has been one of the main ideas associated with it since primordial times.⁵¹ Two main groups of ‘rebirth’ can be distinguished: that of the transcendence of life and that of one’s own transformation. The first group can be divided into experiences induced by ritual and immediate experiences. The former shows the transcendence of life as being represented by the fateful transformations – death and rebirth – of a god or a godlike hero. The substance or life form is here transformed through a process, while the initiate is impressed or consecrated due to his presence or participation. It is a transformation process that takes first of all place outside the initiate, but then involves them and gives rise to the hope of immortality. Immediate experiences of ‘rebirth’ are mystic experiences that “represent an action in which the spectator becomes involved though his nature is not necessarily changed.”⁵²

The more important group of rebirth, namely that of subjective transformation, is also subdivided into various forms.

One form of transformation is that of a *diminution* of personality. The tensivity of consciousness decreases. At the same time there is a loss of energy that leads to listlessness and paralysis and can entail that the whole personality falls apart, consciousness losing its unity. Some parts of the personality become independent and function in uncontrolled ways. Self-confidence and readiness for action are decreased and the mental horizon is limited as a result of an increasing egocentricity. In the end a person develops an essentially negative personality.

The form that seems to be rather opposite to the one just described is that of the *enlargement* of personality. Mental receptivity is a precondition to this process. The stimuli that make this happen might come from the outside, but each person needs to have the capacity to grow in themselves. They become what they have always been, but what has so far been invisible.

Another form of change is that of *structural alteration*, which implies neither enlargement nor diminution. Possession is here the most common phenomena: An idea or a part of the person determines the individual and his actions more or less completely. Possession is thus the

⁵⁰ Jung, C.G. *Symbols of Transformation*. 1956. Ed. Read, Fordham & Adler. Trans. R.F.C. Hull. 2nd Edition. Vol. 5. The Collected Works. London & Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981: 219.

⁵¹ Jung.. *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. Ed. Read, Fordham, Adler and McGuire. Transl. R.F.C. Hull. Vol. 9. Part I. The Collected Works. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959: 147.

⁵² *Ibid*: 118.

identity of consciousness (the ego-personality) with a complex. One example of this is the individual's identification with the so-called persona, which is the case when the individual completely immerses themselves into their professional role. Jung points out the danger of such an identification when he says: "... the persona is that which in reality one is not, but which oneself as well as others think one is."⁵³ Possession is normally one that involves the dark side of a person that takes completely over in the individual's consciousness.

There remains now *natural transformation (individuation)* to be mentioned. This process announces itself mainly in dreams. This person in ourselves that wants to come into full being seems to be uncanny to us, as we have hitherto been unconscious of it. It tries to attract our attention as a voice in us that speaks and interestingly our attitude towards this voice is often divided between considering it as nonsense or as the voice of God. Naturally, the truth lies between those two extremes, the voice also having the function to balance a one-sided ego-consciousness: "And yet the conflict between them gives rise to truth and meaning – but only if the ego is willing to grant the other its rightful personality. ...; but a real colloquy becomes possible only when the ego acknowledges the existence of a partner to the discussion."⁵⁴

Doubt is one main characteristic that the voice can assume.

The forms of transformation briefly described above show the manifold aspects of the rebirth symbol, each of the aspects differing from the others in some way in meaning.

The fact that several possible meanings can and should be attributed to the symbol also distinguishes the latter from the sign that has a fixed meaning because it is an expression of something known.⁵⁵ Jacobi underlines the different sources of symbol and sign and the different usages these sources entail.⁵⁶ Whereas the sign has according to Jung a conscious source, the symbol with its various meanings is the result of an interaction between the conscious and the unconscious sphere. This connection is shown in the German translation for symbol, which is 'Sinnbild'. 'Sinn' points out the link with consciousness and thus with the rational, whereas 'Bild' refers to the unconscious or irrational sphere. Consequently, a symbol always addresses the entire psyche and its functions. Due to the fact that the latter are not fully known, the symbol's meaning can never be fully made known either.

Focussing on the individuation process and its most important archetypes, Jung first of all defines individuation as "the process by which a person becomes a psychological 'individual', that is, a separate, indivisible unity or 'whole'."⁵⁷ Summing up what has hitherto

⁵³ Ibid: 123.

⁵⁴ Ibid: 132.

⁵⁵ Jung. *Symbols of Transformation*: 124.

⁵⁶ Jacobi. *The Psychology of C.G. Jung*: 96.

⁵⁷ Jung. *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*: 275.

been said Jung explains that the individual as unity can only emerge when there is an open conflict between consciousness and the unconscious. None of them should be suppressed. Instead, consciousness should represent and defend reason as its main attribute and the chaotic contents of the unconscious should also get the chance to make themselves seen. “As the name shows, it is a process or course of development arising out of the conflict between the two fundamental psychic facts.”⁵⁸ Symbolism is of a high significance for the final stages of the encounter between conscious and unconscious, which is expressed in the uniting symbol.

On the whole, Jung emphasises how both social adaptation and adaptation to one’s inner reality are important, but his main emphasis seems to be on the claim that mere social adaptation diminishes personality.

The confrontation with the main images as well as archetypes of the personal and collective unconscious, as with the *shadow* and the *animus / anima*, is an important step in the individuation process. The concepts of these images and archetypes are of vital importance in Jung’s theory. They have the most disturbing influence on the ego and can empirically be discovered quite clearly.

One major difference between the personal and the collective unconscious is that the contents of the former are acquired during the individual’s lifetime, whereas the contents of the collective unconscious have always been present from the very beginning.⁵⁹

The *shadow* stands at the very beginning of the individuation process. It is normally the most easily accessible image among the ones mentioned, provided it does not appear in form of an archetype. Jung’s research results have shown that the personal shadow is in part descended from a collective shadow figure that is still partly present in folklore. “But the main part of him gets personalised and is made an object of personal responsibility.”⁶⁰ The term ‘shadow’ itself, which is often used in poetic language, includes nothing that rigidly defines its content. It poses a moral problem to the individual, as it involves acknowledging the dark aspects of one’s personality as present and real ones. This acknowledgement is an essential step towards self-knowledge. Resistance, which is due to arise, has to be overcome first, however. The resistances that are hardest to influence are normally those in which unrecognised projections are involved, in which other persons are held responsible for the appearance of a particular emotion in us. Their recognition is a high moral achievement and the effort to this is often

⁵⁸ Ibid: 288.

⁵⁹ Jung. *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self*. 1959. Ed. Read, Fordham, Adler & McGuire. Transl. R.F.C. Hull. 2nd Edition. Vol. 9. Part 2. The Collected Works. London & Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968: 8.

⁶⁰ Jung. *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*: 262.

only undertaken when one feels the need to integrate one's personality quite strongly. Projections can only be taken back when one's own shadow is recognised. We should also correct a common misuse of terms here: instead of speaking of 'making projections' one should say that one meets with them, as projections arise, as we know, from the unconscious. Projections create an illusionary relation between the subject and the environment.

"Projections change the world into the replica of one's unknown face. ... they lead to an autoerotic or autistic condition in which one dreams a world whose reality remains forever unattainable."⁶¹ Thus, it is not surprising that the shadow also often confronts us in dreams. It here often appears in the form of a well-defined figure. A person who is completely unaware of these projections and thus also of the existence of their shadow is one of the most common human types, which has been displayed in literature numerous times.⁶²

It should be interesting in this context that studies have shown that primitive man often had a very different conception of the shadow.⁶³ The soul has frequently been identified with it so that the shadow has been considered to be a vital part of a person – something that is very much alive and has to be respected and not ignored. "They expressed in this way the feeling of an intangible, living presence ... souls of the departed were 'shades'."⁶⁴ The psyche is acknowledged in its complexity; one-sidedness is recognised to be dangerous: "... noonday, the ghost-hour of southern latitudes, is considered threatening; one's shadow then grows small, and this means that life is endangered."⁶⁵ Even if the dark parts of man are considered as evil (I would refute the truth of this consideration though), it is important to remind ourselves that "evil is the necessary opposite of good, without which there would be no good either."⁶⁶ We need to recognise the interdependence of these aspects and the necessity to maintain their interaction.

The shadow is said to refer to the same sex. This might not sound convincing at first, as it can easily be observed that we definitely project certain emotions, beliefs or assumptions on individuals of the opposite sex as well. Jung is able to explain this apparent contradiction by defining the latter process as *anima* and *animus*, the archetypes of the collective unconscious. Jung's explanation focuses rather on the anima than on the animus. The Latin word, anima, is normally translated as 'soul', but Jung points out that he uses it in a much more specific way

⁶¹ Jung, *Aion*: 9.

⁶² Jung, *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*. Vol. Eight: 208.

⁶³ Ibid: 345-46. I use here Jung's terminology again, even though the term 'primitive man' in itself is a gross generalisation and can thus never be fully correct in its statement. It shows a tendency, however, in this context that shows some truth value. The term does not have negative connotations in the way it is used here.

⁶⁴ Ibid: 346.

⁶⁵ Ibid: 346.

⁶⁶ Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*: 323.

in that it forms a significant content in the unconscious. The projections that cannot be attributed to the shadow as its source for the reason mentioned above, must result from the anima / the animus. The anima always “takes on personified form, thus demonstrating that the factor she embodies possesses all the outstanding characteristics of a feminine being.”⁶⁷ She appears spontaneously from the unconscious, very often in the form of the male-female pairs of deities. Jung claims to have detected empirically that the archetype of the anima is normally found in man, whereas the archetype of the animus is found in women. The mother is said to be the first projection-making factor for the son, and so is the father for the daughter. This is only possible when we assume the existence of feminine characteristics in the male and masculine characteristics in the female psyche.

Jung does this, again showing that our psyche cannot be restricted to a closely defined set of characteristics that are often fairly similar. He believes these complementary characteristics to be on the deepest level of the unconscious. However, we have to ask ourselves here what exactly Jung means when he speaks of male and female characteristics. Obviously he comes up with certain suppositions about the nature of gender, which were very wide-spread during his lifetime. The kind of supposition he undertakes here can be roughly described as making the connection between the animus and the paternal Logos as well as between the anima and the maternal Eros. The inferior functions of men and women are also said to be opposite: “In men, Eros, the function of relationship, is usually less developed than Logos. In women, on the other hand, Eros is an expression of their true nature, while their Logos is often only a regrettable accident.”⁶⁸ This attribution of characteristics to man and woman, even if it is just used as a general tendency, is clearly untenable. This division between mind and soul is one that goes back a long time, but can clearly be regarded as being outdated.

We deal here with conceptions of gender, which means that they are manmade constructs that change over time. I will explain this in more detail in a chapter in the second part of this study. I merely want to emphasise here that Jung cannot truly take these gender constructs out of their historical context and use them then to make general statements about the male and the female unconscious. It is, however, definitely true that both men and women have always many more characteristics in themselves than are attributed to them by one-sided gender constructions in society at different time periods. These gender constructions have only led to the establishment of behavioural norms for women and men, which do not do the individuals with their specific makeup any justice at all.

⁶⁷ Jung, *Aion*: 13.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*: 14.

Total identification with the archetype of the anima and its religious aspect with its perfect union of maleness and femaleness causes serious disturbances in individuals, such as megalomania or its opposite.⁶⁹ The total loss of the archetype, however, entails a discontent with the culture the individual lives in due to the latter's need for religion and religious experiences in the widest context.

Jung claims that anima and animus have both a positive as well as a negative side.⁷⁰ The relationship between the former is an emotional and collective one. The negative side of the anima in a man is chiefly composed of sentimentality and resentment; the negative side of the animus in a woman shows itself in prejudiced views, insinuations and misconstructions. The positive aspects of animus and anima are mentioned by Jung as well: "... and in the same way that the anima gives relationship and relatedness to a man's consciousness, the animus gives to woman's consciousness a capacity for reflection, deliberation, and self-knowledge."⁷¹ Again, I would strongly argue against this assignment of attributes to man and woman. The argument that I would support, however, is the one that the effect of each attribute can be a positive or a negative one, depending on the latter's intensity and on its relationship with other attributes. This is a view that once again stresses complexity in a convincing way. If we take emotions, for example, which are typical of the anima, we can say that they are very positive and useful in the form of empathy and kindness, but are rather negative when appearing in an exaggerated form like hysteria.

Jung observes that not all contents of animus or anima are projected (here we see a parallel to the shadow), but can appear in dreams or can be made conscious through active imagination. These contents can, with great effort, be integrated into consciousness, though the archetypes themselves cannot. This is the case because they "represent *functions* which filter the contents of the collective unconscious through to the conscious mind."⁷² They are the foundation of the psychic structure and can never be directly perceived. Recognition of them is totally impossible as long as the shadow has not been integrated into the psyche. The recognition of their projections is more difficult to discover than for example those of the shadow because people have great difficulties visualising these empirical concepts as anything concrete, are unfamiliar with them and thus adhere to their prejudices. These prejudices entail that we always have an incomplete way of seeing a person. Difficulties in relationships are often due to these necessarily always 'false' images we have of another person.

⁶⁹ Jung. The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious: 68.

⁷⁰ Jung. Aion: 16.

⁷¹ Ibid: 16.

⁷² Ibid: 20.

The self now is the archetypal image that leads from the polarity to a union of the two psychic systems. It is the last stage of the individuation process. This union is on its way to fulfilment when the contents of the collective unconscious are integrated into the personality, which means that they become parts of the self.⁷³ The self then is the centre of the psyche where consciousness and the unconscious meet, embracing both of them in parts. At the same time, it is important to fix reasonable boundaries to the ego and grant the figures of the unconscious - the shadow, the animus, the anima and the self - relative autonomy and reality. If this is not the case, two things might happen: the ego can be assimilated by the self, which is dangerous insofar as the image of wholeness is then only in the unconscious so that the adaptation to the environment is disturbed. The other and more likely possibility is that the self becomes assimilated to the ego as a result of a too pronounced orientation to the world of consciousness. "In the first case, reality had to be protected against an archaic, 'eternal' and 'ubiquitous' dream-state; in the second, room must be made for the dream at the expense of the world of consciousness."⁷⁴

It is thus crucial to grant both aspects their legitimate place in the world.

In order to integrate a content it is necessary to understand it not only intellectually but also according to its feeling-value, as the latter is the one that determines to a large extent the role the content will play in the psyche. The affective value thus determines the intensity of an idea, which in turn shows its effective potential. Whereas the shadow naturally has a negative feeling-value that can often be clearly described, the anima and the animus have rather a positive one that is, however, often difficult to define. In a state of unconsciousness, for example during sleep, the affective value increases the deeper into the unconscious you go. Besides this subjective feeling-value there is also an objective value that is founded on general consensus referring to moral, aesthetic and religious values. The self appears normally as a religious idea in an extensive range of symbols.

Although Jung admits that 'wholeness' seems to be nothing but an abstract idea, it is "empirical in so far as it is anticipated by the psyche in the form of spontaneous or autonomous symbols"⁷⁵, by which he means the mandala symbols, which are symbols of unity and totality. This wholeness that is anticipated in the self is thus an objective factor and claims a position and a value that is superior to those of the animus and anima. Jung's parallel between the symbols that represent these objective factors and the divine image is a

⁷³ Ibid: 23.

⁷⁴ Ibid: 25.

⁷⁵ Ibid: 31.

convincing one, as they all show totality. Thus we can call the idea of the self a transcendental postulate.⁷⁶

Jung shows us that the realization of the self needs first of all self-knowledge, “so that it becomes clear to him why and to what purpose he acts and lives as he does.”⁷⁷

Furthermore, Jung emphasises the method of ‘active imagination’ as being a crucial one to bring unconscious contents to consciousness.⁷⁸ The imagination with its vivid symbolism thus plays a determining role to gain the highest stage of self-development. Rushdie will use the same approach to self-development and will show the imagination to be a major means to it.

We can now see where the transformation processes in an individual that entail the latter’s maturation lead to: The adaptation to the environment and the focus on intrapsychic realities ideally lead to an overcoming of the opposition between individual and collectivity. Therefore we can say that the entire personality is rooted in the parts (consciousness and the unconscious) that are directed towards the external and the internal realities. Wholeness of personality seems to remain a life-long ideal in Jung’s account, which is nevertheless worth striving for.

⁷⁶ Jacobi. The Psychology of C.G. Jung: 131.

⁷⁷ Jung. Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche: 361.

⁷⁸ Ibid: 317.

I.3. Madness and Society

Madness has always been a contentious term, which can be seen in the different ways artists and critics approached it, coming up with a variety of representations of madness. I will mainly describe the psychological approach that presents characteristics of forms of madness like those of schizophrenia. At the same time it is vital always to take note of how discourses of madness are produced and what is implied in their production. In fact, the so-called socio-historical approach shows madness as a construction by society over time. This does not necessarily mean that the existence of disorders in people is denied (at least not all cases are), but that the way these disorders are described and interpreted is presented as an arbitrary and subjective one in which people take their own prejudices towards them. Individuals with disorders tend to be seen and treated in very one-sided ways and are more often than not robbed of their humanity. In addition, the sociological component in this approach reveals how social conditions are created that are conducive to the development of personality disorders.

Both Michel Foucault in his work *Madness and Civilization*¹ and Roy Porter in his work *Madness*² point out that the exercise of power has always been involved with the (alleged) occurrence of madness. Both approach this theme by orientating themselves at the same basic questions, asking who has been identified as mad, what has been thought to cause their condition and what action has been taken to cure or secure them. In the course of history madness was associated with spirit invasion or been seen as a vice or the work of the devil before it came to be regarded as a medical phenomenon. In either case madness has regularly been ascribed in the case of the breach of taboos and social conventions.³ As both Porter and Foucault show, the relationship between the breach of taboos and madness has often come to play the central role in the diagnosis and attribution of insanity to persons, which is especially reflected in literary works of the modern and postmodern era. Measures that have been applied to deal with madness have until the present day included forms of confinement, which imply social exclusion, harsh judgement and treatment of individuals, moral punishment and

¹ Foucault, Michel. *Madness and Civilization – A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. Trans. Richard Howard. London: Tavistock, 1971.

² Porter, Roy. *Madness – A Brief History*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002.

³ Brafman, Cris. “Madness.” *Devil Shat Thirteen*. 11 Jun 1997. 17 Dec 2004: <http://www.disobey.com/devilshat/ds971106.htm>: 4.

surveillance.⁴ Methods of silencing have been applied, which become apparent in the fact that patients' voices have for a long time been suppressed.⁵

From the mid-twentieth century, the dividing line between what was considered mad and sane has become blurred as well as relative.⁶

Individuals using the psychological approach have reacted to the importance the social background has on both the description and the development of mental disease. Supporters of this approach have criticised the prevalent purely anatomical approach of modern psychiatry on the grounds that anatomical changes are practically non-existent in schizophrenic patients⁷ for example and that the patients tend to improve if their milieu changes for the better.⁸ The conclusion can thus be drawn that symptoms of schizophrenia can only be comprehended in view of the individual's previous psychological history.⁹ Only then can the apparently meaningless occurrences take on meaning. It is a constructive standpoint that is called for here, which presents the schizoid person's world as a subjective, but not as a completely absurd one.¹⁰ Instead of assuming a straightforward causal relationship that is purely based on organic functions, we should rather consider to take the approach of psychic causality and conditionalism¹¹: We need to attempt to see a person's reaction from their point of view, which we can only do if we are ready to reconstruct how certain events and people in this individual's life have formed the latter. Such factors could explain ontological insecurity, which lies at the bottom of the mental disorder of schizophrenia, which I have chosen to focus on here. Ontological insecurity also figures largely in depression, which is in many cases a response to the circumstances the individual is in as well. I will not explain this link in more detail though, as it will become clear in context in the many literary examples given later.

Ontological insecurity is an expression that describes that the sense of one's presence in the world as a real, alive, whole and continuous person is lacking.¹² There is thus also the absence of a basis on which we encounter others and develop constructive relationships. An ontologically insecure person regards relatedness with others as predominantly threatening. The reason for this is that the individual feels that they have to make enormous efforts to preserve their identity in the midst of others. There are various sources from which

⁴ Foucault. *Madness and Civilization*: 3, 61, 177, 258-59.

⁵ Hornstein, Gail A. "Narratives of Madness, as Told from Within." Rev. of *The Chronicle*. 25 January 2002. 8 May 2002 <http://chronicle.com/free/v48/i20/20b00701.htm>: 2.

⁶ Porter. *Madness*: 194ff.

⁷ Jung. *The Psychogenesis of Mental Disease*. Trans. R.F.C. Hull. Vol.3 of *The Collected Works*. 19 vols. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960: 162.

⁸ Ibid: 215.

⁹ Ibid: 162.

¹⁰ Ibid: 185.

¹¹ Ibid: 218.

ontological insecurity can emanate, but there is one particularly important one, which is the lack of the loving care of a parent, especially that of the mother.¹³

The particular fears are those of engulfment, implosion and petrification.¹⁴

Engulfment is a process by which the individual feels threatened with loss of identity when they engage in relationships with others. The person fears relatedness with both others and themselves as a threat to their autonomy. Instead, identity is attempted to be preserved in isolation, which the individual looks for. There is a certain black-and-white way of thinking insofar as the individual can only see the complete loss of self by being 'swallowed' by the other person on the one hand and total isolation on the other hand.

Implosion is another, though related fear the individual comes to experience in their precarious sense of self. They often feel empty like a vacuum and fear that this feeling will increase the more they are exposed to reality in general.

Petrification finally is an act in which a person regards the other as a thing, does not care about the other person's feelings and in this way depersonalises the other. De-personalization is a method that is used when the other person is regarded as annoying and difficult. An ontologically already insecure person whose personhood is not confirmed by others becomes petrified, as they start to believe that they do not exist as individuals.

Defensive actions and behavioural patterns emerge as a result of coming to terms with these existential fears, which can take on the forms of withdrawal on the one hand and the immersion in sexual acts and fantasies on the other hand. Insecure people achieve at least the illusion of security in this way.

Those ontologically insecure persons who do not even have a sense of basic unity as a person¹⁵ have developed schizophrenia as a result of their lack of coping with their difficulties. A split develops between the mind and body, which offers them the possibility to use the body as the basis from which they can be a person in the company of other human beings. The 'real' self whose identity is in danger of getting lost is thus kept back and apparently disembodied, while the person that engages with others plays many parts that are not considered parts of the self. The actions of those parts, which a schizoid person would also call false selves or persona, can obviously not be attributed to the identity of the person according to their dualistic viewpoint so that the fear of engulfment could theoretically be reduced. The split in schizoid persons is so marked that the self compares the false selves

¹² Laing, R.D. *The Divided Self*. London: Penguin, 1990: 39, 42.

¹³ Ibid: 116.

¹⁴ Ibid: 43.

¹⁵ Ibid: 65.

really to other persons whom it depersonalises. Thus, the split becomes a form of camouflage for the inner self¹⁶ and the turn towards non-being is considered to be a mere game.

The false selves tend initially to be compulsively compliant to the will of others and are at least partially autonomous and out of control¹⁷ although the inner self as a manipulating agency is still in the background. They are also felt as alien, particularly because the compliance they display seems to be a betrayal of the true possibilities of the individual. For some time the schizoid individual only acts in accordance with other people's wishes due to the fear they experience of what might happen if they do not do what other people want from them. The person can however often only guess what the expectations of the others towards them are like. Thus there is not only compliance at work, but the individual might impersonate someone, i.e. a figure of their fantasy, which they believe wrongly the other person wants them to be.

As a rule, the schizoid individual's inner self can only relate itself to creations of its own fantasies,¹⁸ but not – as we have seen – to real people in the outside world. At the most, the close encounter with a non-self might be experienced in quasi-mystical experiences in which the self feels to be united with a divine being.¹⁹ However, there are some instances where the inner self suddenly erupts to the surface and will accuse the person they have complied with of persecution or betrayal or other negative acts, which ties in with the tendency of the schizoid individual to assume the other to be particularly critical of them. They take their hatred of their false selves for their outward compliance to the outside and transfer it then on another, though real, person. These instances usually trigger a process during which the impersonation becomes a caricature.

On the whole, the schizoid state can be understood as an attempt to preserve an identity whose structure is a very precarious one. It is the possible result of an increased difficulty in being a whole person with others.²⁰

However, the attempt to preserve identity in this way is bound to fail. The self that sets itself apart from the outside world will necessarily experience feelings of emptiness, as one needs to leave marks in the outside world in order to be a person.²¹ As the world is only thought to be experienced by false selves, it takes on more and more unreal aspects, and all that belongs to

¹⁶ Ibid: 110.

¹⁷ Ibid: 96.

¹⁸ Ibid: 142.

¹⁹ Ibid: 92.

²⁰ Ibid: 189.

²¹ Ibid: 174.

it becomes increasingly meaningless, as it does not seem to affect the real self.²² Particularly inner freedom, which the inner self strives to attain, becomes meaningless in view of the lack of any real freedom. The world has rather become a prison for the schizoid individual, in which they feel unable to unfold or act. Feelings of deadness ensue now in the inner self.²³ It becomes thus obvious that the self is too detached to be able to fully experience realness, aliveness and identity. Instead of having a creative relationship with the other in which mutual enrichment can occur, the relationship that takes place is a lifeless and therefore a sterile one.²⁴ Both the true and the false selves become increasingly fantastic and then undergo further divisions into sub-systems so that there is a continuous process of disintegration at work. At the end the individual enters a state of non-entity.²⁵ It is an existential death, which is a death-in-life, which the schizophrenic person suffers.²⁶

This disintegration and lack of co-ordination within the individual leads to contradictory and excessive feeling states: At one moment the individual might feel that they have immense power and energy, while at another they can feel very lifeless.²⁷ The discrepancy between the emptiness they sometimes experience and the longing to take part in life gives rise to feelings of guilt and to envy and hatred of others who seem to live life to the full.²⁸ Often this envy and hatred is accompanied with the desire to destroy all the richness in the world. Generally, schizoid individuals believe in their own destructiveness, which is another reason for keeping themselves apart from others. In the last resort, they try to consciously destroy their selves,²⁹ which they consider dangerous but which in effect is already disintegrated. This conscious step to eliminate their selves as a danger to the world takes more often than not the form of suicide.

The disintegration and loss of identity of the schizoid individual can be further explained through the actions of feeling-toned complexes. The complex is a higher psychic unity,³⁰ namely the unity of ideas. Basically every association belongs to one complex or another. Normally the ego-complex is the highest psychic authority. It contains all the ideas that belong to the ego, which are accompanied by the strong and constantly present feeling-tone of our own body. The ego gives voice to the firmly connected combinations of all body sensations. Therefore our own personality is the firmest and strongest complex.

²² Ibid: 80.

²³ Ibid: 138.

²⁴ Ibid: 82.

²⁵ Ibid: 162.

²⁶ Ibid: 205.

²⁷ Ibid: 90.

²⁸ Ibid: 144.

²⁹ Ibid: 93.

As long as the feeling-tone is present, the complex continues to exist. The complex directs both thought and action in a definite direction. Displacements of complexes are quite common: In a displacement a complex recedes by the emergence of a contrasting mood. It is thus that double personalities emerge and manifest themselves in the form of double consciousness or dissociation of the personality. The split-off complexes can be discerned by the conspicuousness of mood and character. A repressed complex finds symbolic expression and can thus be compared to dreams in its use of imagery.

While the ego-complex is active, the other complexes must be inhibited in order to make the conscious function of controlled association possible.³¹ The repressed and therefore autonomous complex can thus only have weak or indistinct effects, as the latter cannot receive nearly as much attention as the ego-complex does. When repressed complexes become uncontrolled they often cause insomnia, the latter becoming an indicator that the complex is still present and needs to be dealt with by reaching an understanding of it. Further disturbances of sleep in this situation are expressed in the extraordinary vividness of dreams, in the fact that persons derive their delusional ideas almost exclusively from their dreams, to which they attribute real validity, and in the different dreams of the different persona.³² It is the feeling-toned complex that determines the meaning of the dreams.

If the individual continues to withdraw their attention from a complex, they usually put an obstacle in their way towards self-development.³³ Even worse, the ego-complex and its functions might get so damaged that they cannot constructively deal with the repressed complex by integrating it, and we then confront the onset of schizophrenia. This becomes comprehensible when we regard sanity as depending on an overall integration of one's total being.³⁴ The affects of the autonomous complex in schizophrenia become increasingly distorted so that it does not seem to contain a normal psychic content any more.³⁵

Furthermore, formerly unconscious elements take the place of reality.³⁶ This autonomous complex has usually completely taken over at this stage by displacing the ego-complex.³⁷ As a result, a person dominated by such a complex is influenced in all their actions by it and their personality degenerates even more as a result of their lack in self-control.

³⁰ Jung, The Psychogenesis of Mental Disease: 40.

³¹ Ibid: 64.

³² Ibid: 91.

³³ Ibid: 68.

³⁴ Laing, The Divided Self: 202.

³⁵ Jung, The Psychogenesis of Mental Disease: 69.

³⁶ Ibid: 224.

³⁷ Ibid: 68.

The fact that the schizoid person is largely ruled by the autonomous complex makes it comprehensible that such an individual can often hardly be influenced from outside. Consciousness in schizophrenia shows signs of disturbance: It is usually narrowed and restricted in its clarity to one idea, whereas all minor associations become increasingly confused and disjointed, which is again a parallel to dreams. The domination of the person by one idea can be explained by the fact that it is derived from those issues that occupied the person intensely before the onset of the disease.³⁸ In addition, the schizoid person suffers from persistent hallucinations, which are the outward projection of psychic elements³⁹, and is no longer able to adapt psychologically to the environment. The concentration of the person as well as various psychic activities are thus disturbed by the autonomous complex. Very widespread complexes in schizophrenia are the complex of injury, the complex of personal grandeur and the erotic complex.⁴⁰

On the whole the schizoid individual has failed their aim of preserving their identity and integrity. The disturbance of schizophrenia is a real disturbance of the balance between the conscious and unconscious contents.⁴¹ This will be abundantly displayed in Rushdie's works in particular. In order to understand the latter we need to keep in mind the context in which both ontological insecurity as well as schizophrenia develop. We can then comprehend the particular form of behaviour each individual displays in such situations much better. Only then can social criticism effectively be made and understood and can the stigmatisation of society towards people who break the 'rules' be seen in a new light. As a result some of these rules and norms will be identified as barriers to personal development and wholeness.

³⁸ Ibid: 173.

³⁹ Ibid: 90.

⁴⁰ Ibid: 110-11.

⁴¹ Ibid: 207.

I.4. George H. Mead's sociological view on identity

Before presenting Mead's view on identity, I consider it important to outline the development of approaches to this theme over time under the aspect of the division that has been made between person and society. I will focus on an essay by Norbert Elias for this purpose. The essay nicely leads to Mead's view on this division, showing how Mead breaks with a very long tradition of regarding a person and society as being by nature separate from each other. I want to supplement Elias' statements and especially Mead's theoretical approach by ideas of and statements made by Richard Jenkins in his work *Social Identity*¹, which takes up many of Mead's important concepts.

Norbert Elias shows in his essay, *Homo clausus and the civilising process*², how the division between the individual and society has for a long time been described in terms of 'real' and 'unreal'. The underlying assumption is that personal and social identity are different in character: social identity, which is treated as the less problematic form, is said to be of greater robustness and more flexible, whereas a person is considered to be of a more fragile and insecure nature.³ This separation has decisive ideological implications. It means that one form of identity is necessarily privileged over the other. In the value system of nations we can make out both tendencies, a privileging of society as a whole, the nation, which is then the highest value, as well as the positing of the individual as the highest value. The latter view suggests that the individual can reach their decisions independently, whereas the former implies that they have to subordinate all their interests to the social whole. These two viewpoints are reflected in the theories of sociology.⁴ Whereas some of the theories take the self-sufficient individual as the starting point for their theories (this is also especially done in philosophical and psychological theories such as those delineated in two earlier subchapters), others start with the 'independent' social reality. Here, the main focus shall be on the former one, as it is this method that has had a very long tradition and stands in sharp contrast to Mead's method. It is individualism that is displayed here, a form of life that is in particular used in disciplines such as psychology, philosophy and economics.⁵

In this discourse the individual gains knowledge of the world primarily in a very autonomous way. Other persons are not needed here in order to make this knowledge possible. People

¹ Jenkins, Richard. *Social Identity*. London: Routledge, 1996.

² Elias, Norbert. „Homo clausus and the civilizing process.“ *Identity – a Reader*. Ed. Paul du Gay, Jessica Evans and Peter Redman. London: Sage, 2000: 284-96.

³ Jenkins. *Social Identity*: 15.

⁴ Elias. “Homo clausus and the civilising process.” *Identity – a Reader*: 285.

⁵ Jenkins. *Social Identity*: 17.

relating to this discourse have difficulties with the idea of individuals living in interdependence with others from the first, as this would imply that they are not totally self-sufficient. “They have difficulty conceiving people as relatively but not absolutely autonomous and interdependent individuals forming changeable figurations with one another.”⁶ Many of the believers in this image of the homo clausus, the self-sufficient individual, try to combine the view of an individual reduced to states with the process of becoming an adult, but obviously without much success. Individuals reduced to states mainly means that there are no long learning processes, which would be present if there were social interaction. Persons gain insights and knowledge rather suddenly and sudden moments of recognition cannot really be called processes.

Both of the two conceptions of the individual beyond society and that of society beyond individuals are really incompatible with the idea of a close interaction of each of these elements and also inadequate in themselves. Mead will use this recognition later on and reject these two conceptions by melting the concepts of individual and society into a new one. Elias stresses the fact that there has not been a single approach in the philosophico-sociological tradition “that sets out from the basis of a multiplicity of interdependent human beings”⁷ apart from Leibnizian monadology. Leibniz was the first one who moved into this direction by performing an act of self-distantiation, which made it possible for him to experience himself as a being among others. Elias makes a very interesting observation when he observes that for a long time the geocentric world-picture was not replaced and that this fact is paralleled with the egocentric picture of man, which has also been held up for a long time and which in a way replaced the geocentric one. Abandoning both this world-picture and this view of man would mean developing “a higher degree of self-detachment, a removal of oneself from the center.”⁸ Elias questions the reliability of self-perception as a means to gain adequate understanding of human beings and criticises the sharp dividing line between man’s ego and the external world. It is definitely true that the isolated and self-sufficient individual is very much an idea of the modern age as well. This seems to be an apparent contradiction to the changes in world-pictures (abandoning the geocentric for a heliocentric one) and ideas about man (less egocentric ones) at first glance, as one should assume that considering themselves less important would be a result of a greater interaction and involvement with other people and the environment in general. However, I think that this contradiction can be explained away when we discover that the assumption made above is wrong: In the past man

⁶ Elias. “Homo clausus and the civilising process.” *Identity – a Reader*: 286.

⁷ *Ibid*: 288.

⁸ *Ibid*: 288.

had in his role as an autonomous and independent being an important place in the universe because man was the one, who was believed to determine many natural processes, thus not being completely separated from their environment, but having and using the power to influence and change it without being changed or influenced greatly by it in return. In contrast, modern man also regard themselves as autonomous and self-sufficient, but in rather negative terms. Persons nowadays do not see themselves as people who have the power to influence their environment any longer, but have now reached “a stage of self-detachment that enables them to conceive of natural processes as an autonomous sphere operating without intention or purpose or destiny in a purely mechanical or causal way, ... a purpose.”⁹ Thus man nowadays regard themselves in general as less influential or important as they did in the past, at the same time feeling even more isolated.

This isolation of man implies a distancing from other human beings, which is displayed, for example, in the difficulty of having a communication and an exchange of experiences and ideas. In other words, it seems to be “the incommunicability of experience”¹⁰ that is the real “cause of human solitude. Its expression is found in the concept of ‘alienation,’ used more and more frequently within and outside literature in the most diverse variations in recent decades.”¹¹

Together with a higher sense of self-detachment Elias also mentions a better affect control being necessary when man is removed from their position at the centre of the universe, as this position implies that it is far less emotionally satisfactory. Elias describes that this kind of distancing of a thinking subject from a sphere of objects that are said to constitute the outside world is really not regarded as a process being undertaken by the individuals themselves, but falsely as a state of affairs already existing:

The detachment of the thinking subject from his objects in the act of cognitive thought, and the affective restraint that is demanded, did not appear to those thinking about it at this stage as an act of distancing but as a distance actually present ... divided from it by an invisible wall.¹²

This latter view entails, of course, a different ideology and view of man and environment than the former one mentioned. From the Renaissance onwards this view of the self separated from what is going on outside has been prevalent. If the individuals are fully independent and autonomous, then a society would logically be an unstructured and disorganised crowd (as the individuals would have nothing really to do with each other and would thus not interact with

⁹ Ibid: 291-92.

¹⁰ Ibid: 290.

¹¹ Ibid: 290.

¹² Ibid: 292.

each other) and this would mean that concepts like ‘social structure’ or ‘social process’ would be artificial and ideal constructions of sociologists who try to find order in that chaos. Elias declares that in actual fact the opposite is true, showing that the absolutely independent individual is an artificial construct. It is exactly this view Mead and Elias share with each other. The implications of this different view of the individual adopted by Elias (and Mead) are, for example, that

the image of man as a ‘closed personality’ is here replaced by the image of man as an ‘open personality’ who possesses a greater or lesser degree of relative (but never absolute and total) autonomy vis-à-vis other people and who is, in fact, fundamentally oriented toward and dependent on other people throughout his life.¹³

The notion of an open personality is a very important concept for the development of an individual, which certainly takes place to a great extent by social influence. People according to Elias only exist in pluralities and thus in mobile configurations. Thereby he eliminates the antithesis of ‘individual’ and ‘society’ altogether.

Jenkins is very much in line with Elias when he claims that the individually unique and the collectively shared are both similar as well as related to each other and that social identity must consequently reflect each to the same extent. “In social identity (or identities) the collective and the individual occupy the same space”¹⁴. For him, self and society are different kinds of abstraction from the same phenomenon, namely human behaviour and experience. Merely the emphasises are dissimilar in that individual identity stresses difference, whereas collective identities stress similarities.

I agree with Elias (and Jenkins) that this antithesis has to be dropped and the close connection between a person and a collectivity has to be emphasised particularly in those instances in which we want to see the enormous interaction going on between individual and society.

By turning to Mead’s point of view we come across the approach of social behaviourism. Its discourse deals with the individual’s experience from the standpoint of society, at least from the standpoint of communication as essential to the social order. This means that social psychology focuses on the individual’s experience by showing that this experience evolves in society, in a social structure or a social order.¹⁵ Social psychology’s main interest lies in the effect, which the social group has in the determination of the experience and conduct of the individual member. The social psychologist looks mainly at the individual’s self-development

¹³ Ibid: 294.

¹⁴ Jenkins. *Social Identity*: 26.

¹⁵ Mead, George Herbert. *Mind, Self & Society – From the standpoint of a social behaviourist*. 1934. Ed. & Intr. Charles W. Morris. Chicago & London: U of Chicago P, 1970: 1.

and self-consciousness and studies the relation between the individual and the social group to which they belong. Social psychology is regarded as a branch of general psychology in that minds and selves are regarded to be essentially social products and the situation of the individual is dealt with in its concrete totality. Thus, social identity can here be defined in Jenkins' terms as "a characteristic or property of humans as social beings."¹⁶ It "refers to the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities."¹⁷

Mead approaches this field of social psychology from a behavioristic point of view, which implies that the individual's conduct is observed, especially the conduct as it is observable by others. This observable behaviour is seated in an individual's organism and is partly expressed in 'attitudes', the beginning of acts. These attitudes trigger various responses. The social act is a dynamic whole, a complex organic process that can be seen in each act of the individual: "Identity can in fact only be understood as process. As 'being' or 'becoming'. One's social identity ... is never a final or settled matter."¹⁸ Mead emphasises the importance of society in social identity in the following sentence:

"For social psychology, the whole (society) is prior to the part (the individual), not the part to the whole; and the part is explained in terms of the whole, not the whole in terms of the part or parts."¹⁹

To sum up, Mead claims that the social process is seen as precondition for the development of an individual's mind, self, and self-consciousness.²⁰ It can thus be regarded as *the* constituent of a person's identity. In consequence, according to his account of identity, all human identities must be in some sense social identities, as they are all "thoroughly socially constructed"²¹.

Mead explains in the second part, which he named 'The Self' how this interaction between society and the individual takes place. The attitudes, described above, of the community are called a generalized attitude and the individual is obliged to take it.²² What Mead means by this is that each individual has to be aware of other persons' views of them and also recognise other persons' expectations towards them. Their own behaviour is a kind of response to these expectations. This interaction is described by Mead with the terms "I" and "Me". Whereas the "Me" is the organised set of attitudes of others, the "I" is the response of the organism to the

¹⁶ Jenkins. Social Identity: 3.

¹⁷ Ibid: 4.

¹⁸ Ibid: 4.

¹⁹ Mead. Mind, Self & Society: 7.

²⁰ Ibid. 82.

²¹ Jenkins. Social Identity: 20.

attitudes of the others. It is important that it is through the 'Me' that an individual gains self-consciousness. Only then is it possible to recognise one's self as an object. I think that this is a perfectly valid and understandable point: In order to be able to define one's identity, one has to be able to say also what one is not, thus recognising oneself by recognising the other. Also, being recognised as a person by others can be taken as an indication that one exists. This recognition of other and self is, for a social behaviourist like Mead, only possible in actual interaction with others, as it is only then that actions and their effects are observable, which are a proof of the existence of an individual and others. "Self-consciousness, on the other hand, is definitely organised about the social individual ...his own experience as a self is one which he takes over from his action upon others."²³ Self-consciousness or consciousness of the other thus cannot be achieved by mere intellectual reflection. This means that Mead would certainly decidedly refuse a view like Descartes' "Cogito ergo sum". Jenkins expresses this behaviouristic viewpoint when he says: "Agency is central to selfhood".²⁴

The 'Me' in Mead is thus the self a person is aware of, that exists for him in his consciousness. Although the 'Me' structures the self and can attribute valuable characteristics to it, some ascribed aspects might not always be pleasant to a person. It seems therefore necessary to ask if there is still a certain sense of autonomy present in the individual in order to be able to reject unwanted aspects that have been ascribed to them.

At first it seems that an individual's personality is completely determined by others and that the individual reacts as an 'I' merely to the expectations of the others towards them by answering these expectations. I want to introduce the terms of autonomy and heteronomy here, even though Mead does not use them, as they will be the theoretical tools when analysing the literary works later on: If a person is very heteronymous, they are very limited in the conscious development of their identities, whereas if an individual is a very autonomous person, they aim to develop their personality much more through their own choice.

Mead actually refuses the view that an individual has no autonomy left by explaining that the individual's response to the expectations of the others does not necessarily have to be one of affirmation and acceptance. "Now, the attitudes he is taking toward them are present in his own experience, but his response to them will contain a novel element. The 'I' gives the sense of freedom, of initiative."²⁵ Individual abilities should find expression in social life. Only by

²² Mead. Mind, Self & Society: 167.

²³ Ibid: 171.

²⁴ Jenkins. Social Identity: 49.

²⁵ Mead. Mind, Self & Society: 177.

this kind of autonomy is social progress possible at all. It is crucial to see that Mead regards an individual's deviant behaviour from any social pattern as a progressive element in human interaction and shows that limited autonomous behaviour of a person must be possible in groups and communities. Thus, the reaction of the individual to the expectations of others is not calculable: "... but the response that takes place is something that just happens. There is no certainty in regard to it."²⁶ Jenkins takes up this idea when he says that social identity is the outcome of agreement and disagreement and in this way negotiable.²⁷

He calls the process whereby individual and collective identities are constituted an internal-external dialectic of identification, thus emphasising that social identity is never unilateral.²⁸ This internal-external dialectic is taken up again in order to show the interplay of processes of group identification and social categorisation. Whereas Jenkins compares his term group identification to what Mead calls the 'I', which is in this case the conscious identification of a whole group with an attitude or a set of attitudes, he relates the term social categorization to Mead's 'Me', which are the attitudes of the others towards the individual. He calls selfhood the primary social identity of internal definition (Mead's 'I') and human-ness the primary identity of external definition (Mead's 'Me').²⁹ Here, Goffman's terms of self- and public image are used in order to elaborate on how individual identity is generated in this dialectic relationship: A self-image can only become a public image if it is accepted by others. Jenkins emphasises that persons engage in these processes every day and that none is more important than the other.³⁰

The autonomy of the individual in respect to their reactions to other people's expectations towards them also entails that the individual might be able to change people's attitudes by behaving contrary to their ideas of adequate behaviour. In this way a person influences the social process in return. "The reaction of the individual in this conversation of gestures is one that in some degree is continually modifying the social process itself."³¹

It is thus obvious that the individual is always involved in the two processes of adjusting to ideas expressed by others as well as reacting against them. "The self is not something that exists first and then enters into relationship with others, but it is, so to speak, an eddy in the social current and so still a part of the current."³²

²⁶ Ibid: 178.

²⁷ Jenkins. Social Identity: 5.

²⁸ Ibid: 20-21.

²⁹ Ibid: 55-56.

³⁰ Ibid: 27.

³¹ Mead. Mind, Self & Society: 179.

³² Ibid: 182.

It is important to underline the term ‘processes’ here, in which the individual is involved, as it relates to what Elias differentiates from the idea of states. Jenkins likewise stresses the term processes in social interaction when he remarks: “First, social identity is a practical accomplishment, a process. Second, individual and collective social identities can be understood using one model, of the dialectical interplay of processes of internal and external definition.”³³ Like Elias, Mead also uses the concept of different world views that have been or are prevalent between today and the past:

For the world-view of modern culture is essentially a dynamic one – a world-view which allows for, and indeed emphasizes, the reality of genuine creative change and evolution in things... According to modern thought, there are no fixed or determined ends or goals toward which social progress necessarily moves ... (indeed, creativeness is essential to the modern idea of progress).³⁴

Mead furthermore mentions the basic aim and motive behind the individual’s reactions to society by speaking of an individual’s duty towards others. By doing so, Mead introduces an ethical characteristic of human behaviour, which underlies morality. The sense of what kind of acts are right or wrong are reflected in a person’s conscience, which serves them as a guide to behaviour:

... and this fact is the basis of the profound ethical feeling of conscience – of “ought” and “ought not” – which we all have in varying degrees, respecting our conduct in given social situations... and ethical and unethical behaviour can be defined essentially in social terms: the former as behaviour which is socially beneficial or conducive to the well-being of society, the latter as behaviour which is socially harmful or conducive to the disruption of society.³⁵

A sense of co-operation and equality with the other members of the group is a pre-condition for ethical behaviour. Thus, Mead defines the nature of the individual’s behaviour towards other members of society and gives it a guideline. The individual still has the freedom, however, to choose in what ways and by what means they fulfil these ethical demands in a given situation.

I think that Mead makes a very important point in stressing that individuals always define themselves through the interaction with others. His approach emphasises the component of the social context even more forcefully and clearly than the previous philosophical and psychological approaches have done. This is necessary, but he falls into the other extreme of

³³ Jenkins. Social Identity: 25.

³⁴ Mead. Mind, Self & Society: 293-94.

³⁵ *Ibid*: 320-21.

defining the individual merely through its interaction with others and thus “overemphasises the impact of the social on the individual.”³⁶

It should be stated as well that society is not unified. The individual is determined by other factors and influences as well, such as biological / genetic factors, which partly constitute their personality.

So I admit the complexities of the individual personality. Not only does it have a ‘nature’ dimension, but its ‘nurture’ dimension contains elements usually examined by psychologists and social psychologists, as well as the role aspect which is the particular province of the sociologist³⁷.

Likewise, human action can be allocated between the fields of psychology, sociology and social psychology. Heading calls this blend of different areas that constitutes a person’s behaviour “an uncertain hybrid”³⁸, thus pointing out both that sociology offers only a partial explanation and that we cannot exactly know how partial this explanation (as well as the contributions of the other areas) is.

Society’s influence on the individual and the attempt to limit the latter, for example by certain conventions imposed upon them, are abundantly displayed in English Literature as well, particularly in the works by D.H. Lawrence and Oscar Wilde’s novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. The tensions between the individual’s attempts at realising their autonomy and the compulsion they feel to adhere to fulfil social expectations and conventions play a significant role in these works.

If we compare Mead’s with Jung’s approach, we see that Mead gives a more detailed account of the role the individual has in society and of how the interaction between society and the individual takes place. This account, as just demonstrated, is very useful for an interpretation of texts under the aspect of identity. On the other hand, Jung is definitely someone who takes society’s influences on the individual seriously, which is for example shown in his description of the nature of dreams. He adds, however, processes and elements in the human psyche that – according to his view - cannot be taken as the result of social interaction, which is for example shown in his idea of archetypes.

Thus, in my opinion Jung presents a less limiting view of an individual in that he defines it not just through social processes, but shows that there are parts in the structure of the human psyche present that are set apart from the influence of a person’s environment. I will use the

³⁶ Jenkins. *Social Identity*: 38.

³⁷ Bradbury, M., Heading, B and Hollis, M. “The man and the mask: a discussion of role theory.” *Role*. Ed. J.A. Jackson. Sociological Studies 4. London: Cambridge UP, 1972: 50.

³⁸ *Ibid*: 55.

points mentioned above in both viewpoints on the individual's identity in a complementary way in the next two parts of my study on Indian literature as well as on the works by Salman Rushdie. The concept of roles, which I will introduce in the next chapter, will also be of importance as well as supplementary viewpoints on identity and the notion of an individual's culture. Roles and culture will both be presented as aspects of possible enrichment and also as limitations to identity depending on the context in which these aspects become influential.

I.5. Love relationships as a defining factor of identity

This chapter will focus on love relationships as a particularly important form of social relationships in respect to the formation of a person's identity. This is the case because it is through the language, the understanding and the behaviour of love that we organise our private lives.¹ While there are various existent love relationships, such as sibling, parental or filial love², which are taken up in the texts, my emphasis will be on sexual love relationships. The definition I try to come up with of the latter can to some extent be used for the depiction of these other forms of love, as they tend to share some major components.

Love is one of mankind's most persistent and appreciated ideas,³ which is reflected in the frequent use of the term 'love' by people over time⁴ and by the widespread engagement with love as a literary theme.⁵ At the same time it poses a problem to give a clear definition of the term. There are several reasons for this: Firstly, love is frequently conceived in its widest possible manner so that almost any kind of relationship is called 'love'. Unsurprisingly in such an approach there does not seem to be one common denominator: Although there are then intersections between the various phenomena called love regarding their characteristics, it can often be one particular characteristic that is shared between two forms of love, while it is another characteristic that is shared between two other forms of love. In the following I will try to develop an account of love that I regard as significant, as it should be seen as conducive to self-development and to the attainment of a feeling of wholeness. It is as extensive as necessary without becoming fuzzy, as I will list what I consider its major components. Secondly, love can be seen from different perspectives and in different contexts so that it sometimes resembles a feeling, disposition or state, whereas at other times it might rather take the form of an individual's action or an interaction between individuals.⁶

It has only been in recent decades that the scientific usage of love has become more established, this usage obviously being rooted in common usage, which has brought on all the various problems that are involved with attempts at definition as outlined above.

Thinking of the origin or the roots of love, it is possible that there is a genetic component involved in that we acquired a capacity for or a disposition to experience love.⁷ We could thus

¹ Evans, Mary. *Love – An Unromantic Discussion*. Cambridge: Polity, 2003: 2.

² Regan, Pamela C. *General Theories of Love. The Mating Game – A Primer on Love, Sex, and Marriage*. Los Angeles: Sage, 2004. 08 Oct. 2004 http://www.sagepub.com/ReganChapter1-Final_3222.pfd: 3-4.

³ Armstrong, John. *Conditions of Love – the philosophy of intimacy*. London: Penguin, 2002: 1.

⁴ Kelley, Harold H. "Love and Commitment." *Close Relationships*. ed. Kelley, Harold H., Berscheid, Ellen, Christensen, Andrew, Harvey, John H., Huston, Ted L., Levinger, George, McClintock, Evie, Peplau, Letitia Anne, Peterson, Donald R. New York & San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Company, 1983: 271.

⁵ Armstrong. *Conditions of Love*: 2.

speak of an inherited disposition for love. However, this disposition might have very little influence on our actions, as these depend on our (moral) attitudes and views towards this disposition, and these attitudes and views differ between one individual and another and are also very much influenced by culture. We can expect that in a particular society a particular meaning is attributed to love so that love can to a great extent be called a cultural construct. The genetic capacity should thus not be overestimated: in the end the instincts that stem from this sphere need to be evaluated before any consequences result from them.

The question now is what we look to find in love. It seems that we look for things in the other person, which we lack or which have only been insufficiently developed in our selves, such as qualities we consider as good.⁸ The turn towards the other is then often expected to trigger an emotional education so that our own good qualities can be brought out in the open. Furthermore and more importantly we want recognition from the other person: The desire to be liked is deeply implanted in us so that there is always the hope that a person will like us just for what we are. At the same time we nevertheless sometimes try to be the persons we imagine the other will approve of. The strong need to be recognised plays with the idea of an essence of a person that needs to be found by others. It is through recognition that loneliness can be overcome, the latter being the result of an immense gulf between the experience of one's own inner life and what seems to be the perception of others. This gulf exists when one's way of thinking and feeling seems alien to others. If someone seems to understand the way we think and feel we can speak of intuitive understanding. Our longing for love is thus a longing to reduce our isolation through the appreciation by the other of what we consider our most 'authentic selves'. If we want to dispense with such precarious notions as essence or authentic self, which so many individuals adopt in this context, we can say that we are increasingly able to recognise the numerous characteristics of each other when a relationship deepens. There is then often a shift from liking to loving a person. It is necessary to feel recognised in a certain way though in a love relationship: As much as the recognition needs to be plausible to us, it also needs to involve a certain amount of praise and appreciation, which means that we are looking for a benign interpretation of ourselves.⁹

Possession is something else we desire to attain in a love relationship. We often tend to believe that if we possess another person we can be put at ease and our desires are fulfilled. In the same line we think that other desires will then not play a very significant role any longer

⁶ Kelley. "Love and Commitment." *Close Relationships*: 268.

⁷ Armstrong. *Conditions of Love*: 15.

⁸ Ibid: 41.

⁹ Ibid: 59.

in our lives. This way of thinking though really is wishful and utopian thinking. It is a highly idealised account of love, as love cannot be the unique and complete solution to the problem of existence. It is only when we associate care and concern for the other person with possession that we experience some kind of fulfilment.

Idealised accounts of love are however widespread and often seem to be immune against common sense approaches. In fact, ideal love, such as romantic love is frequently considered to be, is seen by many as the only possible form of love.¹⁰ The media plays a significant part in fostering the desirability of romantic love, for example through extensive advertising of romantic films. Romantic love seems to resemble processes of falling in love and cannot be identified with my own conception of love. At the most, it can be seen as comprising the opening stages of a love relationship. Major characteristics of romantic love are passion and intimacy.¹¹ When passion declines, the romantic lover tends to believe that love is declining, regarding later parts of the relationship merely as a dim after-glow of the genuine time of love.¹² This view does not give love a chance to develop and change over time, but instead regards it as fairly static in respect to the enchantment and rapture it brings with it. It is of course inconceivable that such intense feelings can be held up over a longer period of time. John Armstrong recognised the contradiction that lies in the fact that most of us seem to focus on love in its first moments, but that we tend to long at the same time for long-term love.

Romantic love can also be sketched by the famous myth – possibly by Aristophanes - of the origin of love, which is said to describe the perfect union.¹³ This myth conceives early human beings as double creatures who have been cut in half. Love here then describes how each partner longs to find its original partner with whom it desires to be joined together. If they find each other they are believed to return to the original, complete state. This myth declares the existence of one person in the world, who is the right partner for us. Our happiness thus seems to wholly depend on being able to find this one particular person.

Such a myth usually fosters a specific set of expectations towards the characteristics this person should display. This is somehow problematic because the other person is no longer someone else but largely one's own creation, a person whose characteristics are ruled by one's own needs.¹⁴ Furthermore, it is very unrealistic to think that the demand for compatibility will ever be satisfied. It thus seems to be convincing to say that “the search for

¹⁰ Ibid: 4.

¹¹ Cantu, Ethel. “Relationships”. Based on: Brannon, Linda. Gender: Psychological Perspectives. 3rd Edition. Allyn & Bacon, 2002. 08 Oct. 2004. <http://blue.utb.edu/ecantu/Psy%204312/Notes/NotesBrannon9.htm>: 1.

¹² Armstrong. Conditions of Love: 6.

¹³ Ibid: 32.

¹⁴ Regan. General Theories of Love. The Mating Game – A Primer on Love, Sex, and Marriage: 9.

perfect compatibility can be a highly respectable way of not loving.”¹⁵ There will usually be disappointment if the person one wishes to meet is too specifically and closely defined because the actual person one eventually meets will by necessity fall short in some way. Instead to concentrate so much on the right person, it seems more important to adopt a more constructive perspective: It seems doubtful to take compatibility as a precondition of love. Instead, it rather seems that compatibility is an achievement by both partners pointing out a successful relationship.

Romantic love with its association with Cupid is also called ‘blind love’, which involves choosing the wrong person and having an overtly positive view of the other person, the latter who tends to be elevated and idealised so that they really become other persons in the end, who fit our own character and needs. The allegory of Cupid, the boy-god of love, expresses the idea that we do not choose our lovers out of understanding but in accordance with an unfamiliar logic, which does not necessarily relate to the happiness of the partners.¹⁶ This image is comprehensible in cases in which partners are ill-matched and do not provide each other with happiness and content. Cupid also expresses many people’s fear that love is irrational and completely beyond their control. This includes the idea that once we fall in love we lose the ability to act or think reasonably and are merely guided by our passion. Blind passion frequently results from the desperation of loneliness: The excessive need to be close to someone weakens the individual’s abilities of distinction so that their choice of partner is dictated by unconscious processes.

The romantic conception of love involves finding complete security in a relationship with another person. It suggests an impossible model of love, which ironically is still very popular and at least partly adopted. Particularly the belief that we live with some kind of inadequacy that can be redeemed by love is a notion that is far from extinct.

Romantic love or what I call falling in love reveals the longings we have and the attribution of ideal characteristics to the partner.

Closely related to romantic love is infatuation. Like in romantic love, there is an extremely one-sided imagination at work. In fact, infatuation shows us clearly the downside of such a use of the imagination: Not only does it, like romantic love, create a highly specific image of the other, which the real other will always by necessity fall short of, it also creates a fantasy of the self, which runs counter to one’s real personality and which is decidedly appealing. Again, there appears a discrepancy between what we wish and what suits us. In infatuation, we use the other one as a means to elaborate a fantasy about ourselves. Our behaviour is once more

¹⁵ Armstrong, *Conditions of Love*: 34

guided by our immediate inclinations and there is a high degree of hopeful anticipation involved, an anticipation that is devoid though of understanding, which would take into account possible negative aspects as well. We can therefore say that an infatuated person operates “with an insufficient range of emotional categories.”¹⁷ The one-sided imagination that focuses on all kinds of positive ideas of oneself, the beloved and the union, also reinterprets unexpected, disappointing reactions by the loved one, which initially trigger processes of doubt. Our fantasies, however, calm such doubts by conjuring up hopeful and positive interpretations of such behaviour.

Another form of love that I want to contrast with my own account of love is that of ludic love.¹⁸ It is a form of relationship that is mainly sexual in character, usually brief and without real commitment or involvement of the partners. The latter consider love as play.

My conception of love is that it is most of all multi-faceted by nature and continuously undergoes transmutations. The various components of it are usually highly interlinked and my description of them should thus not give the impression that they lead existences that are completely separate from and uninfluenced by each other.

One of the most prevalent and crucial factors of love relationships is intimacy. Intimacy involves closeness to another person through the use of the imagination. The latter is here not used in a one-sided way or is misdirected and can therefore fully and constructively unfold its positive creative potential: It enables us to see what the other person really needs and what their qualities are, and shows us appropriate ways of showing our affection.¹⁹ Our understanding of the partner could in this way be greatly increased through imagination’s use. Imagination should thus be seen as the ability of making certain combinations in our minds. We can thus also recognise certain, less obvious charms of a person, and we can also figure out what we share with another person. Furthermore, anticipation plays a great role in the working of the imagination insofar as the lover dwells on the absent beloved so that the latter seems to be very close despite being physically absent. Passion is thus repeatedly enlarged, too.

On the whole, it seems to me that it is the sharper perception and understanding we acquire through the imagination. It fosters empathy, which involves believing the best about the other provided it is still consistent with the facts.²⁰ This should prevent us from abusing our power

¹⁶ Ibid. 85.

¹⁷ Ibid. 82.

¹⁸ Regan. *General Theories of Love. The Mating Game – A Primer on Love, Sex, and Marriage*: 9.

¹⁹ Armstrong. *Conditions of Love*: 94-96.

²⁰ Ibid. 114.

over the partner.²¹ We rather tend to be kind towards the other and care for another person by trying to act in a way we consider is best for them.²² In this context there is often the mentioning of altruistic love, which is also sometimes described as self-surrender.²³ This form of love considers empathic and caring behaviour as arising from an intrinsic motivation and not as springing from an expectation towards the partner to reciprocate one's own behaviour. Altruistic love should, however, always be regarded as a cultural ideal rather than as something that can fully be achieved.²⁴ It can take place to a certain extent, namely when one puts one's needs behind those of one's partner. At the same time it seems hardly feasible to always do so and never to expect any kind of reward.

It has been observed that intimacy is easier for women than it is for men, but the longing for it is undoubtedly present in both genders. Intimacy furthermore involves loyalty, attachment, involvement, dependence, equality and affection. There exists then a mutual need of each other. Such need can be described as the desire to touch, hold and be close to each other.²⁵ Feelings of optimism, harmony and unity with the other are usually part of the phenomenon of need in love relationships, too, as is the focus on the other person, which results in an intense awareness of the latter.

As mentioned above when exploring the reasons why we search for love relationships, it is possible that love can bring out neglected aspects in a person.²⁶ This is usually the case when the partner points them out to us in one way or another. This process results in self-expansion.

Another important component of love, which is usually an indicator of intimacy, is the presence of trust. Trust involves being able to disclose oneself, which means to entrust some selected information to another. I use the term 'selected' in order to point out that self-disclosure loses some of its communicative goals if it is used indiscriminately. Various factors such as the timing of our disclosure, our partner's capacity to respond to it and the amount of detail we should reveal have to be taken into account if we really want to improve the relationship naturally and non-manipulatively.²⁷ Self-disclosure can only establish trust if it is reciprocated. Generally, trust results from the dialectic between people's hopes and fears as

²¹ Nichols, Margaret. "Intimacy: What's Love Got To Do With It?" Institute for Personal Growth. 08 Oct 2004 <http://www.ipgcounseling.com/intimacy.html>: 1.

²² Armstrong. Conditions of Love: 108.

²³ Knapp, Mark L. Interpersonal Communication and Human Relationships. Boston, London, Sydney & Toronto: Allyn and Bacon, 1984: 200.

²⁴ Kelley. "Love and Commitment". Close Relationships: 285.

²⁵ *Ibid*: 275.

²⁶ Knapp. Interpersonal Communication and Human Relationships: 190.

²⁷ *Ibid*: 211-13.

close relationships develop.²⁸ As feelings of dependency become stronger when close relationships intensify, one expects from the other person much more to be responsive to one's needs and to fulfil one's hopes for the union. Such confident expectations of positive results from a close partner are described by trust. These expectations revolve around perceptions of our partner's view of the relationship and around the intensity and quality of the relationship. We normally have to recognise that our partner tends to moderate their own interests and that they show a caring and solicitous attitude.

Dispositions to trust or distrust normally have their origin in childhood experiences and in the kind of attachment one has had with one's parents: If the attachment has been one of safety, trust can be developed more easily and there is usually less fear of closeness. In cases of a breach of trust, trusting persons do normally not question the partner's central motives, but come up with less threatening or fundamental explanations of such behaviour.²⁹ Trusting persons thus place some limits on the negative implications the breach of trust could have for the relationship. Negative elements of the relationship can thus be successfully integrated into the relationship by putting them within a positive context. Elements such as benevolence, charity, tolerance and forgiveness then come into play.

However, if early filial attachment has been an anxious or ambivalent one, we want much more reciprocation and union with the partner. In addition, more jealousy and emotional instability can be expected in such cases, which also makes these persons more adverse to risk. Individuals with great difficulties at developing trust regard negative and hurtful events in the relationship frequently in isolation so that they are not more comprehensively viewed as being part of a greater framework, which includes many positive experiences.

In contrast to common belief, trust is usually rather low if we desire extreme intimacy and display fears of closeness. Trust rather develops when there is a desire to keep some autonomy in relationships,³⁰ an autonomy that should not be mistaken for the self-sufficient withdrawal behaviour of avoidant individuals. On the whole, extreme desires for union or autonomy usually do not give much room for trust, as these occurrences can be seen as ways of coping with themes of lingering uncertainty. Uncertainty entails a lack of trust, and people who distrust have more rigid and narrow expectations and, ironically enough, tend to trigger the very behaviour they fear in their partners.³¹

²⁸ Holmes, John G & Rempel, John K. "Trust in Close Relationships." Close Relationships. ed. Hendrick, Clyde. 10 vols. Review of Personality and Social Psychology series. Newbury Park, London & New Delhi: Sage, 1989: 187.

²⁹ Ibid: 204-05.

³⁰ Ibid: 189.

³¹ Ibid: 213.

On the whole the development of trust can be called a process of uncertainty reduction, which occurs when the partner's behaviour appears predominantly consistent over time and becomes thus to some extent predictable.³² There needs to be an intrinsic motivation to behave in these consistent behavioural patterns within the relationship. In such a case the partner appears dependable and reliable and it seems that the partner's responsiveness to the other person is a sign of attachment to the relationship. Only if recognition of mutual attachment takes place can there be any further development of trust, as trust grows when both partners perceive that there is a balanced reciprocation process. In addition, an increase in trust also involves dealing sensitively with the partner's concerns regarding vulnerability and dependency. It is also vital in this context to give some personal control to the partner.

It appears that trust is a process and becomes stronger when challenges of intimacy are successfully tackled: At the beginning of a relationship trust might not be much more than a sign of blind faith, but later on in the relationship when the partners know each other better trust is usually the result of more mature considerations. Trust then comprises the acknowledgement of the worth of a relationship as well as that of its negative elements.

Closely linked with trust is the aspect of commitment in relationships. It is usually the perception of a partner's commitment to the relationship that fosters trust. In fact, commitment has been described as the stabilising factor in a relationship and can be defined as the determination to stay in a relationship and be loyal to the partner.³³ There are feelings of obligations to follow a particular course of action. Furthermore, investment is a vital part of commitment: A person who makes a commitment to a relationship invests time, money and a fair amount of energy in it, the latter being often accompanied with certain emotional costs and self-revelations. Committed individuals tend not to consider alternative partners much any longer. Once again, this attitude has to be a mutual one if a relationship is expected to grow.

Commitment is usually the result of the considerations of several factors and the weighing of positive and negative factors. Amongst the factors that would support the commitment to a relationship are those of the loving feelings one has for the partner, the desirable activities and possibly the status this relationship makes possible as well as the costs of leaving the relationship and the feelings of obligation to continue the relationship. A reason for sustaining a relationship would be that of positive interaction that provides both partners with meaning and comfort. There ensues then a preference for the other person's familiar ways than for learning new ones. While the latter benefits are of an intrinsic nature, others like the one of

³² Ibid: 190-91.

holding on to a good position in an in-law's firm are of an extraneous nature and can play a role as well. Factors that would rather favour a break-up of the relationship are psychological costs that are experienced with the partner such as intense efforts and anxiety or the attractiveness of alternative relationships that could not take place while being in the present one.

As a result one could say that commitment is adopted as a conscious strategy if there is the perception of a certain consistency with which the factors supporting the continuation of the relationship outweigh the factors that promote the disruption of it. The outcome of such reflections is more stable if the person thinks about quite a few implications for a relationship. It is then that commitment to a relationship can be seen as resulting from a broad perspective. A broad perspective is one that also gives consideration to likely difficulties and their consequences.

It should be obvious that commitment can only be a characteristic of love if it is not just based on external benefits, but when it and thus the continuation of a relationship is sought as the result of internal motivations.³⁴

Another important part of love relationships is of course the one sexuality plays in it. Sexuality is not just about sex, but also carries a sense of trust and comfort, which are linked to tender touch and caresses.³⁵ It is thus very much about sensuality and to what extent we can reveal and live up to the sensual aspect in ourselves. Intimacy occurs very much at the fringes of sexuality, as it is this sensual closeness that mainly connects sex and love. Although sexuality is a significant element in intimate love relationships, sexual desire does not always coincide with love. There remain frictions between love and sex that cannot just be made to vanish.

These frictions are not the only one that could appear in love relationships. The latter by their nature contain negative, problematic or contradictory aspects. Some of those might be differences in views and convictions, which can hardly be avoided. If there is great tolerance in a relationship, even fundamental differences in opinions can be peacefully acknowledged or, if necessary, worked through.

A deeply ambivalent attitude results from two very elementary and at the same time contradictory tendencies within each person, namely those of yearning for security and closeness on the one hand and for freedom and independence on the other hand.³⁶

³³ Kelley. "Love and Commitment." Close Relationships: 288.

³⁴ Ibid: 312-13.

³⁵ Armstrong. Conditions of Love: 135.

³⁶ Knapp. Interpersonal Communication and Human Relationships: 201.

Particularly the trend towards independence can be regarded as a reflection on our society's individualization processes. Relationships are unsurprisingly often thought of as either a dream or a nightmare, depending on the tendency that is strongest in the individual at a certain moment in time or, and here ambivalence comes into it, they are imagined to be both at once. In fact, relationships today can be described as "the most common, acute, deeply felt and troublesome incarnations of ambivalence"³⁷. The joys and pleasures of togetherness are regularly drastically contrasted with the terror of imprisonment through the bond. In view of this, it is hardly surprising that relationships are predominantly at the source of the present counselling boom, as partners seem to find it increasingly difficult to tackle the complexities of the relationship they are in on their own.

If individuals do not achieve to come to terms with their ambiguities and if then doubt about and resistance to a relationship increase due to insecurity about the other person's future reactions, they often engage in networking activities. This means that they frequently connect and disconnect themselves to and from others so that there are experiences of being in touch at one moment and free floating at the next moment. Connections are entered and broken as the person wishes, which makes it possible for the person to leave a relationship before getting the impression that they are not free any longer and that the costs might be too high regarding their individuality. These processes are fostered by our consumer culture insofar as the latter promises everyone instantaneous satisfaction.³⁸ In such a culture love appears as a commodity that can be taken up and dropped any time. It can be identified with the aforementioned ludic love, which I differentiated from constructive, fulfilling love. People whose behaviour is that of networking tend to engage in virtual relationships, as they are easy to enter and leave. Even so, they cannot completely get rid of their immense anxieties regarding even such short relationships. This is also the case because they cannot be certain of what a relationship and their love will look like in the future and this lack of knowledge appears as particularly frightening.

It is only when the ambivalences between the longing for closeness and the longing for independence are dealt with successfully, which means that they are not merely seen as contradictory any longer but that they are integrated in a unit, that one can recognise that engaging in a relationship can in contrast to general belief really mean freedom. Freedom is then possible because one is able to connect and to give free expression to one's needs for close companionship.

³⁷ Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Love*. Oxford: Polity, 2003: viii.

³⁸ *Ibid*: 7.

Other problematic aspects in love relationships are feelings of envy and especially of jealousy. The word jealous derives from the same Greek root as 'zealous', zealousness representing an intense devotion to the promotion of a person or object.³⁹ Jealousy reveals the belief or suspicion that what has been promoted is in danger of being lost. It contrasts envy insofar as envy, which comes from the Latin term 'invidere' meaning looking upon something with malice, reflects a discontent and a desire for the possessions or attributes of another person. This means that jealousy is typically over what one possesses and fears to lose, while envy may be over something one has never possessed and may not possess in the future. Social-comparison jealousy is a form of envy. It occurs when another person possesses something or someone that one really wants to have. There is usually negative information about oneself relative to another person involved, such as not getting the promotion, which the colleague gets. One's status is thus diminished. This information needs to be highly relevant for the individual, as they can be happy with others who have been successful if the others' superior performances concern aspects that are not highly self-defining. Often there is high similarity in the abilities between the envied person and the person who envies them on the one hand and a great discrepancy between levels of success of the two persons on the other hand. In addition, envy tends to occur in the case of a close personal relationship with the comparison person.

If attempts to get hold of this person or thing are not made, there are usually coping methods within social-comparison jealousy at work, which include diminished desire for the other person's friendship and the disparagement of the other person's traits. Depression and anxiety can on some occasions also follow when individuals constantly have the feeling that they lose out on things, whereas others do not and instead always get ahead of them. Dissatisfaction and inferiority figure very clearly here. These emotional states tie in with anger and sadness, which are usually effected through self-pity. At the same time envy involves, particularly when it has led to anxiety and depression, shame, guilt and self-criticism if there is an awareness of the harmful thoughts towards others.

If jealousy relates to a person, we can speak of social-relations jealousy. Romantic jealousy is one important form of such social-relations jealousy.

Like envy, jealousy covers quite a few emotional states such as anger, sadness and fear. The reactions to such feelings can be ranging from paralysis as a result of emotional devastation that might necessitate social support or pretending that nothing has happened, over arousal, which makes the person aware anew of the partner's desirability, to reactive retribution or

³⁹ Salovey, Peter & Rodin, Judith. "Envy and Jealousy in Close Relationship." *Close Relationship*: 222.

various forms of confrontation. More constructively, there are sometimes reappraisal processes at work, which makes a person think positively about one's good qualities and re-evaluate the importance of the desired goal.⁴⁰

Jealousy is usually further characterised by a sense of feeling lonely, betrayed, uncertain and suspicious. Mistrust accompanies fear of abandonment. Jealousy is believed to be a stronger feeling state than envy because more hate is involved: One here does explicitly not want the other person to have something, which one highly values and whose loss one could not bear. Romantic jealousy usually involves a threat to an existing relationship. The degree of jealousy can be measured by relationship dependence, which involves the perceived dependence of partners, relationship exclusivity and the stage of the relationship. Generally, more involved partners are usually perceived to be more jealous and less powerful.

A very jealous person might have fewer opposite-sex friends and might not be or at least does not perceive themselves to be as attractive as their partner, believe that the partner is attracted to another person and that the partner does not engage much with them any longer and perceive the partner's dissatisfaction with the relationship. Jealousy therefore seems to be both related to one's emotional dependence on the partner and to one's own extramarital behavioural intentions.

The classic crime of passion that focuses on spontaneity seems to be a myth, as there has usually been a long time of psychological abuse and physical injury that precedes the commitment of the crime.

However, the distinction of envy and jealousy given above does not mean that they always appear exclusively. Often both emotions appear: When one's relationship is threatened by a rival, one experiences romantic jealousy as one imagines the loss of that relationship and at the same time envy when the rival's attributes are considered superior to one's own, as the rival has snatched away the partner. Jealousy could also be regarded as the whole and envy as the part: In this conception, jealousy is a simultaneous threat to a valued relationship and a threat to self-evaluation through negative social comparison. The need to raise self-esteem usually results from experiences of envy and jealousy.

On the whole envy and jealousy are fundamental to mankind, as they are instinctual feelings. They are fostered through our competitive cultures' social structures with their focus on material possessions, status and affections. Due to envy's and jealousy's close connections to self-definition, the former should also be regarded as states that have some utility for the individual and not merely as harmful. If they occur we can identify those relationships and

⁴⁰ Ibid: 237-38.

attainments that are truly important to us. Close relationships can thus gain in meaning, but only if we adopt those coping mechanisms as described above, which prove to be constructive in a specific relationship and a particular context.

Problematic or contradictory aspects of relationships often arise through transference processes: Transference processes in relationships occur when we invest the other person with characteristics that are not really their own but that derive from our own earlier relationships⁴¹. The lover might subconsciously look out for another mother or father or for another self in the beloved. Such as in the aforementioned process of falling in love or in romantic love we construct the other person in our minds not on the basis of observation but according to subjective ideas we harbour. As construction is an unconscious process, the difficulties in relationships that regularly arise as the consequence of transference processes often come as a surprise to the couple and can often not be immediately accounted for.

Therefore it is vital to make these naturally occurring processes as much as possible conscious and work them through to maintain a healthy and working love relationship.

Transference processes also regularly involve ambivalent feelings towards the partner. This is one main reason why we often tend to hurt the person we love most at times. The same person is then loved and hated. A pattern is created early in life to which later loves conform insofar as later relationships awake both the fears and disappointments we have suffered in childhood. These unconscious processes regularly lead us to masochistic behaviour.⁴² One way of how this is done is that we tend to set things up so that we become angry with our partners in particular ways that are important to us. There is then the pain of being deprived of something, which becomes intermingled with the feeling of justified anger about this state of affairs and with the feeling of superiority, as the partner is clearly regarded as deficient if they cannot satisfy our desires. The unconscious forces here work insofar as we get attached to a person with whom we can repeat a kind of self-harming pleasure. It is a repetition, as we usually experienced such morbid pleasures in childhood, or on the opposite have always looked in vain for the satisfaction of certain pleasures and try to do so now in a somehow distorted way in our adult lives. Our style of relating to another person is the product of learning to relate to people close to us when we were children, thus often imitating a parent's or both parents' behaviour towards us and each other. We thus sometimes put a partner in a situation that makes them respond to us in ways we remember from childhood.

⁴¹ Armstrong. Conditions of Love: 123.

⁴² Ibid: 90.

Getting together with a certain person can therefore often imply taking up unfinished business from childhood. It is the need to return to a traumatic situation in the past and enact the same pattern of behaviour that draws us to one person rather than another.

It is clear that we love in highly imperfect ways and also that experiences of ambivalence can be regarded as inevitable, which indicates clearly that the romantic myth of two perfectly compatible creatures coming together in love cannot gain much substance in reality: Each person seems to belong to more than one jigsaw puzzle as well and cannot fit perfectly into one due to those desires and interests we have that cannot easily be reconciled.⁴³ In order to cope with such ambivalence we need to change our sense of what is normal. This can lead to the acceptance and acknowledgment of ambivalence instead of its repression. We undergo then the integration of potentially conflicting aspects by striking a balance between them.

If such aspects are not dealt with in such a way, distorted forms of love, such as manic and destructive ones, emerge. Such relationships can involve extreme possessiveness, which is usually accompanied by attempts to force affection from the partner, an incapability to trust in the partner's sincerity and the extreme need to see the partner almost all the time and plan their future together.⁴⁴ The result often is the destruction of the relationship and the disintegration of the person.

Relationship breakdown can of course occur for other reasons, such as for those mentioned as the negative factors regarding the decision on commitment, or for reasons that include dissatisfaction with other persons who are part of the relationship network or dissatisfaction with very difficult circumstances.⁴⁵

The ways relationships break up can widely differ as well: Relationships might lose their vitality because a new person enters the relationship scene. Also the interaction distance might become greater over time and will cause the relationship to fade. Partners might develop in very different directions over time so that some of the things they shared at the beginning seem to have disappeared. The most painful way a relationship ends is the one when one of the partners dies: In this case, the last border is crossed, and there is no chance of reconciliation or even of consciously determining to end the relationship. Here, in contrast to the other ways of break-up it is usually none of the partners who agrees to such a form of separation so that the forceful separation appears to be particularly cruel.

However, if ambivalent aspects of relationships are acknowledged and accepted and one still remains committed to a person, we can speak of a process of maturity in our understanding of

⁴³ Ibid: 129.

⁴⁴ Regan. *General Theories of Love. The Mating Game – A Primer on Love, Sex, and Marriage*: 10.

⁴⁵ Knapp. *Interpersonal Communication and Human Relationships*: 252.

love. Love is thus increased and matures if we recognise our own contradictions within a relationship. Maturity does here not so much stand for a certain age the lovers or the relationship has reached, but rather for a kind of psychological achievement.

For mature love to develop there also needs to be the recognition that our image that we have created of the other person does not hold up to our experiences, the latter being the result of continuous close contact with the beloved. We can now see clearly that the high expectations and hopes, which we have had at the beginning of the relationship and which are also very typical of romantic love, need to be altered and that it is vital to hold on to the good things that are actually experienced.⁴⁶ Our perspective is thus changed: Instead of judging by what is desired, one now starts to judge by what it is possible to obtain. This change of perspective cannot merely be an intellectual shift, but needs to be embraced emotionally, too. The central characteristic of maturity is the idea of learning from experience and this includes accepting some less pleasant characteristics in our partner, as we will never get an ideal partner or respectively, be in an ideal relationship. The concept of mature love shows an optimistic picture of love in the face of difficulties.

Maturity is furthermore the result of constructive conflict solution. The latter might be the attainment of greater understanding of each other and the relationship, the clarification of similarities and differences, learning strategies of how to cope with future conflicts and acknowledging areas where communication and adaptation have to be improved.⁴⁷ This can only occur if both partners accept that conflict is part of all human relationships, if they have a genuine interest in tackling the problem, if they have real concern for the feelings of the other person and if they are able to have a broad vision of possible outcomes. They should also acknowledge that not every conflict can be resolved.

If we overcome hurt and disappointment, which are part of every relationship, love can grow, as these painful experiences can provide the ground upon which love operates.⁴⁸

Once we also recognise our loneliness, disappointment and fragility and our need for the tenderness of another person we admit our own vulnerability and become humble. This is important insofar as this recognition normally entails a clear vision of how love can overcome our isolation and how it can connect us to another person. We can thus clearly attribute some central meaning to love in our lives. At the same time it is crucial to be aware of the scope of love's relevance: Although love relationships are crucial and meaningful, and one could even go so far as to declare "love as a test case of the psychological health of an individual and of a

⁴⁶ Armstrong, *Conditions of Love*: 157.

⁴⁷ Knapp, *Interpersonal Communication and Human Relationships*: 215.

⁴⁸ Armstrong: *Conditions of Love*: 144.

society”⁴⁹, there are further crucial and independent sources of contentment, happiness and safety in our lives, which should not be underestimated. Such sources can be friends, a career, art or various interests an individual pursues. It is also important to see that in order to love and develop through love we need to be relatively stable and to at least some extent settled within our selves.

The conception of love relationships that can lead to something constructive and fulfilling between persons is something which we create and not something that we merely find as a given. Work on the relationship and personal responsibility for the actions we take are vital components. If these components are present not only the love relationship but also we, as individuals, develop through this bond.

⁴⁹ Ibid: 122.

I.6. Role theory in Sociology

Mead's concept of identity in the social context focuses on the kind of interaction that is going on between individuals in society and could be taken as a starting point to explore the positions occupied by these individuals. This is the approach taken by role theory.

The concept of 'role' has encountered many definitions and approaches.¹ I want to concentrate on some of the most commonly shared assumptions by role theorists that will be useful for the application to literature later on.

Let me start by concentrating on the etymology of the word: The word essentially rests on an analogy with the theatre.² To be more precise, role in this context is understood as "a part, a character played out in accordance with the expectations of an audience. Indeed it is a part corresponding to a defined social position the incumbent of which is expected to behave in predictable ways."³ It is important to make the parallel mainly between an individual and a character and not so much between individual and actor.⁴ The latter implies the idea that a person knows what will come next and that they live in two worlds at the same time, whereas a character is an individual in a closed world, who cannot foresee future events. Individuals in interaction cannot predict events in the future either and this is why the analogy between a character in a play and an individual in the real world is the more suited of the two. Society can be compared, in this analogy, to the other characters in the play with whom the individual interacts: " 'Society' thus becomes a dramatization of the needs of self when it seeks interaction with others."⁵

This analogy already indicates that role theory combines approaches of different disciplines. Biddle claims that these disciplines mainly involve three core social sciences, namely anthropology, sociology, and psychology.⁶ In role theory, these areas form one single discipline that is concerned with the study of human behaviour. This study involves aspects like culture, society and personality.

Jackson and other role theorists claim that expectations constitute the decisive factor of the concept of role. Each set of expectations that people hold of each other can be regarded "as a separate role that one is required to play by virtue of one's position."⁷ The individual is

¹ Ruddock, Ralph. Roles and Relationships. Library of Social Work. 1969. London & Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976: ix.

² Jackson, J.A. "Role – editorial introduction." Role: 3.

³ Ibid: 3.

⁴ Ibid: 46.

⁵ Ibid: 47.

⁶ Biddle, Bruce J. Role Theory – Expectations, Identities, And Behaviours. New York: Academic Press, 1979: 4.

⁷ Ruddock. Roles and Relationships: 1.

believed to usually know these expectations so that a certain sense of stability and predictability within the social unit is established.⁸ Normally role is associated with other people's expectations towards a person and thus can be said to link society and the individual. Role functions as a kind of intermediary between individual and society. This idea can be connected with Jenkins' notion of a classification process taking place between society and the individual.

Norms are established, which function as guides to what kind of behaviour can be called socially acceptable. Thus, behaviour that observes these norms closely is called normal, whereas behaviour that departs from them is named deviant.⁹ Normality is such an important notion because it serves people to understand the world better. Its meaning and importance in the discourse of identity can be expressed in this way:

The normal stands indifferently for what is typical, the unenthusiastic objective average, but it also stands for what has been, good health, and for what it shall be, our chosen destiny. That is why the benign and sterile-sounding word 'normal' has become one of the most powerful ideological tools of the twentieth century.”¹⁰

Standards of normality are established individually for each role, a fact that shows the arbitrary nature of role construction. Keeping this in mind, individual resistance by deviant behaviour is hardly surprising.

It is especially the particular labelling act (in this context, the naming of a person is also important as a way to determine their identity) that evokes either resistance, which is displayed by deviant behaviour, or internalisation, which means the acceptance of a label shown in the observation of the norms.¹¹ “...the labelling perspective offers a model with which to place the internal-external dialectic of individual identification in social context.”¹²

The opinion of the labelling school is that social control necessarily produces deviance. “... it suggests that humans persistently resist categorisation anyway. To do so is an important expression of their reflexive selfhood; ... human beings are wont to resist categorisation in all sorts of ways, and whatever its source.”¹³ I would say that categorisation through labelling is likely to cause feelings of resistance, which are often, but not always (some people try to suppress these feelings), displayed in deviant behaviour.

⁸ Ziller, Robert C. The Social Self. Pergamon General Psychology Ser. 18. New York: Pergamon, 1973: 150.

⁹ Ruddock. Roles and Relationships: 5.

¹⁰ Quote originally by Ian Hacking (1990) - in: Jenkins. Social Identity. : 166.

¹¹ Jenkins. Social Identity: 23.

¹² Ibid: 76.

¹³ Ibid: 174.

The established norms are sometimes valid for all members of society, sometimes only for certain classes of individuals.¹⁴ The latter case involves a process of social differentiation. In this way, roles constitute a social structure and can be defined as “role- norms, specialised normative sub-systems which are related to one another.”¹⁵ These normative sub-systems are made known to persons in advance – as duties and rights. Negative sanctions are imposed on deviant behaviour from these duties. The formation of role-norms involves a de-humanization of norms.

One major problem for the individual person is that role expectations often conflict with each other.¹⁶ Many roles bear contradictions in themselves, which the individual has to confront and tackle. They are tackled because every individual has a basic need for integration and cannot bear for a long time to be torn between contradictory feelings. “The deepest need of all is to be sure of who and what we are, otherwise we cannot be sure of ourselves in any respect.”¹⁷ In order to achieve this self-knowledge together with a satisfactory kind of self-image we have to identify our various roles and be in control of them, which is usually done by a successful integration into the self. If such integration does not take place, the result can either be an indiscriminate blending of roles or a tendency to keep roles rigidly separate. Due to the relative loss of control over the interaction between roles, this can cause bewildering contradictions in an individual’s life. In the case of keeping roles strictly separate, I agree with Ruddock’s suggestion that it seems as if a kind of compensating process is at work here. This person normally gets into difficulties when they have to play different roles at the same time or two very different roles successively to the same person.

It is important, however, to note that it is not only others, who choose a role for an individual, but that it is often also the individual, who chooses a certain kind of role for themselves and in this way creates a certain self-image. Naturally one’s self-image, which is the basis for well-being and a secure sense of one’s identity as well as for social functioning, is very insecure. As a result, a person is in general very sensitive to the views others have of them.¹⁸ They constantly seek confirmation of their self-image and if they just get disconfirmation instead are often very distressed, as they are unsure if they can still believe in the self-image they have created. A person suffers when the social structure they live in does not allow them to adopt the roles that would match their personality. The result is that “such people may become uninterested in life, have no commitment to society, no sense of values because

¹⁴ Popitz, Heinrich. “The concept of social role as an element of sociological theory.” *Role*: 15.

¹⁵ *Ibid*: 16.

¹⁶ Ruddock. *Roles and Relationships*: 8.

¹⁷ *Ibid*: 9.

¹⁸ *Ibid*: 31.

nothing available to them is of any value. In consequence of all this they possess no acceptable self-image.”¹⁹

We have now seen that the choice of roles and their adoption works both ways, from individual to society and the other way round, and we can call these processes matters of ascription. “... identity is a matter of ascription: *by* individuals of themselves, and *of* individuals by others. Collectively, the same holds good: groups identify themselves and are categorised by others.”²⁰ Ascription by others can either be a principle of inclusion or of exclusion of a group or an organisation. On the nominal level, ascribed identities like gender and race are generally recognised, but on the virtual level there might be less agreement on these identifications.²¹ The latter is the area of actual experience and feeling and not of sensible reflection.

Many sociologists have called roles the basic units of society and define society as a set of roles and not as a set of individuals.²² Ruddock refuses, in my opinion quite rightly, the idea that man is just the sum of their roles and nothing else. He quotes Alasdair MacIntyre: “ ‘Yet a man is more and other than the roles which he plays. The positions which he occupies in the family, at work, or as a citizen do not exhaust his unique individuality.’ ”²³ I agree with the idea that role is a crucial factor in social interaction and it is because of its constant involvement in situations that personality can never (or at least very rarely) be directly observed. Jackson emphasises this point when he explains how the role-image distorts, typifies and obscures perception of individuality and sums this up in the sentence, “What permits human co-existence is veiled understanding.”²⁴ To sum these ideas up we can say that we cannot see the person without the social generalization that relates to role-relation, but at the same time there is more to the social relationship than just the role-image. “ ‘All intercourse between people inside social categories would be different’ if we could establish *purely* individual, or *purely* social relations.”²⁵ It is important not to overemphasise the influence role norms have for the reason that this could lead to negate the individual any kind of autonomy. The question arises here how much personal freedom an individual has still left when they are merely defined through role behaviour that is mainly determined by society. However, the individual’s autonomy can be said to lie in the fact that they can consciously choose between a variety of possible roles and also have the chance to give up an unhelpful

¹⁹ Ibid: 103

²⁰ Jenkins. Social Identity: 102.

²¹ Ibid: 149.

²² Ruddock. Roles and Relationships: 12.

²³ Ibid: 12. from: *The Guardian*, April 1968.

²⁴ Popitz. “The concept of social role as an element of sociological theory.” Role: 31.

role-identification: “The process of development often means giving up one role-identification for another”²⁶. One should also be aware of the fact that everyone can perform a role in a different, individual way.²⁷ To what extent this is possible depends very much on the kind of role an individual has to play. Some roles offer greater possibilities to unfold individual characteristics, for example creative professions like those of an artist or writer, whereas other roles do not leave much space for individuality, for example those of workers on a conveyor-belt. “In addition, some norms only require behaviour within certain parameters without specifying precisely what the expected behaviour is, thereby allowing plenty of leeway to the individual”²⁸. At least some individuality and innovation can be displayed even in roles that are not completely self-chosen. Indeed, some norms may even require the individual to show innovative behaviour, as they do not state final aims and leave it to the individual to do this. Furthermore, an individual does not have to be completely absorbed into their role behaviour so that they can keep some role-distance.²⁹ In addition, not all roles are an obstacle to personal development: “It is not roles as such, that deny integrity or block the personal development of the occupant. It is particular roles that do this, while others have the opposite effect.”³⁰ Thus personal development can be both made possible as well as blocked by the application of roles.

I have outlined above how role theory can provide explanations to human behaviour and to the connection between individuals and societies. It shows how structure is represented and how society works: Society is only variable according to content, but not to construction.

Lasting societation requires, for example, the setting-up of regularities in social behaviour on the basis of agreements about abstractions, the drawing-up of sanctionable norms, the relation of normative sub-systems to one another, and social generalization of individuals into role-bearers.³¹

Thus, we can say that the concept of role touches upon something fundamental to society. Role-theory is an account of dutiful action – Hollis adds the term ‘a priori model’ and parallels it thus with a Positivist model. I reject this latter claim, as roles are no a priori entities, but are negotiated in society.

²⁵ Ibid: 32.

²⁶ Ruddock. Roles and Relationships: 110.

²⁷ Bradbury, M. Heading, B. and Hollis, M. “The man and the mask: a discussion of role-theory.” Role: 44.

²⁸ Ibid: 51.

²⁹ Ruddock. Roles and Relationships: 14.

³⁰ Ibid: 13.

³¹ Popitz. “Social role as an element of sociological theory.” Role: 38.

Nevertheless, it is now also important to comment on some of the objections raised against particular stances of role theory.

One objection, which I have already raised, is that a person cannot be solely described by the roles they perform.

Role is also a broad concept, and many social factors can be subsumed under it; but it would equally be a mistake to think of behaviour solely in terms of role. ... Sometimes role will prove to be the key concept, sometimes personality, sometimes inter-action and sometimes situation.³²

This idea of personality and identity obviously differs from Mead's viewpoint, which posits social interaction above everything else to determine identity. The viewpoint offered by Ruddock seems to observe more closely the different aspects of a person and is thus careful not to turn one factor into an absolute one in respect to its contribution to personal development.

Another difficulty in some forms of role theory is that they seem to presuppose a kind of consensus among members of society about the content of the roles individuals are expected to perform.³³ "Individuals probably have different conceptions of the content of a role because they have been influenced by different role partners, and the role analyst, in concentrating on the 'generalized other', neglects individual variations on the theme."³⁴ The assumption of a 'generalized other' or a consensus, however, contradicts reality in the same way as the assumption of a static nature of expectations. Expectations are always of a potentially changing nature.³⁵

Also, many role theorists describe the process of society shaping man by imposing roles upon them as a unidirectional one, as they often overlook man's own initiative in choosing their roles and rejecting some of the suggested ones. This leads them to regard role theory as a highly deterministic theory. This deterministic theory underestimates the individual's influence on society in return: "... its danger, it seems to me, is that it is a way of projecting society into the individual without being a way of projecting the individual into society."³⁶

Jenkins' viewpoint of the dialectical interplay of processes of internal and external definition,³⁷ which closely resembles Mead's ideas of social interaction, can be taken up here and applied to roles as well in order to develop a more adequate kind of role theory.

³² Ruddock. Roles and Relationships: 64.

³³ Coulson, Margaret A. "Role: A Redundant Concept in Sociology? Some Educational Considerations." Role: 110.

³⁴ Ibid: 49.

³⁵ Ibid: 118.

³⁶ Ibid: 46.

³⁷ Jenkins. Social Identity: 25.

What is required is a *process* of labelling: a cumulative process over time in which the label has consequences for the individual ... The consequences lie in the responses of others to the labelled individual as well as in her own responses to the identification. ... Being labelled is neither uni-directional nor determinate.³⁸

Furthermore, role theory is bound to comprehend many phenomena of societation only peripherally, for example social differentiations of a non-normative type.³⁹

A further point one has to be aware of is that the enactment of various roles leaves a mark on the individual to the extent that elements of a role are taken over into another role or position because the individual has integrated these elements into his personality.

Now to the extent that the individual does develop a coherent personality he will carry it into all his role-acting situations and there is likely to be 'spill-over' of elements of personality developed in other social contexts into the role being articulated now (e.g. the businessman who treats friends in cost-accounting terms).⁴⁰

That means that the different elements of roles partially interact and mingle and that they are often not kept entirely separate, a process many role theorists neglect to go into.

Keeping these objections and reservations to some approaches by role theory in mind, I will still use some of role theory's main assumptions as described at the beginning of the chapter for my analysis. They are useful tools that complement other theoretical approaches.

I want to state explicitly here that I use the 'role'-term in the widest possible sense in the way I have explained above. I will thus not limit my explanations to institutionalised roles like those exercised in various professions, as some role theorists do, but will include aspects like class and gender as well, as characters in the texts I have chosen display specific expectations to other characters which form a certain pattern that is normally shown in the role image. As in the preceding chapter, I would recommend particularly the novels by D.H. Lawrence and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde to compare how role theory can be successfully applied to English Literature.

³⁸ Ibid: 77.

³⁹ Popitz. "The concept of social role as an element of sociological theory." *Role*: 35.

⁴⁰ Bradbury, Heading & Hollis. "The man and the mask: a discussion of role-theory." *Role*: 49.

I.7. Culture and Identity

Culture can be considered as one of the most formative factors of a person's identity. The impact of culture on an individual's development is even more enhanced by the individual's constant – to a large extent involuntary - confrontation with cultural influences. What then is culture? - The term culture has particularly over the last few decades been extensively used and has acquired a great variety of definitions. Cultural Studies developed and became more influential due to its integration of various research areas that focussed on different aspects of culture or analysed the latter under different premises. Most kinds of research tried to bring several definitions of culture together by integrating them into broader categories. One such approach has been to integrate the following three definitions of the term into a broader culture-concept:¹ Firstly, culture is regarded as a reference to the creations and cultural practices that are intellectual and artistic, such as music, literature, painting and sculpture. Secondly, culture is seen as a way of life that is characterised by the creation and the application of symbols, the symbolic capacity being seen as the foundation of our cultural being. The latter is the case because symbols are shared ideas that attribute meaning in social life. Thirdly, culture is explained as a process and development that cultivates people's minds. This involves not only the development of the individual's own capacities, but also that of the more general social and historical process. Even though the writer here claims that these three senses are relatively distinct, I would like to point out how interwoven they have become in our use of the word: In fact the cultivation of minds is achieved through our general lifestyles as well as through the pursuit of intellectual and artistic activities. In addition, our lifestyles can have very artistic dimensions. Confusion starts mainly when one individual uses one specific definition, whereas the other individual uses either another very specific one or regards 'culture' as the conglomeration of the three definitions given above. It is of course unfortunate to employ now the same term for (partially) divergent views. However the context should illuminate the specific meaning so that it is merely important to bear in mind that there is more than one kind of application of the term and also that theorising culture always involves a process of abstraction.²

In order to see how these different uses of the term evolved, it is useful to have a look at the etymology of the word: Culture derives from the Latin word *cultura* whose original meaning

¹ "part i: Cultural theory: 1 Culture and cultural studies: 1.1 What is culture?" Introducing Cultural Studies, ed. Baldwin, Elaine; Longhurst, Brian; McCracken, Scott; Ogborn, Miles; Smith, Greg. Harlow: Prentice Hall Europe, 1999: 4-7.

is the cultivation of tending of something, such as of animals. This meaning acquired a significant place in many European languages during the early modern period.³ It is not hard to see how we later on derived the meaning of practising customs from it. During the nineteenth century culture became synonymous with civilization: This was the result of deriving it from the Latin word ‘civilic’, which means the meaning of or the belonging to citizens. Civilization as used in French and English in the late eighteenth century describes a form of human development that was marked by process and that shied away from barbarism. This general process of human development was described as becoming cultivated and captured the mood of the Enlightenment. Naturally this understanding of culture in terms of progress gave rise and justification to ethnocentric views and practices and cultural imperialism has taken its legitimacy from there. The classical conception of culture emerged, which was defined as **“the process of developing and ennobling the human faculties, a process facilitated by the assimilation of works of scholarship and art and linked to the progressive character of the modern era.”**⁴ The understanding we have today of culture as pointing towards sophistication and the arts as well as its potential of giving rise to change and development are articulated here.

The concept of culture allows for various definitions and Cultural Studies displays the openness and capacity to accommodate them. Although this results in enrichment, it at the same time contains the danger of completely delving into vagueness.⁵

In order to illuminate the transforming culture-concept and its relation to man better, I want to concentrate on the areas of politics, anthropology and semiology. In addition, I want to focus at first in more depth on the evolving significance of multiculturalism and transculturalism.

Multicultural movements occurred in the early 1970s first in Canada and Australia and then in the U.S.A., the U.K., Germany and elsewhere.⁶ The consecutively evolving theories and practices of multiculturalism were initially a response to failed immigration policies,⁷ and have become of major importance due the ever-increasing extremely high number of migrants worldwide. Like culture itself, the multicultural movement that arose in very different political contexts in different areas lacks a unique definition. Also like culture in general,

² “part i: Cultural theory: 1 Culture and cultural studies: 1.3 Theorising culture.” Introducing Cultural Studies. ed. Baldwin; Longhurst; McCracken; Ogborn; Smith: 23.

³ Chaudhuri, Maitrayee. “The concept of culture in globalised times and in my classroom.” 22 May 2003. <http://members.tripod.com/~csssjnu/culture.html>: 5.

⁴ Ibid: 6.

⁵ “part i Cultural theory: 1 Culture and cultural studies: 1.4 Cultural Studies.” Introducing Cultural Studies: ed. Baldwin; Longhurst, McCracken; Ogborn; Smith: 41.

⁶ Parekh, Bhikhu. “What is multiculturalism?” Multiculturalism seminar #484. December 1999. 08 May 2003. <http://www.india-seminar.com/1999/484/484%20parekh.htm>: 1.

multiculturalism can be best seen as a way of viewing human life. Bikhu Parekh listed three important, complementary insights that attempt a useful definition of multiculturalism:⁸ Firstly, human beings organise their lives in culturally derived systems of meaning and significance so that they view the world from within a culture. Secondly, multiculturalism believes that different cultures represent different systems of meaning and visions of the good life and that each culture can only grasp a part of the whole human existence. In consequence, this view reflects the possibility of various cultures complementing each other. Thirdly, every culture is plural in itself and in this way at least partially multicultural in its origins, which also includes fluidity. In order to appreciate the values of others, it is a precondition that a culture appreciates its own plurality. It is therefore a widespread tendency of closed cultures that they feel threatened by others and that they define themselves through their differences to other cultures. This excludes dialogue. Homogenisation of a culture can never be just, as it neglects to account for the validity of some voices in this culture.

Multiculturalism thus clearly reflects the idea of individuals living in more than one culture at the same time and recognises that no single political doctrine or ideology can encapsulate life's entire truth.⁹ This conviction is the cornerstone for tolerance that tackles power abuse as well as arrogance and feelings of superiority that are based on cultural considerations. Issues of equality are considered insofar as society's diverse communities are treated both equally and fairly in the public and political sphere.¹⁰ Multiculturalists are aware of the fact that caste, class, gender, race and religion have been revealed as sources of discrimination and as a result created an agenda of democratization and non-discrimination. Practices of inclusion are developed, which seek to aim at regarding people in a state both as citizens as well as members of specific communities. In addition, inter-group equality must be linked to the demand of intra-group equality so that discrimination cannot occur within a majority group either that has been granted new rights.

The sense of belonging the individuals feel in this context can for obvious reasons not be founded on shared ethnic or cultural characteristics. Instead, they have to be political and must be based on shared principles in this political community. This includes that one does not harm but support instead the interests and the integrity of this political community. It is however important to regard this commitment as a basic commitment that can and should express criticism of policies, especially of those that use forms of violence against a living

⁷ Mahajan, Gurpreet. "Rethinking multiculturalism." Multiculturalism seminar #484. December 1999. 07 May 2003. <http://www.india-seminar.com/1999/484/484%20mahajan.htm>: 9.

⁸ Parekh. "What is multiculturalism?" Multiculturalism seminar #484: 1-2.

⁹ Ibid: 3.

¹⁰ Mahajan. "Rethinking multiculturalism." Multiculturalism Seminar #484: 6.

being. Examples of this basic commitment include equal rights of citizenship, a decent standard of living, opportunities of self-development and the participation in collective life. As different communities have different needs, voices have become louder in their demand for “group-differentiated rights, culturally differentiated applications of laws and policies, state support for minority institutions, and a judicious programme of affirmative action.”¹¹ Although this seems to be theoretically a reasonable demand, there are quite a few difficulties involved when trying to put this demand into practise. One reason for this is that a ‘minority’ group’s cultural conventions might clash with the country’s legislation, such as is the case when we think about the question if Muslim women can be forced to get rid of their headscarves in European public institutions. In such cases it is necessary to engage in dialogue and constant negotiations that can certainly also have a huge impact on the legislation: Recognition has to be fought for in culture and that involves challenging cultural and political patterns of life. Demands of unity and diversity have to be reconciled. In a society with so many different cultural influences it has become very difficult to speak about distinct national identities.

We also need to acknowledge that a central characteristic feature of culture is that it is liable to adapt and to mutate into new forms. A clear example of this feature is the tendency of canons and traditions to dissolve and also the diffusion of boundaries between popular and high art. This can be illustrated by the arrangements of many shelves and tables in bookshops that display the easy-reads next to literature that is highly demanding. For this reason it has been suggested to verbalise culture: This challenges the view that cultures are inherently stable and homogenous. Often dissent and diversity that permeate all cultures are merely masked. This entails that we mask the complexity cultures possess and that we are unable to develop multiple perspectives that find expression in a dialogue of differences.

Multiculturalism in particular is an important way of doing away with the foundation of essentialist, discriminating and hierarchical ways of thinking of others and of treating them according to these ideas.

This, however, does not imply that there are not still huge difficulties in the ways multiculturalism is actually practised. The frequent eruptions of violence in India, often caused by Hindu fundamentalists, as well as the race riots that were particularly forceful in Britain during the summer of 2001 are just two examples that seem to give at first sight the lie to the idea that multiculturalism can in actual fact work and have the positive effects mentioned above. The problems that lie at the bottom of such acts of violence are mainly

¹¹ Parekh. “What is multiculturalism?” Multiculturalism seminar #484: 5.

issues of certain attitudes towards and assumptions of cultures in the context of multiculturalism. One of the dangers is that multiculturalism is often seen as the concern of the majority that should learn to handle difference in a more open-minded way.¹² This places the majority again into the centre of attention and neglects to emphasise that the process of understanding and tolerance that characterises multiculturalism is a reciprocal one.

Furthermore many people still defend an integrationist perspective that implies that either the majority or the minorities abandon their norms and beliefs. In addition, the huge differences between the experience of mixed, white and multi-ethnic localities have sometimes not sufficiently been taken into account. To be more precise, it is the nature of the ethnic mix that has been ignored.

Problems occur particularly where the population is divided into two large groups. It is also problematic when people try to practise a form of liberal universalism that understands tolerance in the way of not confronting hostilities in order to avoid the risk of offending 'multicultural correctness'. Instead, it seems much easier to allow social and spatial segregation to continue, which goes hand in hand with the increasing presence of stereotypes. Criticism that aims at establishing closer bonds and a deeper understanding could in actual fact contribute to overcome separation and ghetto-building. It is the people who do not dare to confront each other that aggravate already existing rifts between groups. Matthew Taylor argues in a newspaper article very convincingly that demands such as that of David Blunkett's that immigrants who come to Britain have to learn the English language¹³ has nothing to do with forced assimilation that is grounded on the belief in the natural superiority of the English language¹⁴, but is instead a precondition to communication and therefore to an understanding of each other. Dispensing with these false assumptions of multiculturalism is the first step towards establishing a community that reflects variety, complexity and therefore richness. Overall it is important to recognise both the limitations and the possibilities of multiculturalism: While it would be presumptuous to believe in being able to fully understand every aspect of a culture that is multiple in its character, it is also a mistake to assume that disagreements cannot be removed and that there will always remain a mutual unintelligibility.¹⁵ It is certainly true that such absolute statements do not adequately reflect human nature. Both within and across cultures the boundaries of understanding keep changing.

¹² Taylor, Matthew. "Consenting apartheid." *The Guardian* 4 December 2001: 17.

¹³ Brown, Colin. "Blunkett's 'British test' for immigrants." *The Independent on Sunday*. 9th December 2001.

¹⁴ Taylor. "Consenting apartheid." *The Guardian*: 17.

¹⁵ Miri, Mrinal. "Understanding other cultures." *Multiculturalism seminar #484*. December 1999. 07 May 2003. <http://www.india-seminar.com/1999/484/484%20miri.htm>: 11.

In view of the inadequacies of multiculturalism, especially those that lead to segregation, a new approach has emerged that has tried to rectify such deficiencies by introducing new points of departure. This approach, designated as transculturalism, uses some of multiculturalism's basic assumptions such as the importance to foster diversity, but takes them a step further.

The term transculturalism is not new. It was introduced and defined as long ago as 1940 by Fernando Ortiz.¹⁶ It referred to intercultural mixed peoples, seen as the key in legitimising the American identity at the time. The main characteristic of transculturalism is that it describes the process of mingling so that the dialectic between persons who are already culturally and biologically mixed is stressed. Each person is regarded as already being a mosaic in the first place. Transculturalism thus breaks down boundaries by introducing a culture of mingling. It can also be called social multiculturalism, as it takes into account how identities evolve in society, which is an aspect that multiculturalism neglects due to its attention to existing relations between people and to the policies one could introduce to improve these relations. Friction and conflict are regarded as necessary to social processes and are not avoided in the way multiculturalism has sometimes tried to avoid them due to a misunderstood form of political correctness. Instead, a society is only seen as a vibrant and fertile one if it offers room for various, possibly conflicting loyalties. The idea of a cosmopolitan citizenship is even evoked where every person recognises themselves in the other, an idea that can be compared to T.S. Eliot's conception of a world-culture.¹⁷ The latter does not mean a uniform culture, but a culture that captures relations between persons from different backgrounds and that does not eliminate particularities of the constituent parts. This world culture is of course an ideal, but one that we seem to need, as it functions as a reminder that we need to establish as well as to hold on to global ethical standards that guarantee human rights.

Transculturalism can therefore be regarded as a dynamic concept that neither surrenders to irresponsible forms of globalization, which will be mentioned below, nor accepts any particularity, as multiculturalism tends to do. The practices adopted in the context of transculturalism thus differ from those of multiculturalism: Due to ongoing dialogue and communication between all members of society stereotypes tend to be dispelled. After connections have been established, education processes frequently take place in order to achieve a greater understanding of other people. The intended outcome of such cultural

¹⁶ Cuccioletta, Donald. "Multiculturalism or Transculturalism: Towards a Cosmopolitan Citizenship," *London Journal of Canadian Studies* 17 (2001/2002): http://www.bbk.ac.uk/lc/LCCS/LJCS/Vol_17/cuccioletta.pdf: 8.

¹⁷ "Interculturalism, Globalization and Cultural Identity".
<http://www.escanet.org/dialogue/contributions/Paun.doc>: 1.

contact is real integration, which should give individuals feelings of confidence and satisfaction and lead eventually to personal growth. In fact, unlike the unintended side effects of multiculturalism, transcultural practices do normally not result in segregation, but foster inter-group harmony instead. On the whole, it seems to be a useful suggestion made by Martin Sokefeld to abandon a concept of culture that is clearly founded on difference as it is still very often done in (multicultural) political discourse and adopt instead a concept of culture that is founded on continuity.¹⁸

Assimilation is also avoided, a process that is frequently mistaken for the process of integration: Although assimilation emphasises commonalities as well, it tends to do so exclusively, and people undergoing a process of assimilation usually suppress a critique of other persons and are determined to avoid controversies.¹⁹ They also feel that they need to overcompensate ignorance, which they are ashamed of, by being particularly friendly or even subservient. They mirror, which means they emulate, the different lifestyle and consciously and strategically distance themselves from other persons of their former culture and from that culture as well. This can go as far as ridiculing some of the former culture's customs or the people who adhere to them. Assimilation processes are therefore essentially different from those of integration and would certainly not agree with transcultural policies.

Globalisation provides the context for these new cultural formations. It can be seen as “the process of gradually intermeshing world economies, politics and cultures into a global system.”²⁰ Globalisation has increased the frequency of contacts between distant cultures. In our every day lives we take part in global processes and are integrated in global structures: We for example follow news reports that present contributions from all over the world and wars at the other end of the world have huge impacts on the economies of other countries that in turn affect the citizens' quality of life. Globalization has also made companies from abroad, particularly American corporations such as Mc Donald's, settle down in numerous other countries and establish their businesses there. These changes were accompanied with concern that our globe will one day become a very uniform one in which cultural differences will have been completely abolished. Do we really have to fear this? While Arjun Appadurai understands that in smaller polities there has always been the fear that they will be absorbed by larger polities, he also points out that the new global cultural economy has to be

¹⁸ Sokefeld, Martin. “The Concept of Culture between Politics and Social Anthropology: From Difference to Continuity.” 22 May 2003. <http://www.uni-muenster.de/EthnologieHeute/eh3/culture.htm>: 8.

¹⁹ Mark P. Orbe, *Constructing Co-Cultural Theory. An explication of culture, power and communication*. Thousand Oaks, London & New Delhi: Sage, 1998: 110-13.

²⁰ “part ii: Cultural studies: 4 Topographies of culture: geography, power and representation: 4.4 Culture and national identity.” *Introducing Cultural Studies*. ed. Baldwin; Longhurst; McCracken; Ogborn; Smith: 159.

understood in other ways than what the centre-periphery model provides us with.²¹ We can better understand this if we recognise that the proliferation of aspects from another culture does not mean that the end-result of this mixture will be that the place that absorbs these new influences will directly mirror the country or community whose aspects it has absorbed. Instead, it will take on these aspects in a certain way that is dependent on the history and the context that have shaped this place. Thus we can observe a huge discrepancy between cultural items and signs on the one hand and their social adaptation, use and function on the other hand.²² This means that the adoption of cultural items such as American hamburger from McDonald's might have a completely different meaning for Germans and in addition, even though many Germans might eat this food they will therefore not necessarily take on any other aspects of the kind of American lifestyle that is typically associated with this fast food. In this sense it would not merely be a simplification of matters but also a gross distortion to speak of a clear-cut homogenization of a smaller culture by a larger culture. To put it more strongly in John Gray's words: "As societies throughout the world become more modern, they do *not* thereby become more similar."²³

The real dangers of globalisation have to be looked for elsewhere: One of the worst impacts globalisation has is the disadvantage it creates in terms of trade for third world countries. It is true that it is normally particularly the more well-off countries in the West together with some globally important Eastern economic powers that determine the political and economic spheres in our world. This shows in that the richer states still demand taxes for produced goods from third-world countries as well as demanding duties that are four times as high as they are for the trade among the richer countries.²⁴ This is a clear exploitation of those countries that need to be most supported to develop their own economies. We can here speak of a redistribution in favour of the already well-off. In this sense it is a form of imperialism that is so easily adopted in a globalised world and applied to the weaker states. It leaves the people living in these states in an even greater dependency than they were in before firmly establishing these trade links. Particularly the superpowers use third-world countries for their own ends, thus marginalising them and turning them into puppets of their own desires. The cultures of the places where the superpowers intervene are thus affected by the interest of

²¹ Appadurai, Arjun. "Disjuncture and Differene in the Global Cultural Economy." The Cultural Studies Reader. Ed. Simon During. Second Edition. London & New York: Routledge, 1999: 221.

²² Nolte, Paul. "Die unamerikanische Nation." Die Zeit. 23 May 2002: 3.

²³ Gray, John. Al Qaeda and what it means to be modern. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 2003: 113.

²⁴ Schumann, Harald. „Die Welt ist keine Ware.“ Deutschland. June-July 2003: 42.

dominant groups, which attempt to validate their positions in particular structures.²⁵ As a consequence of the resulting confusion in these countries, new leaderships there frequently establish themselves and stop the individuals under their regime to lead rich and fulfilling lives. Instead the leaders use means of oppression²⁶ and intimidation to control the people that are not at all regarded by them as individuals any more. This shows how power and culture are inextricably linked.

Nevertheless there are on the other hand certainly advantages to be recognised as well in the process of globalization in respect to many people's lifestyles and thus to their culture. More people are now able to communicate easily and instantly with people who live very far away from them, they get live news reports from far-away places and can order goods via the internet that are quickly and often cheaply delivered. Their opportunities of communication, gaining knowledge and intensifying their work and leisure pursuits is by most people regarded as a very positive cultural change brought on by globalization, as it has given them a greater spectrum of life choices.

The advantages mentioned here can of course not be fully relished unless the oppression and cultural imperialism that often go with global processes will be abolished by finding different approaches to globalisation. To achieve this it is once again important to find the right kind of interplay between sameness and difference.²⁷ Difference can on the one hand be welcomed, as it enriches a culture by adopting new facets, but it should be rejected when being taken as a justification for power abuse. In the latter case difference is often exaggerated.

As already mentioned, in our globalised world the negative view of cultural difference that has often led to the adoption of measures of oppression, has subsisted²⁸ next to one that sees multicultural practices and exchanges as an enrichment, depending on what kind of stance globalisation takes. "In our time, direct colonialism has largely ended; imperialism, as we shall see, lingers where it has always been, in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic, and social practices."²⁹ These practices include the controlling, the silencing and the erasing of experiences,³⁰ treating thus individuals of other cultures as obedient objects. Culture conceived in this mode remains a hegemonic concept that ignores individuals' common interests.

²⁵ "part i: Cultural theory: 1 Culture and cultural studies: 1.2 Issues and problems in the study of culture." Introducing Cultural Studies. ed. Baldwin; Longhurst; McCracken; Ogborn; Smith: 11.

²⁶ Roy, Arundhati. Interview with Michael Sontheimer. „'Alles wird geschändet.'" Der Spiegel. 2003: 168.

²⁷ Appadurai. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy." The Cultural Studies Reader: 229-30.

²⁸ This is where attempts at homogenizing other cultures come in.

²⁹ Said, Edward W. Culture and Imperialism. London: Vintage, 1994: 8.

It seems to be most important for cultural politics today to adopt an identity concept that allows for transgression. Transgression is crucial in overcoming static ideas of belonging and being. The latter often justify imposing certain roles and the duties associated with such roles on individuals. Transgression is thus the practice that is central in the discussion of post-colonial counterpractices to discrimination, which will become obvious in my analysis of both post-colonial Anglo-Indian fiction in the next part of this study as well as in my analysis of Salman Rushdie's texts in the last part. We adopt here an identity-concept that starts from the assumption of the individual being a largely autonomous and self-critical being that constantly remakes their identity through the interaction with the not-self, which is the external world.³¹ Transgression in this context should be seen as a crucial way of self-development. The aforementioned cultural definitions in politics that nationalise and de-individualise cannot tie in with such a definition of identity and thus had to be abandoned in respect to the politics of transgression. There are different forms of transgression: It can mean the assertion of a positive identity that is as normal and natural as the dominant norm. It can also mean the assertion of a negative identity, which means an identity that is considered to be abnormal, but that can be explained or assimilated. Furthermore, a different identity can be asserted as more natural and normal than the dominant norm. And finally, the most revolutionary strategy of transgression would be one where the categories of what we define as normal and abnormal are subverted. This has for example been undertaken in queer politics which radically questioned our usual binary opposition of male and female sexuality that is based on the assumption of essentialist homosexual or heterosexual identities.³² This latter form of transgression is also more revolutionary insofar as its discourse is in contrast to the former ones explicitly anti-essentialist: Identity is here understood to be performative and not based on any essential characteristics, but it is a performance based on cultural expectations – in this case in the sense of subverting them. This form of transgression can counter power abuse by politicians who had so far taken recourse in eternal universal laws when justifying actions such as the exclusion or punishment of some groups. Political actions can now at the most be justified as being in accordance with one's culture, but this justification proves to be a weaker one considering that culture cannot be regarded as immutable. In this way, transgressive performances oppose or challenge the legitimacy and representativeness of the

³⁰ Barth, Fredrik. "Ethnicity and the concept of Culture." 23 February 1995. 22 May 2003. <http://www.tau.ac.il/tarbut/readers/syllabi/fbarth-ethnicity.htm>: 10.

³¹ "part ii: Cultural Studies: 6 Politics and culture: 6.1 Cultural politics and political culture." *Introducing Cultural Studies*. ed. Baldwin; Longhurst; McCracken; Ogborn; Smith: 224.

³² *Ibid*: 225.

ruling law, suggesting that another set of values is possible.³³ However, it would be naive to think that transgression by creating another law, replaces the existing law immediately. It creates first of all a conflict with the already existing law. It is thus apparent that politics are constructed by and through culture. It is important to recognise that cultural politics is not just about expanding the notion of politics to include culture, but also very much about showing the cultural dimension of politics: Messages can be transformed and made illegitimate when taken out of their cultural contexts. Transgression thus tackles the relationship between culture and power.³⁴

In this context subcultures are of great importance in that they very often express particular values that reflect critically on aspects of the main culture. In this way subcultures both differentiate themselves from the main culture and also incorporate some aspects of it.³⁵ The consequence of resistance, the latter being frequently symbolically expressed, is usually the labelling and re-definition of deviant behaviour by the dominant groups.³⁶

Subcultures also show the fragmentation processes inherent in the dominant culture. We could best illustrate this by taking a closer look at popular culture, which is already a kind of subculture, and observe how it is further divided in several subcultural forms, such as the culture of the fashion industry as well as pop and rock music culture and numerous more.

But not only in cultural politics, also in anthropology has the term ‘culture’ undergone great changes and has led to new insights. Nineteenth-century anthropology widely believed that cultural differences, which had been progressively arranged beforehand, were the result of genetic endowments among peoples. This belief formed the basis for racial theory. By now anthropologists have determinedly rejected the 19th-century stance as a form of racialism and ethnocentrism. They have also demanded that other cultures should not be analysed by our own values, as this does other cultures most of the time no justice and often ends again in intolerance. It was particularly Franz Boas, the first defender of a pluralised culture-concept in anthropology, who emphasised this perspective that laid the ground rules for the modern anthropological orientation of cultural relativism with its belief in culture’s emergence through learning and in the cultural conditioning of behaviour through unconscious processes of habituation. Cultural relativism firmly believes in all cultures’ equal

³³ Ibid: 232-33.

³⁴ “part ii: Cultural studies: 6 Politics and culture: 6.3 Cultures of resistance.” Introducing Cultural Studies. ed. Baldwin; Longhurst; McCracken; Ogborn; Smith, ed: 265.

³⁵ “part ii: Cultural studies: 8 Subcultures: reading, resistance and social divisions: 8.1 Subcultures: power, divisions and interpretation.” Introducing Cultural Studies. ed. Baldwin; Longhurst; McCracken; Ogborn; Smith: 316-7.

development according to their own standards and dismisses all hierarchies. This, however, can unfortunately easily turn into extreme forms of cultural relativism that refuses critical dialogues and instead merely tolerates unquestioningly.

What is certainly important is to take the context of a culture more closely into account when exploring it. This is certainly an achievement of Boas' historical particularism.

Boas' new definition of culture replaced race as the main difference between human beings with cultural difference. The problem in this account is that the individual was stripped of their own responsibility and autonomy and was merely being filled with cultural contents.

Culture became fully responsible for shaping the thoughts and behaviour of individuals.

The next step in anthropological development was the recognition that the anthropologist's descriptions and analyses are always also a means of othering and of course a demonstration of power.

Some very important findings in anthropological research in culture have been reflected on by the famous twentieth-century anthropologist Clifford Geertz. Firstly, he explicitly stressed that the concept of culture is a semiotic one and that in consequence the analysis of culture is interpretative.³⁷ At the centre of Geertz's work was what he termed as 'thick description', which is the process of interpreting the collected cultural material. His important contribution was to make it clear that these descriptions are always, how compelling they may be, anthropological imaginative constructs.³⁸ He showed how analysis always affects, i.e. changes or distorts, the object "that is, *we begin with our own interpretations of what our informants are up to, or think they are up to, and then systematize those.*"³⁹ His distinction though of anthropological writing as involving second or third order interpretations from the depictions of a culture by the native inhabitants as a first order interpretation is partially outdated it seems to me. Considering migrants such as Rushdie or many travel writers one can say that they are and are not individuals who come up with first order interpretations. We can now also apply Geertz's views to societies with numerous cultures that might be more or less accessible to the individual who lives in them. An example would be Saleem's depiction of the various aspects of life in Bombay, which are anything but objective facts about the multi-cultural metropolis, but deeply subjective accounts as they are based on his own impressions and experiences there.

³⁶ "part ii: Cultural Studies: 8 Subcultures: reading, resistance and social divisions: 8.5 Three Studies from the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies." Introducing Cultural Studies. ed. Baldwin; Longhurst; McCracken; Ogborn; Smith: 341.

³⁷ Geertz, Clifford. The Interpretation of Cultures. Selected Essays. London & New York: Fontana Press, 1973: 5.

³⁸ Ibid: 15.

All cultural analysis can do is to guess at meanings. It is by nature inevitably incomplete and can thus never come up with an absolute answer.⁴⁰ This is the case due to culture's variability. Geertz determinedly rejects specific universal cultural forms that served in the past as a central element in the definition of man. Even though there are general forms of culture, such as religion, the differences in the actual manifestations of these forms are so striking as not to be overlooked.⁴¹

He also dismissed a very technical-sounding model of man as a composite of 'levels', each superimposed upon those beneath it and supporting those above it. This model attempts to describe the relations between biological, psychological, social and cultural factors in human life in which one can take off the various layers if one wants to analyse them or find out what man would be without them. Geertz recognised how the levels approach makes us unable to construct genuine functional interconnections between cultural and non-cultural factors. Instead of looking for substantive identities on which layers can be superimposed, a model that is untenable, Geertz and other modern anthropologists have suggested to look for systematic relationships among diverse phenomena. Geertz also stresses how fundamental symbolic acts are in that they help man to understand more of the world and find their place in it. Culture as the sum of such meaning patterns, can thus not merely be "an ornament of human existence but – the principal basis of its specificity - an essential condition for it."⁴²

It is clear to see that this approach stands in direct contrast to assumptions of earlier anthropologists, such as Tylor, who supported a kind of level approach of man as well in that he saw man first of all as a genetically / biologically determined being that acquired the cultural component much later. It has been important to recognise that there is no such thing as a human nature independent of culture. We can only see the world from certain angles that have emerged from the specific circumstances and the context we find ourselves in.⁴³ Our knowledge of the world is necessarily perspectival, but we nevertheless have the capacity to enlarge the number of perspectives we take on things. The privileged position of an omniscient observer 'freed' from cultural influences is, however, not available to us.⁴⁴

Therefore the boundary of what is innately controlled and of what is culturally controlled in human behaviour is a vague one and normally human behaviour can be seen as a combination of the two: While we are born with certain capacities and dispositions, the values and ideas

³⁹ Ibid: 15.

⁴⁰ Ibid: 29.

⁴¹ Ibid: 39-40.

⁴² Ibid: 46.

⁴³ "part i: Cultural theory: 1 Culture and cultural studies: 1.2 Issues and problems in the study of culture." *Introducing Cultural Studies*. ed. Baldwin; Longhurst; McCracken; Ogborn; Smith: 21.

we come up with are culturally created.⁴⁵ Geertz emphasised that becoming human means becoming individual. He thus established an extremely close link between man and their culture, which highlights the importance of researching the latter more to understand the former.

Anthropology has stressed the significance of meaning in respect to culture and has in this context equally highlighted the role symbolism plays in it. It has revealed how arbitrary meanings are assigned in symbolism.⁴⁶ The human ability to assign arbitrary meaning to any object, behaviour or condition is a creative process. This is also shown in human language that enables us to communicate about things that are remote in time and space and that also include abstract things. Symbolism in human language has particularly been focussed on in the areas of linguistics and, to be more precise, in semiotics. It seems useful here to use Roland Barthes' account of myth, as the latter proves to be a great part of culture. In actual fact in his work, *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes shows how unconscious we normally are of how widespread myths are in our culture and that myth-making is actually a process that is constantly involved in culture. This is so because our need to attribute meaning to things can never be satisfied for a longer period of time. Barthes derives his examples that show how myths work from mass culture. Myth is, like our more general culture-concept, revealed as something that is not fixed. Furthermore and most importantly myth deals with the tension between the attempt to establish meaning and the ambiguity that is always present at the same time. To understand this it is first important to know about the various components of myth and the way they interrelate: Barthes uses the structural scheme introduced by Ferdinand Saussure, which consists of the three components of signifier, signified and sign in which the signifier is an image that refers to the signified that is a concept or an idea. The linguistic sign finally unites the two components of signified and signifier. In order to establish a greater context of meaning we must analyse the relation of the sign to the other signs. This is why the process of establishing meaning is a never-ending one. Barthes however goes beyond this clearly-structured account of myth and how it works by focussing on components that lie outside this triangle but influence it: Instead of merely regarding the signifier as a form that refers to something else, he points out that the signifier due to dealing here in myth with “*a second-order semiological system*”⁴⁷ is at the same time also meaning although dismissed for

⁴⁴ Miri. “Understanding other cultures.” *Multiculturalism Seminar #484*: 4.

⁴⁵ Geertz. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Selected Essays: 50.

⁴⁶ Bodley, John H. “An Anthropological Perspective.” *Cultural Anthropology: Tribes, States, and the Global System*. 1994. 22 May 2003. <http://www.wsu.edu:8001/vcwsu/commons/topics/culture/culture-definitions/bodley-text.html>: 2.

⁴⁷ Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*. London: Vintage, 2000: 114.

the moment by taking it as mere form. Meaning is there, however, as the signifier has also got a history and has emerged in a certain context. Structuralism has ignored this, whereas Barthes' post-structuralist approach is to make us conscious of the ambiguity of the signifier in order to recognise how the meaning of the signifier is turned into a form whose content is diminished and impoverished compared to the meaning. It is this interaction between meaning and form that defines myth.⁴⁸ Let me illustrate this by looking at how the wide-spread myth of a star / famous person works in our culture. The signifier would here be a person that is viewed mainly in how they present themselves in public life, i.e. in the media where they have to play a specific role. Money and fame are associated with them, which signify that they are stars. In order to arrive at the signification that this individual is a star however, we have to strip the individual of all their other aspects, such as if they are a caring and loving father and husband or if they are an avid stamp collector. The neglect of certain aspects in favour of one aspect is the way how myth works. It arrives at a distorted truth. Similar processes are at work in the emergence of stereotypes. In Rushdie's novel, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, it is Vina who achieves a mythic status as does her relationship with Ormus. It is impossible if we want to establish meaning of something to establish a really comprehensive or even an absolute meaning. This is natural as is our need to replace ambiguity by meaning, but we should take into account that there are always other aspects involved that we neglect when we give meaning to something. Thus a star can be merely regarded in their achievement in a role, but we should keep in mind that the person that gives rise to the star is more than just this role and that they could also have some very loathsome characteristics that are very well-hidden when performing as a star. Not to shut ourselves completely off from new facets of something enables us to continuously rethink and question our interpretations, thus maintaining our critical faculty. Ambiguity thus fosters diversity and evolution and stands in stark contrast to deterministic systems that do not allow for any growth. And the former processes once again distinguish us as "culturing beings"⁴⁹ Negotiating the interplay between meaning and ambiguity, which are ontologically intertwined, is thus absolutely vital in cultures. In this way meaning remains open and this allows us to remain open. Cultures evolve by promoting incompleteness and Amardo Rodriguez points out how we as individuals can thus realise our own potentiality:⁵⁰ By letting us into a pursuit for completion, which involves acts of empathy, openness and trust, as well as tolerance and sensitivity we can find a fulfilment that

⁴⁸ Barthes. *Mythologies* : 118.

⁴⁹ Rodriguez, Amardo. "Culture to Culturing. Re-imagining Our Understanding Of Intercultural Relations." *Intercultural Communication*. 2002. Ed. Prof. Jens Allwood. 22 May 2003. <http://www.immi.se/intercultural/n5/rodriguez.pfd>: 1.

⁵⁰ Ibid: 6.

mirrors a certain kind of wholeness that is different from completion but certainly not less valuable.

In the following I will first of all show what the neglect of such open conceptions of culture results in, namely how it limits the individual by discriminating against them. To do this I want to focus more specifically on one-sided approaches to cultural aspects like race, religion and gender. Then I will illustrate how more progressive cultural models work on and through individuals, which involves showing how individuals attain enrichment.

I.8. The Hindu philosophy as an Indian approach to wholeness

Whilst the structure and functioning of Hindu society with its concept of caste will be examined in the next part, I want to concentrate now on some views, concepts and symbols of Hinduism that I consider to make a significant contribution to the development of a way of life that is characterised by wholeness. An analysis of Anglo-Indian literature would seem insufficient without taking the Hindu philosophy into account, as it constitutes part of the background from which many of the authors mentioned in the following write.

Although there has been the phenomenon of aggressive Hindu nationalism, which I will explain at a later stage, the basic ideas of Hinduism have been of a very positive and constructive nature. These ideas should not be exclusively seen as religious conceptions, but as ideas that form a particular philosophy of life, aspects of which can be regarded in a more general fashion as suggesting certain lifestyles as beneficial to individuals and society as a whole. Radhakrishnan points out the vitality of Hindu culture by speaking of the importance of the evolution of our knowledge of God.¹ Tradition is not seen as static but something that needs to be reformed and recreated by the free activity of its adherents so that it is kept truly alive. As situations and circumstances change, new forms of how to conduct one's life within the tradition have to be tried out and new aims have to be set. Only then can a person experience a progressive enrichment with the attainment of higher levels of reality. By not demanding the adherence to fixed intellectual beliefs, Hinduism shows no sympathy with dogmatism but offers scope for change instead. This can also be seen in that Hindus regard authority, which often demands a mechanical faith from its followers, as counterproductive. A Hindu's attitude towards their scriptures such as the Vedas is therefore not merely one of trust, but also one of criticism. The scriptures' interpretations furthermore need to be in conformity with the findings of science, which reveals the experimental nature of Hindu philosophy.

This openness to new viewpoints and opinions, which prevents a mechanical uniformity of belief and worship, fully acknowledges the fact that the people of India belong to different groups, worship different gods and practise different rites. But not only the social background of a group is taken into consideration; the personal component of belief is also fully appreciated: the nature of (religious) views differs due to people's different temperaments, their upbringing and education and the multiple influences of the environment. Hinduism acknowledges the importance of not interfering with one's natural way of thinking as long as

¹ Radhakrishnan. *The Hindu Way of Life*. 1927. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1957: 13, 31.

one continuously tries to develop one's intellectual conscience. It is considered unnatural to assume that what is of use to one person is also of use to everyone else insofar as this is not an adequate view of reality and should therefore be discarded. It is futile and disadvantageous to set a common standard regarding one's inclinations. Besides, each method of approach to God reflects a certain mood of the human mind that demands to be recognised. No approach is total but each of them brings out a different facet of the one central reality. "The Hindu has acknowledged that truth wears vestures of many colours and speaks in strange tongues."² Instead of adopting one particular idea as the standard for humanity, Hinduism accepts all religious notions as facts. Respect and good will for other creeds are crucial markers of Hinduism.

Religious experience is in this way seen as psychologically mediated. In fact, experience, intuition and inward realisation are considered the most important guidelines in a person's life. These components are all of a mystical nature, and it then comes as no surprise that the Vedic tradition is known to be inherently mystical in its inclusive and universal perspective that overcomes sectarian differences.³ Elements of mysticism exist in most religions, but – although mysticism is usually understood in a religious context - mystical experiences can occur quite suddenly to anyone regardless of religious orientation and might not be perceived as religious experience at all. They might be understood as artistic or other forms of inspiration, or even be dismissed as psychological aberration. In respect to Hinduism, it is furthermore illuminating to note that the personality of man is regarded as complex, which is mirrored by the complex nature of the environment. Cognition, emotion and will are regarded as the complex personality's three interdependent sides.⁴

The ideal of Hinduism is to achieve a union of free nations differing to a great extent in their ways, which co-operate with each other and make a valuable contribution to the world.⁵ This ideal implies that belief is considered less important than conduct.⁶

On a smaller scale, the person's aim is to reach *moksha*, which can also be described as self-fulfilment, transcendence, release and unity between the person and the infinite and between the self and the world.⁷ A person who lives in *moksha* possesses an all-suffusing 'flux of the I', which means that the 'I' is the centre of their consciousness and of their existence in all situations that are experienced and in all possible selves. The 'I' is constant in all ephemeral

² Ibid: 36.

³ „Mysticism“. Wikipedia. 08 Jul 2006. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mysticism>: 2.

⁴ Radhakrishnan. The Hindu Way of Life: 27.

⁵ Ibid: 58.

⁶ Ibid: 38.

selves and is omnipresent: it is present in the physical self such as in a state of sexual arousal or in the pain felt in sickness, in the personal self during play or in the social self in interaction with others. However, moksha is not restricted to achieve such self-consciousness in a composite self. The highest meaning of life is only found once an individual can sense the 'I' of others until they finally experience total identification. Until consciousness of the 'I' has occurred a person lives in ignorance or false knowledge. Their perception of themselves, their surroundings and others remains *maya*, fragment or deceptive reality. Spiritual freedom can only be gained when one fully becomes part of *brahman*, the all-absorbing life-force.⁸ Brahman is also described as the whole and can be compared to the concept of *nirvana* in Buddhism. These concepts stand for all-fullness, which occurs through the dissolution of single entities and de-individualization. The brahman is not any fixed idea of empirical knowledge but an 'It' that is supra-personal and supra-changeable. Moksha is seen as a real possibility that can be achieved in this life.⁹ It provides an ethical direction to life and is regarded by most Hindus as a universal guide to greater sympathy by ignoring differences of class or caste and by bridging the chasm between the rural and urban population, between the educated and the uneducated people.

Moksha can be reached in many different ways. It is crucial to observe *dharma*, which is the moral obligation a person has, and which depicts righteous behaviour, which includes the observation of guidelines such as the carrying out of 1001 good works and sacrifices.¹⁰ Generally, however, righteous behaviour is seen as relative and is not reduced to very precisely formulated rules. It is said to depend on the culture an individual has been born in, the historical epoch, the innate psychobiological characteristics of a person as well as the efforts that are demanded from the latter in the different phases of life.¹¹ The distinction between different phases of life suggests the suitability of a certain type of lifestyle rather than others at a particular time of life: during youth it is considered appropriate to be immersed in education and learning, whereas it is seen as natural for a young adult to spend a lot of time on founding and then on looking after their home and family. Sexuality and sensuality play a crucial role and should not be undermined. In later life the emphasis is on care in the widest sense and on the attainment of wisdom. These ideal stages of life are guidelines, which still leave a lot of freedom as to how individuals interpret them and finally act within their scope.

⁷ Kakar, Sudhir. „Das hinduistische Weltbild.“ Das Indien-Lesebuch. ed. Dieter Riemenschneider. 1986. Zürich: Unionsverlag, 1999: 16.

⁸ Heimann, Betty. Facets of Indian Thought. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1964: 110, 113.

⁹ Kakar. „Das hinduistische Weltbild.“ Das Indien-Lesebuch: 18.

¹⁰ Fatima, Nasim. „Mystic Tendencies in Hinduism.“ Suite 101. 09 Jul 2006.
<http://www.suite101.com/article.cfm/sufism/7892>: 1.

It is obvious that Hinduism does not underestimate worldly aims and needs.¹² The ambition to attain wealth and the desire to enjoy one's sensuality are fully acknowledged next to the more spiritual aims one should pursue. Hinduism thus shows a very affirmative attitude towards life.

Art and creativity are also important means to attain brahman. Art should produce *rasa*, which is the aesthetic counterpart to moksha.¹³ *Rasa* explores one's inner world, the unconscious, and provides respite from the restlessness of the spirit. Possibilities of creativeness are captured in the symbol of the ocean, which has become an important visualisation of the power of brahman.¹⁴ In respect to art, the Hindu also adopts a comprehensive attitude, not only by embracing a range of different art forms but also by regarding fiction as a kind of reality. In particular, mythology has an extremely important place in Hinduism. This is the case because mythology is a kind of exaggeration of events beyond the actual observable facts and in this way points out numerous other possibilities that are highly valued. Mythology connects empirical actualities and the transcendental.

On the whole, there is always an underlying unity in all parts of and changes in the world according to Hindu thought. Individual and isolated incidents are embedded in a greater whole and the individual agent is only part of a much greater design, which presents man, animal and plant as a unity.¹⁵ They are conceived as a cosmic unity, which gives full expression of the Divine. Man's particular abilities are here not put on a pedestal, but all living beings are regarded as potential representatives of perfection. Similarly, the Hindu gods are not clearly set above man or ultimately superior. They cannot be identified with the Divine, as they are transitory in nature, still follow laws that are to some extent found on earth and cannot interfere with the world's immanent course. There are a great number of Hindu gods, which are endowed with what are considered positive and negative qualities. They tend to stand for opposite ideas or principles and thus display ambiguity. This interplay of opposites is symbolised in the Hindu image of Shakti and Shakta, which stands for energy and idleness, the transformer and the world.¹⁶ These two principles are displayed in an eternal embrace of their thighs, an image whose full meaning cannot be successfully replicated in words. The god Shiva, whilst in one aspect representing destruction and generation combined and in another standing for the destructive power alone, is in his third aspect the representative of the

¹¹ Kakar. „Das hinduistische Weltbild.“ *Das Indien-Lesebuch*: 23.

¹² Nihilananda, Swami. “The Realistic Aspect of Indian Spirituality.” *The Indian Mind: Essentials of Indian Philosophy and Culture*. ed. Charles A. Moore. Honolulu : U of Hawaii P, 1967: 217-19.

¹³ Kakar. „Das hinduistische Weltbild.“ *Das Indien-Lesebuch*: 19.

¹⁴ Heimann. *Facets of Indian Thought*: 69, 143.

¹⁵ *Ibid*: 116-17.

combination of all opposites¹⁷, which will be explored in Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children*. He contains in this third aspect positive and negative elements, generation and destruction, active and receptive, male and female components. Eventually all these opposites are supra-personalised and overcome. His middle aspect is that of calm balance.

The concept of unity is also reflected in Hinduism's circular way of thinking. While the West's way of thinking is one characterised by straight lines, concentrating on the Knowable, Hinduism starts with the pre-empirical and indistinct Unknowable, then focuses on the transitory and distinct empirical phenomena and finally returns to the Unknowable.¹⁸ As a result, Hinduism conceives the course of history, unlike the West, not as a straight line of progressive stages but rather as "a circle or a spiral of continuously developing potentialities."¹⁹ The world, like an individual, emerges, undergoes development and disappears only to be then re-born in another form.

Hinduism's inclination to overcome one-sidedness and limitations becomes also obvious in the elasticity of word meaning in Sanskrit. According to Betty Heimann, there is a remarkable reluctance to apply a term to only one possible meaning.²⁰ She claims that the verbal root, which a noun draws from, rather stays elastic enough to take on different meanings depending on the context and the subject it is used for. It seems that ambiguity or even contradictory meanings are enclosed in the verbal root itself. The root-meaning is also said to contain movement and consecutive counter-movement, which seem to have contradictory repercussions.

The philosophy of Hinduism is one that seems to be very conducive to the attainment of wholeness by its refusal of fundamentalist and rigid ideas and behaviour and its integration of notions of flux, open-mindedness, tolerance and of the idea of unity in multiplicity. These conceptions will prove particularly crucial in Salman Rushdie's works.

¹⁶ Kakar. „Das hinduistische Weltbild.“ Das Indien-Lesebuch: 16.

¹⁷ Heimann. Facets of Indian Thought: 109.

¹⁸ Ibid: 68.

¹⁹ Ibid: 69.

²⁰ Ibid: 124.

II. Contemporary Anglo-Indian literature and the dynamics of identity

In this part I will initially give some background information about India as a country and subcontinent and an overview of the long history of literary creation there, which has always been significant. The textual analysis will then focus on groups and individuals that strive to attain wholeness. More often than not characters take wrong paths to reach this aim. These are contrasted with more constructive ones, which usually imply the individuals' more direct acknowledgment and expression of their needs in the midst of social interaction. The cultural situation provides specific conditions that have a huge impact on the possible success of the characters in attaining wholeness. My approach to textual analysis will be one that covers various decades of Anglo-Indian writing, which should point out how the focus of themes in the novels shifts to some extent: While early Anglo-Indian novels tackle the theme of wholeness particularly in respect to the Independence struggle in the country, which concentrates on freedom from political oppression and the reinstatement of national identity, later novels increasingly focus on the formation of hybridities that evolve in the context of migration. Some aspects of identity like caste and gender remain dominant in the texts produced from about the time just before Independence up to now.

II.1. India and her literatures

India is not just a huge country, but also one that can be characterised by its complexity through the various aspects it displays. The many different groups with their languages and traditions form the character of the subcontinent in a unique way. Therefore India can be described as having many faces, progressive and backward ones. Among the former is certainly the conception of India as an increasingly important economic and technological power, whereas the latter show the violence and poverty that are still very widespread in the country¹ and that still let it remain in the category of ‘development-country’. The diversity of India’s population is the result of massive waves of immigration during India’s long history. These groups of immigrants founded empires, thus often forcefully shaping the country according to their own convictions, but at the same time also being influenced by what they found in the country. This has not always been an easy or peaceful process and often one could describe it as a clash of civilizations, as the political history of India shows how great empires such as those of the Maurya, the Gupta and the Mughal never ruled the entire subcontinent.² As a consequence there were usually rival monarchies in conflict with each other. Even during the time of the British Empire, India was not completely under the influence of the foreign power, as the princely states were independent and not part of British India. The fact that there was never a universal state existent in India determined the subcontinent’s history to the present day.

In addition, other influences that have created the multiplicity of groups and ways of life as they can be found in India today have been the result of the subcontinent’s communication with other peoples and cultures of the Old World such as the Mesopotamians, Persians, Greeks, Kuchans, Romans, Chinese, Afghans and Moghuls.³ These peoples adopted much of Indian thought, religion and art. In return, Indians absorbed and transformed the ideas and creations of other cultures. It is apparent how the encounter of cultures has in spite of the clashes and difficulties very enriching aspects, such as the mutual learning and the resulting transformation of the cultures into something richer and more complex. It is important to keep in mind that all civilizations have been the result of intersections and confrontations with foreign cultures. If there was a process of unification of the various peoples and cultures of the subcontinent it was through the expansion of Hinduism and Buddhism. The historical

¹ Rushdie, Salman. Step Across this Line: Collected Non-Fiction 1992-2002. London: Jonathan Cape, 2002: 208.

² Paz, Octavio. In Light of India. Trans. Eliot Weinberger. London: The Harvill Press, 1997: 94.

³ Ibid: 91.

agents in India used to be the religious reformers, which explains the importance of religion in the country.

Nevertheless, India can despite all the regionalisms and separatist groupings, which resulted from the immigration waves and from the various influences outside India, claim to be a nation. Even though people of the subcontinent define themselves first of all as Bengalis, Tamils, Kashmiris etc.⁴ they have at the same time a notion of what it means to be Indian. Especially during the last few decades, people have developed an idea of a nation-state and what it is based on. This has usually been called the legacy of adopting Western principles such as secularism and democracy, which are the two main pillars India as a nation rests on now.⁵ India has by now – even though imperfectly – run a constituency-based, direct-election democracy for over half a century⁶ that aims to establish an open, tolerant society with multiple aspects and influences. The advantages of democratic institutions, the rule of law and modern administration, however, should not blind one to the fact that the British also left deep religious, ethnic and cultural divisions in the country behind, which finally culminated in the tripartition of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.⁷

Even though it was Gandhi who turned the demand for independence into a nationwide mass movement against the British, it eventually was the modernization process of Nehru that was carried out and became the major feature of the new India.⁸ This modernization was ambiguous in itself, as it tried to save the remnants of an ancient civilization at the same time as fostering newness in the country.⁹ The project of nationhood has therefore been from the beginning a contradictory and therefore a very precarious one that has had to face numerous difficulties. Nevertheless, democracy has been the means to avoid what happened later on in Pakistan, namely an emergence of a state that was ruled predominantly either by military or religious means and whose main characteristic was oppression that was used under the various dictatorships.¹⁰ India aimed thus to avoid the exercise of despotic power that had been a prevalent feature in the past. Independence then was the result of a long democratic process. It involved the two secular institutions of the army and the civil service, the army in India having been the defender of order and constitution.¹¹ Secularism was India's solution to secessionist tendencies. It was consecrated by the Constitution and incarnated the figure of

⁴ Rushdie. Step Across this Line. Collected Non-Fiction 1992-2002: 358.

⁵ Paz. In Light of India: 77.

⁶ Rushdie. Step Across this Line: Collected Non-Fiction 1992-2002: 358.

⁷ Paz. In Light of India: 100-01.

⁸ Rushdie. Step Across this Line. Collected Non-Fiction 1992-2002: 183.

⁹ Paz. In Light of India: 80.

¹⁰ Akbar, M.J. India: The Siege within. Challenges to A Nation's Unity. New Delhi: UBS Publishers' Distributors Ltd, 1996: 23-56.

Nehru. The main principles of secularism are the rejection of state religion, the separation of temporal and religious power, equality before the law, freedom of belief and respect for minorities and for the rights of individuals.¹² Secularism was established as a concrete policy that was subject to the daily test of reality. Even here, power abuse occurred, particularly after Nehru's death: in the case of Indira Gandhi it was due to her incapability to deal with separatist tendencies in an appropriate way. However, on the whole India has achieved to adhere to two conditions on which she based her power exercise and which both make power abuse very difficult in principle: One condition is the separation of powers so that the judiciary may block actions of the executive branch or the decisions of the legislation. This stands in sharp contrast to Bhutto's Pakistan where Bhutto violently brought the judiciary under his control.¹³ The second condition is that of governmental prudence.¹⁴ These two conditions mirror the Western and the traditional influences: While the democratic legacy of the separation of powers is a legacy of the English, the tradition of prudence is both European and Indian in its roots. Therefore, the conflict between tradition and modernity does not seem to be an irreconcilable one and India has again been able to achieve – here in its Constitution – an assimilation of several influences that underlines the openness in the Constitution's character. Unity can now be found in diversity. Salman Rushdie therefore defines India as a country and a nation that still embraces multiplicity. He explains what he sees as the reason for the identification of Indians with the nation-state: It is the definition of selfhood of India as being “so capacious, so elastic, that it manages to accommodate one billion kinds of difference. It agrees with its billion selves to call all of them ‘Indian’.”¹⁵ Thus, the India-idea is a strong and powerful one and Rushdie calls it unsurprisingly “the most innovative national philosophy to have emerged in the post-colonial period”¹⁶, as it brings people together without suppressing multiplicity. Individuality and difference have instead all a place in this idea, which celebrates tolerance and understanding.

Naturally there have been great challenges to India's unity, some of them still existent today or if not existent themselves then often having led to difficulties that India has to confront now. One of the challenges was the demand in the early twentieth century made by several different groups for linguistic states.¹⁷ Secession followed this demand. Especially the Tamil-speaking people demanded a separate country with a separate federation of the four southern

¹¹ Paz. *In Light of India*: 130.

¹² Ibid: 127.

¹³ Akbar. *The Siege within: Challenges to a Nation's Unity*: 44-45.

¹⁴ Paz. *In Light of India*: 128.

¹⁵ Rushdie. *Step Across this Line. Collected Non-Fiction 1992-2002*: 179.

¹⁶ Ibid: 179.

lingual blocks. In this way they vehemently showed resistance to the expansion of the Hindi language. The Congress Party had democratically accepted in both its 1916 and its 1920 sessions the principle of linguistic states after independence according to the people's will.¹⁸ These states would be part of the free federation of India. However, after Partition, Nehru and his Home Minister Patel made the decision to create just four administrative zones rather than a number of linguistic states, countering by this decision the people's desire "to live within the boundaries of their languages and cultures, not by the needs of administration."¹⁹

Due to the fact that Hindi was by large parts of the population considered to be a threatening and imperial language in India that suppressed other languages, English was soon elevated to the status of an associate official language, thus counterbalancing the power of the official Hindi language.²⁰ However it was only after the solution in 1965 came into force that the language riots with their demands for secessionism died down. The riots had involved suicides by protesters who defended other Indian languages. Therefore a compromise was reached that overturned both, the imperialism of just one language already existing in the country as well as separatism as an expression of resistance to such an imposition. Nehru knew that linguistic states had to be avoided, as they would lead to a strict fragmentation of the land.²¹ The crisis was thus overcome by the close integration of an outsider's language.

India still faces dangers to its unity as a nation-state that celebrates multiplicity, especially through the theocratic interests of some groups that have turned Pakistan into the dictatorial country it is today and through frequent outbursts of communal violence. Nevertheless India has on the whole remained the world's largest secular democracy by showing its ability to survive "as a civilization and as an integrated cultural whole."²² The subcontinent has, unlike Pakistan, achieved to establish dialogue between its different groups and is on the way to become "a state that encompasses diversity without suppressing it."²³ Furthermore the national economic interests are closely linked to state secularism as well as the pluralistic cultural legacy. India is a country whose multiple and complex character mirrors a paradox, which becomes apparent in the living together of the modern, secular and democratic institutions and societies that are to a great extent still traditional. An approximation of opposites occurs here that are at the same time pronounced and subtle.²⁴

¹⁷ Akbar. *India: The Siege within: Challenges to a Nation's Unity*: 63-64.

¹⁸ Ibid: 68.

¹⁹ Ibid: 69.

²⁰ Ibid: 80.

²¹ Ibid: 86-87.

²² Ibid: 87.

²³ Paz. *In Light of India*: 133.

²⁴ Paz. *In Light of India*: 138.

The representation of aspects of India and Indian life has been extensively undertaken in literature. Edward Dimock calls literature that represents a country's culture the most enjoyable means of understanding this culture.²⁵ For this reason much of Indian fiction has been called 'historical fiction'.²⁶ Not just the subcontinent itself but also its literature has a very long tradition, which is I should say crucial to know for any good Indian writer today. Many contemporary Indian writers, among them Rushdie and Githa Hariharan, make great use of these numerous, often extremely old Indian writings by using them for their own purposes, which can mean taking up a particular aspect of an old text that is regarded then from a new perspective. Indian literature is generally divided into three broad periods: the ancient or classical period that lasted from about 1200 B.C. until 1000 A.D., the medieval period that lasted from about 1000 A.D. until the coming of the British and the modern period that began with the influence of Western letters on literatures.²⁷ It should therefore be noted that the coming of the British is a crucial event not just in India's political history, but also in her approach to art, particularly to literature.

The very early literature gave voice to the fact I have mentioned before, namely that India has always been a country of immigrants and had a mixed population: the earliest Vedas, composed at about 1500 B.C., displayed the perceptions and the fears of nomadic people in a hostile universe.²⁸ The Brahmanas, which were formulas for controlling the universe, were greatly elaborated works. Often Indian literature has been intimately bound up with things religious and even if it does not start out being religious it tends to end up being so.

Indian literature began in the region of the Panjab when people arrived who spoke a tongue akin to the language groups of Europe and Iran. This was an early representative of the so-called Indo-Aryan family of languages.²⁹

The intermingling of literatures of different languages, sometimes even of different scripts and cultural backgrounds has been a prevalent feature of a nation that reveals many, often even contradictory aspects: From the tenth century on Indian literature adopted the Sufi tradition as the result of the Muslims' invasion into the subcontinent, the Muslims bringing

²⁵ Dimock Jr., Edward C. "INTRODUCTION: Non-Sanskrit languages and literatures and their influence." The Literatures of India – An Introduction. Ed. Edward C. Dimock Jr., Edwin Gerow, C.M. Naim, A.K. Ramanujan, Gordon Roadarmel, J.A.B. van Buitenen. Chicago & London: The U of Chicago P, 1974: 6.

²⁶ Sethi, Rumina. Myths of the Nation: NATIONAL IDENTITY AND LITERARY REPRESENTATION. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999: 1.

²⁷ Van Buitenen, J.A.B. "INTRODUCTION. A brief history of the literatures of South Asia." The Literatures of India – An Introduction: 14-15.

²⁸ Dimock. "INTRODUCTION: An overview: the sutra." The Literatures of India – An Introduction: 1.

²⁹ Van Buitenen, J.A.B. "A brief history of the literatures of South Asia." The Literatures of India: An Introduction: 14.

their Perso-Arabic literary tradition with them.³⁰ Syncretism started to be at work in Indian literatures now. There was also a dynamic interchange between Indo-Aryan and Dravidian (South Indian), between the ‘great’ and the ‘little’ traditions, for example by spreading a local tale or legend and by then incorporating it into the great tradition. Islam and the Dravidian culture were at the same time absorbed and not absorbed in the north into the dominant Sanskrit tradition. The same occurred later with Western civilization: Both the English language, mainly spread in India as I have shown to solve the problem of the language riots, and the literary values it embodies have become a vital part of Indian literatures. Edward Dimock makes the interesting proposition that a culture might in fact only accept those influences towards which it is predisposed.³¹ Even though I would not fully agree with this proposition, as I think that there are cultural elements which are enforced upon another culture to which the latter is not really predisposed, in many instances – especially where force does not come in – the adoption of certain influences rather than others is certainly not a coincidence, but tells us something important about the culture that adopts them.

An important theme of the classical texts that has certainly proven to be very influential to subsequent Indian writing was the celebration of the complexity of a person, which was an attempt to acknowledge the many different aspects of an individual that constitute the latter and also make them whole at the same time. This theme is of course very much in line with India’s acceptance of various different traditions, languages and people, in short with her embrace of multiplicity and variety. Obviously the theme of complexity lies at the very heart of Indian writing, not just in respect to theme, but also as regards form and expression.

Octavio Paz remarks that the tension between wholeness and emptiness has been a very Indian thought that has been dealt with at great length in art.³² The Indian passion for unity is for example expressed in the number zero that served many Indians among others as a metaphysical reality that is juxtaposed by the number one. These numbers, which Rushdie repeatedly takes up in his works in alluding to the ‘Arabian Nights’ when he mentions the number 1001, symbolise the individual’s struggle to reach maturity that is often temporarily stopped or suffers a backward movement due to obstacles that lie on its way. I would claim that this aspect of Indian thought that is displayed in art reflects a person’s individuation process and thus something very elementary of a person. The individual’s struggle also raises questions about the reality of the world: “The great questions about the reality of the world –

³⁰ Dimock. “Non-Sanskrit languages and literatures and their influence.” The Literatures of India: An Introduction: 4.

³¹ Ibid: 6.

³² Paz. In Light of India: 138.

What is it? How is it? – also encompasses the question of origin: What was there at the beginning? Was there a beginning?”³³ Indian art – and literature as one of its expressions – has always dealt with profound questions that are essential to us and can therefore be regarded as being of high importance. Wholeness also finds expression in the various elements, a characteristic that has been taken up by Salman Rushdie and is particularly forceful in his novel *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*. Furthermore, an important aspect of how complexity is celebrated in classical Indian literature is the union of religion and eroticism. Especially in the kama sutras “the most fervid and severe faith is combined with an exalted sensuality.”³⁴ Another crucial example of the combination of essential aspects of man to a whole is the classical Sanskrit short poem, which achieves this combination both in content and form: In content, it does this by unveiling “a composition that expresses in a few lines the drama of being human, its sensations, sentiments and ideas.”³⁵ These short poems also show that “human nature is universal, and it endures through all cultures and epochs.”³⁶ It is exactly by showing these universal aspects of human nature that such literature attains to overcome decay and oblivion and has always been taken up and read again. It appeals to the reader to overcome restrictive ways of thinking and instead demands greater tolerance. The situations these poems describe are deeply seated in our lives and resemble situations we experience. In this way the poets of ancient India closely resemble our contemporary (Indian) writers “despite the centuries and the differences in language, custom, and belief.”³⁷ In its form the Sanskrit short poem attains a certain complexity by invoking other art forms: Not only can it make one feel the existence of a close relationship between music and word, but the art form of Sanskrit poetry also “evokes the plasticity of sculpture.”³⁸ We recognise here an interdisciplinary approach, such an approach being usually called modern even though it is in actual fact a quite old one. Beside these existing old literary influences in India, new influences of Western models emerged, without which modern Indian literature would not have come into being at all. These new influences can be discerned in the early part of the nineteenth century. The most striking result of this new development was the full-scale introduction of prose together with the spread of printing presses and newspapers.³⁹ Even though prose has existed in India before

³³ Ibid: 139.

³⁴ Ibid: 141.

³⁵ Ibid: 150.

³⁶ Ibid: 150-51.

³⁷ Ibid: 161.

³⁸ Ibid: 162-63.

³⁹ Dimock. “The literatures: the modern period.” *The Literatures of India: An Introduction*: 27.

the coming of the British for purposes of presenting folk narrative, story and record, it was only under the influence of the English that it came to be written for purely literary purposes. A new sense of national purpose began now together with a trend toward humanism, which is reflected in this literature.

Especially during the last two decades the oeuvre of Indian literature has gained its place among the most vital literatures in the world. Western publishers have become increasingly fascinated by Indian literature and have tried to get hold of as many works as they possibly could.⁴⁰ They have soon noticed the difficulty to categorise these new Indian works. This is due to the multiform character of these works: “New writers seem to emerge every few weeks. Their work is as multiform as the place, and readers who care about the vitality of literature will find at least some of these voices saying something they want to hear.”⁴¹

There have been heated discussions for some time now on the controversial topic of the use of English in Indian literature due to the increasing number of Indian works written and published in English. I will take this theme up in the next subchapter, as the use of the former colonizer’s language by the colonized is predominantly a post-colonial issue. However, I will here already discuss a few points of criticism raised against Anglo-Indian fiction:

A very wide-spread form of criticism is that India denies her true voice in this form of writing. This criticism however fails at the point where it considers a society as a static whole. I have mentioned before how India absorbed many, in the last century especially Western influences so that they have become part of her character. These new circumstances have to find expression in literature and this insight has been the start of the genre of Anglo-Indian fiction.

One reproach is that almost all of the (latest) Anglo-Indian fiction tends to be metropolitan and cosmopolitan fiction. The latter is presented as a very one-sided fiction and is therefore accused of giving a distorted picture of Indian society. In response to this, I would defend Rushdie’s argument here, which says that the writing of metropolitan and cosmopolitan fiction does not mean that this fiction almost only portrays the lives and concerns of the bourgeoisie, but that it tries instead “to encompass as many Indian realities as possible, rural as well as urban, sacred as well as profane.”⁴²

Furthermore, there is the prejudice against migrant writers who are said to be no true Indians and believed to have usually no real contact with their country of origin any more and its

⁴⁰ Rushdie. “Introduction.” *The Vintage Book of Indian Writing 1947-1997*. Ed. Salman Rushdie & Elizabeth West. London: Vintage, 1997: xiv.

⁴¹ Ibid: x.

⁴² Ibid: xiv.

customs. Here again Rushdie rejects criticism by claiming - what seems to me quite true - that most Indian writers in English have normally still strong bonds to their country of origin and its customs.⁴³ Also for this reason does it seem to be pointless to keep up an adversarial relationship between English-language literature and the other literatures of India.

It is particularly this new kind of literature that celebrates fluid identities and by doing so undermines those literatures that emphasise pure and homogenous identities. Rumina Sethi observes correctly that among these writers it is again especially Rushdie who treats India in a plural way that is sceptical about verifiable truths or facts.⁴⁴ However, Sethi also points out that we should not forget that despite the presentation of the fluid notion of identity there have always been idealised cultural myths and models that show the recurrence of the demands of a definition of nationhood.

My own focus will be on newer Indian literature, particularly on works written after the time of Independence. I therefore present some textual examples by the 'Founding Fathers'⁴⁵ of Anglo-Indian literature, such as Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan as well as the Indian writers following them during the next few decades. I will show how it has been above all the literature of the last decade that focusses on migrancy and on hybrid and fluid identities.

I will mainly concentrate on Indian literature written in English with the exception of some British writers like Paul Scott and Zadie Smith who write about India or about 'Indian' identity in the widest context and whose works should make a not insignificant contribution to the topic.

This choice is partly due to the strictly limited access to translated Indian literature originally written in the indigenous languages and not to any bias towards that literature on my part. Rushdie takes this problem up and claims that "there has long been a genuine problem of translation in India – not only in English but between the vernacular languages – and it is possible that good writers have been excluded by reason of their translators' inadequacies rather than their own."⁴⁶

I reject however the argument that has been made of not presenting Indian literature in the vernacular languages because they are not Indian in the greater national sense anyway.⁴⁷ The

⁴³ Ibid: xvi

⁴⁴ Sethi. Myths of the Nation: NATIONAL IDENTITY AND LITERARY REPRESENTATION: 196.

⁴⁵ Walsh, William. Indian Literature in English. New York: Longman Group UK Limited, 1990: 62.

⁴⁶ Rushdie. "Introduction." The Vintage Book of Indian Writing 1947-1997: x.

Rushdie does however make value judgements on top of that nevertheless, saying that the works of Indian writers working in English have proved to be more valuable than the work done in the vernacular languages.

⁴⁷ Sethi, Rumina. Myths of the Nation: NATIONAL IDENTITY AND LITERARY REPRESENTATION: 3.

argument is invalid in my opinion because it does not recognise that it needs various parts or aspects of India so that we can speak of a nation.

I will also predominantly deal with Indian literature in English because it takes up more of a challenge in that it creates a new voice in which the Indian reality can be and is represented.⁴⁸

For this reason it seems to be particularly interesting to me to observe if and if so then how this literature reflects on the new realities it encounters and has to deal with.

⁴⁸ In the next subchapter I will show how this new voice is different not just from the hitherto-used Indian ways of articulation (namely simply through their various languages and dialects) but also from the voices of the British).

II.2. The term 'post-colonial' literature

Post-colonial literature has by now become so rich and manifold that it can be considered “as a web of different strands”¹ that can vastly differ in location, language and the situations they describe. This becomes better understandable when one considers that the forms of colonialist power differ radically across cultural locations and that its intersections with other orders of oppression are complex and multivalent. Nevertheless keeping these differences and in particular the specific situations and circumstances they arise from in mind, it is necessary to find a common denominator for these different strands:²

Post-colonial literature reflects on the whole new ways of understanding relations between former colonized states and the former colonizing power, concentrating on the new living conditions after a nation's independence and the attempt of her people to enunciate their own voice. In order to make this voice heard they need to confront colonialism's strategies of political, economic and discursive oppression and exploitation, thus unearthing the main characteristics of colonialisms's ideology. Central to colonial practice is the notion of the centre and the periphery that displays one of many dualisms colonial thought set up and adhered to.³ These binaries were an essential part of the colonial ideology that justified the rigid power-system that had been set up by the colonizers.⁴ The latter's racial rule was based on either a historicist or a naturalist view on race and culture. Whereas the naturalist view believed in an inherent difference between races that entailed the superiority of some to others, the historicist view reflects the belief in insufficient and therefore immature development over time of some cultures compared to others and due to which they are believed to be incapable of self-governance.⁵ British colonial rule in India was based on exactly this historicist view on race and could, in contrast to the boldly vicious and cruel rule that was based on a naturalist ideology, be called ambiguous, ambivalent and hypocritical.⁶ Especially the hypocrisy was easy to make out: colonial practice was regarded as ‘the white man's burden’, as a sense of duty that had to be observed and that also legitimised the oppression of the indigenous people. In contrast to imperialism that is rather discussed as a

¹ Parry, Benita. “Directions and Dead Ends in Postcolonial Studies.” Relocating Postcolonialism. Ed. David Theo Goldberg and Ato Quayson. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002: 72.

² Slemon, Stephen. “Part I: Post-colonial Theory: The Scramble for Post-Colonialism.” De-scribing Empire: Post-colonialism and textuality. Ed. Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson. London & New York: Routledge, 1994: 31-32.

³ Boehmer, Elleke. Colonial & Postcolonial Literature. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1995: 139.

⁴ Huggan, Graham. “Decolonizing the Map: Post-Colonialism, Post-Structuralism and the Cartographic Connection.” Past the Last Post: Theorizing Post-Colonialism and Post-Modernism. Ed. Ian Adam and Helen Tiffin. Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993: 130.

⁵ Goldberg, David Theo. “Racial Rule.” Relocating Postcolonialism. Ed. Goldberg and Quayson: 82.

concept, colonialism has always first of all been approached as a practice.⁷ It was mainly the colonizers' misuse of power the colonized suffered from and it seems to be for this reason that the counter-discourse that evolved is rather termed 'post-colonial' than 'post-imperial' even though imperialism's assumptions are equally disrupted in post-colonial writing and criticism. At the core of post-colonial writing is the focus on the representation of identity in colonial times. Fanon shows how the subject cannot be determined without the absence that constitutes it.⁸ An individual can only be defined and define themselves by the consciousness of what they are not. They thus determine their own identity through the confrontation with the 'Other'. The Other is everything the individual in question is not. Especially during the colonial era, however, it has often been the unpleasant aspects that might be part of one's self that have been ascribed to the other person. It is therefore appropriate to speak of a splitting of the person and of an ambivalence in the representation of the Other. "The ambivalent identification of the racist world ... turns on the idea of man as his alienated image; not Self and Other but the otherness of the Self inscribed in the perverse palimpsest of colonial identity."⁹ Rushdie makes frequent use of these partial identity ascriptions, most obviously perhaps in his description of 'angelic' Gibreel and 'satanic' Saladin in *The Satanic Verses*.

In the following literary examples it should become clear that post-colonial awareness goes through various stages and is often not even to a moderate extent present at the time of a state's independence. On the other hand, post-colonial demands were sometimes reflected in a fairly sophisticated mood in writing before independence. Frantz Fanon in particular has shown the different stages of the native's resistance to oppression: They are the processes of assimilation, remembrance of one's own identity as well as the one of awakening that is reflected in fighting, revolutionary and national literature.¹⁰ Strategies in these processes of resistance in writing are especially the uses of ambivalence, irony and mimicry.¹¹ They all aim at undoing the binary concepts used in colonial writing by letting the clear frontiers between the latter merge or at least become diffuse. As a result we get hybrid texts and a hybridised language: Whereas the initial stage of resistance seems to be a mere precondition for counter-narratives by the adoption of the colonizer's narrative, the second stage is the one that treats the confronted colonial attitudes in a much more critical manner. The native

⁶ Ibid: 86.

⁷ Young, Robert J.C. *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*. Oxford & Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2001: 17.

⁸ Bhabha, Homi K. *The location of culture*. London & New York: Routledge, 1994: 44.

⁹ Ibid: 44.

¹⁰ Fanon, Frantz. "On National Culture." *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Patrick Williams & Laura Chrisman. New York: Columbia UP, 1994: 40-41.

remembers their own past – for example, traditions, customs and myths of their culture, which they take up again.¹² This often includes oral performance that has a tradition that goes a long way back and that resists the priority of writing that has been established in the West.¹³ Orality uses carnivalesque elements that also embrace the hybridization of forms and languages. At the same time, the native reinterprets these forms and traditions typical of their cultural past by using the tools of Western theory.¹⁴ The product is a new mixture of Western and Eastern influences where allegory and irony are frequently used. At this stage Homi Bhabha's theory of mimicry can be applied.¹⁵ Language plays an important role in it, as the native does not only mimic Western theory and its ways of seeing the world, but also the language used by the colonizer. In the case of India, it naturally is the English language that many indigenous writers take up. This development has been extremely controversial, as it was unclear to many indigenous writers and critics if the colonizers' language could be an adequate means for speaking for the Indian people. It has been argued how the colonial language must inevitably contain colonial values that imply the cultural superiority of the British.¹⁶ However, most post-colonial writers use the English language in a completely different way than their English counterparts by inserting expressions or sounds of their native tongue:

The English language used may indeed become so different from the language as it is spoken in England that it becomes less of a borrowed tongue, because its relationship to English in the country of its native origin has become tenuous.¹⁷

Post-colonial writers such as Rushdie enunciate – by subtly altering the English language – their own voice and therefore their own identity. There is a certain mockery inherent in this new language use, which is particularly obvious in Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh*. By expressing their identity, the opposition of the colonized's descendants to the label of inferior creatures that has been attached to them and in particular to their ancestors is displayed and they establish a new self-consciousness.

¹¹ Gilbert, Helen. "Part II: Race and Representation: De-scribing Orality." *De-scribing Empire: Post-colonialism and textuality*. Ed. Tiffin and Lawson: 104.

¹² Boehmer, Elleke. *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*: 187-88; 202-03.

¹³ Gilbert, Helen. "Part II: Race and Representation: De-scribing Orality." *De-scribing Empire: Post-colonialism and textuality*. Ed. Tiffin and Lawson: 109.

¹⁴ Fanon, Frantz. "On National Culture." *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Williams and Chrisman: 41.

¹⁵ Bhabha, Homi K. *The location of culture*: 85-92.

¹⁶ Talib, Ismail S. *The Language of Postcolonial Literatures: An introduction*. London & New York: Routledge, 2002: 105.

¹⁷ *Ibid*: 101.

Even though it must be acknowledged that the use of English in Indian literature has certainly led to a decrease in the production of and in the interest in literatures in the indigenous Indian languages¹⁸, there still seem to exist more advantages that support the use of the English language: Another one of these advantages that many writers using English recognise, is that it, through becoming an international medium, reaches a much greater audience.¹⁹ Besides, English has been useful as a bridge language not just between different countries, but also particularly in India, which is a multilingual country that makes an understanding between different communities difficult.²⁰ In addition, English in India now coexists and intermingles with regional languages and it would indeed be an artificial process to turn back time and eradicate the use of the English language by Indians.²¹

It is particularly during this second stage of resistance with the development of hybrid forms of post-colonial cultures that the transitional status of both all cultures as well as of post-colonial discourse itself is emphasised²², which leads us to recognise culture and discourse as processes that defy stasis. In doing so the claim for a permanent cultural superiority of a group over another becomes untenable. The third stage of resistance is the writing of literature that turns towards the nation. It is certainly no coincidence that the term of the nation becomes increasingly important in the period of colonial occupation and particularly in the one following it.²³ The need to define one's own identity clearly vis-à-vis the (former) colonizer is also reflected in the defence of various liminal identities in India, which have resulted in religious, race and ideological riots within the subcontinent.

Especially in the 1990s the generic post-colonial writer becomes more often a cultural traveller instead of a national. It is now the migrant, especially the migrant in metropolitan space who moves into the centre of attention.²⁴ Concentrating on diaspora literature, we deal here with one specific form of postcoloniality. It is precisely this form that characterises Rushdie's texts. Although it is postcoloniality in a narrow sense, the figure of the Resident Alien inherent in it seems to offer great advantages compared to figures that stay in their mother country. Due to the fact that the Resident Alien lives in-between two worlds they gain a certain distance to the place, the culture and the people living there that might prove to be valuable as Rushdie clearly shows. Many post-colonial writers and critics alike agree with

¹⁸ Ibid: 114-16.

¹⁹ Ibid: 112-13.

²⁰ Tharoor, Shashi. "Expanding Boundaries with a Colonial Legacy." *The New York Times on the Web* 30 July 2001. 27 August 2001 <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/07/30/books/30THAR.html>: 2-3.

²¹ Boehmer. *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature*: 209-10

²² Huggan, Graham. "Decolonizing the Map." *Past the Last Post*. Ed. Adam and Tiffin: 131.

²³ Fanon, Frantz. "On National Culture." *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Williams and Chrisman: 47.

each other that the positive effect of living in a new self-chosen place outweighs the “slight anomaly”²⁵ of not having genuine roots or a firm sense of belonging: The work of such diaspora writers who write within other cultural contexts or from the margins of a metropolis transforms and transgresses existing conventions and modes of thinking in complex ways.²⁶ It is therefore hardly surprising that critics display an excessive interest in the fiction of migrants and within this subgenre particularly in extravagant innovation. In fact, the curiosity about diaspora writing has increased to such an extent that many critics take it as the only possible and available form of post-colonial literature, which of course often entails a neglect of other situations such as the economically enforced dispersal of people.²⁷ The individual in the post-colonial era has thus now, as a migrant, to a much greater extent than during previous stages become a hybrid being that dismantles authority and strong nationalism and defends instead the polyphony of voices.²⁸ Post-colonial literature is therefore an ‘impure’ writing in respect to its influences and works with techniques of fragmentation and montage. These techniques clearly put an end to the notion of an unproblematic identity and stress instead that “post-colonial ‘ontology’ itself is located in the excess of hybridity.”²⁹ Hybridity is displayed in a complex, multi-narrative text that evokes a “palimpsest of being”³⁰ to which the concept of flux is essential. Diversity is now not only accepted but also embraced. This form of diaspora differs widely from the definition of diaspora that has been upheld for some time in the past. The latter was understood in terms of scattered tribes whose identities could only be established through the connection to their respective homelands to which they need return.³¹ A sort of collective self seemed to be characteristic for this form of diaspora in which people shared cultural codes, which point out stable frames of reference and meaning. An imaginary coherence on the experience of dispersal and fragmentation is imposed, which is often expressed in nationalisms. The new definition of diaspora and cultural identity that is associated with it, however, shows how individuals constantly produce and reproduce themselves in new ways through the means of transformation and difference. This new definition could only emerge because the individual is now much more seen in context and

²⁴ Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorti. “Resident Alien.” Relocating Postcolonialism. Ed. Goldberg and Quayson: 47.

²⁵ Ibid: 48.

²⁶ Parry. “Directions and Dead Ends in Postcolonial Studies.” Relocating Postcolonialism. Ed. Goldberg and Quayson: 71.

²⁷ Ibid: 72.

²⁸ Boehmer. Colonial & Postcolonial Discourse: 238-39.

²⁹ Ashcroft, Bill. “Part I: Post-colonial Theory: Excess: Post-colonialism and the verandahs of meaning.” Describing Empire: Post-colonialism and textuality. Ed. Tiffin and Lawson: 39.

³⁰ Ibid: 40.

³¹ Hall, Stuart. “Cultural Identity and Diaspora.” Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial theory: a Reader. Ed. Williams & Chrisman: 401f.

therefore positioned in a particular place and time, history and culture.³² The acknowledgement of difference can naturally lead, as it has so often been the case in India, to communalism. These two different definitions of diaspora and cultural identity point towards the ‘doubleness’ of similarity and difference in the post-colonial situation.

In its attempts to find its own voice by using resistance to colonial views post-colonial literature deals with various aspects of a person’s identity such as race, religion, gender and ideologies such as Marxism and nationalism. These aspects all especially played a role during the colonial era, as they have either to a great extent been the repercussions of colonial practice (i.e. the turn of colonised people towards certain ideologies) or have been present before (such as gender relations) but are now questioned more forcefully due to the changes occurring in the country that lead to overall confusion. The ways these identity aspects are dealt with in postcolonial literature are mainly unveiled as limitations to the possibilities suggesting truly decolonised relations. Such limitations are frequently displayed through the use of oppositions and binarisms, colonialism’s main device.³³ However, ways are also shown how these identity aspects can, by approaching them differently, become enriching factors.

³² Ibid: 392.

³³ Collits, Terry. “Part II: Race and Representation: Theorizing Racism.” *De-scribing Empire*. Ed. Tiffin and Lawson: 65.

II.3. Personal Identity in the (post-colonial) literature of India

II.3.1. Colonial Perceptions, Ethnicity and Race

In this short overview I want to relate colonial perceptions to the concepts of race and ethnicity. In respect to race, I will briefly outline the two main views of how races emerged and then question our understanding of race as a stable, generally well-understood category. Furthermore racism and counter-discourses shall be discussed before I will then focus on the concept of ethnicity, ethnic conflict and possible resolutions of such conflict.

Colonial perceptions have, particularly when regarding the history of British colonialism, often and at times even predominantly been concerned with the themes of race and ethnicity. The justification of the presence and practices of the British in India has of course always rested on a highly hierarchical view of western and eastern peoples: The British presented themselves as being wiser, more just and more humane not just compared to their subjects but also to any other Western powers.¹ Western literary knowledge, for example, was displayed as objective, universal and rational, a conception that was followed by the introduction of educational measures in the British style into India. Works of the intellect were believed to be the Englishman's main characteristic. In the case of India it were thus British, in other colonial situations and more generally speaking it were European values or truth that have often been established and defined as the universal ones.² The latter were affirmed with such resolute conviction that often quite a few of the colonized people adopted them as well or at least unconsciously internalised them. We deal here with a Eurocentric view, which was a result of the arrogant assumptions made during the Enlightenment period³ and which was imposed on non-Europeans.

Eurocentric views have frequently been embedded into discourses about 'Others' that presented the latter in very negative and derogatory ways. This is how Eurocentric thinking can easily transform into racist thinking.

Before focusing any more on the nature of racist thinking and acting, I would like to raise the question what we really mean when we come to speak of the notion of race whose significance is usually all too quickly taken for granted.

¹ Viswanathan, Gauri. "The beginnings of English Literary Study in British India." 'Race', Culture and Difference. 1992. Ed. Donald, James and Rattansi, Ali. London: Sage, 1995: 167.

² Young, Robert. "Colonialism and Humanism." 'Race', Culture and Difference. Ed. Donald and Rattansi: 248.

³ Ferguson, Robert. "Otherness, Eurocentrism and the representation of 'race'." Representing 'Race' – Ideology, identity and the media. London: Arnold, 1998: 68.

Since the nineteenth century 'race' has referred to groups of people that are differentiated biologically, which means that they have been classified by skin colour, hair and appearance. The new classificatory systems that evolved were used to explain numerous human differences, differences that touched on morality, intelligence and behaviour. Preconceptions about other peoples could in this way sometimes receive 'scientific' confirmation, particularly when classificatory systems operated with expressions such as savage, barbarous and civilised.

These expressions served to explain furthermore the different stages of development between some peoples: When biblical explanations proved to be out-dated and possibly unsatisfactory to many science-oriented persons, scientific theories came into existence that gave rise to two schools of thought shortly alluded to in an earlier chapter. The monogenetic school upheld the belief of a single origin of man, whereas the polygenetic school maintained that different races or tribes had been created independently. The adherents to the different schools of thought related slightly differently to race issues: Polygenists, conceiving blacks and whites as different species, usually have stronger and less flexible views on race, which frequently turn into prejudice. Both schools, however, fostered the idea of racial inferiority. The two rather distinct issues of origin and of difference were frequently confused.⁴

Only with the emergence of Darwin's theories was this confusion addressed and questioned by claiming that individuals shared a common origin but could still differ to a great extent between populations. Although Darwin did not identify races and was predominantly concerned with animal and plant populations and their individuals⁵, numerous of his readers interpreted Darwin's ideas in a way that regarded man's physical nature as giving rise to their culture, way of life and morality and used this interpretation as justification for the reinforcement of class frontiers. As a result measurements of various populations such as cranial measurements were undertaken, the results often being used to subjugate and dominate some groups of people that were labelled as races, who had apparently less capacity and potential than others.

For this reason, the black person's place in the human order was explained as a consequence of the small volume of his brain. Race studies testing the intelligence of different populations have however revealed no hereditary differences in mental capacity. In cases of great discrepancies in certain abilities between one 'race' and the other, there have been indications that these discrepancies have mainly been due to a different upbringing and to other social and

⁴ Banton, Michael and Harwood, Jonathan. "The Concept Popularised." *The Race Concept*. Newton Abbot, London, Vancouver: David & Charles, 1975: 26.

⁵ Ibid: 36.

cultural influences.⁶ Due to these findings racial classification schemes could not use mental ability as a racial denominator.

In the course of history there has been a particular myth of the special abilities, strength and mission of the Anglo-Saxon race,⁷ which was strategically utilised during colonial times to make the oppression and exploitation of the native populations in India and elsewhere look necessary or even natural. Racism became from then on an issue that gained in importance so that it became increasingly urgent to understand how it worked: Particularly the contradictions and ambivalences, the strange mixture of rational and irrational elements of racist discourse have been pointed out⁸ in order to show the complexity of the phenomenon, the latter which has been particularly well-researched by Frantz Fanon, whom I mentioned earlier: Unconscious processes have to be explored in order to understand the occurrence of stereotypes or the lack of logic in such dialogues any better.

Racism has worked and still works on different levels, such as the institutional and the more personal one. While institutional racism is reflected in the low rates of structural, particularly economic and political, incorporation of certain people – on the whole mainly non-whites -,⁹ personal racism is normally expressed in racist comments and discriminating behaviour in society on a day-to-day level. Both forms of racism are likely to emerge in situations of intense competition for resources, be it housing or employment.¹⁰ Particularly the more personal form of racism constantly measures persons by arbitrarily established indicators of normality. The construction of otherness is closely intertwined with discourses of normality, and it is for this reason that hostile behaviour towards strangers in racist discourse is made to look normal.¹¹ Behind this insistent use of normality, there lurks the danger of violence, the latter adopting many forms in racist practices. The discourses of racism are discourses of a kind of idealised normality, which also carries notions of stasis and purity with it. The boundaries created between groups that seem to be positioned very differently towards this axis of normality are thus strong ones.¹² This becomes particularly transparent in the racist's fear of hybridity, which was also prevalent in colonial times: There was the immense

⁶ Montagu, Ashley. "Proposals on the Biological Aspects of Race, August 1964." Statement on Race. 1951. Third Edition. New York: Oxford UP, 1972: 153.

⁷ Rich, Paul B. "Empire and Anglo-Saxonism." Race and Empire in British Politics. Comparative Ethnic and Race Relations. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986: 13.

⁸ Rattansi, Ali. "Changing the subject? Racism, Culture and Education." 'Race', Culture and Difference. Ed. Donald and Rattansi: 37.

⁹ Baker, Donald G. "Ethnicity, Development and Power." Race, Ethnicity and Power. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983: 143.

¹⁰ Rattansi. "Changing the subject? Racism, Culture and Education." 'Race', Culture and Difference. Ed. Donald and Rattansi: 31.

¹¹ Ferguson. "Racism and Normality." Representing 'Race': 157.

¹² Brah, Avtar. "Difference, diversity and differentiation." 'Race', Culture and Difference: 143.

fear that race-mixing would lead to impurity and finally to mankind's decline.¹³ This decline is also associated with the alleged infertility of hybrids.

Racism is furthermore often linked to other phenomena such as sexism, classism or homophobia and appears therefore rarely as an isolated discriminating practise. Especially during colonial times, racism and sexism often went hand in hand in a male-dominated society of white rulers. In addition, it seems very likely that there was a link between the increasing distance among the classes in Britain and the widening gulf between the colonizers and their subordinates in India. It is vital to pay attention to how different kinds of oppression interact with each other in order to eventually initiate changes.

I now want to challenge the assumption that race is an uncontested, clear scientific category that is usually correctly applied to discourse: To start with, it is not clear what exact physical characteristics have been singled out to define a certain race, but it seems as if the focus has mainly been on visible determinants such as skin colour and hair form or colour than on invisible ones like genes, the latter which have only received more attention since the rediscovery of Mendel's work.¹⁴ In view of this rather vague indication of potential determinants of race, it seems to be hardly surprising that often the same person has been classified in different ways under different categories for diverse purposes. Furthermore, the persons themselves often label themselves in ways that many others with a similar physical appearance would find unsuitable or unacceptable.¹⁵ Therefore it is important to be aware of the constructed nature of the concept of race, which is partly arbitrary, but partly the outcome of historical, political and other situational factors such as social context.

In addition, racial categories and labelling have undergone obvious changes in history. Even during a person's lifespan, a person's identification with one racial category can be abandoned in favour of another one. Race is therefore not anything that is immutable. The indeterminate and context-dependent nature of the term race is particularly well demonstrated in certain counter-movements and -discourses to racism: as there are different racisms, one has to acknowledge the specific circumstances in which they occur in order to effect any changes.¹⁶ As Stuart Hall expressed it, it is vital to employ strategies that work "with and through difference".¹⁷

¹³ Banton and Harwood. "The Concept Popularised." The Race Concept: 30.

¹⁴ Ibid: 38-39.

¹⁵ "Brown Britain." How Racist is Britain. Dir. Yasmin Dellal. Prod. Lucy Pilkington. Channel 4. Keofilms. Com. 29 Sep 2001.

¹⁶ Rattansi. 'Changing the subject? Racism, Culture and education.' 'Race', Culture and Difference: 40.

¹⁷ Hall, Stuart. "New Ethnicities." 'Race', Culture and Difference: 254.

In general, however, one could say that it is important that disadvantaged groups seek new ways of representation that run completely counter to the fetishization, objectification and negative representation so many members of these groups have had to experience.¹⁸

Contestation should and sometimes has taken place by the uncensored display of art and cultural products. Specific negative images of persons marginalized on grounds of their race need to be taken up, discussed and challenged in ways that do away with the language of binary oppositions and replacements.

Ethnicity, a concept that most persons are much less familiar with, is often mixed up with the concept of race. It is a term, however, which comprises much more than the term race does, as it refers only – if at all – to a small extent to physical characteristics, but is much more concerned with the role of history, language and culture in the formation of identity and acknowledges much more openly that discourse is always situated and that all knowledge is contextual. For many group members ethnic identity is determined at birth, and they define it by ascriptive differences such as religion or language, which attempt to give these groups a very definite character. However one has to keep in mind at the same time that the concept needs to be malleable, as there are many examples of changes in ethnicity, such as through conversion or intermarriage.¹⁹

Due to the fact that power once again plays a not inconsiderable role with regard to ethnic relations, there is usually a great danger of ethnic conflict. Although a certain degree of ethnocentrism is always present in our discourses and attitudes²⁰, this does not always necessarily lead to ethnic conflict. The latter evolves often when - which is frequently the case and which is, as mentioned above, also true for racial groups - specific groups in society are incorporated to a different degree within the political, economic and social structures.²¹ Some of them are often offered very limited access to political and economic institutions. In such cases when incorporation has been made particularly difficult to some groups ethnic conflict evolves easily. Ethnic conflict can also often be summarised as being the result of threats that have been made against a group's identity or its way of life.²² These threats are paramount in the case of war, and ethnic conflict in this context can be defined as a recurrent and worldwide phenomenon.²³

¹⁸ Ibid: 252.

¹⁹ Horowitz, Donald L. "The Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict." Ethnic Groups in Conflict. Berkeley: U of California P, 1985: 51-53.

²⁰ Rattansi. "Changing the Subject? Racism, Culture and Education." 'Race', Culture and Difference: 36-37.

²¹ Baker. "Ethnicity, development and power." Race, Ethnicity and Power: 138.

²² Baker. "Race and ethnicity: the emergence of siege groups and cultures." Race, Ethnicity and Power: 117.

²³ Horowitz. "The Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict." Ethnic Groups in Conflict: 3-4.

Ethnic conflict then expresses itself using a language that contains very unflattering, hostile and disparaging terms to describe out-groups. The aims of the conflicting groups are mainly not to be controlled by others but to get some control of the state instead. Many sectors of life are suffused with ethnic sentiment.

As with racism, one has to define the nature of ethnic conflict, which can take on quite different forms. One rough distinction between various forms of ethnic conflict is that of conflict between ranked and unranked groups, a distinction - although it can easily get blurred - that can be made for nearly all ethnic relationships: Ranked ethnic groups are hierarchically ordered groups in which the distribution of honour and prestige is of major importance. The caste structure in Indian society would be an example of such a ranked system, in which prohibitions, restrictions and duties figure largely and need to be strictly observed. The boundaries in a ranked group are therefore frequently the same ones as caste or class lines. Often ranked systems are the result of conquest that leads to domination, such as it has been the case in colonialism.

Unranked systems, on the other hand, are often produced by migration when groups that had so far not been in contact with each other suddenly share the same territory. These unranked systems are also a consequence of colonialism, which can be seen in the migration waves of indentured labourers to other colonies. The use of stereotypes is not as predominant as it is in ranked systems, and the evaluations of other groups are more mixed. The aim here is generally to deprive parallel groups from power and to found an ethnically homogeneous state.

Like anti-racist movements that are a response to racism, ethnic conflict can also, provided there is productive communication between the groups, bring on improvements in how certain groups are treated by others: The protests of subordinated groups can ideally lead to the emergence of unranked systems, a process that occurs in India with her caste system.²⁴ Furthermore, stigmatised groups might turn insulting labels into something more acceptable and thus reject feeling discriminated against. Ascriptive criteria could then become less paramount in respect to the incorporation of ethnic groups into various social structures.

Anand's novel, *Untouchable*, which is one of the first Anglo-Indian novels, is set in colonial India of the 1930s and focuses particularly on the protagonist's, Bakha's, attitude towards the occupying force. Bakha, an outcaste and thus a person at the very fringe of society, regards the British way of life as an escape from his daily plight and strives to

²⁴ Ibid: 34-35.

become more British in his ways: Having lived at the barracks of the British regiment with his uncle for a while, he adopts the habits of the British soldiers such as the way they eat and drink, sleep, walk and look,²⁵ thus copying them in almost everything. He is inclined to do military service, as he thinks that he has glimpsed another, less confined world at the barracks that seems to him “strange and beautiful”²⁶. Being a servant to a sahib is to him – as to quite a few other Indians – a great honour. By considering the British to be superior people, he naively adopts the colonial viewpoint he is constantly confronted with. Therefore he wants to get rid of the “base taint of Indianness”²⁷. Bakha increasingly internalises the British colonizers’ views on what they deem positive and on what they cannot sanction. As a result he grows to dislike much about the Indian way of life. He tries to immediately suppress his own spontaneous reactions and instincts to habits and customs of the British, particularly critical or negative ones,²⁸ making himself believe that everything they do must be good due to their high status. To him the British people’s way of doing things expresses a fashion statement that becomes a guideline for his own taste.²⁹ British items are of great significance to Bakha, as he regards each of them as a “symbol of Sahibhood”³⁰. His friends, Ram Charan and Chota, although ridiculing Bakha’s devotion to English fashion, widely share his admiration: copying dress code and customs of the British, they are at the same time not completely unconscious of the falseness of their instinct, and could see the edge of their parents’ sarcastic comments. After coming back from the British barracks, Bakha considers his friends to be inferior to him because they have not lived in such close vicinity to the British as he has. Bakha learns that being a sahib also means to have an education and to speak the English language fluently,³¹ which he sets out to achieve.

However, the possibility of the British adopting in turn native style and customs is not even accounted for and certainly not desired by either the British or most Indians: They believe that boundaries have to be kept in place. Bakha even thinks that it takes away some of the Colonel’s glamour when he mixes with the natives, adopting their customs and trying to speak the language.³² The Colonel’s attempt at distancing himself from the superior attitude of his compatriots does not sound right to Bakha, as the latter regards Britishness in a very one-dimensional way always as something elevated or even sublime. Bakha can therefore not

²⁵ Anand, Mulk Raj. *Untouchable*. 1935. London: Penguin Group, 1940: 11.

²⁶ Ibid: 78.

²⁷ Ibid: 12.

²⁸ Ibid: 18.

²⁹ Ibid: 55.

³⁰ Ibid: 101.

³¹ Ibid: 38-39.

³² Ibid: 123.

make the distinction between the various British persons living in India at the time and holds on to a reductive image of them. As a result of his belief that the British have to keep a distance towards the Indians, he almost excuses the mem-sahib's anger against him, which in his opinion counts more than does the anger of his own people.

It is only at the end of the novel that Bakha undergoes a change of mind in respect to his attitude towards the colonizers: Listening to Gandhi's speech and the talk of the people standing around him, he is introduced to the idea of self-government as being a hope for India. This idea now seems to pose an alternative to Bakha's predilection to the predominance of British lifestyle in India. He realises in amazement that it is now an Indian who has the power to make huge crowds listen to him and to attempt to influence the white people.³³ Non-natives seem to Bakha even out of place at this gathering and he does not even think of sahibs any longer. When he does so it is merely to notice that the British represent "an order which seemed to have nothing to do with the natives"³⁴. He also takes in arguments that display criticism of both the love of money by many Europeans and their justification of what they have done in India. Although Gandhi's praise for complete economic independence, which implies only to wear homespun clothes and to discard Western technology, is regarded by many bystanders to be both unrealistic and also undesirable, his call to redirect one's attention to Indian values is thought of as being sound and a step in the right direction. In this way Bakha becomes open to Gandhi's message that Indians should stop to slavishly copy the English. Bakha has developed and enlarged his mind in that he now sees a chance in autonomy and in that he gives up the idea of finding freedom in dependence. He now believes in the possibility of a bright Indian future through Independence.

Raja Rao's novel, *Kanthapura*, marks an important change in Indian literature. For the first time an Indian novel that was written in English received immediate widespread recognition in the English-speaking world. Together with Anand's *Untouchable* it initiated the tradition of Anglo-Indian writing. Even though the novel concerns itself very much with the time preceding India's Independence, it is in many ways concerned with issues that played still an important part in the post-colonial era on which most of the other novels under discussion here will focus on.

One important issue that is introduced here is the one that Indian writers use the English language without them regarding it as a completely alien tongue. Rao explicitly mentions this

³³ Ibid: 140.

³⁴ Ibid: 144.

when he considers English as part of the Indian reality as he encountered it at his time.³⁵ He keeps however many distinctly Indian expressions in the novel that are neither translated nor explained in a glossary in order to point out the impossibility of translating certain aspects of Indian life. Furthermore Rao uses the old Indian way of story-telling that is characterised by the presence of multiple stories that are embedded in each other and which are told in a very fast pace. Therefore he does not simply adopt English as used by the British, but integrates it into the Indian reality he is accustomed to.

In respect to the contents of the novel, colonialism under British rule is presented by the introduction of well-known themes such as the establishment of trade. Trading connections with the British are rather seen in negative terms, as the country's, particularly the local village's economy declines: The import of foreign goods such as cloth makes the people in the country poor, as it slows down local production³⁶ so that great parts of the population often do not have enough work to earn their own living any more. It is the British who make the money by selling the products to high prices, taking only their own interests into account so that they profit in the end. It is thus only the already well off people who will profit, but the poorer population will starve. In consequence the gap between rich and poor becomes greater. Both the rents and the taxes rise beyond the means that are available to the villagers. In addition, the workers under the sahibs have to suffer bad treatment such as being beaten. The workers' wives or other female relatives are frequently taken aside by the sahibs to amuse themselves³⁷ and are sometimes even raped.³⁸ The sahibs treat both the workers and their wives as their property³⁹ and show a superiority towards them that leaves no room for any respect. This behaviour seems to result from the conviction of being a superior species. Clashes also occur between Eastern and Western convictions of healing practices: While Indians determinedly reject the foreign medicine the British bring in, the British have no patience with the superstitions of the Indians and force the latter to take their medicine.⁴⁰ The lack of dialogue between the Indians and the British leaves each of the parties in ignorance about the others' methods, which only widens the gulf between them.

Under these circumstances it is hardly surprising that the government of the British is not regarded in positive terms and is increasingly criticised. As a result the Indian people both in cities and villages take up active resistance against British rule, which meets on severe

³⁵ Rao, Raja. Kanthapura. 1938. New Delhi: Orient Paperbacks, 1971: 5.

³⁶ Ibid: 29.

³⁷ Ibid: 82.

³⁸ Ibid: 213.

³⁹ Ibid: 87.

⁴⁰ Ibid: 79.

punishment on several occasions, for example when the police inspector imprisons the rebels.⁴¹ Moreover, the protesters, who are solely identified in racial terms on the basis of their skin colour by the colonizers and therefore seen in very reductive terms, have to tackle hostility they encounter among their own people, the latter being only able to see the improvements the British had made in the country: ““What did we have, pray, before the British came – disorder, corruption, and egoism ...and the British came to protect our dharma.””⁴²

These villagers repeat the justification the British used themselves for colonial rule and thus remain blind to the power abuse that is at work under British dominion, a viewpoint that is also upheld by many ex-army servicemen many years after Independence as expressed in the form of nostalgia in Rohinton Mistry’s *A Fine Balance*⁴³.

The protesters however celebrate the Mutiny of 1857 as an early attempt to fight British rule. Their struggle for Independence displays the yearning for freedom from oppression and corruption as well as the recognition that it is “the way of the masters that is wrong”⁴⁴, an insight Mr Kolah also has in *A Fine Balance*⁴⁵. In this way the oppressive aspects of colonialism are increasingly acknowledged and attacked through the villagers’ suffering.

Ruth Praver Jhabvala concentrates in her post-colonial novel, *The Nature of Passion*, on the notion of modernity that gains in importance particularly among the younger generation in India a few years after the country’s Independence. It is striking how this notion that challenges and often counters more traditional ways of life is deeply shaped by the former colonizers’ influence: Modernity is thus at least partially defined as the adoption of a more Western lifestyle that involves going to a Club where dancing and the drinking of cocktails are the main occupations. Nimmi and Viddi indulge in such a lifestyle, which they have to keep strictly secret from their family though. The only area of their parents’ lifestyle that is British is their furniture,⁴⁶ and this is merely taken up by their father Lalaji for reasons of status, but not because he approves in any way of these foreign influences. Kanta and Chandra on the other hand are also considered to be a modern couple that gives parties to other people and does not closely observe social rules.⁴⁷ Such a life also includes the popularisation of certain sports such as tennis and the strife to become fashionable in dress and hairstyle.

⁴¹ Ibid: 121.

⁴² Ibid: 128.

⁴³ Mistry, Rohinton. *A Fine Balance*. 1996. London: Faber and Faber, 2000: 254.

⁴⁴ Rao. *Kanthapura*: 256.

⁴⁵ Mistry. *A Fine Balance*: 130-31.

⁴⁶ Jhabvala, Ruth Praver. *The Nature of Passion*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1956: 10.

Nimmi mainly plays tennis in order to be seen by others in her outfit⁴⁸ and tries to improve her outlook even by having her hair cut fashionably short.⁴⁹ She is only in a position to do all this by choosing friends like Rajen, who come from modern families that welcome such ways. Going abroad is also an important part of this new, modern lifestyle the young generation attempts to attain.⁵⁰ Both Viddi and Nimmi hope to get a better education there, and Viddi also longs to be able to choose a profession in this way instead of automatically entering his father's business. Furthermore it is important to him to pursue his artistic ambitions. On the whole there is a great emphasis on individualization by following one's own interests and on self-development and –fulfilment.

Although this development can be regarded as a step towards greater liberation from traditions and rules that limit individuals, it does not even nearly go far enough. The unquestioned belief in the desirability of anything Western is rather a replica of the colonizers' arrogant self-presentation than a critical departure. In addition, the individuals still adhere in many ways to certain views that have been internalised and can be regarded as real obstacles to their emancipation process. One of these views contains the belief in a clear hierarchy of people's worth and involves the exercise of continuous judgement of others.⁵¹ Furthermore, the new lifestyle adopted by some of the younger people is hardly ever really revolutionary, but concentrates itself on surface phenomena such as clothes and hairstyles. When it comes down to actually going ahead with transforming one's views into action, persons regularly fail to do so. Viddi, for example, is not so intent on following his dreams and ideas at the end any longer and is about to settle in his father's business, his father putting a lot of pressure on him to do so and Viddi recognising how his father's money that he will receive when he works in his business allows him the modern lifestyle he longs to have.⁵² He is a character who has never had much self-awareness and can be to a large degree characterised by his passivity. Jhabvala deals here with not always successful but clearly visible attempts of the characters to break free from rigid structures. Despite their frequent failures to make important changes, it can be regarded as the beginning of a necessary process of personal and social transformation provided the characters achieve to develop a more critical reflection on Western lifestyle.

⁴⁷ Ibid: 29.

⁴⁸ Ibid: 91.

⁴⁹ Ibid: 204.

⁵⁰ Ibid: 34-35.

⁵¹ Ibid: 68.

⁵² Ibid: 236.

Another novel by Jhabvala, *Heat and Dust*, is located in two different time periods, which is the colonial time during the 1920s and then the post-colonial time of presumably the 1970s, a few decades after India's Independence.

The early time-period concentrates on Olivia's, the narrator's grandfather's first wife's, impressions as a British woman who confronts India in the environment of colonial servicemen and their wives. During the instances she encounters the reality of the Nawab and his people, she undergoes unsurprisingly a process of alienation.⁵³ Feelings of alienation also occur, however, when she meets British couples who have lived in the new country for quite a while and seem to know a lot more about India.⁵⁴ She is, however, determined to get rid of the image of the outsider and the ignorant person that harbours many one-dimensional ideas.⁵⁵ Furthermore Olivia wants to actively overcome her feelings of estrangement from the Indians she comes across so that she decides to learn Hindustani that would enable her to establish a conversation with them.⁵⁶ She then becomes conscious of the numerous prejudices and stereotypes both on the part of the Indians she meets towards Westerners and on the part of Westerners towards Indians.⁵⁷ After Olivia has 'lost' her child it is the Nawab, the Indian, who is blamed by the others, as he has apparently used Olivia, the European, as a means of revenge. These accusations have of course again a racist taint. When the colonial reign comes to its end, an event Olivia has been able to foresee,⁵⁸ and most British people leave,⁵⁹ Olivia has overcome her severe homesickness and stays on in India with the Nawab.

This is what a few decades later the narrator does as well, who – like Olivia - emigrates from England in order to go to India. In contrast to Olivia, however, the narrator makes this journey by her own decision and on her own. For these reasons and also for the fact that the colonial system does not exist any longer so that there is not that much of a British colonial community there at this time, the narrator gets access far more easily to Indian society. Her fervent wish to be completely open to India, leads to her early withdrawal from the Society of Missionaries where she arrives in and where they completely stick to British customs.⁶⁰ The difficulties the missionaries have to adapt to the new circumstances in the post-colonial India are also powerfully illustrated in Paul Scott's novel, *Staying On*, which depicts the failure of

⁵³ Jhabvala, Ruth Praver. *Heat and Dust*. 1976. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991: 25-26.

⁵⁴ Ibid: 69-70.

⁵⁵ Ibid: 103.

⁵⁶ Ibid: 38.

⁵⁷ Ibid: 144-45, 119, 121.

⁵⁸ Ibid: 89.

⁵⁹ Ibid: 155-56.

⁶⁰ Ibid: 3.

the British, exemplified in the couple Tusker and Lucy Smalley, and the inability of the Indian characters to transform the colonial power-hierarchy into a more equal relationship, which could have offered them a new and more satisfying place in the world. Similarly, Arundhati Roy's novel, *The God of Small Things*, is another example of colonial relationships that are continued long after India's Independence. The narrator in *Heat and Dust*, however, is – like Olivia in the past - keen on enlarging her Hindi vocabulary, and she adopts Indian customs. Her involvement with the country shows her how many stereotypes those British who stayed on still have in their minds.⁶¹ Some of the stereotypes are reflections on erotic and idealised notions of India, which particularly emphasise the aspect of spirituality.⁶² The reality of India, however, frequently reveals India's alleged spirituality as a myth.

Stereotypes also still exist on the Indian side regarding the Europeans: Inder Lal sizes up the narrator-character before they start an affair as if to find out if she fulfils all the clichés of European women he knows of.⁶³ He is, though, at the same time open and curious about European customs, such as different eating habits and does not have a great number of preconceptions.

The novel suggests that although stereotypes and clichés continue to exist, it has become easier after Independence to get involved with the other country and relationships between the 'races' are also no scandals any longer. There also seems to slowly emerge a greater readiness to approach persons from different cultural backgrounds in a less biased way.

In *India – A Million Mutinies Now* V.S. Naipaul brings in a new aspect concerning early Anglo-Indian relations, explaining how Eastern and Western aspects were combined in pre-colonial times through the foundation of the Brahmo-Samaj by Raja Ram Mohun Roy.⁶⁴ The Brahmo-Samaj was at the beginning a faith that blended Hindu and Christian teachings, but soon became a culture under Rabindranath Tagore that eventually influenced Nehru's teachings. This culture can be seen as an antidote to the views of colonialism that hold on to a strict dualism between Eastern and Western ideas. Although the institution has become lifeless nowadays, its legacy has been felt for a long time and should be remembered now in an independent India that constantly defines anew her character as a nation.

⁶¹ Jhabvala. *Heat and Dust*: 21, 59.

⁶² Ibid: 95, 139.

⁶³ Ibid: 127.

⁶⁴ Naipaul, V.S. *India – A Million Mutinies Now*. 1990. London: Vintage, 1998: 286.

Amitav Ghosh's novel, *The Glass Palace*, depicts the time from the late nineteenth to the end of the twentieth century and thus covers a long period of colonialism in India, Burma and Malaya, countries that the British exploited economically and where they practised cultural imperialism whilst frequently mistreating the indigenous workers.

However, the power abuse by the British is soon taken up by the Southeast Asian peoples whom they govern and is then applied by them to their neighbours: In this way, colonial relations are established in Burma between the Indians and the Burmese, the rich Indians ruling over the Burmese⁶⁵ and killing many of them. These violent developments all show the mechanisms of ethnic conflict. Ethnic conflict is here a result of colonialism and of the decisions the colonizers make on administrative affairs. The Indian people adopt the model of power exercise the British use over them, thus demonstrating their alleged superiority over the Burmese by imitation. The ethnic conflict between Burmese and Indians is here one between ranked groups.

In view of this situation, Gandhi's principle of unarmed movement against colonialism stands out as an example to be followed.⁶⁶ Finally both India and Burma gain Independence and have thus also achieved to create the basis for being free countries that set their own rules.

The novel also highlights the role of the British Indian Army, an institution that evolved during colonialism: Many Indians joined the army and fought there for money for their colonial masters, allowing the latter to destroy every trace of resistance to their power.⁶⁷ The selection process of who can enter the army as a soldier follows racial politics according to which some Indian groups are excluded from the army because the British consider them racially unfit.⁶⁸ In actual fact, the British Indian Army has always functioned on the understanding that there is a great separation between the Indians and the British and both sides have felt that this separation was to their benefit. This dividing line is to a large extent responsible that prejudice, distrust and suspicion have not vanished, but have just been covered up more effectively.⁶⁹ As a result of this power-relationship within the army, which is really a master-slave relationship, the Indian Independence League is founded to exercise criticism of the British Indian Army, making Indians aware that they are fighting for an Empire that has kept them in slavery for two hundred years.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Ghosh, Amitav. *The Glass Palace*. London: Harper Collins, 2001: 240.

⁶⁶ Ibid: 254.

⁶⁷ Ibid: 29-30.

⁶⁸ Ibid: 520.

⁶⁹ Ibid: 285.

⁷⁰ Ibid: 391.

It is obvious how the Indians in the Army are never mentioned in terms of influence, but are merely regarded as instruments. Naturally Indians are also excluded from the Club, where the British soldiers regularly go. The Indians who do in fact resent such exclusive measures decide to split the British Indian Army and thus create the Indian National Army⁷¹, which is joined by many workers. However, due to the strong allegiance of Indians in the British Army towards the allegedly common cause, many of them feel now that they have lost their original national identity and now want to impose the feeling of being their own masters. They encounter further difficulties when at the end of the war many of their members are brought back to India as prisoners of war where they are regarded as traitors by the British and as heroes by the Indian public.

The people from Malaya who joined the Indian National Army are in some ways in a similar situation as the Indians are in the British Indian Army in that they fight for a country that they have never seen.⁷² It is paradox, but such as England to the Indians, so does India for the Malayan soldiers remain a myth that is created by them, describing it as “a shining mountain beyond the horizon, a sacrament of redemption – a metaphor for freedom”⁷³.

These national armies are obviously full of contradictions and inconsistencies and it is therefore hardly surprising that many soldiers, especially those who changed loyalties, feel torn in their loyalties towards the British Empire, believing on the one hand that it has given them many things, and rejecting on the other hand the Empire’s brutality. The readiness of the former colonized peoples to make use of their new freedom takes time to grow and a precondition to it is to overcome the disorientation and confusion that spread just after Independence.

The central theme of Hari Kunzru’s novel, *The Impressionist*, is the quest for the self against the background of a racially mixed heritage. Although only recently written and published, it is set in colonial times, at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century and therefore illustrates particularly well the prejudices and preconceptions people of different ‘races’ show towards each other whilst perceiving the world in very dualistic terms that do not allow for any identities that are in-between these poles. Pran, the novel’s protagonist, suffers an identity crisis after having learned about his mixed heritage and after having encountered the unforgiving ruthless views on hybridity that the persons around him hold on to. As a result, Pran tries throughout the novel to establish his identity as a racially pure one. On his

⁷¹ Ibid: 437.

⁷² Ibid: 521-22.

⁷³ Ibid: 522.

wanderings through India, England and Africa Pran takes on other identities that are in accordance with what other people see in him and take him for. Part of his identity crisis is expressed in his reliance on other people's views of him to an excessive extent. He simply internalises their views, plays the role that is expected of him and is thus merely a collection of impressions by other people, but cannot feel that he is anything beyond it: "... in between each impression, just at the moment when one person falls away and the next has yet to take possession, the impressionist is completely blank. There is nothing there at all."⁷⁴ He thus seems to have no identity but the ones people attribute to him at different times in different situations, a phenomenon we will encounter later in Rushdie's characters Saladin and Gibreel in *The Satanic Verses* and in Uma in *The Moor's Last Sigh*. He is a chameleonlike creature who uses mimicry in order to be accepted as a person in various surroundings. The different personae he plays are underlined by name changes.⁷⁵

While Pran has been rejected as an Indian prince and future leader at home due to his partial whiteness,⁷⁶ many of the persons he meets on his consecutive travels see and appreciate the white person in him: The British Major at the Nawab's place, the army people he comes across in the Punjab as well as Mr MacFarlane, who owns a mission with his wife, contribute to Pran's increasing identification with 'whiteness' and in addition plant the seeds of the belief in white racial superiority in him. Pran cannot see through the facade Mr MacFarlane puts up in his arrogant demeanour and in his research in craniometry,⁷⁷ which he uses to elaborate his racist ideology: Whilst MacFarlane detests non-white people and especially loathes hybridity, he nevertheless sleeps with Indian women and fathers a child, which he tries to keep a secret.

Pran's growing but still vague sense of identity is questioned again, however, when Mrs MacFarlane sees the Indian in Pran and wants to encourage him to acknowledge this Indian identity as well by giving him the Indian name Chandra.⁷⁸ His confusion and insecurity about his racial belonging have to be immense at that point. It becomes quite clear that race is a constructed category, which is not at all clear, but can easily be understood in different ways by different people, which is expressed in these people – here the MacFarlanes – associating the same person to different racial categories. The reason for allocating Pran to one rather than to another racial category, mirrors the MacFarlanes' different evaluation of the importance of certain attributes as racial designators. Closely linked with such an evaluation

⁷⁴ Kunzru, Hari. *The Impressionist*. London: Penguin, 2003: 419.

⁷⁵ Ibid: 72, 131, 191-93, 284-85.

⁷⁶ Ibid: 41.

⁷⁷ Ibid: 196-97.

⁷⁸ Ibid: 191-93

are views on power structures and relations, which are also completely dissimilar between Mr and Mrs MacFarlane.

Pran's attempt to embody a white Englishman⁷⁹ does not lead him to the fulfilment of his wishes either: In fact, he is rejected at the end by a white English girl he went out with for some time because he does not display any of the 'exotic' features or characteristics Astarte is looking for. The latter are of course constructs of her mind.⁸⁰ His ideas about the desirability of (his) whiteness are once again turned upside down. He observes how the appreciation of skin colour, which once again serves as the main indicator to the race category, does not only depend on the point of time in history, but is also very much context-dependent, which means that the values, beliefs and the culture of a society give rise to certain preferences rather than others. For this reason the responses he gets from various people in several societies hugely differ in their embrace or criticism of whiteness.

Pran's most decisive change occurs on an anthropological expedition that is undertaken in the name of the Empire with clearly colonial ideas on the minds of the explorers, considering all the various languages and races as really being of one soul and mind, which is British.⁸¹ Activities such as mapping and categorising are used here as strategies of exercising power and control. It is certainly a colonial assumption in these early anthropological undertakings that civilizations can be adequately depicted. The professor and his companions gradually learn that this is not the case, which includes giving up their rather static idea of pristine peoples that stay essentially the same over time.⁸²

However, the Fotse people also have to learn a lesson about the inevitability of change and the fact that continuity is very much part of the world and not necessarily negative. Only then will they be able to give up some of their antagonism against all Western practices, which they have often harboured even against the ones that are not imperial in nature but simply different.

Pran here undertakes a journey into the self that goes much deeper than anything undertaken before. Pran suddenly feels deep in himself that he does not believe in the imperial project at all and actively attempts to come to an understanding of these people he has not known before without taking refuge in ready-made assumptions and preconceptions. He thus makes the step towards a greater transcultural understanding and by doing so dispels his own fear of being non-white, which is a precondition to the acceptance of this part as being a constituent in

⁷⁹ Ibid: 284-85.

⁸⁰ Ibid: 414-15.

⁸¹ Ibid: 381.

⁸² Ibid: 467-68.

himself. It is also a precondition to embrace hybridity as something that can enrich the self. Pran has thus finally made the first real step to an integration of the various parts in himself. He has acquired at least some autonomy necessary for the development of his personality and now, being the only remaining person of the expedition that he abandons, engages fully and consciously in the quest of the self.⁸³

The novel shows clearly how self-development - which focuses here particularly on aspects of race - works, namely by taking the beliefs of others towards ourselves, dealing with them and then responding to them in our own way. Pran has had a long way to go not to merely internalise the often very discriminating views of others, but to respond to them in a more critical manner. Although the advantages of migration and the incorporation and integration of many viewpoints are hinted at in the gradual development of a post-colonial viewpoint that overcomes the injustices some individuals have to suffer, the racial barriers erected by the societies Pran lives in, prove to be too strong to attain this viewpoint easily and to see hybridity clearly as a chance rather than a curse. In the end, the protagonist has learned, however, how he can become more than just a blank sheet of paper with unaltered imprints left on him by others: He undergoes a learning process in which he transforms the imprints at the end and thus creates new ones, which are both of a multiple and malleable nature that do not any longer exclude the possibility of accepting a mixed-race identity but are rather open to it instead without clinging to this specific label though. There is now awareness that racial identity categories are constructs and should therefore not be seen and treated as essences or reliable denominators of persons, particularly because individuals are no static entities, but in a continuous process of change and development.

It is ethnic identity that is a big issue in Rohinton Mistry's novel, *Family Matters*. The work explores the meaning of Parsi identity analysing it in religious as well as in cultural ways that focus on traditions of learning. The term Parsi refers to an ethnic identity in the first place⁸⁴ and it is therefore ethnicity that the novel points out as an important factor of self-determination. Such self-determination becomes particularly important due to the dwindling number of Parsis not only in India but even worldwide.⁸⁵ Their closeness to the British⁸⁶, which reveals itself in their lifestyles, has now become a problem regarding a distinct Parsi identity. Mistry shows how many Parsis have for this reason become hostile to British society

⁸³ Ibid: 481.

⁸⁴ Birdy, Ervad Jal N. "Snippets and Lessons From Early Parsi History." 04 Oct 2003. <http://tenets.zoroastrianism.com/snip33.html>: 1.

⁸⁵ "Survivors through History." 04 Oct 2003. <http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl1741/17140650.htm>: 1.

⁸⁶ Luhrmann, T.M. "The Good Parsi." 04 Oct 2003. <http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog/LUHGOO.htm>: 1.

in particular and how they try to uphold their own system of values. Such an example is Yezad, who is very much adverse to expose his sons to English books or food⁸⁷ being convinced that such exposure to English culture would prevent them from developing any feeling of belonging, which he deems necessary if one wants to do justice to one's Parsi identity.⁸⁸ He is furthermore absolutely horrified when his youngest son, Jehangir, wants to be called by an English name.⁸⁹ One of the Parsis in the novel is aware of the irony in this latest turn towards the adoption of an anti-British stance: “The funny thing is, we used to pride ourselves on being Westernized, more advanced”⁹⁰. Yezad's adversity to anything 'foreign' leads to extremity, which is best displayed in his belief in ethnic purity. Ethnic purity is of course a myth, such as the belief in being able to turn back time and retrieve the more traditional Parsi lifestyle of the past is one. Instead of consciously embracing new influences and regarding them as enrichment to their views, many Parsis seem to view these influences as threatening factors that merely lead to loss of their cultural heritage.

This attitude becomes particularly obvious in the orthodox Parsis' disapproval of intermarriage, which has been a taboo for a long time⁹¹: In the novel, the protagonist's, Nariman's, father forbade his son the engagement with a non-Parsi girl, Lucy in the name of Parsi values and identity⁹², which – he believed – had to be protected. Nariman submitted at the end, but could not find happiness with the Parsi wife he had to marry.

Yezad, Nariman's son-in-law, has similar expectations towards his sons, which triggers a confrontation between him and his eldest son Murad whose girlfriend is a non-Parsi. Unlike his grandfather in the past, Murad openly revolts against his father's views, and at the end of the novel a compromise is found: Yezad lets the non-Parsi girl come to Murad's birthday party thus becoming gradually more open-minded to the possibility of intermarriage. Yezad has in this way also made the first step towards the reformists' battle against the orthodox Parsi policy of excommunication that has served for a long time as punishment for intermarriage.⁹³

Ethnicity is here again treated as a divide between people; a possible mingling is still frowned at. As a result preconceptions and prejudices remain largely in place and the struggle against orthodox views on Parsi identity is revealed to be a slow one.

⁸⁷ Mistry, Rohinton. *Family Matters*. 2002. London: Faber and Faber, 2003: 217.

⁸⁸ Ibid: 97.

⁸⁹ Ibid: 247.

⁹⁰ Ibid: 413.

⁹¹ “The Parsi Community of India – the Last Bastion of Zoroastrianism in the World Today.” 04 Oct 2003. <http://www.lifepositive.com/spirit/world-religions/zoroastrianism/parsi-community.asp>: 3.

⁹² Mistry. *Family Matters*: 132.

⁹³ Ibid: 467.

While early Anglo-Indian novels usually depict the fight for Independence as a resistance to colonialism, the novels written during the decades after Independence focus on the legacy of colonialism, particularly on the difficulties of transcending colonial views and prejudices on both the Indian and the European side. The later texts show that a change in people's minds occurs very slowly. The older generation of Indians often still bears a grudge against the former colonizers and everything associated with their way of life and is therefore extremely reluctant to adopt any British influences, such as it was done more readily in pre-colonial times when there was no burden of the past one had to deal with. In contrast to such distrust against European, especially British culture, the younger generation, both in India and as migrants abroad, regularly welcome Western style and leisure pursuits, defining them as part of the modern way of life. The greater openness to Western influences can be welcomed as a point of departure, but it is not unproblematic when it sometimes takes the form of an uncritical adoption of them. Such action is reminiscent of the former colonizers' praise of their culture and the superiority of their race in all aspects of life. Issues of ethnicity become also extremely important for not only national, but also ethnic minorities in a country, as they consider it important to stress their cultural legacy.

On the whole, colonial perceptions, although still lingering on for a long time after Independence, become less prominent among the younger generation, the latter showing much more interest in and curiosity for people from other backgrounds. If racial or ethnic prejudice occurs now it is not always necessarily linked to the colonial legacy: there are frequently instances of prejudice for example between people who are all from a non-white background.

II.3.2. Nationalism and other ideologies

This short introduction should explain why ideology is central to any analysis of individuals in social interaction by giving some brief definitions of the term and by exemplifying this claim in certain ideologies that prove to be particularly prominent in my chosen texts.

In popular usage, the term is frequently used to denote a certain set of rules or doctrines, which are often politically conceived.¹ The term's definition has concentrated on how a current social and political order is legitimised by the ruling institutions through the production of certain world views and values.² Such legitimisation engages in the widespread teaching of ideas about the way things are, how the world functions and what it should be like. In this way people's way of thinking is moulded in such ways that they come to accept certain ways of behaviours, regarding the state of affairs they encounter as well as their ascribed roles in society as natural givens that cannot and should not be altered.

Critical theory puts a strong emphasis on ideology's unconscious and unavoidable nature.³ This can be explained by the critical theorists' definition of ideology as being simply the way in which persons perceive and think of the world. Ideology is here described as a collection of shared assumptions within a society about how reality and life are experienced. Furthermore, ideology can be understood as a systematic set of beliefs in which one belief presupposes another.⁴

Althusser furthermore made the important observation that our way of seeing things is always inscribed within the language we speak, which means in discourse. Slavoj Žižek explains that we have to get rid in this context of metaphors of demasking and unveiling, as there is no other truth or reality we can have access to without the masks and veils: "The mask is not simply hiding the real state of things; the ideological distortion is written into its very essence."⁵ Ideology can thus not achieve anything else but to make a claim to the truth, and this claim is usually taken seriously. It becomes now also understandable what Althusser means when he claims that it is impossible to be without ideology. It should by now be apparent that the concept is with some justification generally associated with power relations. Nationalism has for a long time been a very powerful ideology and plays a crucial role in the

¹ "Ideology." *Meriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. 17 June 2004

<http://www.stfx.ca/people/mmoyagh/445/more-445/Concepts/ideology.html>: 1.

² Lye, John. "Ideology – A Brief Guide." 17 June 2004 <http://www.brocku.ca/english/jlye/ideology.html>: 1.

³ "Ideology." *Meriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*: 1.

⁴ "Ideology." 18 June 2004. <http://www.sociology.org.uk/wsd3.htm>: 1.

independence struggles of colonised countries. The term 'nationalism' is generally used to describe two phenomena: Firstly, it depicts the attitude members of a nation display when they care about their national identity.⁶ Nation is here often defined in terms of a common origin, ethnicity or cultural ties, and the belonging to a nation is mainly regarded as involuntary. Secondly, nationalism also refers to the actions members of a nation take when they attempt to achieve or sustain a form of political sovereignty. This goal can be pursued by any group of people who aspire voluntarily to a common political state-like organization. It is, however, vital to see that the cultural and the political domain regarding nationalism can most of the time not be so easily separated from each other and that nationalism usually displays an interaction between the political stance and cultural beliefs. This becomes clear in the tendency of nationalists to aim for full sovereignty, regarding the state as a political unit that is owned by one ethnic-cultural group whose traditions are to be protected. Nation can thus be described as a mixed, ethno-cultural as well as a political category, but seems to still have a greater emphasis on the ethno-cultural aspect.

It seems plausible to explain the emergence of nationalism as the outcome of the spread of ideology through structural social factors. The success of this strategy can be largely explained by the individuals' need of identification with a group or community, this organisation being regarded as fulfilling their sense of belonging.

The forms nationalism takes can be quite different in nature.⁷ One rough distinction would be that between classical and liberal nationalism:

Classical nationalism takes the ethno-nation as its basis, stating that it is the first duty of each member to follow the principles of one's ethno-national culture regarding cultural affairs. The difficulty with such a view is that some claims classical nationalism makes can easily interfere with individual autonomy, impartiality and obviously also with diversity due to claims and demands of homogeneity.

Liberal nationalism on the other hand tends to accommodate any complex of attitudes, claims and guidelines for action which attribute a fundamental political, moral or cultural value to nation and nationality and which entail certain duties as a result of this value. This stance can also be called cosmopolitan⁸: Once the belonging to various communities is approved of, social groups tend to be more willing to move beyond the borders of a nation and to thus

⁵ Žižek, Slavoj. "Cynicism as a Form of Ideology." *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. (London; New York: Verso, 1989), pp. 28-30. 18 June 2004 <http://www.egs.edu/faculty/zizek/zizek-cynicism-as-a-form-of-ideology.html> : 1.

⁶ Miscevic, Nenad. "Nationalism." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 29 Nov. 2001. 17 June 2004 <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nationalism> : 1.

⁷ Ibid: 6.

adopt a truly cosmopolitan viewpoint, the latter being a radical departure from previous forms of nationalism that usually relate to and can be subsumed under classical nationalism.

Nationalism in India has a long history, with the country's colonial background being one of the most influential factors on the course the different nationalisms in India took.

By the end of the nineteenth century, India as a nation was becoming increasingly important to many Indians so that they were looking for a re-definition of the nation and themselves.⁹ The Indian National Congress was founded in 1885, an institution that should help to initiate social and economic reforms as well as improve the living conditions in India in general. One major aim was to put an end to imperial exploitation, which meant the development of a particular form of nationalism: This Indian nationalism under British rule aimed for a political community that transcended caste, class or religion.¹⁰

However, many regional and social movements proved not to be very compatible with the liberal nationalism the Congress members adhered to, as they ran completely counter to the members' aim for national integration. These regionalisms at last made it impossible for the nationalists to represent the political opinions and views of the Indians as a whole. Concerns such as those of the Indian Muslims for example remained largely unrepresented, which led to the foundation of the All-India Muslim League in 1906 and finally to the creation of Pakistan, a new homeland for Muslims. The British contributed their fair share to these rifts between the main religious groups of India by following a divide-and rule policy.¹¹ They categorised people on the basis of their religion and treated them as being completely separate from each other. Nationalist feelings between India and Pakistan have continued to the present day, especially in Kashmir where the two nations still carry out their disputes over boundaries and divisions based on Hindu and Muslim presence there. The colonizers' attitude contributed also to the next partition, which was the partition of Bengal.

The fight for nationalism and independence during the early twentieth century was shown in the adoption of particular measures: Firstly educational boycotts were organised and a constructive programme to create national schools was initiated.¹² Economically more important was the call for a national industry that was backed by a boycott of British goods,

⁸ Ibid: 15.

⁹ Tomlinson, BR (Tom). "Chapter 1: The Construction of Colonial India." Mercury. School of Oriental and African Studies. U of London. 28 June 2004

<http://mercury.soas.ac.uk/users/tt2/teach/impnat/India/construction.htm> : 13.

¹⁰ Tomlinson, BR (Tom). "Chapter 2: The Search for Swaraj: Nationalism and Communalism, 1900-1930." Mercury. School of Oriental and African Studies. U of London. 28 June 2004

<http://mercury.soas.ac.uk/users/tt2/teach/impnat/India/swaraj.htm> : 1.

¹¹ Keen, Shirin. "The Partition of India." Emory. 1998. English Dept., Emory U. 28 June 2004

<http://www.emory.edu/ENGLISH/Bahri/Part.html>: 3.

¹² Tomlinson. "Chapter 2: The Search for Swaraj: Nationalism and Communalism, 1900-1930." Mercury: 9.

especially of foreign cloth, such as Manchester cotton. This boycott proved to be an extremely important event in the national freedom struggle, as it was the economic foundation for Indian independence from foreign exploitation.

Although the Congress was determined to win self-rule for India as early as 1914, at that time the Congress members were still quite vague about the exact nature of such rule. It was under Gandhi's influence during the years that followed that the nature of self-rule took on a more definite shape. Gandhi's power in the Indian National Congress was prevalent for many years, and particularly so when he organised mass action against the British colonizers. The aims and methods of Gandhi's nationalism could spread very quickly, as many Indians looked for some new ideas and a plan of action in a time of social and political uncertainty as well as economic instability. Gandhi, who had already fought for Indian rights in South Africa, devised the following plan of action: Apart from securing more rights for peasants and industrial workers regarding their settlements, he introduced the method of civil disobedience in 1919 through strike action. He also started a process of non-co-operation with the British in 1920, assuring all Indians that self-rule needed to occur by legitimate and non-violent measures. In 1921 Gandhi declared that peaceful relations between Hindus and Muslims as well as economic equality and the removal of untouchability had to be key elements in national self-government. Gandhi's measures in his nationalist struggle included not only a boycott of foreign cloth and alcohol, but also the distribution of two million spinning wheels so that items of clothing could from then on be produced at home. He furthermore set up organisations of volunteers who carried out protests against local inequalities. On the whole, Gandhi introduced changes into Indian society by reasserting its traditional values and by peaceful struggle that would lead to political independence. It is by these means that Gandhi became a great leader figure that quite a few persons tried to emulate, always having him in mind as a role model for their actions. It is obvious that Gandhi's nationalism is an inclusive and liberal one, which can also be called 'composite nationalism' or multiculturalism, arguing for the peaceful co-existence of Muslims and Hindus and demanding rights for all groups of Indian society.¹³ One of the statements of composite nationalism is that being a good Muslim is definitely compatible with being a good Indian because religion does not define India in a way that it excludes as a nation communities belonging to certain faiths. Instead, India's pluralism is reflected in India's laws and political institutions.

In contrast to Gandhi's understanding of nationalism, Hindu nationalism, which is in full force today, stresses the primacy of Hindus in India and demands that all non-Hindu groups

should play a minor role in the life of the nation. This is a form of classical nationalism that can be defined as being extremely faith-based and as extremely communitarian in nature. Muslims and Christians in particular, being the second and third largest minorities in India, have encountered a lot of hostility as a result. Hindu nationalism has not had much strength during India's freedom movement and during the four decades after independence, but has become very powerful since the late 1980s when it gained increasing influence with the result that Hindu nationalists are now part of the ruling coalition in the government in Delhi. To Hindu nationalists, it is not so much laws and political institutions but rather emotions and loyalty that form a nation.¹⁴ Hinduism is the basis for their politics. The definition of a Hindu therefore comprises a territorial, a genealogical as well as a religious dimension.

Muslims have been chosen to be the primary adversaries for the reasons that they are such a large group and that it was due to their demand for a new homeland that India underwent partition at the end. Hindu nationalists are only willing to let Muslims become part of the Indian nation if they accept the dominant role of Hinduism in India, if they acknowledge the violence Muslim rulers exercised on Hindu civilization in the past and if they refrain from demanding special privileges like the guarantee of private religious laws. Mahatma Gandhi was murdered by Hindu nationalists amongst other reasons for not being adverse enough towards Muslims and was considered as a traitor by the Hindu nationalists because he had not supported their struggle for a Hindu state that covered the whole of British India.¹⁵

Rushdie emphasises how the rise of Hindu nationalism runs totally counter to the notion of India as a nation-state, the latter that can give a feeling of belonging by welcoming diversity regarding the people who live in it.¹⁶ Fortunately not only Rushdie but the majority of Indian voters – including Hindu voters – is still very much in favour of pluralism and diversity so that there is still some hope that Hindu nationalism will not become an overpowering force in the people's understanding of their nation.

Other classical nationalist attitudes in India figured as well during the last few decades: There was the nationalist movement by the Sikhs during the time Indira Gandhi was in government.¹⁷ They demanded an independent Sikh state in the Punjab and resorted to terror in order to put pressure on the Indian government to grant them this state. Instead of

¹³ "Soul of India: What is the meaning of anti-Muslim violence in India?" wideangle. 28 June 2004 <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/shows/india> : 1.

¹⁴ "Soul of India: The Struggle for National Identity." wideangle. 28 June 2004. <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/shows/india/briefing.html> : 1.

¹⁵ Daniel, Aharon. "India since independence: Indian Nationalism and the Gandhi murders." Tripod. 1999-2000. 28 June 2004 <http://adaniel.tripod.com/Gandhis.htm> : 1.

¹⁶ Rushdie. Step Across this Line – Collected Non-Fiction 1992-2002: 220.

¹⁷ Daniel. "India since Independence: Indian Nationalism and the Gandhi murders." Tripod: 1.

extracting such a promise however, their holiest place, the ‘Golden Temple’ in Amritsar was stormed by soldiers that had been sent by Indira Gandhi. The anger and frustration of the Sikh community found violent release in the assassination of Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards, an act that was considered by many Sikhs a just retribution for the massacre that was carried out under her orders.

Liberal nationalism is normally immune to terrorism, extremism and fundamentalism, ideologies that have caused excessive violence and pain in the past as it meant murdering innocent people, sometimes without even revealing the true motives for such murder. Rushdie warns of the adoption of such radical and destructive stances by pointing out the restrictive measures that are put in place by fundamentalists, such as a ban on the freedom of speech, on a multi-party political system, on a reliable and responsible government as well as on pluralism and secularism.¹⁸

The Indian population also had to come to terms with the ideology underlying a dictatorship during the time when Indira Gandhi was Prime Minister of India. This proved to be extremely difficult, as a dictatorship is a government that is authoritarian in nature and is opposed to democracy¹⁹, although it might hide its true nature under a democratic constitution, as it was the case in India at the time. The term ‘dictatorship’ describes the way the leaders come to and exercise power, meaning that the nation is frequently deprived of their right to express their political viewpoints by fair popular elections.

Dictators can come into power in very different ways and an important one is by elections. However, fair elections are normally not maintained for a long time in dictatorships so that false elections are held in which a dictator can claim that they have the support of the electorate and is therefore legitimately in power. Corruption is often used during elections and the number of voters seems to be unusually high. Such election malpractice applied in the case of Indira Gandhi.²⁰

Another very powerful ideology in India and numerous other countries in the past was that of communism. The foundation of the Communist Party of India occurred in the 1920s with the aim of creating an alternative mass movement to the existing Congress anti-imperialist movement.²¹

¹⁸ Rushdie. *Step Across this Line – Collected Non-Fiction 1992-2002*: 393.

¹⁹ “Dictatorship.” *Wikipedia*. 17 June 2004 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dictatorship> : 1.

²⁰ “On This Day / 7 January / 1980: Gandhi returned by landslide vote.” *BBC*. 22 June 2004 http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/january/7/newsid_2506000/2506387.stm : 2.

²¹ Maiti, Prasenjit. “Indian Communism and Tropes of Indian Writings in English.” *Postcolonial Web*. Dept. of Political Science. Burdwan U., India. 22 June 2004 <http://www.postcolonialweb.org/india/literature/maiti9.html> : 1.

The context in which the Communist Party emerged in India was that of excessive state control against which people started to protest: The communists failed to see any other opportunity but to resort to violence as their form of protest against such state control.

The predominant reasons for this movement though were economic in nature: The movement was clearly directed against both the British and the Indian classes with property. It was the capitalist system itself more than the colonial government or the ruling Congress Party that were under attack.

The problem with the Communist Party of India was the fact that it was too conservative and quite ineffective compared to communist parties in other countries. One of the reasons for the lack of effectiveness of the Communist Party in India were the divisions that soon occurred within the party with the result that it finally split in 1964. This split produced a second faction called the Communist party of India (Marxists), which asked all the workers to start a revolt. They should thus protest against the injustice they had to suffer through the elites' greed for national power through capitalism. Particularly the landlords and peasants did not enjoy any advantages whatsoever by the increase in India's industrial strength, as the feudal society they have so far lived and worked in broke down completely.

The divisions within the communist movement in India can be explained by the difficulties Indians had in redefining their country as a nation after Independence. The failure to unite and establish a new national identity entailed the lack of cohesiveness within the communist movement: The absence of shared national spirit among some persons of the peasant castes, landowners and the class proletariat made it problematic to form an effective revolutionary group. The communist movement was adopted to reveal economic dissatisfaction, but most people involved with the movement knew very little about Marx and Engels or their writings. Kerala had a special place within the history of Indian communism, being both a flourishing capitalist region for trade and one of India's most destitute areas. It must have thus been a magnet to communists, who strove for the reform of such a capitalist system in order to establish more social justice. In fact, Kerala was the only region in India that ever had a democratically elected Marxist government. Especially in Kerala it is crucial to see the often rather violent efforts of the communist movement in the context of caste matters:

Communism clearly attempted to abolish the caste system, and one of the reasons for Kerala being one of only a few anti-caste systems in India that lacked strict caste structure could be the intense communist efforts there. However, due to the weak nature of the Communist Party of India, the aim of uniting the castes in most of India could at the end not be reached so that the movement failed in this strategy as well.

In Rao's novel *Kanthapura* the acknowledgement of the Indians' oppression under the British makes them gradually adopt forms of nationalism as means to re-assert their own identity as a people with its right to govern their own country and the demand to be recognised as equals to the British.

It is particularly the nationalism that Gandhi preached to the people that is spread through the nation and serves people as a foundation for their struggle, which is exemplified in the protagonist's, Moorthy's, struggle. Gandhi's principles serve as guidelines to the kind of resistance the people take. His habit to wear homespun clothes reflects his intention to foster the country's economy by using its own resources, therefore simultaneously trying to make sure that people have work. However, even though Gandhi considered the economic factor thoroughly, and actively tried to boost the economy, some of his economic principles are unfortunately also very backward in that they do not aim to integrate modern influences and establish trade connections in a way that would be most advantageous to the country.

Moorthy enlightens the villagers on Gandhi's ideology²² and gives them cotton to spin and yarn to weave.²³ He himself tries to set an example by only wearing homespun clothes. He also takes up Gandhi's practice of fasting as another form of protest against imperial practices of the colonizers and against any forms of violence in the country. Fasting is later on also practised by the people in the various villages who follow in Moorthy's footsteps. They thus achieve a kind of resistance to their country's status of dependency that is non-violent in its character. They also take to heart Gandhi's teachings of love and truth that aim at increasing harmony in the world.²⁴ Undertaking their struggles in Gandhi's name means for the villagers to remind each other – especially at the height of their protests – to observe Gandhi's rules closely, in particular the one of non-violence. They give expression to their feelings of being disciples of Gandhi: “ ‘We know only one Government and that is the Government of the Mahatma,’ ... ‘But ours is an Indian government.’ ... mountain wind.”²⁵

At the same time the protestors actively support the Congress that seems to be able to represent their voice: “ ...and yet there is but one law our people will obey, it is the law of the Congress.”²⁶ They found their own Congress Parties (male and female ones) and imitate in this way the big Indian Congress Party. Their struggles soon involve a greater part of the population: the coolies who have been badly influenced by the sahibs are won over for the cause of the protesters at the end and live in harmony with the villagers in *Kanthapura*. After

²² Rao, *Kanthapura*: 28ff.

²³ Ibid: 66.

²⁴ Ibid: 181.

²⁵ Ibid: 248.

²⁶ Ibid: 228.

Gandhi's death they hope to be represented by Jawaharlal Nehru and show loyalty to him and his politics.²⁷

This form of liberal and composite nationalism obviously proves to be a very positive one that promises greater success than any unconstitutional violent national struggles that often gain the upper hand in a people's struggle of liberation. At the end they have not yet won the struggle for an independent nation at that time, but they have made the first steps towards achieving it by their increasing awareness of their identity as a people. " 'No, sister, no, nothing can ever be the same again. You will say we have lost this, you will say we have lost that. . . ., but there is something that has entered our hearts, an abundance like the Himavathy on Gauri's night, . . ., and he will bless us.'"²⁸

In *India – A Million Mutinies Now* V.S. Naipaul illuminates the role Marxism played in post-independent India: He shows how an ideology created a movement that won at first many adherents by engaging in the peasants' struggle for better living conditions. Then the disintegration of Communism into smaller factions gave rise to one particularly powerful group in India, the Naxalites. They however soon turned to the use of violence and started numerous killings that were justified by the killed people's allegedly damaging influence on the Naxalite cause.²⁹ Following Communist tradition, the murderers were merely objects of the ideology and not autonomous subjects any longer with their own plans of action. In a similar vein, Arundhati Roy shows in her novel *The God of Small Things* how individual concerns count even less once party discipline is undermined: set in Kerala with its communist government, the Untouchable Velutha does not get any support from his party when he finds himself in personal trouble. This novel as well as Naipaul's travelogue point out communism's failure in India to establish a more just society with peaceful means that could be based on equality. Naipaul's travelogue attributes this failure most of all to the absence of unity among the people of India, which made it impossible to keep alive a united Communist front.

In Mistry's novel, *A Fine Balance*, it is particularly the ideology that forms the basis of Indira Gandhi's policies that is highlighted and sharply criticised. The novel reminds the reader that Indira Gandhi's legitimacy as Prime Minister of India has been in doubt since the elections in

²⁷ Ibid: 256.

²⁸ Ibid: 255-62.

²⁹ Naipaul. *India – A Million Mutinies Now*: 337.

1975. She is accused of cheating in these elections and is thus under pressure to step down.³⁰ To hold on to power she claims that the country's security is threatened by internal disturbances and declares a State of Emergency. Under the pretext of the Emergency, fundamental rights are suspended so that most of the opposition are under arrest and union leaders, even some student leaders, are thrown into jail. Police brutality is condoned despite the public's outrage. Furthermore the press is highly censored. Indira Gandhi thus retroactively changes the election laws, turning her guilt into innocence, and introduces a form of dictatorship whose ruthlessness is compared to the behaviour of the colonizers.³¹ This underlines the corruption of the voting system that occurs in India's government³² and shows the enormous power of the Prime Minister who can change any law that she wants to modify.³³ The government's cunning and the strategies it uses are symbolised in the game of chess that Maneck is introduced to by his friend Avinash and that he later on teaches Om.³⁴ This distorted view of justice can also be seen in the options the rent-collector gives Dina before destroying the tailors' work and tools – that is either to leave her abode that she has used to give shelter illegally to the tailors or to buy the necessary police order that allows her to stay.³⁵ Justice is now sold to the highest bidder. Laws keep changing so that Dina, after being evicted from her flat, does not even get a chance to take legal action.³⁶ Another act that she learns is released at that time is the Maintenance of Internal Security Act, which allows detention without trial. After the announcement of the Emergency, the Prime Minister's image appears on several posters. Like every great leader, she makes great promises to the people, speaking to them of improvement in housing, the creation of new schools and hospitals and of birth control and the elimination of poverty.³⁷ These promises sound very appealing to the people, but gradually it becomes clear that it is mainly the poor who suffer from the measures and programmes she introduced: An example of this is the 'Slum Clearance Program' whose aim is to make the city more beautiful and that involves the destruction of old shacks. At the same time it means however that many poor people lose their homes: The beggars are made to work hard outside the city and receive severe punishments.³⁸ Many pavement dwellers and beggars are also hurt by the policemen, the latter who cause accidents for them. Om and Ishvar are taken to this irrigation project as well although it is for

³⁰ Mistry. *A Fine Balance*: 301.

³¹ *Ibid*: 263.

³² *Ibid*: 176-77.

³³ *Ibid*: 689.

³⁴ *Ibid*: 508ff.

³⁵ *Ibid*: 524-25.

³⁶ *Ibid*: 694-95.

³⁷ *Ibid*: 327-28.

unemployed people. They become sick as a result of the hard work and receive punishment for that.

Another very destructive program is the 'Family Planning Project' that aims at solving the problem of overpopulation. Indira Gandhi makes the promise of satisfying everyone by its introduction by giving gifts and money to the persons who undergo sterilization. Nusswan approves greatly of the Emergency measures, as he thinks that some people should be eliminated and that compulsory sterilization is necessary. Sterilizations are indeed forced on the people. Nobody speaks of all the sterilizations that go wrong and which are merely called 'accidents', some of them being the result of using half-sterile utensils, or of the corruption that is also part of the Family Planning Scheme.³⁹ The madness of the Family Planning Scheme is for example obvious in the case of a man who is sterilised twice. Om is one of the victims of the scheme: He is operated twice, as the doctors are not satisfied with merely sterilising him; they also have to remove his testicles. Like many vasectomies that go wrong, great suffering ensues for the patient, here for Om, after the operations.⁴⁰ The officers who should deal with such maltreatment turn, however, a blind eye on it. The Family Planning Centre also refuses any responsibility whatsoever for Ishvar's condition that becomes so severe that his legs have to be amputated.

Mistry's critique of the dictatorial rule during the Emergency under Indira Gandhi is sharp and intent on uncovering the violence and discrimination committed under the alleged promises of improving life for everyone. Mistry exposes the injustices that ensue especially regarding the poor and the powerless as a result of the arbitrary creation of laws and orders.

Like Naipaul's travelogue, *The God of Small Things* illuminates the role communism played in India and particularly in Kerala with its communist government.⁴¹ The communist government tried to tackle various inequalities and injustices that have been existent in India for a long time: It protested against the exploitation of workers, demanded a general pay rise and fought for non-discrimination of Untouchables, which should be expressed in not addressing them by their caste names. By being sensitive to the weaknesses of how Indian society organised itself, the communist government with its message of bringing on a better future though the revolution appealed particularly to the disadvantaged and neglected. Unsurprisingly, Velutha, an Untouchable, who is lowest on the social ladder, is an active

³⁸ Ibid: 394.

³⁹ Ibid: 479-80.

⁴⁰ Ibid: 658-59.

⁴¹ Roy, Arundhati, *The God of Small Things*. London: Flamingo, 1997: 68.

member of the party. However, when he gets into trouble after his affair with Ammu he does not get any support from the party whatsoever.⁴² Communism's other face is revealed now that the ideology should be put into practise: The private concerns of individuals do not count anything. It is party allegiance that is important and if individuals act in a way that undermines Party Discipline and Unity, they do not have any chances of receiving help. As George Orwell has so brilliantly shown in his sharp illustrations of the machinery of communism, communism's practise turns a principle that has demands for greater justice for everyone at its heart into something that becomes inhuman: "And there it was again. Another religion turned against itself. Another edifice constructed by the human mind, decimated by human nature."⁴³ At the end it is clear that the individual does not receive any direct support and that even the revolution is unlikely to bring changes for the better to the oppressed, partly because there will always be principles that are set above man and that are treated as inviolable.

Githa Hariharan's novel, *When Dreams Travel*, displays quite a few one-sided ideological standpoints: Whether it is patriarchy or elitism, the individual is never regarded in their complexity but stripped off certain aspects and characteristics inherent in them. Such ideological viewpoints are extreme in nature due to their very restrictive character. As a consequence, many of these ideologies practise strict censorship, as it is shown in the novel where the ruling elite forbid complete freedom of speech. This is a kind of dictatorship that mutilates any piece of art by taking some of its messages out of context, thus destroying its complexity and wholeness. The process of violent dissection and fragmentation of art as a medium of self-expression and thus also of the individual is shown in the literal mutilation of a female body:

Then first they chopped her limbs: one, two, three, four... so that blindness would be perfect and complete. The tongue, that word-dripping treacherous tongue, was pulled out and thrown into a purifying fire. ...So off went One-Eye's head.⁴⁴

The ensuing silence of this woman shows the subjection of most people living under a dictatorship who then just become echoes and mouthpieces of the dictators: "They colonized

⁴² Ibid: 287.

⁴³ Ibid: 287.

⁴⁴ Hariharan, Githa. *When Dreams Travel*. London & Basingstoke: Picador, 1999: 148-49.

her body, her skilfully planned design, to paint their sticky colours and words, their own moral themes.”⁴⁵

The importance of fighting for freedom of speech is emphasised. Here, it is especially the imagination that is highlighted, as it is regarded to be the major contributor to self-development and self-expression. Imagination’s depth that acknowledges the richness of man and reality is described as “a huge circular wonder with a million strands and textures and grand designs.”⁴⁶ This description of the power of stories closely resembles Rushdie’s delineation in his novel *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*. The same can be said for the demand to pull down the barriers between day and night, which can here certainly be interpreted as the division between the conscious and the unconscious realm. As long as there are barriers between these two spheres, the imagination cannot evolve. The latter is a combination of memory and fantasy and consists therefore of many different parts: Stories are composed of “fragments, splinters of a broken mirror”⁴⁷. The Eternal City⁴⁸ is an echo of the Lands of Eternal Night and Day in Rushdie’s novel. Furthermore, the violent dictatorship that has to be fought is mentioned to be the one of the Shah of Iran⁴⁹, which caused the announcement of the fatwa in Rushdie’s case.

Frequently the narrated stories take on a dreamlike form or are in actual fact dreams. Dreams as an especially powerful form of the imagination’s expression are shown to be of particular importance, as reason’s censorship can here be completely undermined. We become thus free by crossing borders that are normally erected and held up by others and by ourselves. This enables us to gain a greater insight into ourselves. “... and in the midst of the dreaming comes the knowledge that this is as important as – no, even more important than – life.”⁵⁰

In *The Glass Palace* it is fascism that is presented as an ideology with many dangers: Like colonialism, it also displays a dual way of thinking in terms of superiority and inferiority of races. By not regarding the latter to be of equal value and thus treating them in a superior way, they restrict the individual in their freedom. In the context of the Second World War it is now German Fascism that becomes the focus of attention: While the British colonizers created and expanded their Empire through colonial interventions, the German Nazis and Fascists claimed their territory through their own form of imperialism, an imperialism that

⁴⁵ Ibid: 274.

⁴⁶ Ibid: 243.

⁴⁷ Ibid: 293.

⁴⁸ Ibid: 140-41.

⁴⁹ Ibid: 197.

⁵⁰ Ibid: 106.

Dinu regards as imperialism of the worst order.⁵¹ His hatred of European Fascism as well as of Japanese militarism surpasses even his antipathy to British rule. As a result, he takes political action, helping with the distribution of a magazine against fascism.

Another political form of oppression is the one that occurs, once more, in a dictatorship, which is in this case the dictatorship in Burma, which was set in place in 1962. Under this dictatorship the golden Burma becomes synonymous with poverty, tyranny and misgovernment.⁵² The new dictators practise censorship so that hardly anything can be published any longer. Dinu recognises the danger that lies in the process of politics completely taking over and invading everything. In contrast to this, his work place, a photo studio called 'The Glass Palace', becomes a location where the autonomy of speech and behaviour is practised and celebrated.⁵³ The name expresses that within all the tyranny and control one can and should still create a place of freedom, tolerance, learning and respect and that it is worth maintaining such a space. It is this plea and belief that Hariharan has expressed earlier in a different, but equally symbolic, way.

Nationalism in India was extremely strong before Independence when it could be seen as a necessary act of self-determination to express one's own identity.

Other ideologies, such as those that were implemented by dictators were usually more destructive and harmful and thus caused a lot of misery and suffering. Indira Gandhi's rule was an example of this: By introducing cruel measures on the homeless and the poor she merely widened the gulf between the powerless and the powerful, but did not contribute to the creation of more justice. In the context of a dictatorship, censorship is also mentioned as a practise that has held numerous people in oppression and subjugation by denying them one of their most essential rights, that of freedom of speech.

The spread of communism in parts of India at one time was another attempt at establishing more social justice, which was always undermined by the existing caste system. In actual practice, the ideology remained deficient in reaching this goal. There was never any agreement between the different factions and there was still power abuse that reflected some form of social hierarchy.

In later novels the emphasis shifts more towards more positive and constructive ways of thinking and acting, which involve a greater openness and the exchange of views, pointing out

⁵¹ Ghosh. *The Glass Palace*: 293.

⁵² Ibid: 486.

⁵³ Ibid: 508ff.

how they overcome radical politics and can bring about instead a person's inner growth and maturity. More hope is therefore evoked in recent works to be able to come to terms with radical politics.

II.3.3. Gender and sexuality

Although the concepts of gender and sex have become particularly important over the last few decades in gender and feminist studies, they have indeed a long history in the West, the latter which shows distinct changes in people's understanding of these concepts in respect to a person's sexuality.¹ These changes included those of the belief in a one-sex model to those in a two-sex model, which went hand in hand with the conviction of the existence of a binary scheme of gender.² Ideas of performative aspects of gender prevalent in the eighteenth century also gave way to conceptions of natural gender differences in the nineteenth century. Recently biological explanations of people's social behaviour have become hugely popular, as they often come up with simplistic explanations of men's and women's behaviour.³ Such early socio-biological theories contained the danger of naturalising certain behaviours, the latter being normally those that were considered desirable and which people believed should be promoted.

Theorists who rejected the predominant influence of hormones and genes claimed quite convincingly that social and cultural influences had a greater impact on human sexuality and gender identity.⁴ The focus then shifted to how aspects of culture and society, such as the rules that have to be observed, become internalised into persons' thinking and thus influence the way they act and feel. Anthropology in the 1920s and 1930s was the first discipline that challenged the idea of gender differences as being a product of biology, and sociology and psychology followed suit: A particular interest in gender roles arose from the wish to understand the performative differences in the way men and women act. Gender roles became to be regarded as the ways that men are socially recognised as men and women as women. This role acquisition takes place through a process of internalisation, which can be seen as the process of how a person develops their gendered identity. The views various schools have taken on these gender roles were of a very different nature: Structural functionalism, which has been put forward by Talcott Parsons and can be defined as the process of the formation of social organization, adopts a consensus view of gender, which regards the different gender

¹ Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality*. 1984. Trans. Robert Hurley. 3 vols. London: Penguin Books, 1990.

² Allen, Emily and Felluga, Dino. "General Introduction to Theories of Gender and Sex." *Introductory Guide to Critical Theory*. 25 November 2003.

<http://www.sla.purdue.edu/academic/engl/theory/genderandsex/modules/intromainframe.html>: 4.

³ Stainton Rogers, Wendy & Rex. *The Psychology of Gender and Sexuality*. Buckingham & Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2001: 11.

⁴ Sayers, Janet. *Sexual Contradictions – Psychology, Psychoanalysis, and Feminism*. London and New York: Tavistock Publications, 1986: 11.

roles of men and women as complementary ones.⁵ According to that view the co-operation between men and women is ideal in that it contributes positively to social order and harmony. Other schools such as feminism, however, adopted a conflict view of gender and gender roles and particularly criticise the prevalence of patriarchal power that has oppressed women. Psychology also developed social learning theory⁶, which states that behaviour is learned and not the consequence of one's biological constitution. It points out how people learn by watching the behaviour of others and then by imitating these behavioural patterns. Parents are particularly powerful role models considering how much the child is exposed to their presence and influence during infancy. Rewards and punishments are particularly powerful incentives to behave in certain ways.⁷ Furthermore children tend to imitate to a greater extent same-sex models than those of a different sex, a form of behaviour that is most likely the result of parental influence as well. Children thus learn to link certain kinds of behaviour with maleness or femaleness. In addition, children learn to associate certain activities and tools with one gender or the other. These conceptions eventually led to the introduction of gender schema theory.⁸ This theory reveals the frameworks through which people view the world, pointing out how schemata are the basis for people's identity constructions, as they are the material we use to make interpretations and assumptions about the world around us. They reflect particularly our views on maleness and femaleness in our society. Context is an important factor for activating our gender belief system,⁹ which can be seen in our varying self-descriptions in different contexts.

Rigid and narrowly defined gender schemata give easily rise to gender stereotypes.¹⁰ Gender stereotypes reflect the expectations to a number of very specific characteristics and traits, attitudes and behavioural patterns to be found in men and women. It is particularly in the case of gender stereotypes that we are frequently confronted with bipolar views of gender. These pervasive views enforce the belief in the necessity of adhering to one's alleged gender characteristics. The bipolar conception of gender also means that displaying many masculine characteristics entails a lack of many feminine ones. For gender stereotypes biological sex plays a vital role regarding the 'natural' behaviour one could expect from individuals.

⁵ Parsons, Talcott. "Family Structure and the Socialization of the Child." Sex Differences: Cultural & Developmental Dimensions. ed. Lee, Patrick C. & Sussman Stewart, Robert. United States of America: Urizen Books, 1976: 204-14.

⁶ Sayers. Sexual Contradictions ... Feminism : 23ff.

⁷ Bandura, Albert & Walters, Richard H. "Theories of Identification and Exposure to Multiple Models." Sex Differences... Dimensions. ed. Lee & Sussman Stewart: 424-31.

⁸ Rogers. The Psychology of Gender and Sexuality: 49.

⁹ Smith, Cynthia J. and Noll, Jane A. and Becker Bryant, Judith. "The effect of social context on gender self-concept." Sex Roles: A Journal of Research. March, 1999. 25 November 2003.

http://www.findarticles.com/cf_dls/m2294/5-6_40/55082335/p1/article.jhtml: 1-2, 5-7.

It seems to be a conclusive point to say that gender differences can hardly be simply bipolar when one observes the multiple dimensions of gender and gender difference.

There soon emerged numerous attempts at establishing a link between biological and sociological theories, which have become particularly characteristic of psychoanalysis as undertaken by Sigmund Freud¹¹ and Melanie Klein¹² and of cognitive-developmental schools of thought¹³. These interactive theories should be regarded with scepticism though, as it is extremely difficult to determine what factors of our gender identity are biological and which ones are social in the widest sense. Interaction between individuals and their environment is a highly complex, ongoing process and cannot be explained in a finite, exhaustive way.

One-sided or misogynous theories on gender identity and sexuality have experienced their greatest challenges by feminist and postmodern views, which often coincided or complemented each other. Two waves of feminism are prominent in the twentieth century: First wave feminism occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century and can be characterised by women's concern with their material conditions.¹⁴ It was and is a process to gain equal treatment for women regarding laws as well as citizenship, workplace and welfare rights. Second-wave feminism in the 1960s was more concerned with interpersonal politics, recognising that it was now the notions of sexuality and reproduction that had to be tackled.¹⁵ The movement from first-wave to second-wave feminism is also a shift that emphasises the similarity of women and men to concentrate on the differences between them. It was also this second movement of feminism that started the debates, which have been ongoing since then, if phallogocentrism with its emphasis on masculine sexual agency as well as heterosexuality have been made obligatory due to social pressure. The issue of power in sexual relations has therefore moved into the centre. Feminists during the 1960s and the 1970s also pointed out the exploitation of women on a psychological level. Furthermore, Judith Butler conceived gender as performative, as the creation of meaning is a context-dependent act: "As a shifting and contextual phenomenon, gender does not denote a substantive being,

¹⁰ Rogers. The Psychology of Gender and Sexuality: 50-51.

¹¹ Freud, Sigmund. "Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes." Sex Differences... Dimensions. ed. Lee and Sussman Stewart: 49-53.

¹² Klein, Melanie. "Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict." Sex Differences... Dimensions. ed. Lee and Sussman Stewart: 79-86.

¹³ Kohlberg, Lawrence & Zigler, Edward. "Physiological Development, Cognitive Development, and Socialization Antecedents of Children's Sex-Role Attitudes." Sex Differences... Dimensions. Lee and Sussman Stewart: 435-44.

¹⁴ Rogers. The Psychology of Gender and Sexuality: 128.

¹⁵ Greer, Germaine. The Female Eunuch. 1970. London: Flamingo, 1999: 336.

but a relative point of convergence among culturally and historically specific sets of relations.”¹⁶

Very often the language that refers to gender excludes or diminishes women in our society by marking them as merely maternal beings, pointing out women’s allegedly innate disposition towards child bearing and mothering. In many instances this has led to the identification of women with the procreative function, which is an extremely reductive view on women.¹⁷

These are all attempts to rob women of their autonomy as thinking and acting subjects. At the same time gender is used as a unifying principle that sets one sex as an opposite against the other sex: While men are expected to get sexual pleasure and experience, a woman’s own sexual pleasure together with her genitalia, which are hardly ever mentioned in a serious manner¹⁸, remain at best secondary. In addition, a woman is, in consistence with the imposition of a moral double standard regarding sexuality, judged extremely harshly if she behaves in a licentious way, whereas a man is not.¹⁹ The misery of women who are constantly pressurised to neglect their own needs has for a long time not been observed, but it is partly reflected in the high number of women suffering from mental health problems.²⁰

Underlying such a dual gender conception is an oppositional sexuality in which boundaries are very clear-cut. This view was adopted in order to conceive and then justify a person as having a coherent identity without sexual ambiguities.²¹ Feminists protested against such an artificial view, which entailed the oppression of homosexuality, commenting that this oppression was the result of a naturalised view of sexuality, which cannot – as my historical sketch of the conception of sexuality at the beginning of this chapter shows - be upheld. In fact, the belief in persons’ original heterosexuality refers to no more than the idea of the natural and the original, which could thus in postmodern fashion be seen as the simulacrum. Judith Butler challenged this belief in original heterosexuality²², showing how by limiting the forms and expressions of sexuality to heterosexual encounters, power strategies are deployed, which are made to serve particular intentions, such as supporting processes of reproduction. Unsurprisingly one effect of such power strategies was the pathologicalisation of homosexuality and other forms of sexuality that deviated from the heterosexual matrix. This act resulted in the establishment of a taboo with an underlying moral guideline.

¹⁶ Butler, Judith. Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity. New York & London: Routledge, 1990: 10.

¹⁷ Greer. The Female Eunuch.: 109-10, 262-63.

¹⁸ Greer, Germaine. the whole woman. London: Doubleday, 1999: 36.

¹⁹ Sayers. Sexual Contradictions... Feminism: 153.

²⁰ Greer. The Female Eunuch.: 107ff.

²¹ Butler. Gender Trouble ... Identity: 134-35.

²² Ibid: 59.

Many feminists came up with and defended the idea of androgyny, which postulates the existence of male and female characteristics in a person. The concept of androgyny thus broke with those theories that regarded femininity and masculinity as incompatible within one person. The diversity of a person's characteristics as well as that of culture can according to feminists defending the idea of androgyny not be represented in strictly heterosexual accounts: "The binary regulation of sexuality suppresses the subversive multiplicity of a sexuality that disrupts heterosexual, reproductive, and medicojuridical hegemonies."²³ Theorists emphasised also the similarities between the sexes as well as the differences within each sex. Androgyny therefore made new possibilities of describing oneself and one's behaviour possible. The claim that androgynous people tend to be psychologically more stable and healthier²⁴ seems probable, as individuals are here given the chance to reveal and develop more aspects of themselves and are not trapped within expectations they can never wholly fulfil. It seems to me a step forward that the concept has been adopted into mainstream psychology in the 1970s.

Furthermore, not only should sexuality and gender be seen as performative, unstable categories, but sex as well cannot completely be regarded as mere nature without any meaning ascriptions. Judith Butler has pointed out how sex only really means something or gains any significance at all by our discourse of gender. Without this discourse and its underlying assumptions sex would be inaccessible to us. Along these lines, Mila Amurrio described gender as being "entirely engaged in the meaning creation process of sex and sexuality."²⁵ Biological descriptions regarding sex are therefore moulded by cultural assumptions and are thus not, as we are so often made to believe, neutral in character. It becomes clear that it is not sex that restricts gender and Butler deducts from this the possibility of the existence of more than merely two genders. She thus calls for the introduction of new categories of gender.

Having identified the power strategies at work regarding gender and sexuality, it is an important task to show resistance to them by methods such as cross-dressing, which undermine one-sided and discriminating naturalised assumptions and offer other ways of regarding the interplay of sex, sexual orientation and gender behaviour.²⁶ Parody, as one of the more important means of showing resistance to the established discourse on sexuality, points out the absurdity of the notion of an original – be it gender, sex or sexuality – and shows instead how this notion is merely an imitation without a source. Consequently such

²³ Butler. *Gender Trouble ... Identity*: 19.

²⁴ Sayers. *Sexual Contradictions ... Feminism* : 29.

²⁵ Amurrio, Mila. "Reflections on the Concept of Gender." *The Basque Case: Readings in Language, Culture, Identity and Politics*. 25 November 2003 <http://ibs.lgu.ac.uk/forum/iamur.htm>: 4-5.

²⁶ Butler. *Gender Trouble ... Identity*: 137-38.

naturalised notions can be described as being politically vague and dissatisfactory. Most importantly, the fact that the individual can in fact make a difference by showing resistance, stresses that despite the formative influences of culture and discourse on a person's gender identity, agency is still possible and of great importance to gender development. Although the individual is exposed to aspects that are bound to leave a mark on them, they are not fully determined by it and thus retain some autonomy they can and should make use of in order to fight gender discrimination and in this way claim their rights. This appeal to become a more effective social agent is particularly intended to reach women²⁷ and any members of society who face prejudice, hostility and rejection due to their sexual orientation or their gender behaviour.

In the context of India there is particularly the issue of dowry that plays a significant role in respect to gender relations. Although a dowry, which was given as a gift by the bride's family to the husband's family, was regarded as a daughter's compensation for not inheriting any property due to the nature of Indian inheritance laws, in actual fact the married daughter most of the time did not have much control over her dowry.²⁸ Her husband and her in-laws took care of it and thus treated it for what it genuinely was, namely a set-up for connections of a socio-economic nature, which was precious to the bride's family. As these beneficial connections, which mainly include a husband's and his family's rank and caste, education and financial standing, could often not be thanked for that easily by making gifts of similar value to the in-laws in return, a dowry was considered as an appropriate way of creating a balance in benefits among the two families.

It is certainly a great injustice to the daughter that the vicarious inheritance her family makes her believe she receives at her wedding is linked to marriage, which means that she – in contrast to the sons in the family - does not receive any valuable goods in case she does not marry.²⁹ Furthermore, a daughter is not expected to stay in the house of her parents for a long time. Often as soon as she reaches puberty she is supposed to marry, and the choice of husband is, due to the socio-economic nature of marriage in India, mainly still one that lies in the hands of the parents. A daughter thus faces the anxiety of having to leave home early and having to care for a husband and keep a household before she has even reached adulthood. These are burdens on a young woman that are difficult to deal with. Even worse, her family

²⁷ Greer. *The Female Eunuch*: 370-71.

²⁸ „Indian marriages & Anti-dowry movement in India.“ 15 March 2004.
http://www.indianchild.com/indian_marriages.htm: 1.

²⁹ Dalmia, Sonia. „Examining the Role of Dowries in India.“ 15 March 2004.
http://www.iaes.org/conferences/past/philadelphia_52/prelim_program/j00-1/dalmia.htm: 1.

often knows that they sign a death warrant for their daughter: The in-laws regularly continue to demand money or other monetary favours after the wedding is over and anti-dowry laws are easily ignored. Poorer families have to stop paying the in-laws at a certain stage, normally after they have become completely destitute or bankrupt, knowing that a so-called dowry accident will almost certainly ensue their refusal of payment.³⁰ The daughter's husband and in-laws kill her in a way that it looks like a kitchen-accident, which is by setting fire to her clothes. As a result her husband has the possibility to marry again and thus gain another dowry, preferably from a family who is better off than his first wife's family.

This is obviously a system that commits enormous violence against women whose chances of successful resistance against these circumstances are very small.

It should be seen as another outrageous injustice against women that widows are in most Indian societies not allowed to remarry after their husbands' deaths, widowers however retain this right unquestioned.³¹ To make it worse for a long time it has been traditional to perform the act of suttee – the widow committing suicide after her husband's death. The widow's life is thus rendered worthless without a male person at her side, which seems both a patriarchal and a very misogynous act. It does not give a woman the autonomy to act as a person in her own right after her husband's death and invokes the impression that all she has ever been was an appendage of her husband, whom she has been entirely dependent on. It is therefore, in my opinion, a misunderstood sense of cultural openness and tolerance when excusing practices as suttee (and also dowry) as cultural, or, in the case of suttee, as religious practices that have to be respected particularly when women are willing to perform them. It is certainly not all the women who are willing to undergo these practices and, even more important, it is a matter of not just discrimination and injustice, but of extreme violence, and such violence can hardly be justified under the cover of customs and rites.

These last two practices will be mentioned in the literary examples I am going to speak about now, and the approaches to gender I have given at the beginning of the subchapter should give a better understanding to the gender aspects dealt with in the following texts.

Raja Rao's novel, *Kanthapura*, explores in depth the roles of women. This can already be seen in the fact that we encounter a female narrator-figure and therefore deal with a female perspective on things. The female narrator tells us that one of the obligations women have to

³⁰ Gnanadason, Aruna. "Dowry (India)". 15 March 2004.
<http://members.tripod.com/Akshar/dowry/DOWRY.HTML>: 1.

³¹ „Indian Marriages & Anti-dowry movement in India.“: 1.

fulfil is an early marriage, a duty that is also mentioned in Anand's *Untouchable*.³² Young girls are normally married off as soon as they come of age – sometimes at the age of twelve.³³ This inevitably means that they lose out on their childhood and already need to perform wives' duties instead of having time to develop and mature during their adolescence. In addition, marriage conventions entail matching up the horoscopes of the possible future partners.³⁴ Another important restriction on women in marriage is that they might have to put up with ugly or very unpleasant husbands, as it really is wealth and status that count in the families who choose the girls' husbands and who do not leave the girls much of a say in this matter.³⁵

Restrictions though are not just imposed on women in respect to marriage. The limitations to which widows have to submit are presented as being equally harsh: Widows are expected to appear in quite a plain fashion and to behave in the most modest manner possible. This should for example be apparent in the way they dress. If these expectations that have become rules are not fulfilled, the women are shunned and are called by a bad name. This is the case with the young widow Ratna who still wears jewellery, has a hairstyle that is considered unfeminine and walks in the streets on her own.³⁶ She however faces the other villagers' hostility and speaks up for herself.

Married women are in general expected to behave in an obedient way towards their husbands or other male relatives and are not supposed to enter into serious conversation.³⁷ This expectation is linked to the general reluctance of the villagers to provide a good education for the girls. The latter are destined for family life and for nothing else and the villagers despise the modern ways in the city where women gradually get access to a similarly good education as men and where the duty to marry at a very early age ceases to be an absolute duty any longer. Women and girls also get a better chance there to get to know members of the other sex themselves without always being pushed towards someone by their parents:

‘What with their modern education and their modern women. Do you know, in the city they already have grown-up girls, fit enough to be mothers of two or three children, going to the Universities? And they talk to this boy and that boy; ... Really, aunt, that is horrible!’³⁸

³² Anand. *Untouchable*: 87.

³³ Rao. *Kanthapura*: 38.

³⁴ *Ibid*: 13.

³⁵ *Ibid*: 116.

³⁶ *Ibid*: 48-49.

³⁷ *Ibid*: 58.

³⁸ *Ibid*: 43.

It is obviously still too early to introduce these reforms in the villages, which would open up career and new lifestyle opportunities to women, the latter thus becoming much more involved as social agents.

However, positive changes occur even in this male-dominated village-life. Towards the end it is also the women who found their own Congress that fights – also physically – for Independence of the country and the withdrawal of the British. They have to encounter many prejudices at the beginning due to assigned gender attributes when the majority of men insist that a woman's place is at home and that it is not feminine to fight,³⁹ but the women show courage when they continue in their fight. In actual fact, when Moorthy is not there any more, it is the young woman Ratna who takes the lead and the others accept that “she is our chief now.”⁴⁰ The women are in the end celebrated elsewhere for their stamina and their loyalty to Gandhi and his principles.⁴¹

Obviously even in Kanthapura and other villages there is a change in gender roles under way because women achieve to make themselves free from observing too many of society's conventions.

R.K. Narayan focuses in his early novel, *The Dark Room*, more specifically on gender relations between married couples in India in the 1930s. While the main focus is on the strictly patriarchal relationship between the protagonists, Savitri and Ramani, he also introduces alternative ways of conducting relationships.

Savitri, who enacts the traditional roles of wife, mother and housewife, does everything her bossy husband Ramani wants her to do. Her obedience and subservience to him⁴² meets with a display of superiority and condescendence on Ramani's part.⁴³ In addition he regards her as a mere passive, sexual object. This orthodox, even misogynous attitude, is also fully embraced by Savitri's friend Janamma, who believes in female submission and in the meek pursuit of wifely duties and even excuses abusive relationships between the sexes.⁴⁴

Savitri's and Ramani's children, who are constantly exposed to such gender stereotypes, imitate their parents as gender role models, which is expressed in their choice of games and activities.

³⁹ Ibid: 149-51.

⁴⁰ Ibid: 225.

⁴¹ Ibid: 253.

⁴² This obedient and subservient attitude of a woman towards men and in particular a husband is also multiply reflected in a later novel, Jhabvala's *The Nature of Passion*, in which many of the women can only identify themselves through their husbands or other male family members and in which their presence is solely related to the sphere of the house.

⁴³ Narayan, R.K. *The Dark Room*. 1938. Chicago: The University Press, 1981: 14.

Savitri makes some attempts to free herself from her restrictive position: at one point she retreats into the so-called dark room in which she stays for a long time without wanting to speak or eat. The dark room symbolises the confined space in which women in her position exist, pointing out their sphere of the house that appears like a prison in that it is suffused with loneliness and dependence. In addition, the dark room also stands for Savitri's (and many other women's) oncoming depression, pointing out her deprivation and the fact that her needs are not met. At a later point she becomes more assertive and instead of letting herself be silenced by her husband, she now speaks up for herself and leaves the house when she is still ignored.⁴⁵ She has become fully conscious of the extreme dependence she lives in at home and attempts to start a new life taking on work with the aim of becoming financially independent.⁴⁶ Savitri's decision shortly after to abandon the post and go home is not a relapse as such. It could have been a new start in the family by establishing different guidelines of how to conduct the marriage. The relapse occurs, however, when Savitri comes home and immediately adopts the role of the servant again⁴⁷ so that her husband, who has started to get concerned about her (although due to his gender-specific upbringing, which involves male toughness and unconcern, he cannot admit to it) and to search for her, now again feels justified in his superior attitude towards and his treatment of her. At the end nothing has changed. Savitri's revolt was a temporary one that passed so that she finds herself now in the same financial and emotional dependencies which she has been in before.

Alternative, more emancipated marriages are those of Savitri's friend Gangu, who pursues various projects she is interested in and also gets an education on her own initiative⁴⁸, and that of her new acquaintance Ponni, who even reverses the power-relationship between the sexes and gives commands to her husband⁴⁹. Although both Gangu and Ponni can be considered as discriminating against and sometimes even abusive to their husbands, they both seem to recognise that power relations between the sexes probably need to be reversed for a while in order to make men aware of their sexist belief structure so that finally gender equality will have a chance to reign. Both women show that equality can be aimed for within a marriage, which counterbalances the impression one easily gets, namely that women in that society could only live an independent and happy life when engaging in this struggle as an unmarried,

⁴⁴ Ibid: 59-60.

⁴⁵ Ibid: 109-14.

⁴⁶ Ibid: 180ff.

⁴⁷ Ibid: 206ff.

⁴⁸ Ibid: 19.

Attempts at female liberation by the means of education and the pursuit of self-chosen leisure activities are also made by the young characters of Kanta and Nimmi in *The Nature of Passion*, but in such a superficial way that they can finally not be regarded as emancipatory.

unattached woman. Their lifestyles give hope and mention the potential for major changes in gender relations over the next decades in Indian society.

Shanta Bai lends another component to this outlook by illustrating how Indian women can gradually enter the world of business: Getting a post in Ramani's office where she meets numerous prejudices, she is nevertheless very self-confident in discussing work regulations and conditions and is not intimidated by the men who are senior to her.⁵⁰ She represents the prototype of the newly emerging career woman in India at the time, which means that she loves her freedom and is unconcerned about the opinion of other people. Family and a classical home life are rejected as bonds that would tie her down and serve as an obstacle to her ambitions. Shanta Bai furthermore displays a very open and free sexuality, which does not conform to social rules. Although this can be seen as progress to women's liberation, she is also very irresponsible and careless when she embarks on an affair with Ramani, who is married and has a family. Interestingly, Ramani does her many favours, as he is attracted to and full of admiration for her unorthodox lifestyle, a lifestyle that he would never permit in his marriage.

The novel illustrates the very beginnings of achieving progress in women's emancipation and liberation both outside but also especially within marriage. It opens up the possibility of women entering more professions as well as the equality in gender relationships at home. However, the fact that Savitri as the main female protagonist has failed at the end to achieve more autonomy, indicates that women such as Gangu, Ponni and Shanta Bai were still exceptions at that time and that usually women's lives rather resembled those of Savitri. Narayan therefore shows that there is still a long way to go to improve a woman's status by getting rid of obsolete gender role expectations.

This rather pessimistic depiction is juxtaposed with a somehow more hopeful outlook on female liberation and independence though in Narayan's novel, *The Guide*. In this novel, which also mentions the pressure on a young woman an arranged marriage can bring on⁵¹, gender relations are also shown in a conflictual and repressive way. Female dependence on men in India of the 1950s is even more thoroughly explored in the young woman's, Rosie's, relationships with men: Giving up her ambitions in traditional dancing for her husband⁵², Rosie cannot find self-fulfilment, and is only temporarily happy in her new relationship with the narrator, Raju, who promotes her in her art before she fully recognises Raju's selfishness

⁴⁹ Narayan. *The Dark Room*: 159, 161.

⁵⁰ Ibid: 73.

⁵¹ Narayan, R. K. . *The Guide*. 1958. London: Penguin Group, 1988: 12f.

⁵² Ibid: 74.

and superiority.⁵³ She succeeds, however, in leaving both men behind in her life and starting anew in the city as an independent woman and a more autonomous character.

In Jhabvala's novel, *Heat and Dust*, the perspectives and experiences of the two women, Olivia and the narrator-figure, are at the centre and show in spite of the time difference many parallels.

The initial situation the two women find themselves in is quite different though: While the narrator takes actively part as a woman in social life in India from the start, Olivia is left on her own in the big house she and Douglas live in, a situation that is typical of the wives of colonial servicemen.⁵⁴ Her feelings of loneliness and of not being understood by her husband are reflected in Lucy's state of emotional deprivation in Scott's novel, *Staying On*, which is another novel that underlines the frequent distance colonial couples experience growing between them during their time in the colony, which is – as *Staying On* shows – often not much diminished by the termination of colonial service. Olivia then starts an affair with the Nawab⁵⁵, which meets on jealousy on his friend's Harry's part, who is clearly in love with the Nawab. Homosexual tendencies as these will be more explicitly dealt with in a later novel, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, by Kureishi, in which the protagonist Karim becomes intimate with a boy he greatly admires. Olivia does not become more autonomous whilst being with the Nawab though, as he behaves in a possessive and chauvinistic manner towards her. Her decision to undergo an abortion⁵⁶ can also not be called an autonomous or emancipated act as it might appear at first, but the result of not seeing any other way to escape the pressure of her society, the latter which would clearly exclude her among other reasons for committing adultery and having an illegitimate child. When it is found that she has undergone an abortion that merely assumed the appearance of a miscarriage, she is, like all the other women who feel driven to commit this act in their despair, condemned and scorned.

This is one instance in which the parallels between the narrator and Olivia become obvious: The narrator also thinks of having an abortion, like Olivia not being sure of who the father of the future child is. Both women are obviously very open and self-confident in their sexuality in the first place. In contrast to Olivia however, the narrator is not under pressure to prevent giving birth to this child, but rather treats this matter in the most careless and selfish manner, as if it was a game. In the last moment she seems to guess that she might regret this rather indifferent attitude towards her pregnancy later on and changes her mind about it. It is

⁵³ Ibid: 194.

⁵⁴ Jhabvala. *Heat and Dust*: 14.

⁵⁵ Ibid: 137.

⁵⁶ Ibid: 166ff.

interesting to see that her abortion would have been performed by using similarly old-fashioned means as were used in Olivia's case, such as those of inserting a twig into the womb and pressing and rubbing the latter. Furthermore the abortion would have been almost ritualistic in nature and would have been performed in seclusion, as there are still many cases at that time when a woman has to be saved from dishonour.⁵⁷

Another parallel in their lives in India is that they both enter into a discussion about the practice of suttee, which was officially outlawed in 1829: Speaking about an incidence where a widow was forced by her relatives to burn herself on the funeral pyre⁵⁸ during Olivia's and Douglas' stay at that place in 1923, Olivia adopts the view of cultural tolerance, considering it presumptuous how most of the Westerners who discuss the event try to impose their views on Indians in respect to this tradition: “ ‘And quite apart from religion, it *is* their culture and who are we to interfere with anyone's culture, especially an ancient one like theirs’ ”⁵⁹. By pleading for tolerance for this cultural practice, Olivia completely ignores the violence that is done to the woman. While Dr Saunders takes the opposite point of view, regarding suttee as savagery and then makes the mistake to generalise on savagery when he claims that it is present everywhere and in everything in India, some of the other people listening try to adopt Olivia's viewpoint, but still see suttee as a very gruesome form of suicide. Olivia goes so far as to say that she considers suttee to be a noble idea and that she would be grateful for such a custom, obviously finding the idea of dying for the person one loves very romantic and appealing. Inder Lal's mother also still thinks of the idea of the suttee to be one that has to be respected and admired and is, similar to Olivia a few decades earlier, even regretful that this practise is not legitimate any longer. The narrator must find it difficult to understand her patriarchal and outdated views: Although Inder Lal's mother understands how difficult the first few years are for a bride in her in-laws' house where she has to cope with her homesickness and has to get used to the new family and the rule of the mother-in-law, she at the same time maintains the rightness of these things. She is also sexist in that she did not want her son to marry a girl who is very educated, believing that this would complicate things and chooses her daughter-in-law rather on account of status and looks (Ritu has a desirable white complexion) than on that of her intelligence. Inder Lal shows also no understanding regarding his wife's needs in the least, not recognising her depression during the early years of their marriage but attributing her low mood to a resistance in her to be sensible and to her low intelligence.⁶⁰ He and his mother

⁵⁷ Ibid: 139.

⁵⁸ The practice of widow burning is also referred to in A. Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* where India is unfavourably compared to Burma in this respect where women enjoy a very high standing.

⁵⁹ Jhabvala. *Heat and Dust*: 58.

⁶⁰ Ibid: 50.

clearly support Ritu's dependency on them and her focus on the house and on her three children, not taking any notice of how unfulfilling such a life is for Ritu and that this seems to be the reason why her mental state rapidly deteriorates.

On the whole the novel presents a rather gloomy picture of gender politics in India, insinuating that no great changes have taken place in that area during the decades before and after Independence. Wives, who are still mainly chosen for their good looks rather than any internal attributes they might possess, are more or less exclusively confined to the sphere of the house and not regarded as autonomous human beings. This latter stance has made it possible for many persons, both men and women, to maintain their belief in suttee, as when there is no real autonomous existence for a woman, then the end of her life has already started with the event of her husband's death.

Anita Desai's novel, *Clear Light of Day*, explores the gender identities of the siblings, Bim, Raja and Tara as well as that of their aunt Mira, concentrating especially on the two sisters. It is particularly through role attribution, which is a characteristic of the novel, that female and male forms of identity are shaped. Gender role assignment occurs here as much from one individual to the other as it does in a self-referential way. The young Raja chooses the ideal of a hero that he wants to pursue,⁶¹ an ideal that is masculine enough to be considered worth striving for. His sister, Bim, always eager not to be outdone in a competition with her brother, chooses the female counterpart to it. By deciding to become a heroine she makes a clear statement about the possibilities that should be open to a woman as well as to a man (that includes self-realization in the outside world) so that she can develop characteristics such as braveness and strength that have in Indian society been mainly regarded as male attributes. From an early age Bim, like her brother, has always been very keen on adventures and in addition soon develops a curiosity about learning,⁶² none of which is regarded as particularly desirable for a girl. Venturing into the outside world is something that is important to her in order to feel free and happy.

Neither Raja's nor Bim's ideals for the future come true though. While Raja chooses to become a businessman, Bim stays behind at home in a much less self-chosen way. When Tara comes for a visit from Washington she finds that she has to revise her image of her sister as being both physically and emotionally as strong as a rock and is very moved when she gets glimpses of Bim's weaknesses and her vulnerability.⁶³

⁶¹ Desai, Anita. *Clear Light of Day*. 1980. London: Vintage, 2001: 55.

⁶² Ibid: 123.

⁶³ Ibid: 148.

It is worth pointing out though that Bim has not lead an adult life that is in complete contradiction with everything she believes in: Despite the difficult circumstances she has followed her academic ambitions and got a degree before she starts teaching and obviously enjoys this vocation very much. Furthermore, although Bim's care for Baba restricts her in some ways, she is at the same time happy about being with him and being able to care for him, as family together with the house in which she is deeply rooted, have always meant a lot to her. Bim, in spite of seeming to lead a very hopeless life at first glance, has achieved to realise some of her ambitions and has also held on to values, such as family life.

There is some more progression in her life at the end when she finally goes out to some neighbours' party and thus engages more with the world outside again, which has been of great significance to her in the past. Her greater openness to the world is retrieved again, and her frustration is bound to decrease.

Even Baba, who cannot do very much on his own, develops to a certain extent once Bim changes in that he engages more with other people, especially with children, when they are around in the house or he and Bim are at the party. He radiates more contentment and joy on these occasions when he is taken out of his secluded world in which he listens to records for long stretches of time without seeming to be aware of any company around him.

Tara has also developed as a character although not enough to do without any relationships in which she takes on the inferior role. Always having had a rather subordinate role as a child, both at school and also among her older siblings, Tara tries to escape the responsibilities of everyday life by choosing in contrast to her sister Bim the rather traditional life of a young married woman, a status society highly approves of. Always having been afraid of the world, other human beings and most of all of having to make important decisions on her own, she is instinctively drawn towards marriage and to rearing a family, a communion that should give her more stability. She is the only one of the family whose childhood dream, respecting the main role she wants to adopt later on in life, comes true, as she becomes a mother.⁶⁴

In a way Tara gets the stability she is so badly in need of in her family and also gains more self-confidence and courage, which is obvious both in her more active lifestyle as well as in the way she does now not back down any more when talking to Bim, but makes her own views clear to her. Like Tara about her, Bim also has to revise the image she has kept of Tara in her mind and realises that people in fact change and that they can do so for the better and

⁶⁴ Ibid: 112.

not only for the worse,⁶⁵ the latter which she has assumed to be usually the case due to the losses she has suffered at home.

The process to reach the stage that Tara has reached, however, is one that can hardly be approved of: Her husband, Bakul, patronises her and treats her in the most condescending manner in order to turn Tara into a stronger woman. He never stops to regard her as a mere child and seems to see her mainly as a pretty ornament, but without being proud of her or admiring her in the least as a person, as she will always remain weaker than she should be in his opinion.⁶⁶ Although Tara has developed, she needs to assert herself more if she wants to achieve a relationship that is based on equality.

The one person who could not develop and fulfil at least some of her potential is their aunt Mira. Like Bim, she is bound to the house and her position there is the one of a caretaker. Becoming a widow at twelve before her marriage can even be consummated, she brings up the children and is always there for them, giving each of them what they need, particularly solidity, support and comfort.⁶⁷ In contrast to Bim, however, she does not pursue a life outside the house so that she has nothing to counterbalance her grief for all the deaths that occur in the family. She seems to be like the epitome of female solicitude and care, a gender role her society so highly approves of: Mira lives entirely for other people and completely neglects her own needs. This fact together with all the worries she has to deal with in the house finally lead her into alcoholism⁶⁸ and then into madness.⁶⁹ Both phenomena can be seen as an escape from the unhealthy, restrictive and very static atmosphere of the house in which she finds no space to blossom. Her sorrow, which nobody in the house has paid much attention to, is a burden that she cannot take off her shoulders and that finally crushes her.

The novel highlights the tendency of women – as a result of the way they have been brought up - to lead lives that involve a lot of self-sacrifice and more often than not lives that are confined to the sphere of home. The example of Mira shows what harmful consequences this can have and that there is an urgent need to create a balance to the sphere of home, such as pursuing an interest and / or a profession of one's choice, which is what Bim does, and to entertain fulfilling relationships outside the home place. Men like Raja or Bakul on their part do not show such extreme concern for the family, which can again be attributed to the very different ideal of male gender identity that is still very much in place in the second half of the

⁶⁵ Ibid: 10.

⁶⁶ Ibid: 17-18.

⁶⁷ Ibid: 112.

⁶⁸ Ibid: 88-89.

⁶⁹ Ibid: 96.

twentieth century, leaving them far more space to think of themselves and encouraging them to choose the lifestyles that suit them most.

More hope and a stronger emphasis on successful female emancipation are expressed in Rukhsana Ahmad's novel, *The Hope Chest*, which deals with various experiences of female alienation in Pakistani as well as in - to a much lesser extent - British society.

The young girl, Reshma, grows up without having had a childhood at all: From a very young age, she, as the oldest child in the family, is expected to run a great part of the household and to look after the younger children in the way her mother does.⁷⁰ At the age of thirteen she is married off to a much older man without having a say in this decision. Her parents, who are destitute and cannot afford having so many children in the house any longer, receive money for her from the bridegroom's family and thus sell their daughter to strangers. Reshma's initial curious anticipation to married life gives way to harsh disillusionment when her husband forces himself upon her in the most violent and brutal manner, thinking merely of satisfying his own arousal.⁷¹ Reshma's wishes and feelings are negligible to him, especially because he is keen on not breaking with the custom of deflowering the bride during the night after the wedding. This is the start of a long process of humiliations Reshma has to suffer by both her husband and his family, which expects obedience and dutiful behaviour from Reshma. Significantly she claims that Afsar Khan is a good husband, 'good' meaning nothing else but the absence of beatings in her marriage.⁷² This claim becomes understandable when we take into account what is thematised in *A Fine Balance*, which is that quite a few married women are made to wear black burkhas and are physically abused. Throwing acid into the women's faces is one form such violence can take⁷³, and these brutal outbursts are more often than not triggered by trifles such as by a burnt meal or a dowry quarrel. Bride burning and dowry deaths are certainly no unknown occurrences.

Reshma, however, soon acknowledges the huge efforts numerous pregnancies demand from the body and also the intense care of the children and the difficult handling of the financial situation. Not being allowed to obtain and use contraceptives, she chooses the only way that is open to a young Pakistani woman in her situation, namely to take her own initiative by having an abortion and then a sterilization.⁷⁴ This action has severe consequences when she reveals to her husband what she has done: Afsar Khan, assuming that her course of action could only be

⁷⁰ Ahmad, Rukhsana. *The Hope Chest*. London: Virago Press, 1996: 54.

⁷¹ Ibid: 93-95.

⁷² Ibid: 136.

⁷³ Mistry. *A Fine Balance*: 288.

⁷⁴ Ahmad. *The Hope Chest*: 209-10.

the result of an adulterous affair or relationship Reshma has let herself into, evicts her from the house, sends her back to her parents and keeps their children.⁷⁵ At home, Reshma becomes the stain on her family's honour, becomes increasingly desperate but finally chooses a constructive path: her decision to learn midwifery and work at a hospital is completely her own. At the end, Reshma has learned how to listen to her own needs and wishes and starts an independent life that is not characterised by the same level of discrimination against her any longer.

Similarly Rani, the sister of Reshma's best friend Shehzadi, also experiences the disadvantaged position of being a female person in Pakistan. She becomes aware of how little a girl counts in her society when Reshma's parents let their youngest daughter Munni die, nearly burying her alive.⁷⁶ This incident is decisive in bringing on Rani's anorexia. At the bottom of her illness lies the knowledge of having failed to meet her mother's expectations towards her, the latter having been strongly formed by her mother's, Shahana's, own upbringing and by social conventions: Her mother has always wanted her and her sister to be fairer and more beautiful and puts pressure on Rani by worrying about her daughter's marriage prospects. Her hopes for her daughter, which are often juxtaposed with strong doubts, are symbolised in the chest that keeps her daughter's dowry. Shahana's opinion mirrors the views upheld in society, that a woman's life can only be a fulfilled one within a traditional marriage that leads to the foundation of a family.⁷⁷ Rani is thus only considered by her in terms of how well she might be able to fulfil these functions but not recognised as an individual with specific talents and abilities. Rani does therefore not feel recognised by her mother and seeing how few opportunities girls and women are given to develop their selves, she develops a feeling of alienation that is shown for the first time in her out-of-body experience during an operation where her soul seems to have escaped and floats above her body.⁷⁸ It is only when she gets acquainted with Ruth, whom she meets in the hospital in London where she is treated, that Rani feels finally understood as a person and gradually recuperates, not thinking of the stigma that is attached to mental illness in Pakistan. After her marriage she has to face her husband's critical attitude towards her and the criticism she gets, especially from her mother, when she does not conceive.⁷⁹ After another spell of illness and a stay in London where she meets her friend Ruth, she becomes more aware of her unhappiness in her marriage. The result is that she refuses fertility treatment, asks her husband

⁷⁵ Ibid: 270.

⁷⁶ Ibid: 14-15.

⁷⁷ Ibid: 246.

⁷⁸ Ibid: 3.

⁷⁹ Ibid: 258.

for a divorce, openly displays her indifference towards him and starts with more determination to pursue her own artistic interests.⁸⁰ The painting she produces at the end is a composite image and can be regarded as a symbol that illustrates how she has matured and integrated the various different aspects of her self. Out-of-body experiences, which signalled her inner disintegration, do not occur any longer.

Ruth, even though not burdened by the high expectations towards young women in Pakistani society, undergoes also experiences of alienation from the outside world: Being rejected by her mother,⁸¹ Ruth starts to live in an alternative reality that sometimes replaces actual reality and sometimes gets so mixed up with it that Ruth cannot distinguish between the two any more. Her alienation is again caused by a lack of understanding of her person and her needs. Never having had a real mother figure, she is deprived of affection that is vital to a healthy self-development. She suffers from a lack that she can only insufficiently compensate by her fantasies and by the restoration work she does. Both Rani and her later partner Tony achieve to make her feel real and part of a world they all share and have thus a healing influence on Ruth. However, her inner wound is only badly healed, which is obvious in the stifling, over-indulgent relationship she has to her daughter Faith.⁸² It is obvious how much she wants to enjoy now what she has never had before, namely a loving mother-daughter relationship. Although her behaviour finally destroys her relationship with Tony and even though she has not really been able to overcome the traumatic relationship with her mother, she has not stopped fighting for a more integrated life she can be happy with, which is symbolised in her creation of the treasure chest that she gives Rani and which is really a 'hope chest'.⁸³

Rukhsana Ahmad has shown how the conventions in (Pakistani) society together with the more specific expectations towards women strongly discriminate against the latter. The novel however also illustrates how such discriminations can be dealt with and even be rejected so that women can live richer and more autonomous lives.

The main female characters in the novel *The God of Small Things* all have to face various kinds of restrictions to their lives, too. While the older generation of women such as Baby Kochamma and Mammachi shows no attempt yet to undermine gender discrimination but rather support it such as in the example of Mammachi's acceptance of her husband's violent

⁸⁰ Ibid: 297-304.

⁸¹ Ibid: 26-27.

⁸² Ibid: 170ff.

⁸³ Ibid: 113.

behaviour towards her⁸⁴, the younger generations of women try to lead more emancipated lives, which are in tune with their own inclinations. Not only does Ammu follow her own interests, she also has the courage to leave her husband, an alcoholic, when he starts beating her and the children.⁸⁵ She also takes a lover, which is against “the Love Laws”⁸⁶ insofar as it breaches social conventions. In addition, she works hard, starts a career in education and takes up a UN post thus fighting for her independence. However, these attempts at emancipation can only be successful to a certain degree due to the social rules that are always present: Ammu is for example discriminated against in business matters: even though she and Chacko both work in Mammachi’s factory, it is the man, Chacko, due to being Mammachi’s son, who has a claim on the property.⁸⁷ Ammu both perceives and criticises the chauvinism in this society, which is shown in the fact that she does not have a choice after her divorce but to either take on her husband’s or her father’s name. Furthermore, Ammu encounters the double standard used towards men and women as regards sexuality insofar as her mother cannot accept Ammu’s divorce but is lenient with her son Chacko when he sleeps with various women all the time.⁸⁸ While she labels these women as whores, the man is excused, such as Ammu cannot get any approval from her mother. At the end Ammu dies alone and does not even get a church burial.

The twins, Estha and Rahel, undermine their community’s gender expectations as well. Thinking of each other as of being one person, they suffer a trauma when they are forcefully separated during their childhood. As a result, they have clearly lost parts of themselves and pursue interests that would have been more likely to be developed by a member of the other sex: While Estha becomes interested in household affairs after college,⁸⁹ Rahel is not prepared to observe the rules in colleges as to how a girl should behave. They thus compensate for the presence of the other twin by developing parts of themselves, which they might normally not have acknowledged.

Estha’s loss of his sister is dealt with by his turn towards animals, trying to find some affection there. Rahel’s way of dealing with loss is marriage – a marriage, however, she soon finds herself to be unhappy in. Like her mother, Rahel has the courage to go through with a

⁸⁴ Roy. *The God of Small Things*: 47-48.

⁸⁵ Ibid: 42.

⁸⁶ Ibid: 33.

⁸⁷ Ibid: 159.

⁸⁸ Ibid: 169.

This double standard is also mentioned in Hariharan’s novel *When Dreams Travel*, in which the sultan enjoys complete sexual freedom and is entertained in the harem, while a woman is supposed to be chaste and is not expected to express any sexual pleasure whatsoever (Hariharan: *When Dreams Travel*: 15).

⁸⁹ Roy. *The God of Small Things*: 11.

divorce, earning her own money with small jobs, some of them being risky jobs to do for a woman. She feels that she is generally still treated in a suspicious way, as she is a divorcee. When Estha is re-returned, he and Rahel, both never having enjoyed their sexuality, also share a physical union thus breaking society's strongest taboo – that of incest. It is a union both of them can be comfortable with and their desires, having been unfulfilled for so long, now erupt in a completely uncontrolled manner.⁹⁰

The generational divide in this novel in respect to attitudes towards women's emancipation also surfaces in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*. In contrast to the latter novel though does Roy in *The God of Small Things* suggest that it seems to be too early for the women of later generations to actually finally achieve the happy self-determined lives they fight for.

Attempted emancipation processes are revealed to meet on even more obstacles for the women described in *The Impressionist*. They play subordinate roles, which tie in with the positions women had in colonial times that are depicted in the novel. It is yet another example of how on the whole female sexuality among Indians had to conform to expectations such as passivity and shyness and that women could only have sexual intercourse after marriage if they did not want to be tainted with shame and scorned by society as a consequence. The latter happens to Amrita, the protagonist's mother, who has a wild, passionate sexual encounter with an Englishman.⁹¹ Being married off soon after so that her family can forget the shame Amrita has brought onto herself as well as onto their name, she undermines expectations of how a young bride should behave by her sexual eagerness and the fact that she and not her husband is the one who is sexually in charge. On top of that Amrita has also undermined her family's expectations towards her, of being – as they consider it appropriate for a girl and young woman - of a gentle and obedient nature. Instead, Amrita has always been an unruly and difficult girl who had to suffer beatings as a consequence of her 'deviant' gender behaviour.

Similarly, colonial British women are also expected to lead lives in the shadow of their husbands. This is what Elspeth Mac Farlane, the missionary's wife, does for a long time, following her husband's "lead in every thought and action, mechanically running the household according to his instructions."⁹² However, Elspeth achieves greater independence when she starts running the Mission on her own initiative after her husband's efforts have not proven successful. She also soon embraces a different kind of spirituality than her husband

⁹⁰ Ibid: 328.

⁹¹ Kunzru. *The Impressionist*: 14-16.

⁹² Ibid: 217.

does and mixes with the natives and learns their language and about their customs against her husband's wishes. She has thus become a more autonomous person and has shown her husband that the patriarchal order he and many other British colonials have come to regard as natural is unacceptable to her.

The most striking exploration of the performative aspects of gender identities in this novel, however, is the one that involves transgression. It occurs first when Pran is dressed up as a female person during his short stay in the brothel.⁹³ This kind of cross-dressing is a post-colonial identity that breaks with the clear dualities of male and female. His appearance as an effeminate boy in front of the Major also evokes identities such as transvestism, which demand a broader gender concept than the conventionally acknowledged one. The fact that Pran's cross-dressing occurs against his will, can also be interpreted as society not being ready yet to embrace such new transgressive identities that open up new possibilities of living. Homosexuality and possibly bisexual identity in the example of the Major Privett-Clampe⁹⁴ are also shown as forms of sexuality that challenge our mainstream conception of a natural heterosexual identity, conjuring up the concept of androgyny with its ambiguities.

Individual female struggles for freedom are also of major importance in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Vine of Desire* and in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*, the latter to which I will allude by showing some similarities to the former novel. *The Vine of Desire* concerns itself with the situation of marriage and with the needs and desires that arise in persons in this context: Sudha, who we are told has always been rather weak and on the search for protection, cannot stand the increasing pressures in her traditional marriage that are mainly a result of her mother-in-law's interferences that go as far as to urge Sudha to abort her child once she knows that Sudha will give birth to a daughter.⁹⁵ Disappointed in her marriage in which she has tried to play the role of the perfect wife but has in turn not felt that her husband fulfils his duty towards her, she has the courage to leave in spite of the bad reputation she knows she will get as a result of this. There is a close parallel here to Hasina in *Brick Lane*, who also leaves her husband - in her case because her husband has beaten her.⁹⁶ Sudha indeed learns that she is a nothing as a divorcee in India, losing all her money at the divorce due to her husband's claim that she has deserted him. She makes another big step in terms of self-development when she decides to keep her child and to go on the long journey to America on

⁹³ Ibid: 66.

⁹⁴ Ibid: 87.

⁹⁵ Divakaruni, Chitra Banerjee. *The Vine of Desire*. 2002. London: Abacus, 2003: 16.

⁹⁶ Ali, Monica. *Brick Lane*. London: Doubleday (Transworld), 2003: 46-47.

her own to see her cousin, Anju, and Anju's husband Sunil. Meeting another Indian-born emancipated woman there,⁹⁷ Sudha learns new ways of experimenting with her femininity, such as when she flirts with her new acquaintance Lalit. Feeling lonely in the flat, she sleeps with Sunil and is prepared to take the consequences and moves out. Not only does she now become financially independent by earning her own money, which is another parallel to Hasina's emancipation process in *Brick Lane*, she also feels the need to make up in a way for having wronged her cousin so much by providing all the care she can give for an old man, thus making herself useful.⁹⁸ Ali's character, Hasina, similarly, works in a charity that offers support of innocent female HIV sufferers.⁹⁹ Sudha's strength and independence are now so great that she feels strong enough not to lean on another individual as a crutch, rejecting both Sunil and Ashok, the latter that has been an admirer of hers for a long time.

Anju, who has always had a great longing for freedom, tries nevertheless to play the role of obedient and polite wife. In a story to her niece Dayita it becomes clear however that she knows about her own inner imprisonment as well as about those of many other young women in Indian society or those who come from this background.¹⁰⁰ Not being happy about staying at home all the time, particularly after her miscarriage that caused her to sink into depression, she starts after a while to follow her own interests, taking up some studies in college. The latter show her her own potential as a creative human being: In her creative writing classes she deals with her own feelings, with the events she has witnessed and her reflections about them so that she can make sense of her life. She thus flourishes in her new hobby and even joins a writers' group whose members show her new ways of life as a woman.¹⁰¹ Anju also shows a greater strength when she does not humiliate herself in front of her husband after learning about his affair. She becomes more and more self-reliant, following her dreams and wishes, which is exemplified in that she takes up learning how to fly literally and metaphorically in the end.¹⁰²

Especially the women in the novel are entangled in a web of gender image constructions: Not only do they have certain images of each other, such as Anju who sees Sudha as the beautiful and extremely lovable woman¹⁰³ and Sudha who in turn regards Anju as the strong and powerful woman, they are also subject to the process of image-making by others: Ashok sees

⁹⁷ Divakaruni. *The Vine of Desire*: 82-83.

⁹⁸ Ibid: 221.

⁹⁹ Ali. *Brick Lane*: 220.

¹⁰⁰ Divakaruni. *The Vine of Desire*: 47.

¹⁰¹ Ibid: 106-07.

This liberation process is one that Nazneen in *Brick Lane*, who has also become disillusioned with her marriage, takes up as well by going out more on her own and starting to speak English with people.

¹⁰² Divakaruni. *The Vine of Desire*: 368.

in Sudha someone beyond reproach,¹⁰⁴ someone who is almost superhuman, and Dalit imagines Sudha for a long time as a very pure woman.¹⁰⁵ These constructions of gender images and roles, although inevitable processes in encounters between persons, are also power exercises that create distorted realities that cannot do much justice to the individuals involved, especially not to Sudha.

Nevertheless, both women have in the course of the novel undergone a process of maturation and have become more self-reliant, a development that can also be attributed to Nazneen and Hasina, the two female protagonists in *Brick Lane*. At the same time it is important to note that the women in these novels can predominantly find emancipation when they are single. There is still a lot to do so that relationships between the sexes that are based on equality and respect can evolve.

It is striking how women in India before the country's Independence, although they have their own fight against the foreign rule they experience, still mainly submit to the strongly patriarchal system that is in place in society. This submissive behaviour does not change much after the country's Independence, but there are some areas where women start to reassert themselves: There is a gradual process in which women establish themselves in the world of work and also have a greater say within marriage. Although successful emancipation is much more frequently depicted in the later novels, it becomes at the same time obvious what a hard struggle it still is for the women to achieve it. If they go through with the struggle, they can also succeed in living up more to their own sexuality instead of first of all complying with their husbands' sexual needs.

In spite of these developments, there are numerous injustices that remain in place and seem to be (almost) completely unaffected by the changes in gender relations: There is still strong discrimination due to the dowry system, which makes parents more reluctant to welcome daughters into the families than sons. In such a system daughters are still mainly seen as financial burdens. Furthermore widows do still not have much of a future in Indian and Bangladeshi society, as they do not get any space for self-realization so that their lives can be said to be over. Divorcees and women who leave their husbands are clearly stigmatised and abhorred by most people in society and therefore excluded from community life so that they are either forced to leave the place of their shame or to suffer in silence. There are also still

¹⁰³ Ibid: 323.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid: 335.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid: 355.

supporters of suttee as late as the second half of the twentieth century. In addition, many husbands still resort to violence, which includes sexual force, if their wives disobey them. The continuation of the tradition of arranged marriages, which are more often than not against the individuals' wishes, and especially child marriages often act in favour of such use of violence.

Although there are some improvements regarding gender equality in Southeast Asian societies and communities, there are still too many instances of power abuse and discrimination so that one cannot truly speak of female liberation yet.

II.3.4. Caste, Class, Status and Community

Caste should not be seen as an isolated occurrence, but needs to be seen as part of the caste system. It is not very conclusive to regard caste outside this relation, as it distorts the Hindu reality of how caste functions. In contrast to our own society, Hindu society always first of all refers to the whole, which governs the parts and thus focuses on the interaction between those.¹ The starting point here is structure, not substance. Starting from structure then, the caste system can be mainly characterised by its features of interdependence, separation and hierarchy, which should all be accounted for as processes instead of merely being regarded as static. There is a lack of a centralised state so that social control is obviously decentralised and the result of cooperation with repressive rules.²

Interdependence between the castes can for example be seen in patron-client relations, which are quite widespread and which link higher and lower caste families.³ Indians describe these relations generally in terms of exchanges of rights and obligations, whereas we would differentiate between economic, political and religious services.

Separation can to some extent be seen as the expression of the division of labour and partly of occupation. This separation that is accompanied by specialization aims for the satisfaction of needs of all people in society. However, we do not deal with a merely professional system here, but with a system whose link between occupation and caste is established by religion.⁴ The connection is sometimes hidden though and there are a number of neutral professions that are performed by many castes. Not every caste can thus be linked to one specific occupation. Where separation takes place, it seems to be particularly founded on status difference. Status difference in turn is reflected by hierarchy.

Hierarchy, which is a system that clearly assigns a specific place to every part, displays in Hindu society a particularly religious view as well.⁵ This combination can be explained if we regard the language of religion as such as the language of hierarchy. Power is of course also involved in the Hindu system of hierarchy⁶, but it is not the predominant factor that led to the creation of the system.

¹ Dumont, Louis. Homo Hierarchicus – The Caste System and Its Implications. 1966. Trans. Mark Sainsbury, Louis Dumont and Basia Gulati. Chicago & London: U of Chicago P, 1980: 40-41.

² Sharma, Ursula. Caste. Concepts in the Social Sciences. Buckingham & Philadelphia: Open UP, 1999: 13.

³ Littlejohn, James. Social Stratification – An Introduction. Studies in Sociology 6. Woking & London: George Allen & Unwin, 1972: 82-84.

⁴ Dumont. Homo Hierarchicus: 93.

⁵ Ibid: 107

⁶ Ibid: 153

These principles of Hindu society as outlined above can be better understood by focussing on the opposition of purity and impurity or pollution, which is relevant to all three principles. This opposition can also be described as the form in the distinctions of caste.⁷ Purity is entirely understood in a religious way and can therefore not be identified with our definition of physical cleanliness in the context of hygiene.⁸ Due to the fact that the idea of pollution is central to Hindu society, there are numerous instances in which this principle can have a big impact. Major sources of impurity are excretions from the human body and the animal as well as contact with unclean animals.⁹ Certain castes that perform occupations that make such contact inevitable are therefore considered to be impure and thus liable to spread pollution in society. Impurity is also attached to the events of birth and death as well as to menstruation.¹⁰ These sources of impurity can be defined as absolute criteria. In contrast to these there are relative or indirect criteria, which reflect the attitude of castes to a particular caste's way of life.¹¹ An example of how relative criteria are important in establishing a hierarchy of purity is the centrality of the Brahman's decision from which castes he can accept water or food. He, who is highest in the religious hierarchy, has to be particularly careful to avoid pollution, as the latter entails lack of status. Such criteria can be called relative, as they are applied differently in different areas.¹²

There are, however, remedies such as water that can be applied through ritual in many cases if a person believes they have become polluted.¹³

Such rituals as well as other status-related procedures are in fact really enacted on the level of sub-caste and jati and can be observed particularly well in the village. The sub-caste can be called the fundamental unit of Hindu society, as it gives the latter its character, such as its typical fragmentation into small groups in which various forms of interaction take place, whereas interaction with persons outside one's sub-caste is kept to a minimum and is strictly controlled.¹⁴ Each member of a sub-caste thus belongs to a group, which is, due to the individual's deep involvement in it, as important as family is to them. The sub-caste, which has its own hierarchy, has usually been an endogamous group.¹⁵ Custom and ritual give each sub-caste its particular character. The variations in the way of life between the different castes can be seen in diet, marriage and funeral customs or in the particular gods chosen for worship

⁷ Ibid: 46-47

⁸ Zinkin, Taya. Caste Today. 1962. London, New York & Bombay: Oxford UP, 1965: 11.

⁹ Littlejohn. Social Stratification : 70.

¹⁰ Zinkin. Caste Today: 14-15.

¹¹ Dumont. Homo Hierarchicus: 81-82.

¹² Zinkin. Caste Today: 18.

¹³ Littlejohn. Social Stratification: 71.

¹⁴ Zinkin. Caste Today: 4.

at home.¹⁶ Codes of conduct for a sub-caste are usually well known to its members and are normally strictly observed, as the neglect to do so usually results in harsh punishments, such as in the expulsion from the sub-caste community as well as in a loss of status.¹⁷ Loss of status is probably one of the worst things that can happen to anyone in Hindu society. It becomes clear from this that each local caste, the jati, provides a community that is particularly important for the individual's sense of identity. Community thus plays a far more important role in Hindu society than it does in most western societies. In fact, without the framework of the community with its rules and conventions, a Hindu would most likely feel at sea about who they are and how to conduct their lives.

This belonging to one sub-caste rather than another with its specific organisation is explained by the status one acquires at birth and rebirth. One is born into a certain station in life as the result of one's deeds in a past existence. The meticulous performance of one's duties, those duties referring to the concept of dharma¹⁸ as explained earlier, makes it possible to be born into a higher sub-caste. This process of acquiring merit is then expressed in the doctrine of karma.

Karma and dharma thus provide a stabilising, ideological support to the caste system.

There have been disputes as to how much the caste system is a consensual system or a system that mainly causes resentments and dissatisfaction among the lower castes. Frequently the notion of the caste system as being a consensual system has been asserted in order to distinguish it from oppressive systems applying coercion, which many theorists saw at work in the cases of race and class.¹⁹ However, although there has been acquiescence among low-caste persons to their low status, many others have shown deep resentment as regards their polluted position. The resentment was taken up by Gandhi in his attempts to reform the caste system with the main aim to abolish untouchability.²⁰ It was also taken seriously by Dr. Ambedkar,²¹ who took up an anti-Brahmin stance, regarding the Brahmins as the cause of all social misery, understanding their place as the focal point around which the caste system was built. Earlier on, the Brahma Samaj under the social reformer, Rama Mohan Roy, was probably the most anti-caste of all these movements that fought for the rights of the lower castes. It is thus important not to focus in a one-sided way on just one reaction of low-castes

¹⁵ Littlejohn, *Social Stratification*: 75.

¹⁶ Zinkin, *Caste Today*: 5.

¹⁷ Littlejohn, *Social Stratification*: 75-76.

¹⁸ Ibid: 71.

¹⁹ Sharma, *Caste*: 48-49.

²⁰ Ibid: 34.

²¹ Ibid: 50.

to the structure of their society, as the caste system is an ambivalent system and therefore often causes ambivalent feelings amongst its members.

Although the caste system has been abolished, it still exists today but in a changed, frequently less rigid form. Before outlining changes that have occurred over the last few decades, I want to firstly stress that the caste system has never been a completely static, unchanging system:²² Within the caste system, there has been fluidity present for a long time, as borders between sub-castes have sometimes become porous despite the demand for rigid boundaries. Fluidity is also exemplified in the principle of dharma, which enables a person to acquire a higher position in society.

Recent changes can be seen in that rites are often not strictly observed any longer and have actually lost much of the significance and the value that have once been attributed to them.²³ As a result, the system as such has become unstable and tends to disintegrate with the hierarchy no longer being in place due to the lack of overall consent to it. Compromises are now regularly made. As castes do not believe in their own superiority or respectively their inferiority so much any longer, exchanges between castes of equal status have actually increased even more. Equality has become a new guideline, which has in many cases replaced the old hierarchical one.²⁴ Some of the manifestations of this trend can be seen in a sub-caste's change of name and occupation, the latter which have made it inferior to another sub-caste. Many Hindus who have become sceptical about their faith have converted to other religions.

In view of all these developments, the Orientalist notion of the passive 'other' whose main characteristic is that they are devoid of agency can be dismissed. Caste itself is obviously not a static entity either.²⁵ In addition, it is important to recognise that discourse about caste is not unitary but situational and context-dependent²⁶ so that the adoption of an essentialist view of caste, as it is typical of the Orientalist, is untenable.

There are other important aspects of social structure that are relevant for the following textual analysis. The aspect of status has already been introduced when delineating the mechanisms of the caste system. It was then associated with the social position a member of a caste or sub-caste held and how this could only be kept up by the observation of various rules. This was important, as a loss of status meant a loss of esteem or prestige, which persons valued very highly. Prestige can be seen as a basic characteristic of one's social standing or

²² Ibid: 74-75.

²³ Zinkin. Caste Today: 36.

²⁴ Ibid: 41-43.

²⁵ Sharma. Caste: 74-75.

²⁶ Ibid: 60.

status.²⁷ A person needs to be a member in a group or society in order to attain prestige and is then given special symbols that show their status, which usually places them in a central position. In addition, a person with prestige is normally part of or at least very close to a wider socio-cultural order that is crucial for its members. It is often those persons who represent the core of such an order who are regarded to be prestigious. The sources of prestige and thus also of the deference which people show to others, can be found in the varied involvement in such an order or in organizational positions, for example in positions of power or economic positions, or in some purely personal qualities. Often a person gains prestige from the presence of a combination of such sources. The expression of status honour then lies in a specific style of life, which is expected from those who want to have and retain it.²⁸

Status rests on subjective attitudes, which can be seen in that different societies often have different prestige rankings, which people would apply on the basis of the presence or absence of certain attributes that are considered to merit prestige.²⁹ Not only is the choice of criterions different, also the nature of the ideology that underlies it, usually differs.

By and large, the analysis of inequalities of status is problematic because one often cannot come up with an account that would make measurement and comparison possible.

Status has often been mixed up with class although there are clear distinctions that can be made between the two aspects: While status frequently refers to a range and continuum, class conveys the idea of a certain unity and allegedly homogeneity among its members.

Furthermore, while status should be linked to prestige, class is mainly connected to the economy and refers to aspects of wealth, income and capital.

It needs to be stressed that class is a historical phenomenon that encompasses some different, apparently unconnected events both in experience and in consciousness.³⁰ As class ‘happens’ in human relationships, it cannot be merely reduced to structure. It refers to the articulation of interests between some persons against others whose interests are different from theirs at a particular time. If we regard ‘class’ as a historical occurrence, it is certainly not unproblematic that it is often conceived in a generalised form. This happens when historical events show regularities of response to analogous situations. Although I will attempt to illustrate such a general theory of class and class formation as well in which there are certain regularities, it is nevertheless important to merely use this theory as a framework for analysis and not to forget to consider historical and contextual aspects.

²⁷ Eisenstadt, S.N. “Prestige, Participation and Strata Formation.” Social Stratification. ed. J.A. Jackson. Sociological Studies 1. London & New York: Cambridge, UP, 1968: 67.

²⁸ “Max Weber on Class.” Class. ed. Patrick Joyce. Oxford & New York: Oxford UP, 1995: 36.

²⁹ Runciman. “Class, Status and Power?” Social Stratification. ed. Jackson : 43.

³⁰ Thompson, E. P. “The Making of Class.” Class. ed. Joyce: 131.

Classes are seen as possible and frequent bases of social action.³¹ Their members normally share a component of their life opportunities. This component is economic in nature and refers, more specifically, to the interests in the possession of goods and in the opportunities for income. The condition of the exchange of commodities in the labour market expresses the class situation. A class situation is often defined by property and the lack of property and thus called a market situation.

Class formation occurs on different levels: On the first level there has to be an awareness of the real conditions of the class situation, which means an awareness of how the capitalist economy is structured and how property is distributed.³² The second level concerns the social organization of society as it is lived by people in capitalist formations. Here, the factors of class become important: It should be clear by now that class is multidimensional. On this level, it comprises occupational position, education and income. Melvin Kohn identifies limited education and constricting job conditions as the most vital factors for the formation of class, as it is here where class experience occurs.³³ The economic situation into which a person is born has important repercussions on the individual's life: Apart from the inherited patterns of opportunity³⁴ the reason for the limited job opportunities to people of lower classes can be found on the third level of analysis, which concerns the disposition of persons, which points towards values and orientation. It can be found that generally people being in a lower class position due to the presence of some of the aforementioned factors feel that they are at the mercy of forces and people beyond their influence or understanding and therefore show a high level of class-conformity. This can be the beginning of the formation of class-consciousness, which is a step beyond the mere experience of class: Class consciousness might not only involve class identification, which can be described as a subjective factor of class, but also the awareness of the position of one's class in the class hierarchy, an awareness of class distinctness and class interests as well as possible class solidarity.³⁵

Class-consciousness can overcome conformity on the final level of class formation, which focuses on behaviour that is shaped by people's values and orientation. If people become conscious of the injustice and the discrimination they have to face every day and decide to do something about it, they come together to engage on a process of collective action.³⁶ It is at

³¹ "Max Weber on Class." *Class*. ed. Joyce: 31-32.

³² "Max Weber on Class." *Class*. ed. Joyce: 34.

³³ Kohn, Melvin. *Class and Conformity – A Study in Values*. 1969. 2nd Edition. Chicago & London: U of Chicago P, 1977: 190.

³⁴ Scase, Richard. *Class*. Concepts in the Social Sciences. Buckingham: Open UP, 1992: 53.

³⁵ Ossowski, Stanislaw. *Class Structure in the Social Consciousness*. 1963. Trans. Sheila Patterson. London, Boston & Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979: 136.

³⁶ Katznelson, Ira. "Levels of Class Formation." *Class*. ed. Joyce: 146.

this point that full class consciousness is achieved. Collective action is a constructive alternative to the silent acceptance of inequalities. As it stands at the very end of the process of class formation and is an expression of a high form of class consciousness.

The question now is how we can create a society that is based on more equality and how we can conceive equality. Both, equality and inequality are defined on the basis of different criteria so that the debate about the terms is always a debate about what criteria should be applied. This involves a process of justification. There is thus no universally valid solution to how equality should be achieved. Specific criteria regarding equality are always justified with reference to the existing social conditions.

Equality between different states for example means that there has to be a justification in case they are treated differently. This justification could refer to relevant circumstances or differences between them. Often criteria for such justification are need, merit and contribution to the common welfare. While in capitalist societies merit plays a particularly important role, in communism it is need that figures largely. On the whole, problems of equality are problems of fairness.

Scase develops some guidelines how equality based on different criteria can be achieved today.³⁷ First of all, common interests need to be emphasised, such as those between employers and employees. This should attack exploitative relationships at their very root and lead to a more just distribution of rewards and opportunities. Furthermore health and welfare contributions should be provided that are not based on the market and that improve the well-being of individuals. This should lead to the amelioration of the workers' material conditions, to higher employment rates for women and the disabled and other groups that are considered to constitute 'marginal' labour. In this way the extreme implications of class and the market are reduced, personal freedoms are guaranteed and citizens' rights are protected.

Rao's *Kanthapura* underlines that caste divisions were still very strict at the time before Independence by mentioning the separate quarters of the village Kanthapura where the respective castes lived.³⁸ Kanthapura can be regarded to be representative of so many other Indian villages as well, i.e. in respect to the issues of caste and community. Moorthy, who has lived in a city for a while and who has there become acquainted with news ideas and views on the world, seems to initiate something like a revolution when he speaks of Gandhi's idea of a casteless society among the villagers - an idea that is also explored in Anand's *Untouchable*, which focuses on the daily life of an outcaste. Not only does Moorthy speak of this idea, he

³⁷ Scase. *Class*: 64ff.

also lives up to it by freely going to the different quarters of the village, even to the one where the Untouchables live and whose lives Moorthy thus tries to understand better. Due to the long tradition of caste and the resulting strong adherence to it by the population, he meets much hostility when he speaks about his ideal and rejects traditional hierarchies in the name of people's equality.³⁹

In spite of the hostility Moorthy meets, he does not waver in these teachings even when he is excommunicated from the village. Instead of separation of the groups he aims to establish a feeling of oneness and gradually achieves that unity spreads between the various castes – a unity as a result of overcoming limitations and strict boundaries: “... people came – men, women, children – and the pariahs and the weavers and the potters all seemed to feel they were of one caste, one breath.”⁴⁰

This increasing strife towards a casteless Indian society is directly associated with the struggle to get rid of the British whose government supports, by paying the Brahmins well, a hierarchical Indian society.⁴¹ Caste is of course closely related to status so that the dismantling of the caste system also entails a decreasing consciousness of one's status.

The community is also of great significance in Kanthapura and other villages during this early time of a nation's birth: the village life that is presented to us in the novel is characterised by its many celebrations, festivals and other gatherings that brings the community together and creates a bond between its members.

On the other hand these close bonds can at the same time be regarded as means of exclusion of people outside, people who live farther away and do not participate in these communal activities. Such people and their lifestyles are generally eyed with suspicion and often dismissed before having learned much about them. The introduction of new influences, however, lets the society gradually become more open-minded: Moorthy's urban influences, the joint struggle between the coolies and the villagers, meetings of the villagers with people from other villages and from the city suggest further changes that will occur in the future and that almost by necessity lead to less discriminating and more open and interactive lifestyles. The change in that the various communities grow closer together is illustrated in the recognition of the need for a common language so that more interchanges could take place between different groups and opinions could be exchanged.⁴²

³⁸ Rao. Kanthapura: 13.

³⁹ Ibid: 22.

⁴⁰ Ibid: 179.

⁴¹ Ibid: 132.

⁴² Ibid: 143.

In Jhabvala's novel, *The Nature of Passion*, it is the community people live in, which plays a central role. It determines crucial norms of behaviour that the members of traditional Indian society have to observe: The neglect of such an observation makes these individuals to outsiders who are despised by other members of society, who attribute a bad reputation to them. This happens to Lalaji's daughter-in-law Kanta in the novel, who finds family gatherings and enforced commitments extremely tiring and not worth including as substantial parts of her life. Family being the basic and most important form of community in Indian society, Kanta understandably merely meets on disapproval by displaying such an attitude. This fairly closed communal life unsurprisingly causes xenophobic attitudes: It becomes important not to marry or even to entertain any friendships with people who do not come from the same community. Lakshmi's observation of how Nimmi never spends time with the girls from her own community at school⁴³ gains its significance from this duty. She also breaks this rule by getting together with the Parsi Pheroze. The main reason for the formation of this attachment is her intention of getting involved with someone whose status is a very high one.⁴⁴ She knows that a bond with a person of his standing would make her become more recognised in circles of such high status. The assumption that her strife to enter high society is the main motivation in choosing Pheroze, can be substantiated when Nimmi is soon equally eager to enter marriage with a boy who has been chosen for her and who can guarantee her an entry into the world of glamour.⁴⁵

It is exactly this status consciousness that gives both more orthodox persons who hold on fast to the communal life and more modern-orientated persons like Nimmi, Viddi, Kanta and Chandra the motivations for their actions. Kanta's motives for marrying Chandra, whose prestige in Indian society results from being England-returned and having achieved his degree with distinction, are indeed to enjoy her share of her husband's prestige and high standing.⁴⁶ Viddi, who at first seems to revolt against his father's mania for money and wealth and to embrace art instead,⁴⁷ is in actual fact no better: Instead of seriously developing his artistic ambitions, he spends most of his time idling in expensive bars and cafes where he indulges in wasteful behaviour, which he assumes to be an essential part of a rich person's life. Money is here regarded as a determinant for status and social standing, a fact that is also reflected in the high number of servants that are paid for their services in Lalaji's house.⁴⁸ Viddi does not give

⁴³ Jhabvala. *The Nature of Passion*: 111.

⁴⁴ Ibid: 47.

⁴⁵ Ibid: 258.

⁴⁶ Ibid: 64-65.

⁴⁷ Ibid: 128.

⁴⁸ Ibid: 239.

up his greed for money and all the fleeting pleasures he can enjoy when having it. It is for these reasons as well as for the hope to become a more prestigious person that he gradually lets himself into his father's business arrangements.

Lalaji and his son Om are probably the two characters in the novel whose greed and need for wealth and prestige is most obvious. Particularly their class-consciousness manifests itself in that they cannot look at anything without trying to determine its intrinsic monetary value. It is only Lalaji's money that makes other people respect him, thus never appreciating him as a person but always only his possessions and his power in business. This reaction extends even to his family, which Lalaji sometimes becomes aware of in moments of insight and which makes him deeply concerned about failing his family. Nevertheless his identification with money and success leads him into bribery and corruption,⁴⁹ which he even uses on his son Chandra who, afraid to risk his career, is at first very adverse to his father's pleading, but finally gives in.⁵⁰ He and Kanta depend to some extent on Lalaji's money and can thus not afford to break with him completely by resisting his demands. Another example of such greed for prestige and recognition can be found in the character, Raju, in Narayan's novel, *The Guide*, who resorts to treachery and cunning.

On the whole the characters' ambitions to both retain prestige through the observation of conventions as well as to increase both prestige and their wealth through the accumulation of riches are at the cost of their humanity. Especially their greed attracts false friends and makes them very lonely people. There is not enough introspection present in them, however, to recognise this fully so that they continue to evaluate others in terms of what they have.

In *The Buddha of Suburbia* class is shown, particularly in England, as the important factor that divides people in respect to education and career opportunities: Karim is particularly dismissive about his lower-class background when he moves to London and enters a new world there where people have achieved something due to their education.⁵¹ However, it is certainly interesting that Karim has been cast for a role as an actor partially because of his lower class background. This is a reminder that although people of the higher classes are often privileged in education and consequently in career matters, coming from a less privileged background does not necessarily completely prevent success or fame. Furthermore, Jamila reminds Karim of how one-sided his adherence to the London upper-class culture is, pointing out that he narrows down his consciousness by not acknowledging the plight of many people

⁴⁹ Ibid: 54.

⁵⁰ Ibid: 249ff.

⁵¹ Kureishi. *The Buddha of Suburbia*: 177-78.

from the lower classes who should and could be helped in improving their situation. Karim's class experience has obviously not developed into full class consciousness, which would involve his engagement in collective action together with the people he has grown up with. In contrast to Karim, prince Umar in Hariharan's *When Dreams Travel* actively fights against the social inequalities he comes across in India and thus reaches the highest stage of class consciousness.⁵²

It is not only Karim, however, who starts to evaluate others and him in terms of class. His father and Anwar are both very class-conscious as well once they arrive in London. This is hardly surprising, as Anwar and Jeeta have always had a very high standard of living as well as high prestige in Pakistan, and receive a great shock to find that their circumstances are completely different in England, which means for example that they have to live in a very poor area of London where they have to make numerous concessions to their lifestyles.⁵³ Indian and Pakistani as well as British society all emphasise the importance of both status and class and create status- and class-consciousness in people, which is absolutely essential during their lives. Thus, almost every activity is considered in class terms, such as pub visits are considered to be lower class.⁵⁴ In addition, relationships between people who come from very different class backgrounds are still frowned at and are usually particularly disapproved of by the parents of the couple. Class and status thus become instruments of classification and judgement not only in order to determine a person's potential for success, but essentially also in order to determine a person's desirability or even worth.

Naipaul stresses in his travelogue *India - A Million Mutinies Now*, the importance of community in a country with such an enormous population. Communities are mainly formed on the basis of caste and thus religion. Therefore caste divisions are still presented as a major issue in India in the late 1980s⁵⁵ although the conditions for the untouchables' lives have improved a lot over the decades, particularly as a result of Ambedkar's engagement with the untouchables' cause.⁵⁶ The improvement of their social situation becomes apparent when we compare this narrative with that of Anand's *Untouchable*. The caste system was still strong until 1955, but then started to weaken when more people demanded their rights in face of the privileges the upper castes had. In this context anti-brahminism became particularly powerful

⁵² Hariharan. *When Dreams Travel*: 225.

⁵³ Kureishi. *The Buddha of Suburbia*: 26.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*: 46.

⁵⁵ Jhabvala's novel, *Heat and Dust*, adds another dimension to the issue of caste division by describing the division's frequently shocking ramifications in the 1970s. Jhabvala. *Heat and Dust*: 109, 157.

⁵⁶ Naipaul. *India - A Million Mutinies Now*: 119.

and gave rise to the so-called Dravidian movement⁵⁷ that attempted to establish a more equal distribution of rights and duties in Indian society. Nevertheless feelings of alienation and distance are still very much prevalent between the different castes, and caste still plays an important role regarding the profession a person can aspire to.⁵⁸

Mistry's novel, *A Fine Balance*, analyses the categories of caste and status by taking a closer look at Indian society at about the time of the Emergency. Dina's brother Nusswan is very conscious of his high status and disapproves radically when Dina chooses a partner whom he considers to be their inferior in ambitions, prospects and money, determining the latter as being attributes of status. Nusswan's excessive appreciation of status ties in with his extreme reliance on community and family ties.⁵⁹ The opinions of others he lives with are thus always at the back of his mind even when he seems to make decisions on his own. Dina, however, cannot completely abandon taking pride in her status either: Although this factor did not play a role for her in her choice of husband, she later on in the novel discriminates the two tailors who work for her by treating them in a very superior way.⁶⁰ As a result, Om feels like a slave and is not ready to take this treatment from Dina. He is, however, for a long time kept quiet by his uncle Ishvar who accepts this treatment at the beginning, knowing that it is caste rules Dina adheres to and not a personal grudge she bears against them. Only much later does he stand up for himself and make it clear to Dina that he and Om are not slaves but human beings with their own needs to determine their lives.⁶¹ This self-assurance he gains should be seen as the legacy his father and brother have left behind, both of which have undergone a long process of fighting against caste barriers and rules all their lives: After suffering fraud and his son's mistreatment, Ishvar's father made his children change their caste of tanners and leather workers for the caste of tailors instead so that they would have greater chances in life. Changing from one caste to the next among the untouchables is a huge achievement in a society in which caste barriers have often been treated as if they were static and insurmountable in a highly hierarchical organisation. Obviously these barriers have been lowered due to this revolt against inequalities and caste violence. Narayan continues his father's fight against caste boundaries, for which he and his family have to pay with their lives though. Om, who has to face discrimination as well⁶², and his uncle Ishvar experience harsh

⁵⁷ Ibid: 253.

⁵⁸ Ibid: 187.

⁵⁹ Mistry. *A Fine Balance*: 46.

⁶⁰ Ibid: 100-01.

⁶¹ Ibid: 571-72.

⁶² Ibid: 199.

poverty and have to live in illegal accommodation,⁶³ which they are finally forced to leave before they are taken in by Dina – after some hesitation on Dina’s part. Dina’s move is the outcome of a long process of change in awareness: For a long time Dina has kept up a haughty attitude towards the tailors, which she also adopts in order to cover up her own insecurity about her status at that time, which she sees threatened by her comparative poverty.⁶⁴

The obvious change in her attitude occurs when she takes in a lodger, Maneck, who moves out of the college grounds where he suffered severe bullying and also had to live under very harsh living conditions. Maneck rejects the distinctions in status that Dina makes between them and the tailors because in college he has become aware of the injustices such distinctions can cause.⁶⁵ Due to his different family background and the experience of how his friends have suffered from such discrimination, it is easier for him to go beyond these hierarchical ways of thinking and acting than it is for Dina. He reverses in a way the power relations between him and Dina when he shows his displeasure when she does not want to take in the two tailors as lodgers at first after they lost their homes. He also tells her of the plight and the hardship the two tailors had to suffer. Gradually Dina’s status-consciousness changes, she starts to feel affection for the tailors and finally offers them to stay at the veranda.⁶⁶ She feels genuine regret about her harshness towards them and as a consequence, treats the tailors almost as her equals, not making them pay for shelter and also allowing them to sit at her table and to use her best cups. Dina’s new generous and sympathetic attitude towards the outcastes is not restricted to Ishvar and Om though. She also shows compassion for the hair-collector Rajaram after he has been made redundant and helps him to start his own trade by giving him some money. She even goes to the beggar’s, Shankar’s, funeral, an action that completely breaks with the rules of what is socially acceptable between a Parsi and a beggar⁶⁷ and that therefore deeply shocks her brother. Even more amazingly, she comes to regard Beggarmaster as a kind of father.⁶⁸ Dina feels that she is rewarded manifold for her generosity and enjoys the fruitful exchange between the Parsi and the tailor customs. Education is also mentioned in this context as an element that is important in overcoming caste restrictions and that can lead to emancipation. Dina has changed and developed to such an extent that she now

⁶³ Ibid: 214-15.

⁶⁴ Ibid: 241-44.

⁶⁵ Ibid: 293.

⁶⁶ Ibid: 468-69

⁶⁷ Ibid: 614.

⁶⁸ Ibid: 682.

sees a deep divide between herself and her acquaintances, Mrs Gupta and Zenobia, who judge people by their status and not by their behaviour.

It is extremely sad that Ishvar and Om become beggars at the end after Dina is forced to close the shop and goes back to her brother. They sink down to the lowest status they can possibly have because they have been physically abused and crippled so that they lose their capacity to work and thus everything else that depended on it, such as a slightly better way of life.

Maneck despairs about these devastating changes and commits suicide,⁶⁹ as he cannot realistically see a way out of the caste and status divisions and the cruelty that can be part of them. Such cruelty also befalls the Untouchable Velutha in Roy's *The God of Small Things*, whose injuries inflicted on him finally lead to his death.⁷⁰

Mistry here presents us a very complex picture of power relationships regarding caste and status: On the one hand, he shows us the chances of stepping beyond borders and points out the developments that have taken place. On the other hand he chooses a negative ending concerning such socially regulated relations, as he sees how slow and difficult social progress during the seventies and eighties was and how often it came to a standstill or was reversed.

Pankaj Mishra shows in *The Romantics* what an important impact caste as well as the community a person belongs to still have on a person in India at the very end of the twentieth century. Although the novel's protagonist is not interested in sectarian-, caste- or religion-based politics in the sense of consciously practising discrimination, he habitually observes caste boundaries: Whereas Miss West talks uninhibitedly with the boatman, Samar cannot initiate a conversation with him due to the boatman being of a lower caste and serving him.⁷¹ At the same time the novel undermines the idea sometimes upheld by persons who are not too familiar with the caste system that Indians from higher castes are automatically quite well off. Caste cannot be equalled to an economic category: Samar notices at the university how many students are impoverished Brahmins. He furthermore becomes aware of the difficulties due to his social position that stand in his way in terms of travelling and becoming thus immersed in other cultures. In addition, Brahmin identity changes: The generation of Samar's father still holds on to the Brahmin idea of learning and the arts that later on developed into a rather secluded life, whereas Samar can later on in the novel not identify with this life concept any longer.

⁶⁹ Ibid: 749.

⁷⁰ Roy. *The God of Small Things*: 308.

⁷¹ Mishra, Pankaj. *The Romantics*. 1999. London: Picador, 2000: 38.

The most prevalent example of how important social standing is for a person's life prospects is the person of Rajesh, who lives in a very poor quarter of Benares and seems to have no chance of ever leading a better life in which he can fulfil some of his dreams. He is one of the high-caste persons who live in extreme poverty and it seems certainly paradoxical that his high caste comes in as a disadvantage now, as government jobs are given to low-caste people. This naturally comes as a blow to Rajesh who still has this feeling of superiority in him Brahmins have been brought up with. He resents having to do jobs that are normally considered to be beneath a Brahmin.⁷² As a result, he becomes increasingly unstable and finally becomes part of a killer gang where he is well paid for his services.⁷³ Rajesh has due to these discrepancies between his caste and his financial and social standing never been able to successfully integrate the various elements in him, as they seemed to be too contradictory and confusing to him. The novel shows how seriously caste is still taken more than half a century after Independence and Gandhi's struggle to abolish the caste system, in particular when social position is in opposition to the economic situation the individual find themselves in.

In *The Glass Palace* it is particularly status that determines an individual's identity. Establishing one's identity becomes especially difficult if one's status suddenly changes, as the former has to be re-assessed and re-asserted. This issue is also dealt with in Jhabvala's novel, *Heat and Dust*, which focuses on the status conflicts in the 1920s between the ruling Indian princes in the provinces that were not under British power and the British who were there. In *The Glass Palace*, Burma's Royal Family, who has always enjoyed great respect from their people, experiences such a change in status: The arrival of the British puts into question if the Royal Family can stay any longer where they are, which proves to be an extremely humiliating situation for them.⁷⁴ As a result, the Queen's rank is diminished in the eyes of her subjects, and the King's power is ignored by the English colonels. As soon as they find themselves in exile, their power is further diminished by the servants' unwillingness to work for them. This unwillingness is the result of their doubt if the social position of prisoner does not just extend to the Royal Family and not to themselves, which would make them free.⁷⁵ Hiring local servants, the Queen continues to try to preserve her supremacy and authority abroad, but fails in restoring order in the Royal Household, which finds expression in her clash with the English midwife who does not adapt to the Queen's household customs.

⁷² Ibid: 170.

⁷³ Ibid: 244.

⁷⁴ Ghosh. *The Glass Palace*: 21-22.

⁷⁵ Ibid: 53.

The Collector is contemptuous of what the Queen stands for, namely of her prestige, regarding her and her family to be bloodthirsty aristocrats.⁷⁶ Outram House, where the Collector holds the family imprisoned on a hill, becomes a slum-like abode.⁷⁷

Status is also relevant for the marriages of the Princesses. There are difficulties in finding suitable partners for them in exile, as it is more difficult there to find partners within the house of their ruling dynasty. The Queen would not allow her daughters to marry beneath them, believing that they would defile their blood in this case. It is therefore a great scandal when the First Princess becomes pregnant and her affair with the Queen's coachman is revealed.⁷⁸ This event clearly diminishes the Princess' as well as her family's reputation and standing in society. The shame the Royal Family has to suffer when the Second Princess runs off, leads to the king's heart attack and his death⁷⁹ and to the Queen's unforgiving attitude towards her daughter.

For Dolly the situation is in many ways even worse during her time in exile. As a dependant and servant of an unknown family her marriage prospects are gloomy, as community and family have to be known for marriage. It is therefore not surprising that she has an affair during her stay in exile in order to forget the restrictions that apply to her and to feel free from their burden. Her low status only alters when she leaves the country and marries Rajkumar.

Status is of great importance to most Indians as well and many of them join the British Indian Army because they feel that this elevates their status: Arjun and his fellow-officers believe that their association with Europeans makes them eligible to be rulers and to be members of the elite,⁸⁰ thus feeling pride and being conscious of their new prestige. Therefore many Indian servicemen disregard the fact that numerous English officers are not above common thievery and that their haughty ways and their grand uniforms are just a very superficial part of their identities that do not make a statement on their behaviour.⁸¹

Ghosh shows in *The Glass Palace* how the characters in the novel that come from different backgrounds, all base their identities almost exclusively on their social position and rank they have in society. As a result they suffer an identity crisis when their status changes for the worse and they have great difficulties in adjusting to this new situation. The emphasis on status in the Southeast Asian societies presented in the novel restricts the individuals largely in respect to marriage and the freedom to do and choose what they want. Other values and

⁷⁶ Ibid: 152.

⁷⁷ Ibid: 88.

⁷⁸ Ibid: 117.

⁷⁹ Ibid: 205.

⁸⁰ Ibid: 279.

⁸¹ Ibid: 50.

rights therefore recede into the background when it comes to the observation of the respective duties that have to be performed by the individuals in various positions.

Although the caste system, which has been presented in so much detail in texts dealing with the time before Independence in order to show its power, was abolished at the end of Gandhi's struggle against, it is difficult to make out a society in India during the decades after its abolition that has become more just or really favours equal opportunities for people from all kinds of different backgrounds. There are only a few instances after Independence where some progress is achieved in that caste boundaries are loosened and the nature of caste changes. Particularly the boundaries between individuals of high castes, who are at the very top of the social scale, and those low caste persons who are at the very bottom of the social ladder, are still closely observed though. Status is therefore maintained among the various castes and sub-castes. Caste has a particularly strong effect when it is joined by class issues.

Furthermore community is revealed as an important instance of identification, which also serves as a means of inclusion and exclusion. It can be positive, particularly abroad, because the individual feels socially integrated and part of a group. However, it also sometimes serves as a hostile barrier in respect to people outside the community who are intimidated by the existing group dynamic and feel unwanted.

Discrimination and processes of limiting, belittling and patronising persons of lower standing are still very much in force today in Indian, British and Anglo-Indian societies. The barriers in people's minds have not been pulled down at the same speed as the existence of castes in India has officially vanished, so that there is still a lot to be done to give more equal societies the chance to emerge.

II.3.5. The role of religion

Religion is universal and seems to have existed throughout history. In fact, there is no society known during the course of history that has not practised religion.¹ While institutional religion came into existence about 4000 years ago, which more or less coincided with the invention of writing, it seems likely that religious beliefs and practices have existed for a longer time.² The religious capacity therefore seems to be a necessary feature of all mankind.³ This means that there is an innate urge in everyone to encounter one's surroundings in a religious way - that is, as being of a particular significance.⁴ At the same time, religion is, contrary to common belief, nothing static, but changes over time: While the great religious texts and scriptures, which are each believed to have been delivered by a chosen human messenger who spoke in God's name,⁵ might not frequently undergo a great number of fundamental changes, religion as a practice is – as already pointed out in my explanations of the Hindu philosophy - an evolutionary process insofar as one religion borrows aspects from another religion, the latter which might even disappear in the course of this process.⁶

Definitions of the term religion vary widely, depending on the view a person takes on faith. In general, definitions of religion emphasise the presence of a sense of the sacred, which might be applied to objects or to a ritual law and which must not be violated.⁷ Core characteristics of religion are belief, practice and its consequences as well as experience and knowledge.⁸

It is useful, however, to distinguish between broad or inclusive and narrow or exclusive definitions of religion: The latter show religion to include a belief in a supernatural entity that is inevitably closely connected to religious organisations, while the former regard religion simply as systems of meaning which interpret the world, reach different conclusions, develop certain goals and can be of a very private and personal type.

Particularly the type of religion with a strong institutionalised framework frequently involves a great emphasis on community life. Communal worship with its various rituals and

¹ Carlton, Eric. Religions in Society. Patterns of Belief 2. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1973: 49.

² "Religion". Wikipedia. 5 Aug. 2004 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion>: 10.

³ Thompson, Ian. Religion. Sociology in Focus. 1986. London & New York: Longman, 1993: 17.

⁴ Hick, John. "The Outcome: Dialogue into Truth." Truth and Dialogue – The relationship between world religions. ed. Hick, John. Studies in Philosophy and Religion 2. ed. Baelz, P.R.. London: Sheldon Press, 1975: 149.

⁵ "Religion". Wikipedia: 10.

⁶ Zaehner, R. C.. "Religious Truth." Truth and Dialogue. ed. Hick: 13-14.

⁷ Carlton. Religions in Society: 64-65.

⁸ Thompson. Religion: 15.

ceremonies creates a sense of commitment and belonging with shared values and a certain moral order. As a result, social solidarity evolves, and both personal and social identity are created and reaffirmed. In this way religion works as a powerful force of social integration.⁹

It is hardly surprising that those persons who uphold narrow religious definitions believe that religion gradually disappears, particularly in the Western world, while individuals adhering to a more comprehensive view of religion rather regard religion as undergoing a process of transformation. Indeed, this transformation process can be seen in the decline in the popularities of churches and its services and the turn towards other forms of religious practise.¹⁰ These are sometimes very private forms, but also sects and religious groups such as the Jehova's Witnesses or the Mormons.¹¹ Persons adhering to very private, intuitive forms of religions tend to describe themselves as being spiritual rather than religious.¹²

There are various reasons for people's withdrawal from institutionalised, mainstream religion: While some of the persons consider it too restrictive, others criticise the abandonment of traditional practices or beliefs. In addition, many persons have sceptical objections to certain doctrines or reservations to particular forms of practice. Marx's argument that religion really works on the masses of people in the way an opiate does with the consequence that persons become blind towards exploitation by self-interested religious leaders or theocratic governments is also sometimes taken up.

The fact that religion, particularly in the Western world, undergoes changes rather than experiences a decline in popularity points out that religion is undeniably still crucial in the West and that it is a danger to equate the East predominantly with religion and myth. This view does not only overlook the fact that the religious is part of each of us, but it has also brought forward superior attitudes, regarding the religious stage identified with the East as subordinate to the scientific or rational stage allegedly displayed in the West. As a consequence colonialist and imperialist practices have flourished.

A major drive for persons to turn towards religion both today and in the past, has been the longing to find some orientation, clarity and order so as to cope better with their sometimes very chaotic lifestyles.¹³ On the whole, religion has served different purposes at different times, but functions in a similar way in all societies in that the latter focus on a changeless

⁹ Ibid: 5-6.

¹⁰ Ibid: 32-33.

¹¹ Ibid: 23.

¹² "Religion". [Wikipedia](#): 4.

¹³ Shermer, Michael. [Why People Believe Weird Things – Pseudoscience, Superstition, and other Confusions of our Time](#). 1997. New York: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1999: 5.

entity on the one hand and a God who acts in time on the other hand.¹⁴ Questions about life and death as well as morality and specific goals in life are usually issues that are tackled in various ways by different religions.¹⁵ Religion can therefore be regarded as a “varying response to men’s relatively unvarying needs”¹⁶. Religious practices thus usually suit the conditions of the societies in which they arise¹⁷ and are greatly influenced by cultural factors.¹⁸ In this way it makes sense to at least regard the particular form of religion that is present at a certain place at a certain time as socially derived, sustained - and as we will soon see – socially legitimated,¹⁹ making statements that display a total view of the world.²⁰

One of the main problems religious persons have had to struggle with was how to confront accusations of religion being devoid of truth. Such arguments of validity have usually been made by sceptics who uphold scientific methods as the recognised approach towards the establishment of truth. Scientific truth only refers to statements that are open to empirical verification or falsification.²¹ It is not absolute either, as it changes through new discoveries and insights and is to some extent always biased as well, as scientists start with a particular, mainly culturally-derived view in mind, which has an impact on their investigations. This is why science can also be called a belief system. Most importantly in the context of truth, scientific statements are not capable of evaluating moral or spiritual values, a fact that is easy to understand when we think of different belief systems as using different ways of assessing and formulating truth and authenticity. Scientific statements do not concern themselves with meanings persons give to their lives and their existence. Therefore scientists cannot disprove the veracity of certain religious statements.

We can merely make a scientific truth statement about religion when we define religion as a social truth and expression. An analysis of our society would be incomplete without recognising the “*social validity* of religion”²². The validity of the contents of religious belief though remains personal conviction.

The widespread phenomenon of superstition is also worth mentioning within the context of religion, as every religion contains forms of superstition. In addition, superstition is a belief

¹⁴ Zaehner. “Religious Truth.” Truth and Dialogue. ed. Hick: 7.

¹⁵ “Religion”. Wikipedia: 9.

¹⁶ Carlton. Religions in Society: 95.

¹⁷ Ibid: 50.

¹⁸ Hick. “The Outcome: Dialogue into Truth.” Truth and Dialogue. ed. Hick: 142.

¹⁹ Thompson. Religion: 63.

²⁰ Hick. “The Outcome: Dialogue into Truth.” Truth and Dialogue. ed. Hick: 149.

²¹ Carlton. Religions in Society: 20.

²² Ibid: 30.

system that seems at first glance to closely resemble that of religion: It is also intensely subjective and cannot be proven or disproved by scientific methods and appears irrational.²³ Superstition can be best defined as the process of causal linking of unrelated events or phenomena. Personal superstition is also very widespread: In this case a person's actions are wrongly suspected of having a particular outcome,²⁴ this so-called outcome in fact being an occurrence that is entirely unrelated to the person's actions.

The reason why many persons turn towards superstitious beliefs is that they tend to find immediate gratification that makes them feel better. This is due to the simple explanations that are an essential part of superstition and that provide some orientation in a complex and confusing world.²⁵ The result of holding superstitious beliefs often is unfounded fear and anxiety. It is thus not surprising that many influential persons have played on such feelings of others in order to make the latter do what is most beneficial to the position and prestige of the former. In India, where this practice has been dominant, strong attempts at stopping such deceit were made at the end of 2003 when the demand was made to introduce an anti-superstition law, the latter making it an offence to cheat someone by claiming to have supernatural powers.²⁶

It is usually the case that superstitious persons assume the existence of a particular form of control over the universe.²⁷ The latter is the belief in a passive form of fate: This form of fate, which the Greeks once personified under the name of Moira²⁸, regards a person's life as being an entirely predetermined course, which the individual has no power whatsoever to change even to the smallest extent.²⁹ This means that the individual has no real freedom and the notion of free will cannot be anything but a farce. In consequence, the individual cannot logically be held responsible for any of their actions. Persons who adhere to such a passive form of fate put themselves into the pleasant position to be blameless regarding anything negative that results from their actions and therefore to be morally beyond reproach.³⁰ Many persons who believe that they cannot change the course of events by making decisions and acting in accordance with them also avoid making any crucial decisions whatsoever, which includes the avoidance of the conscious adoption of some values rather than others, and tend

²³ "Superstition". 04 Aug. 2004 <http://zebu.uoregon.edu/~js/glossary/superstition.html>: 1.

²⁴ "Superstition". Free-definition. 04 Aug 2004 <http://www.free-definition.com/Superstition.html> 1.

²⁵ Shermer. Why People Believe Weird Things: 276-77.

²⁶ Diwanji, Amberish K. "The shackles of superstition". 04 Nov. 2003. 04 Aug. 2004 <http://www.rediff.com/cms/print.jsp?docpath=/news/2003/nov/04spec.htm>: 2.

²⁷ "Superstition". Free-definition: 1.

²⁸ Bloesch, D. G. "Fatalism". Elwell Evangelical Dictionary. 04 Aug. 2004 <http://mb-soft.com/believe/txn/fatalism.htm>: 1.

²⁹ "On Fate" 02 Aug. 1999. 04 Aug. 2004 <http://www.zionmainframe.net/main/words/nf/reflect.html>: 1.

³⁰ Litt, Sheldon. "Fate". 04 Aug. 2004 <http://www.positivehealth.com/permit/Articles/Regular/litt28.htm>: 1.

to stay as passive as it is possible for them instead. The higher control and power that are assumed to be exercised over them usually lead to silent acceptance of their lot. Although they might not understand why things happen a certain way, it is a comfort to many to believe that there is a hidden meaning behind everything and that it is essential that certain events occur the way they do at a certain time in a certain place.³¹

However, the notion of fate has been re-conceptualised in a different and, as it seems to me, much more realistic way that leaves room for agency: Fate here involves responsibility and does not just hit us like an outside, wholly uncontrollable force.³² Although it is reasonable to assume that the individual cannot control everything, such as the conditions in which they were born and which might prove highly relevant to their possibilities and chances in life, the individual has still a great deal of choice whether they want to follow up certain opportunities within the somewhat limited framework of circumstances they were born in. The power to choose one path rather than another endows their lives with specific meaning and gives each person particular characteristics, thus turning them in fact into individuals.³³ Fate is thus essentially conceived as the outcome of a person's conscious or unconscious choices and is therefore largely chosen and not imposed, an understanding of fate that is particularly well expressed in the aforementioned concept of karma. Although the outcome of certain actions are bound to the various laws of life and are beyond the individual's control, the first step that is undertaken towards the achievement of a goal is made by the individual.³⁴ It is in this way that fate can be described as an "agent used in the fulfilment of our destiny"³⁵. This account disposes with the idea of fate and free-will as opposing forces and sees them instead as interactive and interdependent ones.

Leader figures such as religious or spiritual guides can also play a significant role within a religion. They can be the main teachers, the founders or reformers of religions or just well-known persons³⁶, who often gain a great deal of their prominence through their charisma.³⁷ Charisma is a form of authority that is given to an individual due to their obvious qualities or powers³⁸ of which only the most intriguing ones are given expression. These charismatic

³¹ Wille, Andrew. "A Contemporary Perspective on Fate and Free-Will". 12 Oct 2002. 04 Aug 2004

<http://home.uchicago.edu/~awille/Andrew%20Wille%20-%20A%20Contemporary%20Perspective%20on%20Fate%20and%20Free-Will.htm>: 1.

³² Litt. "Fate": 1.

³³ Wille. "A Contemporary Perspective on Fate and Free-Will": 1.

³⁴ "What is destiny? Is there some thing called free will?" 05 Aug. 2004

<http://www.aksupta.com/Thoughts/destiny.htm>: 2.

³⁵ Birchfield, Steven. "Free Will, Fate and Destiny – Sides of the Same Coin?" *Divine Astrology*. 05 Aug. 2004

<http://home.online.no/~stebi/freewill.htm>: 6.

³⁶ "Religion". *Wikipedia*: 10.

³⁷ "Charismatic authority". *Wikipedia*. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charismatic_authority: 1.

³⁸ Thompson. *Religion*: 44.

religious leaders enjoy a high status as long as their followers believe in their proficiency in a certain field.³⁹ There usually exists a huge personality cult, which often includes the putting up of images of the leaders everywhere in the country.⁴⁰ They often gain a lot of influence over their followers and have, in the past, used their power both in positive and negative ways: While Gandhi used his influence to improve the conditions of the persons that were lowest in the hierarchy of Hinduism, many other religious guides that have gained a quasi-divine status in their disciples' eyes used their position to further their own interests. This has usually been done by exploiting the people's dependency on them, which went hand in hand with the former following the latter blindly and in a relatively passive way. The followers tend to regard their respective leader as omniscient, inerrant and as being the keeper of moral truth,⁴¹ thus disabling themselves of keeping a healthy critical mind towards both the leader's actions as well as to the underlying dogmas and doctrines.

Many religious leaders stir up discontent amongst the population about various issues and come up with a view of a better world thus fostering social change,⁴² but others try to keep the status quo at that time. Particularly the latter regularly use religion as justification for injustices of the present social order⁴³ and tend to impose their views on their followers so that extremist groups soon emerge. The members of such groups often resort to violence and force, which are accompanied by feelings of suspicion and hate and the determination to retaliate any alleged injustices. All these acts are grounded in intolerance, often including violent conversions, and are once again justified in the name of religion.⁴⁴ Holy texts are often taken literally, a tendency that is accompanied by narrow-mindedness and a black-and-white way of thinking that do not allow for doubt. The widespread dogmatic, uncritical conclusions beg questions, such as those of how they were derived.⁴⁵

Religious extremist group ideology means great limitations to the lives of the individuals,⁴⁶ such as sexual restrictions and censorship, the latter taking away one of the most fundamental rights of man, which is freedom of expression.

One instance in which such fundamentalist groups are bound to emerge is the existence of a majority-minority constellation in society, such as it has been the case with Muslim or Parsi

³⁹ Ibid: 64.

⁴⁰ "Charismatic Authority". Wikipedia: 1.

⁴¹ Shermer. Why People Believe Weird Things: xiv-xv.

⁴² Thompson. Religion: 44.

⁴³ Ibid: 4.

⁴⁴ Carlton. Religions in Society: 90-91;

and in: Cox, Sam. "Expressions of faith: End cycle of hate with love". Honolulu Advertiser. 6 Sep 2003. 05 Aug 2004 <http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2003/Sep/06/il/il26afaith.html>: 1.

⁴⁵ Shermer. Why People Believe Weird Things: 21.

⁴⁶ Thompson. Religion: 51.

groups in India. Members of those groups fear that their religion is in danger of becoming extinct. They try to retain their religion by creating strict rules and exercising excessive control over themselves and each other. In this way though they only create prisons by abolishing freedom.

Religious extremist groups, which tend to isolate themselves from other religious or non-religious influences and persons, neglect to recognise the benefits of exchange and communication with individuals who have a different outlook on life: Although there might initially be misunderstandings, outsiders to a religion have the advantage to approach its principles in a less involved and thus often in a less biased manner. They are thus more likely to question some of these principles or point out contradictions or incoherencies, which most adherents to a religion are not able to see due to their identification with the religion's doctrines. Inequalities and inhumane elements are often also pointed out by outsiders. They can easily create new impulses and new ways of seeing the world.

As Hinduism has shown, religious difference does not necessarily entail conflict, but different statements can instead be seen as a call for synthesis. In general, the aim is to enlarge and deepen our understanding of each other through dialogue between the faiths.

Only through such openness and such a broad-minded view of religion are individuals able to experience various positive effects of faith in their lives: In addition to the advantages mentioned above, which include self-development, they might also be able to enjoy religious knowledge and practice as cultural experiences that reflect beauty and value and that become a treasure to them. Furthermore, it has been proven that there is a tendency that persons who adhere strongly to a belief – provided that belief is inclusive and thus not very restrictive in nature – are usually in a very good state of mental health.⁴⁷

In respect to religion the novel *Untouchable* reveals first of all the perversity that priests and other high caste Hindus commit when they exclude in the name of religion some members from services and from even entering the temple itself.⁴⁸ It must strike those outcastes who are of a very religious disposition such as Bakha, who shows great respect for the Hindu gods and goddesses, as very unjust and inappropriate to follow such rules once they come to think about the utility of them and question the necessity of hierarchy that is part of the Hindu religion. Narayan expands this theme further in his novel, *The Dark Room*, in which the priest completely lacks a humanitarian attitude but instead pays close attention to a person's

⁴⁷ "Religion". [Wikipedia](#): 11.

⁴⁸ Anand. [Untouchable](#): 58.

background and behaves furthermore in a very misogynist, dishonest, unreliable and exploitative manner.⁴⁹

In addition, *Untouchable* focuses on the practise of conversion, arguing not only against it but also revealing the difficulties of making persons who have grown up with completely different religious notions understand some of the principles of another religion, which is in this case Christianity. Ideas such as the Holy Trinity that are now more often than not merely accepted without being questioned before by the religion's disciples, are now looked at more closely and sometimes also doubted.⁵⁰ Bakha when being confronted with these teachings by the old sahib also misunderstands many things of the sahib's narrative because he takes everything told by him literally. However, he as an outsider to the Christian faith also gives impulses that seem to be worth thinking about, such as his criticism of the core ideas of Christianity, including the one that man is sinful by nature. Having grown up in a society where inequality is the norm, he welcomes on the other hand Christianity's rejection to make differences between people regarding their status and thus their rights in society. The person of Bakha shows how long established truths of religion can be challenged by new ways of seeing the world and how this can particularly be done by an outsider and non-believer.

In Raja Rao's novel *Kanthapura* a close, rural community is presented to the reader where religion plays an important role. The villagers of Kanthapura have their own very local goddess, such as each of the neighbouring villages seems to have one, and many rites and festivals are dedicated to her. Belief in the village goddess Kenchamma, which remains important till the very end of the novel⁵¹, also creates superstition that is narrow-minded and can even take on dangerous forms, for example when the villagers attribute a deeper meaning to illness and merely trust in their goddess in respect to healing.⁵² A similar form of superstition is shown in Jhabvala's novel, *Heat and Dust*, in which certain beliefs serve as a justification for the use of violence such as when Ritu's mental illness is attributed to the workings of an evil spirit that has to be exorcised by applying hot iron to various parts of Ritu's body.⁵³ In Narayan's novel, *The Dark Room*, superstition in the form of adopting a

⁴⁹ Narayan. *The Dark Room*: 167.

⁵⁰ Anand. *Untouchable*: 127-28.

⁵¹ Rao. *Kanthapura*: 258.

⁵² *Ibid.*: 9.

⁵³ Jhabvala. *Heat and Dust*: 81.

passive fatalist view of life makes the female protagonist, Savitri, accept her suffering as something that has to be borne.⁵⁴

In *Kanthapura*, however, a suggestion of an increasing tolerance towards other religions is achieved at the same time by the people's adherence to Gandhi's teachings of equality that do not just refer to castes, but also to different religions.

There is nevertheless also a certain danger involved that could lead the Indians in the novel to a great dependency and to a neglect of their own common sense or beliefs. This danger results from the elevation of leader figures such as Gandhi and to a lesser extent Moorthy, who gain a quasi-divine status in people's minds. Gandhi is described as the "Mountain-god"⁵⁵ and the powers that are ascribed to him and to Moorthy certainly seem to be of a divine character: "... and so from that day we knew there were the Small Mountain and the Big Mountain to protect us."⁵⁶

Anita Desai's novel, *Clear Light of Day*, attributes a very positive role to religion at first: The boy, Raja, enjoys the sense of communion that is strongly present in his neighbour's, Hyder Ali's, house. He appreciates the times when the family members regularly gather in order to enjoy Islam's rich and beautiful poetry.⁵⁷ Not only does he feel enriched when participating in the family's gatherings, his awoken love of Islamic writings makes him wish to go to a Muslim College where he could study Islam in more detail. However, his father, a Hindu, does not tolerate his new interest and vehemently forbids him to take up Islamic studies. Instead he sends Raja to a Hindu College to do a course in English Literature, hoping Raja will forget his attraction to Islam. In the college, Raja gets into a conflict with the other boys, who are fanatical Hindus who support their religion at any cost. Raja thus gets an insight into the Hindu-Muslim conflict, which has also been depicted in Jhabvala's novel, *Heat and Dust*, when focusing on the time of the 1920s⁵⁸, and its repercussions for Muslims: Hyder Ali and his family are among many Muslims who have to escape to a safer place due to the threats they are faced with.⁵⁹

Religion, which has once seemed to give people a sense of personal fulfilment, has been turned into a nasty web of contestations, suspicion and urges to retaliate.

⁵⁴ Narayan. *The Dark Room*: 170.

⁵⁵ Rao. *Kanthapura*: 176.

⁵⁶ Ibid: 177.

⁵⁷ Desai. *Clear Light of Day*: 49.

⁵⁸ Jhabvala. *Heat and Dust*: 66.

⁵⁹ Desai. *Clear Light of Day*: 60-61.

Although Raja eventually gives up his pursuit of Islam and becomes a very secular businessman, his former sense of religious awe that made such a great impression on him, is to some extent still present in Bim with whom he once shared his written Urdu verses and which Bim now reads again and finds her mind become calm.⁶⁰ The novel is a reminder of the beauty and value of true religious feeling as well as a warning not to abuse religion as a tool of intolerance that fosters hate and violence.

The various forms of religion in *White Teeth* serve as an anchor to which the individuals hold on in the modern and rather chaotic world they live in and in which they seem to have lost their sense of identity, a development that has also been described in *The Buddha of Suburbia* where particularly the migrants, Haroon and Anwar, feel a great need for religion and spirituality.⁶¹ Smith shows in *White Teeth* that such individuals unfortunately develop fixations and as a result become quite intolerant towards persons who are non-believers. At times, many of the believers' faiths turn out to be quite extreme in the course of the novel. Hortense, Irie's grandmother, is extreme in her attempt to convert people to the faith of Jehova's Witnesses: Although her daughter Clara gives up this faith, Hortense does not give up the belief in her powers of conversion, trying in vain to convince Irie of her prediction that the end of the world is near.⁶² Clara's former boyfriend, Ryan, has converted to this faith and displays the black-and-white way of thinking that is typical of extreme viewpoints. He even replaces in his mind and his behaviour the fundamental rights of a citizen by a doctrine that claims to be always right.⁶³ His and Hortense's faith is presented in a rather ludicrous fashion that tries to impose on other people's lives and remains utterly limiting.

Samad is not able to reconcile his Muslim faith with the very secular way of life his children have chosen to live, considering Islam in danger of losing any importance it might ever have had in the Western world. The conviction that the West is most of all faithless and secular is also held by the migrants, Haroon and Anwar, in *The Buddha of Suburbia*. Samad is especially devastated about the failure of his project of turning Magid into a convinced Muslim who values Islam's long tradition: He watches in horror how his son disregards all the rules that a Muslim has to observe, such as the avoidance of pork in his diet.⁶⁴ Samad's belief also gets into conflict with his sexual needs, which the sexually reticent Alsana does not fully satisfy. He suffers strong pangs of conscience when he masturbates and during his affair with

⁶⁰ Ibid: 167-68.

⁶¹ Kureishi. *The Buddha of Suburbia*: 64.

⁶² Smith. *White Teeth*: 395.

⁶³ Ibid: 510.

⁶⁴ Ibid: 454-56.

his sons' music teacher, Miss Poppy Burt-Jones. However, instead of developing a sense of moral guilt and responsibility towards Alsana, which might result in taking greater care of others and their feelings in general, he is merely concerned with his own personal salvation. In this way, his faith not only makes him suffer, but it makes him also more careless about other people, redirecting his sense of moral obligation from human beings to god. Millat also points out that Samad is not at all consistent in the pursuit of his faith and can therefore not prescribe others how they should be living as Muslims.⁶⁵

Millat himself, after having been an extremely worldly, licentious, drug-taking and alcohol-drinking youngster who had not shown any interest in Islam whatsoever, suddenly turns to a very fundamental form of Islam, a change that is mirrored in Anwar's turn to an exclusive conception of religion in *The Buddha of Suburbia*.⁶⁶ It is certainly the strong feeling of community Millat encounters there and the deep conviction about having discovered 'The Truth' that makes him adopt this belief: He hopes to give his vague sense of identity something it can build on. Ironically, Millat, being convinced about the rightness of the ideas this Islamic group KEVIN upholds, tries to lead a very chaste life now.⁶⁷ He thus imposes deep restrictions on himself by suppressing his sexual needs as much as he can. Furthermore, he is so much drawn into this new way of life that he does not even shy away from the use of violence against people whose principles are in direct opposition to his. Not only is he intent on taking the course of violent action against the geneticist Marcus Chalfen and his supporters,⁶⁸ he also takes part in the riots in Bradford that culminate in the burning of Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*.⁶⁹ It is certainly typical of the narrow and extremely intolerant way of thinking such groups display that they do not even listen to, or in this case, read what the other person has to say. Hearsay and comments or passages that are taken out of context are enough to accuse a person of blasphemy. Smith shows here how the book-burning in Bradford could happen by exploring the nature of extremist beliefs, beliefs that have distorted the faith as it was understood in the first place: "But it's nothing to do with Islam proper."⁷⁰ Like all fundamentalists, Millat ends up losing all sense of proportion and cannot fully respect anyone any longer who does not live according to the rules of his faith – here, the faith as understood by KEVIN.

⁶⁵ Ibid: 334.

⁶⁶ Kureishi. *The Buddha of Suburbia*: 171-72.

⁶⁷ Smith. *White Teeth*: 372ff.

⁶⁸ Ibid: 533.

⁶⁹ Ibid: 237.

⁷⁰ Ibid: 347.

Religion in *White Teeth* is revealed as a destructive force that does not only leave its adherents in very confined ways of thinking, but that sometimes also does harm to others.

Rohinton Mistry focuses in his recent novel, *Family Matters*, on the religion of the contemporary Parsi community in India: He shows how many people have difficulties with the declining importance of Zoroastrianism, which is the world's oldest revealed religion. As a result of many Parsis' concerns about the future of their religion, they become extreme in their imposition of religious rules on others.

One of the novel's characters, Yezad, turns to Parsi values and Zoroastrianism when his life becomes very difficult with financial worries and the burden of having Nariman in the house, the latter needing constant care after a fall. Religion to Yezad is now a comfort that enables him not to completely give up hope for better life circumstances. However, he does not really become free by his newly found religion. Instead his need for stability and security let him create prisons for himself and others. Religious rules have become something concrete to him, a world that contains order and clarity. By demanding the observation of these rules from others as well he puts pressure on them and tries to restrict their freedom in the same way as Nariman's father has once done. His eldest son Murad rejects to adhere to the numerous religious rituals his father deems so important.⁷¹ Murad recognises the fanaticism behind his father's religious obsessions that makes the latter use religion as a weapon instead of regarding it as a peacekeeping force. In contrast to his father, Murad can only accept a religion that is also open to new influences, the latter that it can integrate into its various traditions. Such a compromise between Yezad's narrow-minded beliefs and Murad's protests against these religious principles is found at the end when Yezad does not cling to the same extent to religious rules any more as he did at the beginning and Murad on his part participates in a religious ceremony.⁷²

Another instance of religious fundamentalism is displayed in the depiction of the actions of the Shiv Sena, which propagates Hindu values by the use of violence. The Hindu identity the Shiv Sena members propose is founded on sharp enmity towards other groups, predominantly towards Muslims. Not unsurprisingly for such an extremist group the Shiv Sena practises severe censorship:⁷³ Artists cannot work and express themselves freely any longer, being more often than not accused of blasphemy. Sexuality is also a sensitive topic to them, as its representation in various publications often appears to interfere with orthodox moral values.

⁷¹ Mistry. *Family Matters*: 463-64.

⁷² Ibid: 496-98.

⁷³ Ibid: 273.

The group has become so powerful that its doctrines strongly influence the police force.⁷⁴ The drawback for many non-orthodox or non-Hindu groups is that they are all judged now by Shiv Sena values.

These religious groups mentioned in the novel have suffered a loss of members and many of their followers find comfort in and hope for their groups' survival in the various dogmas that knit the communities more closely together.

In addition, individuals like Yezad who find themselves in particularly difficult life circumstances also often turn towards extreme forms of religion without noticing that these religious forms fail to attain the original aim of religion: They do not liberate the individual and thus give them a richer life, but turn them into a dependent human being whose autonomy is severely undermined. Although Mistry shows our present time as being definitely not any less conducive to extremism than certain periods in the past, he also points out that we all have the freedom to choose other ways of dealing with either personal problems or with our fear of the extinction of a religious tradition. At the end of the novel he illustrates how openness and the integration of influences lead to happier and more fulfilling lives and also to better relations between individuals.

In Ali's novel, *Brick Lane*, religious notions play a role in several different ways: It is once again the notion of fate that is of major significance to the main character, Nazneen, who has internalised from an early age her mother's belief in fate as determining each person's life.⁷⁵ Nazneen's mother's adherence to a passive form of fatalism is revealed in that she does not call for the doctor when her daughter does not feed at all after her birth. As in Rao's novel, *Kanthapura*, and in Narayan's work, *The Dark Room*, taking any action seems wrong to her mother, as it would be a struggle against one's fate, which she regards as a major offence: "Fighting against one's Fate can weaken the blood. Sometimes, or perhaps most times, it can be fatal."⁷⁶ The fact that Nazneen continued to live after having been left to her fate is regarded as a proof for the rightness of non-interference with things and of passivity in life in general. It is of course due to the limited range of possibilities that are open to Nazneen's mother that it is easiest for her not to try to exert a certain influence but to fall back on a completely impassive attitude, which she justifies by the idea of fate, of letting god's will be done. Nazneen emulates this behaviour after her mother's death and is concerned that her sister Hasina might be punished for fighting so hard against her fate, but gradually she starts

⁷⁴ Ibid: 155.

⁷⁵ Ali, *Brick Lane*: 11.

⁷⁶ Ibid: 10.

questioning the veracity of fate as it has been presented by her mother and also reveals the notion to be a very vague and indeterminate one: She thinks, for example, that it is not certain that Hasina does in fact struggle against her fate. Instead, her actions could also be interpreted as following her fate. This alternative interpretation is possible because the nature of a person's fate is not revealed to the person or to other people around this individual and could therefore take on any form. Nazneen finally rejects an idea of fate that is linked with impassivity when her little son, Raqib, falls very ill: Instead of 'leaving him to his fate', she takes action and takes him to hospital. She seems thus to understand fate in a new way, namely as being the result of her own actions. It can certainly be seen as an expression of her matured views on autonomy that she does not later blame herself for having caused Raqib's death by getting help for him.

Nazneen also uses religious practice, such as her regular prayer, for a while as a distraction from her misery at home. Religious rituals are used as a dampener to her desires and needs, but do not really fulfil their primary function, namely to be an expression of devotion and love of god.⁷⁷

As in Jhabvala's *Heat and Dust* there is also still the superstitious belief in persons being possessed by an evil spirit if they show symptoms of madness. Again exorcisms are regarded as the only effective cure for it. This is what Nazneen's mother has to undergo when she in fact revolts a few times against 'her fate' by neglecting her appearance and then by attacking her husband.⁷⁸ The people around her do not recognise that her violent outbursts are merely an expression of her extreme suffering and of her feeling of imprisonment and seek spiritual explanations instead.

Religion also plays an important role in the meetings of the Muslim association of the Bengal Tigers, which Karim and other Muslims have founded. This association is the antidote to Chanu's liberal understanding of religion in general and of Islam in particular, which is expressed in teaching his daughters all the major religions and in showing them how they are linked and not opposing forces.⁷⁹ While Chanu holds an inclusivist view of religion and fosters better understanding of other religions through the proliferation of knowledge, thus adopting a discursive dialogic approach, Karim's group is an extremist one, which is founded on the idea that there is an enemy outside, which is the Christian community that they have to fight. The group, which cannot agree on many things, turns to violence in its extreme

⁷⁷ Ibid: 107, 169.

⁷⁸ Ibid: 332.

⁷⁹ Ibid: 161.

intolerance towards other ways of thinking and believing,⁸⁰ supports the idea of martyrdom⁸¹ that distorts Islam, and finally, losing focus of its ideas and aims, dies out.⁸² The formation of the group can also be regarded as a result of the insecurity of the Bengali Muslims in London where they are a minority. They feel threatened by the British Christian majority there and know no other way to come to terms with their insecurity than by the formation of a militant group. It is therefore race and nationality that contribute to the adoption of fundamentalist views, the latter giving a lie to true religious feelings.

Early Anglo-Indian novels stress how persons in religious offices, such as priests, often abuse their power to exploit vulnerable people, mostly women. Both the early as well as the later novels point out the existence of superstition among many persons, which manifests itself for example in attributing a religious cause to extremely conspicuous behaviour and in believing to be able to cure certain alleged abnormalities in persons that are seen to be the source of such behaviour by religious means such as exorcisms. Such measures, which often take on quite cruel forms, have been applied to individuals for a long time now and are still used more often than it is commonly assumed.

There is also no sign that extremism and fundamentalism abate over time. The texts show that they emerge when people strongly define themselves through their religion and how this self-definition involves insecurity: Persons who turn to fundamentalism usually see other beliefs as a threat to their own identity and feel they have to attack other beliefs and to impose their beliefs on them. Quite a few of the novels' characters resort to religion in this way as an excuse for violence.

On the whole there is not much of a positive development in the way religion is dealt with by the various individuals. However, there are a few examples that capture the beauty of religious feeling and religion's emphasis on the love of others and on a lively community spirit. These examples serve as a reminder of what religion can be by revealing its true essence and potential, which also reveal that fundamentalism and extremism are in fact distortions of the nature of religion.

⁸⁰ Ibid: 212ff.

⁸¹ Ibid: 318.

⁸² Ibid: 407.

II.3.6. The individual within the context of migration

Having in previous subchapters already depicted various migration movements to India as well as the notion of being a migrant as such, the latter which will be defined in more detail in a later section on Salman Rushdie's background, I will now focus more specifically on Indian migration movements. These movements will be of particular importance to understand the situations the characters of more recent Anglo-Indian novels find themselves in.

Early migration from the subcontinent took place when Buddhist missionaries decided to travel and spread their messages.¹ In addition, Hindu kingdoms of medieval Southeast Asia were attractive to Indian labour and craftsmen. However, due to the Indian Ocean trading system, Indians decided to go not only to Southeast Asia, but also to East Africa and the Middle East.

The second important migration wave occurred as a result of 19th century British imperialism: In view of a declining birth rate in Britain and the abolition of slavery in the Caribbean, the British had to find new labourers in order to pursue their aim of exploiting the Empire's resources and found these new labourers among the 250 million inhabitants of India. Indian labourers were thus sent to the various British colonies, having been promised good wages and the fare for their return journey home. The reality, however, was rather disillusioning, many Indian labourers having to live in poverty and generally bad conditions without the realistic hope of a return journey. They could be defined as the "global working class of the British Empire"². Many Indians also joined the British colonial service, which promised them high pay. The Indian communities abroad focussed, particularly after the system of indentured labour was abolished in 1911, a lot on their own culture and distanced themselves in this way from other communities. They were often accused of exploiting the native population and of only pursuing the aim of amassing a lot of wealth in a very self-centred manner. The hostile views on Indians underlying such accusations often led to a particularly bad treatment of Indians abroad by the dominant group in a country, such as it was the case in Uganda and Kenya, from where many Indians were finally evicted.³ Indian migrants were also used by the white regime in South Africa, which wanted them to support the practise of apartheid. To achieve this aim many white officials pointed out the differences

¹ "The Indian Diaspora". 14 November 2003. <http://www.ahtg.net/TPA/indiasep.html>: 1.

² Ibid: 1.

³ "II. The Future of Indians in the Diaspora". [Punjabilok](http://www.punjabilok.com/heritage/the_future_indians_in_the_diaspora.htm). 14 November 2003. http://www.punjabilok.com/heritage/the_future_indians_in_the_diaspora.htm: 2.

between the Indians, other apartheid groups and themselves, thus inflicting a way of thinking on Indian migrants that culminated in strong discrimination.

The beginning of the third crucial migration wave can be dated back to the time of Indian independence in 1947.⁴ Instead of working for the European colonizers in the colonies, Indians now went to the colonizers' homelands, especially to Britain. Those Indians who were skilled workers and settled down there came soon to be regarded as a medium between the Indian and world economies due to the impact they had on the economy. There is a strong possibility that Indian migrants, who are continuously expanding in number, contribute to the first economic boom of the 21st century, as they have established themselves in excellent professions and have the highest income per person when compared to other groups.⁵ This development can be explained by the great zest and dedication most Indians abroad have shown in their work and careers. In view of the predominantly economic motives Indians had for emigrating to Britain or other first world countries, it is often difficult to clearly differentiate between voluntary and forced migration: In these cases Indians were driven to migrate due to economic disadvantages or even suffering at home, but if we can call it 'forced' in the sense of not having another opportunity to lead a secure life remains questionable. Especially the numerous affluent Indians tend to maintain close connections with India, which becomes obvious in marriage arrangements between the places and the continuation of kinship networks.⁶ Language and religion have become the most important denominators of identities among many Indian migrants.

Other very recent Indian migration movements are those to Gulf countries where the infrastructure needs to be improved dramatically and where the construction sector therefore offers Indian migrants enough work. However, unlike many Indian migrants living in the West who have prospered and achieved a fairly high standard of living, Indians living and working in the Gulf countries are largely unskilled or semi-skilled and have to live in communal abodes far away from their families.

If we speak of Indian migration it is vital to examine the associated phenomenon of diaspora as well. The concept of diaspora was first used by the ancient Greeks, to whom it meant migration and colonisation.⁷ It underwent a change when the Jews, Armenians and Africans mainly defined it as the loss of a homeland to which they fervently longed to return.

⁴ "The Indian Diaspora". <http://www.ahtg.net/TpA/indiasp.html>: 3.

⁵ "The Future of Indians in the Diaspora": 1.

⁶ "The Indian Diaspora". 14 November 2003. <http://www.uohyd.ernet.in/sss/cinddiaspora/Indian.html>: 2.

⁷ Georgiou, Myria. "Thinking Diaspora: Why Diaspora is a Key Concept for Understanding Multicultural Europe". *The Multicultural Skyscraper Newsletter*. Vol. 1 No. 4. 4 December 2001. London School of Economics. 14 November 2003. <http://www.multicultural.net/newsletter/article/issue4-georgiou.htm>: 1.

Nowadays it mainly signifies once again the understanding of migration and persons' attachments and relations that are not restricted to a nation. Diaspora depicts the metamorphic processes that underlie identity formations and therefore reveals identities as being heterogeneous and fluid. Identities emerge and are sustained through mixing. This implies the continuous occurrence of instabilities within an individual and a community as well as within society when different cultures come into contact. Multiple cultures might be compatible, but sometimes they appear to be mainly contradictory so that it needs intense communication with numerous negotiations on a wide range of issues to form valuable and constructive relationships. Minorities in diaspora also reflect internal diversity, particularly between the generations, one generation often being the one that has actually physically migrated and consecutive ones, which have always lived in the country of their ancestors' settlement. Unsurprisingly, there are constant power struggles and disputes, which take place both within a culture and between cultures. There is always specificity to the experience of certain groups who at some stage migrated, as the particular historical events and conditions leading to migration give each migrant community its own character. The specific circumstances of each migratory process also might contribute to a better understanding of discrimination or processes of inclusion or exclusion, which can differ widely between the ethnic minorities. Diaspora therefore concentrates on how communities are formed and highlights ethnicity as a reference point across nations over time.

In the case of the Indian diaspora we could say that it shows India as a mobile and dynamic nation that undergoes changes that take their beginning far away from actual Indian land.⁸ India is thus more than a specific place that is clearly located: It also is to a large extent an imaginary place with many facets that developed from historical processes like colonialism and post-colonialism. The ideas of India therefore hugely differ and are largely shaped by the new influences Indian migrants experience in their respective host countries. An Indian migrant in Uganda encounters different ways of life as well as different reactions to his presence there by the native population from an Indian who has chosen to settle down in England. 'Nation' in the context of migration is always something constructed and partly fictitious. This conception of nation allows Indians to regard themselves both as Indian and at the same time as belonging to places like the United States and England, which are their actual abodes. It is also not uncommon for the Indian diaspora to adopt several nationalities. The Indian diaspora therefore incorporates global and local elements, is national and international at the same time and one of its characteristics is the lack of logical cohesion

between place, culture and identity. The spread of cultural products in the arts, such as the increasing popularity of Indian novels or films in many Western countries, displays the close relations between different places, the proliferation of these goods being the result of globalization tendencies that accompanied migration processes.⁹ Distinctions between first and third world now become porous or fuzzy in the minds of the new migrants.¹⁰

Transnationalism thus becomes increasingly important, describing how individuals can create strong links between societies and contribute to the transformation processes of at least two different nations.

Indianness, which has from the start always been conceived as an umbrella term comprising a great number of particularities of the various communities in India, such as caste and status issues, religion and rites or political affiliations, is now understood in an even wider scope and is therefore constantly thought in new ways and is renegotiated. The term 'home' needs to be redefined as well: 'Home' for most Indian migrants has become associated with the freedom to choose their way of life and their place of abode, a freedom that was not open on such scale to former generations.¹¹ The changes the idea of home underwent, soon gave rise to even more imaginary conceptions of it. It can signify a language, certain values and ideas or particular loyalties one forms, which are all suffused with great emotional value. Indian migrants have still longed for firm ground under their feet, thus occasionally longing back to a more fixed sense of home, but at the same time most of them have started to accept the new definition of the term, which has also given them a better understanding of other migrants in those cases when they approached them with openness. It is only those Indians, mainly resident but also a few non-resident Indians, who have a very orthodox and limited understanding of Indianness, who are concerned about these new, open-minded ways of conceiving it and fear that an important part of their identities gets lost in such processes of translation.¹² Very unconstructive attempts of dealing with fears of losing one's heritage have been those that include a retreat into the family circle, the lack of readiness to engage in public affairs and the uncritical adherence to traditions and customs, in short a great unwillingness to establish contact with the new surroundings and with the people there.¹³

⁸ Shukla, Sandhya. "Introduction. Geographies of Indianness." *India abroad*. 14 November 2003. <http://pup.princeton.edu/chapters/i7676.pdf>: 3.

⁹ Ibid: 20-21.

¹⁰ Ibid: 10.

¹¹ "Asian Journey – The Journey Home". *Time Asia*. issue of 18 August – 25 August 2003. 14 November 2003. <http://www.time.com/time/asia/2003/journey/story.html>: 2.

¹² Shukla, Sandhya. "Introduction – Geographies of Indianness": 10.

¹³ "II: The Future of Indians in the Diaspora". *Punjabilok*: 3.

The advantages of the experience of migration, such as the broadening of one's horizon through new intercultural contacts, should outweigh the disadvantages though in case the migrant is open and willing enough to engage with new influences and situations and to become a valuable agent in the global world.

Anita Desai gives us in her novel, *Clear Light of Day*, an example of one-sided representations of a place that has been left behind. Tara's husband, Bakul, who has spent his childhood and youth in India, and has then migrated to America with Tara, does not represent his original homeland in its complexity at all, but instead exoticises it completely in order to make people interested in it and make them go and pay a visit to the country. By speaking of the Taj Mahal, Indian philosophy, music and art he emphasises a certain kind of already existing stereotype about the country that is, although positive in its nature, misleading and distorts Indian reality:¹⁴ Bim reminds him how prevalent famine, bribery and corruption are in the country as well and how his narratives about India amount to hypocrisy, no matter if he is an ambassador for the country or not. The problem with Bakul's narratives is that they also support one-sided identity constructions of the people living in India, which ties completely in with what the colonizers did in the past, presenting both the place and the people as something completely different from anything in the West, therefore creating the notion of the 'other', the latter being separated from the people in the Western world by a deep, at times a seemingly insurmountable gulf. Bakul acknowledges that he creates a myth and that he would not try to do this in his homeland, as he does not have to explain there what the country is like.

The context of migration can thus be used not only as a chance to give people more knowledge about a place that is foreign to them, it can also be abused by the persons who know both places, deceiving others to create an imaginary place that is more appealing, more desirable, but certainly also farer away from the truth. As a result, there cannot be a real cultural appropriation and engagement on both sides, such as it would be advantageous when people from different cultures meet and try to establish a dialogue.

Naipaul sketches in his travelogue, *India - A Million Mutinies Now*, his experiences as a descendent of Indians who once migrated to Trinidad and settled down there. He describes how he and other people of his generation created images of the country of their ancestors that had often not very much to do with the real country. Furthermore he observes the need

¹⁴ Desai. *Clear Light of Day*: 35.

for a community that is particularly strong in exile. There the community consists of the descendents of Indians, who form a particularly close bond on the basis of race rather than of nationality. In India he finds that the need for community takes on rather different forms: where race and nationality do not play a dominant role any longer, clan, caste, region and family become important factors of identification and belonging.¹⁵ Naipaul's travels have enabled him to become aware of the similarities and differences in people's attempts at self-determination in exile as well as in the homeland: In spite of the different character of these attempts the strategy of creating groups is the same. It is done on the basis of an allegedly shared characteristic or belief that includes as well as excludes at the same time. Boundaries are inevitably drawn in the process, but a traveller or migrant such as Naipaul is in a better position to recognise, question and thus transcend them.

Pankaj Mishra's novel, *The Romantics*, focuses on the encounter between European exiles who have chosen to live in India for some time to absorb the country's cultural richness, and Indian Brahmins with a particular focus on the protagonist Samar. The novel celebrates the openness of both the Europeans and the Indians towards each others' different traditions and backgrounds and, like Hariharan's *When Dreams Travel*, emphasises the potential inherent in travel and migration.

This openness that achieves to break down barriers is exemplified in the relationship between the Frenchwoman, Catherine, and the Indian, Anand. The difficulties they have to face in their relationship are certainly not to be underestimated: Anand is a poor Brahmin who is financially completely dependent on Catherine¹⁶, particularly so when he cannot find any work in France¹⁷ where he has gone with her. Furthermore, both their parents have deep-seated prejudices against foreigners and put up protective mechanisms to safeguard their identities. The couple manages to deal with these difficulties, as their love binds them strongly together and as they regard (their) cultural differences as enrichment to their lives. Throughout the novel, despite other complications such as Catherine's unfaithfulness, they never give up fighting for this union of love that appears, particularly culturally, to many of their acquaintances and friends as a very incongruous one.¹⁸ It is only at the very end that they split up because the burden of the relationship has become too strong. In spite of this outcome

¹⁵ Naipaul. *India – A Million Mutinies Now*: 7-8.

¹⁶ Mishra. *The Romantics*: 46.

¹⁷ *Ibid*: 271-72.

¹⁸ *Ibid*: 49.

there remains a sense of belief in other relationships such as this one to have a great chance to work out.

Despite the young Europeans' and Indians' sincere interest in each other, preconceptions that mainly result from a lack of knowledge and occasionally lead to the use of exoticism or to condescension are nevertheless existent on both sides.¹⁹ Particularly Samar becomes very much aware of his ignorance of European culture and often wonders whether certain ways of thinking or behaving can be regarded as typical of the other culture or not.²⁰ He realises that even the kind of vocabulary that is used by the Westerners is very different from his. He only gets to know the people he meets very gradually and has constantly to readjust his views on and his impressions of them. This process reflects the general process of constructing a person's identity in our minds and making sense of it by putting the various experiences with this individual together into something 'whole', such as one would do in a jigsaw puzzle. In the case of Samar one could say that he is confronted with a rather difficult jigsaw puzzle due to the cultural differences that have to be taken into account when trying to understand another person. The significance of role attribution is undeniably present in this process.²¹ In Samar the encounters with the Europeans, and particularly with the two women he gets closer to, leaves a craving behind to learn more about influences that have so far been alien to him and of seeing more than the world he has grown up in, of whose smallness he becomes acutely aware.²² These experiences have shown him the potential inherent in cross-cultural exchanges and have thus made him more knowledgeable and broad-minded.

White Teeth deals intensely with the repercussions of migration by illuminating both the lives of the actual, namely the first-generation immigrants, as well as those of their children. Both generations are confronted with a conflict of loyalties and experience moments of complete disorientation²³ even though the underlying experiences are often very different in kind and in intensity between the generations and also between the individuals of the same generation: Samad and his wife Alsana, for example, differ in their views on Britain insofar as Alsana can in some ways be more content to live in Britain, whereas Samad has an idealised vision of Bangladesh in his mind that offers all the qualities to lead a good and successful life. His idealization of his country of origin and the struggles he has with assimilation, which are

¹⁹ Ibid: 90-91.

²⁰ Ibid: 41-44.

²¹ Ibid: 11, 62-63, 113.

²² Ibid: 65.

²³ Smith. *White Teeth*: 327, 407.

mirrored in the character of Chanu in Ali's novel *Brick Lane*²⁴, go so far that he sends one of his sons there without telling him or any other member of the family about his plans.²⁵

Naturally his unrealistic belief in maintaining cultural purity proves to be totally misplaced: Samad is highly influenced by the aspects of life that surround him in London without even being aware of it.²⁶ Even Alsana, who has better adjusted to British life than her husband, harbours this fear of cultural and racial mixtures and is horrified by the thought of Millat mixing with white girls.²⁷

The various minorities living in Britain also have strong preconceptions of each other in respect to their daily habits and customs, which prove to be more often wrong than right. In addition, they are also prone to indulge in stereotypes, such as Alsana's attribution of a kind of general friendliness to Caribbean people, which she sees reflected in Clara's nature.²⁸

Samad's and Alsana's children, Magid and Millat, also have moments of confusion: They soon feel limited by Samad's narrow viewpoints that do not allow for any Western influences. Millat rebels by fully embracing Western youth culture with its gangs, cheekiness, drug experimentation and indulgence in sex. This culture has even its own language, which Samad is ignorant of²⁹. However, Millat soon notices that other, more Eastern aspects are also an integral part of him as part of his upbringing. Not being able to successfully integrate these aspects, he feels torn in his cultural allegiance: "... there remained an ever present anger and hurt, the feeling of belonging nowhere that comes to people who belong everywhere."³⁰ He can only go from one extreme to the other: Abandoning his wild lifestyle, he joins a fundamentalist group that is essentially against all worldly enjoyments and pursuits that are normally associated with the West. Both approaches impose strong limitations on him, as they either suppress his spiritual or his physical and sexual needs.

Similarly, Magid is not inclined to integrate his experiences of Bangladesh into his rather Western mindset, which surfaces early on when he temporarily wants to be called by the English version of his name.³¹ He displays a completely uncritical view on Marcus Chalfen's great project of genetic manipulation and becomes so completely absorbed in the Chalfen's

²⁴ Ali. *Brick Lane*: 58, 93.

²⁵ Smith. *White Teeth*: 208-09.

²⁶ *Ibid*: 190.

²⁷ *Ibid*: 286.

²⁸ *Ibid*: 65.

²⁹ *Ibid*: 216.

³⁰ *Ibid*: 269.

³¹ *Ibid*: 151.

way of life that we can here speak of him adopting a new sub-culture, which is – by the Chalfen family themselves – called “Chalfenism”³².

Irie struggles seriously with her Caribbean looks, an inheritance from her (grand-) mother, and her feeling of being British and of wanting to be acknowledged as a white British person. She thus tries to change her naturally curly Afro hairstyle into a straight one.³³ By doing so she denies a part of herself that she does not like and even suffers from. Like Millat, Irie is also radical in her initial refusal of a part of her inheritance and then in her bizarre turn towards it: She suddenly wants to visit Jamaica, hoping to trace her ancestors’ and therefore also her own origin, thus identifying with a country that is really unknown to her.³⁴

In comparison to these three young second-generation immigrants, Karim in Kureishi’s *The Buddha of Suburbia* is able in the end to overcome radical one-sided constructions of belonging and instead adopts a rather transcultural view.

The confusion the characters suffer from in *White Teeth* is also shown in the stereotyping of people who are not white, but of a different skin colour: It is often wrongly automatically assumed that such people are all migrants coming from a country known to the majority of British society. Such assumptions do not take into consideration second- or third-generation immigrants, who might not look like a prototypical British person, the latter being still considered as white, but who have the British nationality and were born and brought up in Britain.³⁵ Racism is also at work insofar as some professions are generally not open to non-white persons. Discrimination has not ceased to exist, such as in the example of Archie not being invited to a business dinner due to his wife’s racial origin.³⁶

Multicultural (British) society is also portrayed by the use of the allegory of a diverse flower garden.³⁷ The conviction that this garden needs some help in order to bloom suggests the need not only to establish new laws regarding immigration and rules that clearly state and protect the rights of minority groups, a necessity that is underlined in *Brick Lane*³⁸, but also to establish a more intense dialogue and start thinking in trans- rather than in multicultural ways. An example of such a transcultural approach can be found in Mr Kapur’s engagement with and appreciation of the various communities in Bombay in Mistry’s *Family Matters*.³⁹ *White Teeth* also suggests that compromises are often necessary in the form that each group or

³² Ibid: 314.

³³ Ibid: 274ff.

³⁴ Ibid: 402.

³⁵ Ibid: 155-56, 319.

³⁶ Ibid: 71-73.

³⁷ Ibid: 309-10.

³⁸ Ali. *Brick Lane*: 406.

³⁹ Mistry. *Family Matters*: 159, 292, 362.

individual has to sacrifice some freedom or rights in order to secure a functioning society that is also democratic in character. If a multicultural society granted every group all rights they demand⁴⁰, this society would not be more than a farce that was founded on chaos and anarchy.

The novel ridicules a thoughtless celebration of a diverse society that neglects the splits and rifts within it and the hostile discrimination that exists so often between its groups. It also portrays, similar to Ali's work *Brick Lane*, the difficulties individuals encounter in integrating various aspects of their selves successfully, these aspects being the result of their own or their (grand-) parents' background⁴¹ and of the numerous other influences they encounter daily. Creating and maintaining a mutually enriching life in a society that has space for many ways of being and living is a challenging and hard task, but it is nevertheless a task that should be tackled seriously in order to avoid the forms of intolerance delineated in the novel.

Amitav Ghosh's *Glass Palace* deals with the several migrations the protagonists undergo focusing on the three Asian countries, Burma, Malaya and India but also mentioning Britain and the United States. These migrations are very different in nature in that some of them are forced and others are voluntary and therefore chosen migrations. One forced emigration leads the Burmese King, the Queen and their household from Burma to India where they have to live in permanent exile for a long time.⁴² A process of cultural adaptation takes place quite soon, which particularly concerns the younger generation, which adopts Indian dress and languages. Even the Queen, who finds it very hard to adjust to the new life circumstances in India, gradually starts showing an interest in Indian culture, especially in Indian clothes.⁴³ These instances of adapting to the new country they now live in involve a gradual distancing from the mother country. They can be defined as a process of building a new home elsewhere. Dolly has fully undergone this process: She defines her new home in terms of Ratnagiri and not Burma any longer, as she has a rather vague memory of Mandalay where she believes she would now be a foreigner and a trespasser. This shows again how the concept of home can shift and is rather relative in nature. When Dolly leaves India together with Rajkumar, she embarks on another journey that promises new departures in her life and that might lead her to a new home.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Smith. *White Teeth*: 129-31.

⁴¹ It is this background that creates the difficulties, as it dispenses with the simplistic notion that the individual is a blank sheet of paper, which receives passively imprints from the outside. see page 465.

⁴² Ghosh. *The Glass Palace*: 60.

⁴³ Ibid: 109.

⁴⁴ Ibid: 119.

Forced migrations also occur in respect to hiring a new labour force: Indians go to Burma where there is a shortage of labour and the British Colonial Government try to hire Indian workers for the plantations. The Indians are expected to do the work that the Burmese would not put up with due to the terrible work conditions.⁴⁵ They are exploited there such as Malaya's migrant workers have to suffer harsh work conditions to increase the country's prosperity.

Uma, however, has consciously chosen to emigrate. She first goes to Europe and then to America and does, in contrast to Dolly during her stay abroad, not become very alienated from her country of origin. She engages with issues of her homeland by joining the Indian Independence League and fighting there together with other Indians against colonialism and imperialism.⁴⁶ It is especially through the distance she has to her homeland that she becomes more aware of the inequalities and injustices there and of the necessity to intervene in cases such as that of the exploitation of Indian soldiers.

An important consequence of undertaking several migrations such as Dolly and Uma have done is the possibility of adopting and integrating various cultural aspects to which one shows allegiance. Dolly does this by giving her first child an Indian and a Burmese name,⁴⁷ which stresses the child's mixed background, his father being of Indian and Dolly being originally of Burmese origin. Later on Dolly's daughter-in-law, Manju, follows this tradition.⁴⁸ It is a celebration of the national and cultural heritage, which has once been despised during colonialism but which is now welcomed. The potential and advantages of a double heritage are thus recognised, a change that can certainly be defined as development due to the embrace of tolerance and openness.

Romesh Gunesequera's novel, *Heaven's Edge*, describes the protagonist's, Marc's, journey to an exotic island where his grandfather had been born and to which his father had emigrated and died. Not only does Marc hope to understand the views of and the motives for action of these two people better, he also hopes to find something that affects and changes him in a profound way. Although he does not seem to be conscious of this deeper motive for his decision to leave England at first, his level of awareness rises during his stay on the island: He gradually acknowledges the different influences of staying at a place, thus developing a sense of belonging and a need to move on.⁴⁹ While Marc has been very earthbound all his life until

⁴⁵ Ibid: 49.

⁴⁶ Ibid: 222.

⁴⁷ Ibid: 195.

⁴⁸ Ibid: 344.

⁴⁹ Gunesequera, Romesh. *Heaven's Edge*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Place, 2002: 6.

then, he now surprises himself by his wish to leave, such as his grandfather and father have done in the past. He soon sees though that the concepts of flight and belonging are in a more complex relationship by recognising the truth in his grandfather's belief that only the foreigner feels a genuine sense of belonging.⁵⁰ This is true and false at the same time: On the one hand the migrant seems to have hardly any sense of belonging and always appear to find themselves torn between loyalties; on the other hand, it is exactly this relative distance to their environment that makes the migrant more conscious of their inevitably arising feelings of belonging and that causes them to make their choices more consciously.

In some ways Marc's arrival on the island is at first a kind of anticlimax: Instead of the paradise that he imagined the island to be according to his grandfather he has to confront hostility by the natives as well as the widespread use of terror and violence in this place. However, Marc soon starts having many positive experiences as well.

The different environment of the island where he makes new acquaintances, such as Uva, directs his attention also to social needs that have so far been repressed, such as the need for human contact in general and for a love-relationship in particular. He gives up his secluded lifestyle and becomes intimate with Uva. Marc now consciously strives to satisfy his "yearning for wholeness"⁵¹ and together with Uva envisions how a world could be created that would be better, more suited to enlarge an individual's personality: It is the acknowledged embrace of diversity that is based on love for each other that is believed to be a great potential.⁵² Love as the connection with someone else needs to be founded on freedom and the search for freedom has been one of the motives for Marc's journey. Time to be on one's own and the content resulting from being settled within oneself are pointed out as the preconditions to any really satisfactory relationship with another person.

At the same time Uva recognises how growth and self-development are always very personal and deeply ingrained in our respective histories so that we all need to "find our own special balance between what we know ought to be, and what we can see has to be done."⁵³ Marc at the end of the novel has achieved exactly that kind of balance for the time being by having mustered the courage to get involved with the life and the people of the island and by his decision at the very end to stay on the island where he can see the promise of further personal growth particularly through his relationship with Uva, which has already deepened by the things they have gone through together. In spite of the destructive aspects he encounters in his

⁵⁰ Ibid: 41.

⁵¹ Ibid: 213.

⁵² Ibid: 223.

⁵³ Ibid: 228.

new homeland, he achieves to create his “ ‘own Eden’ ”⁵⁴. This proactive approach Marc takes to make this new place a home is sharply contrasted with Yezad’s fantastic idea in Mistry’s *Family Matters* to simply find paradise elsewhere without having to make a contribution.⁵⁵

Although Gunsekera alludes to disillusioning experiences typical of the migrant who have formed their own views and expectations of a place before they go there, he mainly emphasises the benefits of migration as long as it accommodates our need for finding a homeland as well.

In *The Vine of Desire* exile seems at first particularly for the two main female characters of the novel a chance to start a life that is more in accordance with their own wishes: Anju can, by going to America with her husband, fulfil her dream of flight that is always associated in her mind with freedom; Sudha thus gets the opportunity to start a new life away from the harsh judgement of her by society. The women’s allegiances to a place soon become divided and ambivalent: “I want to bite into the apple of America. I want to swim to India, to the parrot-green smells of my childhood.”⁵⁶

Sudha soon strives to get rid of her image as a stranger by wearing Western clothes and by rejecting the Indian way of life she knows of. Sudha’s strife to emulate a free American way of life is an attempted escape from her past and particularly from the unpleasant aspects associated with it. Unsurprisingly, Sudha is also drawn to the Westernised Lalit, who shows her a world that is devoid of the constant threat of social censure the latter which demands a close observation of unwritten rules. Soon it becomes clear though that her past cannot simply be disposed of: She can see Lalit’s difficulties in understanding her situation concerning their backgrounds, she coming from an orthodox Indian family background, which Lalit has never experienced in this way.⁵⁷ Furthermore Sudha senses that the liberalism she associates with America can also have its drawbacks, such as emptiness and loneliness that it can cause in a person. After leaving the shared flat, Sudha sees that there are prejudices and preconceptions in America as well, such as when she learns about her employer’s belief that Indian women are tranquil.⁵⁸ In addition, she also feels how status changes, in her case for the worse, when leaving one’s country: Nothing shows here that she is originally from a very well off family. She also starts doubting her one-sided celebration of freedom when she discovers, after Lalit’s description of his home, that her need for roots is an essential part of her as well that

⁵⁴ Ibid: 29.

⁵⁵ Mistry. *Family Matters*: 249, 283.

⁵⁶ Divakaruni. *The Vine of Desire*: 87.

⁵⁷ Ibid: 176.

⁵⁸ Ibid: 218.

does not want to be denied.⁵⁹ At the same time she feels that she has never really had a home, only delusions of belonging, which also means that she has never really understood America and that the country has not given her all that much.⁶⁰ She now sees that there can be a new life for her even back in India, but that a new beginning also means going to a different part of the country. Her stay in America has given her new insights into different lifestyles so that she can go back to India as an enriched person. Returning to India in a more enriched fashion, however, has only become possible after abandoning her one-sided constructions of the new country she lived in for a while.

Anju has never had the same great expectations towards America that Sudha had. She is, however, also gradually changed by her life there: She adopts a more Westernised way of thinking in that she starts believing that she owes something to herself.⁶¹ Her greater involvement with American women feels at the same time exciting as well as alienating in that she feels, such as Sudha has in the presence of Lalit, how her different background creates a barrier between them so that an important part of her will probably always be unintelligible to them. The understanding of each other is more often than not an illusion in the context of exile, particularly at the very beginning of a person's stay in the new country. Anju keeps a critical attitude towards America though in that she also acknowledges her negative sides. Anju has to deal with preconceptions some Americans she meets have of India.⁶² She sees the danger in looking at things out of context. This is the starting point for the formation of myths, such as those created about practices of cannibalism and other brutal gestures like the sacrifice of virgins. Anju feels both protective as well as critical towards her heritage, strongly disliking certain aspects of it. She therefore shows a similarly balanced and realistic view as she does about America. Her realism and her critical ability also make her conscious of the fact that she idealises India after Sunil's adultery when she longs to be back in the place where she grew up.⁶³ She consciously decides to stay in America appreciating the changes that have occurred in her life in that place, some of them having thrown her into deep grief, but others having given her hope as well as the ability to come to terms with the things that tie her down, such as with the losses in her life. Her stay in America has made her more alert to elements of her own culture so that she shows a more conscious appreciation but also criticism of the culture she has grown up with as well as of the culture she is still new to.

⁵⁹ Ibid: 279.

⁶⁰ Ibid: 330.

⁶¹ Ibid: 107-08

⁶² Ibid: 214.

⁶³ Ibid: 302.

Looking at the character of Sunil finally, we encounter the typical sense of alienation that frequently occurs when a migrant goes back to his own country after having been away for a very long time: He experiences a culture shock at the sight of the dirt and unhygienic conditions he meets in India and to which he is not used to any longer.⁶⁴ Sunil has also forgotten most of his Bengali and cannot recall what some expressions mean. This shows how experiences of alienation and processes of appropriation, resistance and communication take place both on a migrant's arrival in a new country, but also on their return to their home country. Migration thus reveals itself as a complex process that takes place both in the case of leaving as well as in that of entering one's mother country.

The form of the novel also displays how aspects of the protagonists' heritage are constantly present: The various story lines of the novel, as well as the various ways of how experiences are told, for example through letters, assignments or stories to the child Dayita reflect the rich story-telling tradition of India in which stories become increasingly intertwined. Multiple story lines are also very much present in Hariharan's novel, *When Dreams Travel*, which refers more explicitly to India's story-telling tradition by retelling *The Arabian Nights*. Such a way of writing assumes the character of a collage in which various voices make themselves heard by replacing a single narrator voice. It is thus also an essentially postmodern style and thus an attempt to link post-colonial and postmodern ways of writing as well as the issues involved with them.

Migration becomes an issue of increasing importance in the novels from the early 1990s. It seems that there has not only been a rise in the number of people on the move to the West, but that the need to write down migratory experiences has also risen: The context of multicultural societies and the individuals' experiences in these societies provide abundant material for analysis. It can be said that migration has probably been the most powerful topic for the last few decades, as it challenges the individual's sense of self, all the beliefs and values they have held up so far and makes it necessary for the individual to consciously define themselves anew.

The different generations of migrants face both problems and advantages of the new situation, although in different ways: While the parent generation still has feelings of displacement and tends to idealise the home country, their children, who are second-generation immigrants, often experience to be in-between the culture of their parents and the culture of the country they were born in. They frequently suffer an identity crisis, which is to some extent due to

⁶⁴ Ibid: 325.

contradictory cultural, ethnic and national identity ascriptions by the people who they encounter. There are many instances where these identity ascriptions lead to an extreme reluctance to get involved with their parents' culture. Both immigrant generations thus tend to cling to one-sided cultural views that do not do any justice to the various influences they are surrounded by. However, recent works have shown more examples of successful cultural integration that involves enrichment through the knowledge and practise of various cultural aspects, particularly those of the part of India where they come from and those of their new homeland, which can be reflected in a greater openness towards foreigners. The emphasis has thus shifted to the potential inherent in migration for each individual.

III. Developments of the wholeness-theme by Salman Rushdie

Wholeness has been of central importance in Salman Rushdie's writing, which is obvious both in content and in the form of his texts. A brief glance at Rushdie's life should give us a better insight into causes and development of his interest in the concept of wholeness. Using postmodern and post-colonial techniques he emphasises not only how crucial a notion wholeness is but also alludes to ways in which it could possibly be attained. His works take up aspects of identity such as regional, religious, gender or national identity – aspects that have also been discussed in the previous part. Furthermore, he enlarges on the issue of hybridities and migration as means to wholeness very early in his career as a writer, and he should be counted among those who initiated this trend in writing. The imagination and various art forms are prevalent parts of his life, and by emphasising their importance, he also stresses freedom of speech and expression as basic human rights that need to be granted to everyone in order for self-development to occur. Rushdie, by considering numerous facets of identity that are relevant to wholeness, treats the theme not just in a very comprehensive way, but also sheds light on the human condition in new ways.

III.I. Writing in context: Salman Rushdie's life and works

Many of the various issues dealt with in Salman Rushdie's works have been of great significance in his own life. Establishing the link between his biography and his work shall illuminate Rushdie's conception of identity and also point out themes that are dealt with in much of his work. Rushdie's written versions of these issues can thus often be explained when we regard the former as altered mirror images of his experiences that include impressions and events.

One of the most prevalent themes Rushdie discusses is migrancy and, through association, what it means to live between different cultures. Taking into account how many migrations Rushdie has undertaken and what a deep impact they have left on him, it can hardly be surprising that the phenomenon of migrancy, which has become a "globalized phenomenon"¹ and thus increasingly important, is explored in great depth.

Salman Rushdie's first migration took place at the age of thirteen when he was sent from Bombay where he had been born and had been living ever since to Rugby School in England. There he experienced for the first time what it means to be displaced², seeing all his expectations of and ideas about England revealed as illusions. He felt the sting of racism when he was called "a wog"³ by his classmates and was thus turned into an outsider. This feeling of non-belonging and outsidership was also present when he left England and went to Pakistan where his family had travelled to in the meantime. Pakistan can thus be called his second exile, as he differed from the people he met there due to his greater independence and his greater force of opinions and especially because he had acquired a British English accent during his time in England. These experiences provided him with the strong knowledge "about displacement, about rootings, about feeling wrong in the world."⁴ He later explains his belief that "such out-of-place experiences lie at or near the heart of what it is to be alive in our jumbled, chaotic times."⁵

However Rushdie did not stay in Pakistan for long and decided to go to Cambridge to get a good education. Due to his hitherto alienating experiences in England, he was not keen on migrating to Britain again for a second time, describing his return in 1965 as "one of the most disorienting moments of my life."⁶ After having lived in London for quite a long time

¹ Rushdie, Salman. Step Across this Line: Collected Non-Fiction 1992-2002. London: Jonathan Cape, 2002: 300.

² Goonetilleke, D.C.R.A. Salman Rushdie. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998: 2-3.

³ "Salman Rushdie." brain-juice. 15 March 2003. http://www.brain-juice.com/cgi-bin/show_bio.cgi?p_id=114: 1.

⁴ Rushdie. Step across this Line: 317.

⁵ Ibid: 317.

⁶ "Salman Rushdie." brainjuice, http://www.brain-juice.com/cgi-bin/show_bio.cgi?p_id=114: 1.

and having become a British citizen, Salman Rushdie decided to undertake another big migration – this time to New York where he claims to feel more at home and at ease than he felt during his long stay in Britain.

These at first involuntary and then self-chosen ‘exiles’ Rushdie has experienced have at the same time made him appreciate the advantages a migrant can enjoy and have ultimately largely shaped his world view: The almost constant moves he makes and changes he undergoes in new environments have made him conscious of the provisional nature of everything we are surrounded by. He is deeply conscious of the ceaseless transformations of everything around us and that we make contracts, particularly with people, that we renew every day.⁷ The most intriguing experience of the migrant lies for him in “the freedom to build a life in the most dazzling place you can find.”⁸ Big cities offer better chances to do so than smaller places according to him due to their greater openness to others and other influences and their rather polyglot cultures and it is therefore no coincidence that he has always felt most at ease as a migrant in a big city, particularly in New York⁹, which has seen huge waves of migration.¹⁰ Migration has thus essentially to do with the crossing of frontiers, geographical as well as linguistic and cultural frontiers and almost any kind of frontiers of the mind. Rushdie believes that this tendency lies at the heart of every person: “In our deepest natures, we are frontier-crossing beings.”¹¹ Frontier-crossing involves stretching our mental horizons and is often a step towards a greater understanding of and tolerance towards what has hitherto been completely alien to us. Therefore Rushdie describes the ground on which the migrant walks as fertile¹² and attributes a double vision to the migrant due to their position of being both inside and outside a culture or nation at the same time. Whole vision, which he recognises can never be achieved, is in this way replaced by double vision or a ‘broken-mirror’ vision. The latter acknowledges that man can only have fractured perceptions. The former emphasises that the migrant often feels like they are part of two cultures or as if they do not belong to either of them. Goonetilleke describes Rushdie therefore as a “cloven writer produced by migration, inhabiting and addressing both worlds, the East and the West, the world of his mother country and that of his adopted country, belonging wholly to neither one

⁷ *Arena: Salman Rushdie and the Ground Beneath His Feet*. Pres. Francine Stock; Dir. Mary Dickinson; 1999.

⁸ Goldberg, Michelle. “A beacon of sanity.” *Salon.com Books*. 1 October 2002. 13 September 2002.

<http://www.salon.com/books/feature/2002/10/01/rushdie/print.html>: 3.

⁹ Max, D.T. “Manhattan transfer.” *Guardian Unlimited – The Observer* 24 September 2000. 15 March 2003

<http://www.observer.co.uk/review/story/0,6903,372211,00.html>: 4.

¹⁰ Catapano, Peter. “A New York State of mind.” *Salon.com Books*. 1 October 2002. 13 September 2002.

<http://www.salon.com/books/int/2002/10/01/rushdie/print.html>: 2.

¹¹ Rushdie. *Step Across This Line*: 408.

¹² Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-91*. London: Granta Books, 1992: 15.

nor the other.”¹³ The migrant moves on ambiguous and shifting ground. He is not only in a valuable, but also in a very difficult position: Everything is suddenly put into question and the ruptures this causes in a person give a lie to our understanding of man as an essentially continuous, unified being that stays essentially the same, usually displaying only those characteristics that are predictable.

Instead, Rushdie shows that migrants are decentred beings: “Indeed, the experience of migration provides the text with a subtle background for a better understanding of displacement, hybridity and metamorphosis.”¹⁴ Rushdie reflects on his own experiences when he shows in his works how the immigrant’s “sense of self is fundamentally shaken by his insertion into radically new relations with land, family, community, and nation.”¹⁵

Rushdie’s resulting account of selfhood is thus a highly complex one that acknowledges the many facets of a person’s self that are often not without frictions and contradictions.¹⁶ This, however, does not mean that we do not have a sense of ourselves. We do but in a way that involves complexity and transmutation, the latter being both the result of the former and also the indicator of it: we hardly ever display the same characteristics and the same behavioural pattern all the time, but change both of them for example according to the context we find ourselves in: “... we can be bold in the company of our lovers and timorous before our employers, ...aggressive and easily abashed.”¹⁷ Rushdie’s belief in the fluid nature of man makes it possible for him to hold a view of man that involves trust in productive ways of self-determination and is also full of hope: no matter how low people have sunk in their deeds, there is always a way for them to rehabilitate themselves by letting their better parts gain the upper hand and by being guided by the latter. Rushdie’s optimistic belief in man even extends to such highly shocking and deeply controversial cases as the release of the Bulger killers.¹⁸ Rushdie’s account of selfhood entails opposition to any kind of ideology that breeds extremism and justifies the latter in the name of essential viewpoints. This is obvious in Rushdie’s abhorrence of religious fundamentalism¹⁹ whose abominable consequences he describes in his works. These ideologies cross frontiers in a manner that is completely

¹³ Goonetilleke. *Salman Rushdie*: 6.

¹⁴ Ben-Deggoun, Hassan. “Fiction as Fission: Salman Rushdie’s Aesthetics of Fragmentation and Hybridity.” *Political Discourse – Theories of Colonialism and Postcolonialism*. 7 May 2001. 20 March 2003. <http://www.scholars.nus.edu.sg/landow/post/poldiscourse/casablanca/hassan1.html>: 1.

¹⁵ Gupta, Akhil. “Reincarnating Immigrant Biography: On Migration and Transmigration.” from: *Beyond Dichotomies: Histories, Identities, Cultures, and the Challenge of Globalization*. Ed. Elisabeth Mudimbe-Boyi. Albany: Sunny Press, 2002. 19 May 2003. http://www.stanford.edu/dept/anthroCASA/pdf/gupta_Reincarnating.pdf: 7.

¹⁶ Rushdie. *Step Across this Line*: 178-79.

¹⁷ Ibid: 179.

¹⁸ Ibid: 381-83.

¹⁹ Goldberg. “A beacon of sanity.” <http://www.salon.com/books/feature/2002/10/01/rushdie/print.html>: 1.

opposed to Rushdie's ideal of frontier-crossing: The former make use of violence and injustices in that they "expressly reject frontiers in the way of the empires of the last century and the century before."²⁰ It is this wrong, one-sided and unimaginative way of frontier-crossing that Rushdie explicitly rejects. It could be argued now that after the latest outbreaks of terrorism, the latter being based on fundamentalist and extremely intolerant ways of seeing the world, we should rather concentrate on erecting more – at least geographical – frontiers in the name of caution and self-protection and that the calamities of frontier-crossing certainly outweigh the advantages of it. However, I think that it is precisely the terrorists' erection of apparently insurmountable frontiers in the first place that lead them into committing such horrific acts: they see people with other beliefs as their enemies and draw a sharp line between themselves and others, while at the same time they overstep other frontiers such as the one not to violate another person. Extremists and terrorists are thus at the same time avid builders of numerous frontiers and destroyers of them in a very wrong way in that they disrespect other people's freedoms instead of supporting them. It therefore seems very unlikely that new frontiers even if they are erected to positive ends such as the saving of innocent lives, will genuinely make a change for the better. Like Rushdie, I believe that in the end "the open frontier, created by the bringing-down of walls, has been and remains a symbol of other openesses."²¹

Rushdie has also contrasted forms of extremism with the rich pluralism of Bombay.²² Furthermore, he explains how religions, particularly the main religions, are normally very complex and not extremist in themselves, but that they become so by the way people interpret them. In this way he does not only criticise but also actively defends religions such as Islam against some attacks that have been especially strong after the events of September, 11th 2001: this is done when he shows the rich, pluralistic Sufi philosophy in it and the high culture of Islam that are as much part of the religion as discrimination against women and the harsh punishment of criminals²³, the latter two being due to the problem that there has never been a separation between Church and State as has occurred for example in Christianity.²⁴ Rushdie thus emphasises that he both strongly criticises some aspects of Islam - aspects such as certain rules that have often been questioned by adherents to Islam themselves - and that he at the same time admires a lot about Islam.²⁵ Islam as it exists cannot simply be generalised either

²⁰ Rushdie. Step Across This Line: 426.

²¹ Ibid: 426.

²² Goonetilleke. Salman Rushdie: 2.

²³ Catapano. "A New York state of mind." <http://www.salon.com/books/int/2002/10/01/rushdie/print.html>: 3.

²⁴ Rushdie. Imaginary Homelands: 380.

²⁵ Ibid: 409.

way without reducing it to a great extent. Rushdie knows that a “progressive, irreverent, sceptical, argumentative, playful and *unafraid*”²⁶ Muslim culture is something highly valuable, but that this firstly necessitates the elimination of its destructive and intolerant aspects.

In fact, Rushdie even though having ceased to be a Muslim at the age of fifteen²⁷ – a change that is evoked in *The Satanic Verses* when Gibreel like Rushdie himself, devours ham sandwiches – has always upheld an open-minded and respectful attitude towards religion. This can also be attributed to his upbringing in a very modern, tolerant Muslim family and the fact that he had Christian ayahs as well as friends from all kinds of religious backgrounds. He knows that religion, which arouses our sense of the marvellous, is closely connected with our dreams, so closely that he defines religions as “manifestations of our dreaming selves.”²⁸ Of course Rushdie knows that the dream is part of our very essence and thus admits the importance of the religious sense in a person. It is therefore important to a person to satisfy their spiritual needs, but it is equally important to keep it as a private matter.²⁹

Considering Rushdie’s description of frontier-crossing in the form of migrancy and the role he attributes to it, it is nevertheless important to recognise that being a traveller and a migrant is also a privileged position that not every person has the opportunity to attain. Salman Rushdie was lucky enough to be offered the possibility to go abroad and get an education there and later on live there because he had the good fortune of having been born into a wealthy family.³⁰ If one is not a refugee or asylum seeker migration and travelling are certainly restricted to people who are fairly well-off. One should also bear in mind that Rushdie’s upbringing in one of the better and richer areas of Bombay meant that although he acquired in many ways a broader view than many others through his travelling, he did not see too much of certain aspects of India, such as the thousands of homeless people. Therefore he does not dwell on these aspects at such length as many other writers in the tradition of Anglo-Indian writing such as Mulk Raj Anand or Rohinton Mistry have done. Even a migrant’s vision cannot be an all-encompassing one so no claims on omniscience can be made.

Timothy Brennan observes how Rushdie’s success in popularizing the subcontinent for a Western readership clearly exceeds the success experienced by his early predecessors, such as Anand and Rao. I agree particularly with the reason he gives for this popularity, namely that Rushdie’s writing also concerns itself a lot with the Western World, especially with England.

²⁶ Ibid: 437.

²⁷ Ibid: 377.

²⁸ Ibid: 378.

²⁹ Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*: 422.

³⁰ “Salman Rushdie.” *brain-juice*. http://www.brain-juice.com/cgi-bin/show_bio.cgi?p_id=114: 1.

In this way he offers Western readers points of identification and does not almost exclusively present a world alien to them. Besides, cosmopolitanism is what infiltrates more and more people's lives even outside the city due to the increasing influx of migrants and the stronger media presence everywhere that introduces foreign influences to people. For this reason people can partially identify with the in-betweenness of cosmopolitan life that is virtually constantly presented in Rushdie's works: "Thus, the 'in-betweenness' of the cosmopolitan ... was ... theoretically accounted for on every page of his work."³¹

In addition, Rushdie focusses on race-relations as they are found today in Britain and in America thus pointing out how race and nationality often still work in the way of causing one group to discriminate against another. I agree with Brennan that it seems to be particularly these issues that are attractive to contemporary Western readers. Rushdie also manages to highlight both Indian and English writing and culture by bringing them together in a very close and positive way, thus celebrating the potential of the hybrid and going beyond the kind of post-colonial writing that has stopped at illustrating the difficulties of cultural mingling after criticising colonial attitudes towards this issue.

A crucial concern of Rushdie has become the application of censorship throughout the world. Censorship is a form of frontier-building that works against freedom of speech, the latter being a basic way of expressing aspects of one's personality as well as being a way of achieving real understanding. Obviously censorship has been an enormous issue in Rushdie's own life. In actual fact he first encountered censorship for reasons that were not explained to him when he was just twenty-one years old and wrote a piece for a small magazine on his impressions of going home.³² Shortly after this he acted in a short play and was forced to drop some lines on pork and god that were in the script. This censorship showed how religious extremism was part of Pakistan's ideology and how this extremism suffused all areas of Pakistani life. The ban on *The Satanic Verses* in 1989 together with the fatwa that was imposed on him by Khomeini was of course the culmination of censorship that he has personally experienced. His life was changed to a great extent as a result, which involved not being able to enjoy the freedom to go wherever he wanted without being under extreme protection. During that time he often could not enjoy the most basic freedoms.

Even then, however, his belief in freedom of speech was very strong and he held firmly on to the cause he was fighting for by not repudiating anything he has written. Instead he emphasised: "The battle has been about free speech, and free speech is about disagreement.

³¹ Brennan, Timothy. "Preface." *Salman Rushdie and The Third World. - Myths of the Nation*. Houndsmill, Basingstoke, Hampshire & London: Macmillan, 1989: x.

³² Rushdie. *Imaginary Homelands*: 37-38.

And so we disagree.”³³ Rushdie was very much aware of the fact that multiplicity was kept alive by the existence of various viewpoints confronting each other. This was of course what this part of *The Satanic Verses* was all about. It has certainly been largely misunderstood when it has been regarded by some, particularly very orthodox people, as a vicious attack on their religion that can merely be called sheer blasphemy.³⁴ Rushdie has pointed out this misinterpretation of his own opinion as displayed in the novel on numerous occasions.³⁵

His emphasis on freedom of speech has been so great that when a film was released that attacked him and his life in the worst possible ways, he chose not to censor the film although it would have been understandable in his position had he done so. Indeed when he found that the film was banned in Britain he even asked the people to licence it and found himself justified in doing so when the film very quickly disappeared after its release because nobody there seemed to have a real interest in watching it.³⁶ It proved his belief in people being more often than not able to make the right decisions on their own and also seemed to be a justification for Rushdie’s vehement call for freedom of expression.

His defiance of censorship both in his novels – especially in *Haroun and The Sea of Stories* – and in his essays was also the result of learning of censorship that was imposed on others or on a society in general by law. An instance for the latter is the British blasphemy law that does not allow one to voice opposition to religious orthodoxies and against which Rushdie appealed in the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg in 1996.³⁷ This shows of course that censorship does not just occur in totalitarian regimes, but also in many cases in so-called Western democracies. This also becomes obvious in Britain’s and particularly America’s media coverage that shows very one-sided accounts of current affairs.

Rushdie also mentions another instance of censorship in his mother country concerning the situation of Kashmir: India has frequently ignored the reality of Kashmir and the voice and the needs of the people living there. This indifference and behaviour that had only the Indians’ self-interest in mind finally led them into the creation of laws that announced long jail sentences should any Kashmiri make any kind of anti-Indian statements in public.³⁸ This is another instance of how the building of frontiers, here through censorship, breeds terrorism.

³³ Lyall, Sarah. “Rushdie, Free of Threat, Revels in ‘Spontaneity.’” *New York Times on the Web*. 26 September 1998. 20 March 2003. <http://www.nytimes.com/books/99/04/18/specials/rushdie-free.html>: 3.

³⁴ Patel, Ismail Isa. “Mis/Representations of Islam: A Study of Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses*, and ‘The Rushdie Affair.’” *FortuneCity*. May 1998. 28 February 2002. <http://victorian.fortunecity.com/coldwater/439/rushdie.htm>: 6; 9-13; 16-18.

³⁵ *Face to Face*. Jeremy Isaacs talks to Salman Rushdie. BBC Production, 1994.

³⁶ Rushdie. *Step Across This Line*: 238.

³⁷ *Ibid*: 354-55.

³⁸ *Ibid*: 306.

Terrorists in Kashmir protest in their own wrong and violent ways against being deprived of their human rights.

Rushdie warns that the effects of total censorship are the absence of information and the presence of lies. Dissent and opposition, which are “the bedrock of democracy”³⁹, are silenced. This means that there would be no freedom any more to challenge and to satirize orthodoxies.⁴⁰ It is quite fitting that he quotes a passage of John Stuart Mill’s essay *On Liberty* that explains that the silencing of an opinion might be even worse for the people who dissent from the opinion than for those who hold it, as they cannot see if their conviction is well-founded or not, as they have nothing to measure their own opinion against any longer by comparing it to something else. The danger is that some dissenters just automatically assume that their convictions are infallible⁴¹ and that is of course the foundation for radicalism.

The worst consequence for Rushdie that arises from the application of censorship is that of the stifling of creativity. The argument against a multiplicity of voices does not merely entail the oppression of arguments, but also that of the products of the imagination. Creativity can only fully flourish and present itself to the outside world when it has enough space to do so. “The creative process is rather like the process of a free society. Many attitudes, many views of the world jostle and conflict within the artist, and from these frictions the spark, the work of art, is born.”⁴² Therefore, he concludes, there should be no restrictions to the subjects a writer chooses to deal with even if they might offend people.⁴³ This is of course not intended as a permission to maltreat people’s feelings in a way that can prove to be a highly destructive one. I think I can make and defend this claim by pointing out that Rushdie is a fierce opponent to violence and injustice. What Rushdie meant by saying that it is alright to offend is that it is almost unavoidable in a controversial and critical piece of art that there are not at least a few persons that are offended by it. He also reminds us that the most interesting subjects are usually those that are on the edge of discussion. Even though I do not think that this is always the case, in many cases it appears to be true.

A vital characteristic of art and the imagination, the latter being the starting-point of the former, is that it is also frontier-crossing. “The creative spirit, of its very nature, resists frontiers and limiting points, denies the authority of censors and taboos.”⁴⁴ Rushdie speaks most of all about the novel, not only because it is the genre he is most at home in, but

³⁹ Rushdie. *Imaginary Homelands*: 40.

⁴⁰ Ibid: 396.

⁴¹ Rushdie. *Step Across This Line*: 232.

⁴² Ibid: 233.

⁴³ *Face to Face*. Jeremy Isaacs talks to Salman Rushdie.

⁴⁴ Rushdie. *Step Across This Line*: 274.

certainly also because it is the most popular genre in literature with very high sales figures. Novelists provide versions of the world and the popularity of the novel seems to show how open many people are to learn about different ways of seeing or approaching things: “We read for opinion, attitude, spin. We read not for raw data ... newspapers, like novels, have entered the realm of the imagination. They both provide versions of the world.”⁴⁵ Due to this popularity of the novel, Rushdie rejects fears that literature does not have a future in today’s high-tech world. He holds on to his belief that “the art of the novel will undoubtedly survive.”⁴⁶

Literature is open and tolerant in that it allows for many interpretations. Rushdie regards literature as the highest of arts, as it seems to be the best suited to challenge absolutes of all kinds. He explains this by pointing out how literature is the least subject to external control because it is made in private.⁴⁷ It is the courage literature often takes in getting across ideas and viewpoints without taking heed of calls for restraint, which turns it into the space where multiplicity, freedom and creativity can roam.⁴⁸ Its importance thus lies in redescribing the world, giving lie to official versions of truth. Truth’s fragmentation is discussed in a way that it sees reality and morality not as givens, but as imperfect human constructs.⁴⁹ Truth as seen through fictions is a matter of viewpoint. Fiction thus shows us that truth is not a photograph,⁵⁰ meaning by that a reality that is to be taken for granted. Literature is self-validating. It shows the way in which different languages, values and narratives quarrel, but does not establish a privileged language.⁵¹ It remains an enquiry that brings different worlds such as the material and the spiritual worlds together. Great literature, by asking extraordinary questions, opens new doors in our minds. This includes for example how the writer conveys a sense of social responsibility to us.⁵² This responsibility that arises from the questioning of viewpoints and practices is of course central in the post-colonial novel. Rushdie thus uses postmodern techniques to illuminate post-colonial issues. The task of the author according to Rushdie is to push the work to the limit of what is possible:⁵³ “Literature is the only place in society where, within the secrecy of our own heads, we can hear *voices talking about*

⁴⁵Ibid: 142

⁴⁶Ibid: 58.

⁴⁷Rushdie. *Imaginary Homelands*: 424.

⁴⁸Ben-Deggoun, Hassan. “Fiction as Fission: Salman Rushdie’s Aesthetics of Fragmentation and Hybridity.” <http://www.scholars.nus.edu.sg/landow/post/poldiscourse/casablanca/hassan1.html>: 1.

⁴⁹Rushdie. *Imaginary Homelands*: 422.

⁵⁰*Arena: Salman Rusdhie and the Ground Beneath His Feet*.

⁵¹Rushdie. *Imaginary Homelands*: 420.

⁵²“Salman Rushdie.” *brain-juice*: 1.

⁵³Rushdie. *Imaginary Homelands*: 15.

everything in every possible way.”⁵⁴ For this reason Rushdie believes that fiction should be taken very seriously despite the possibly very negative consequences this might have for some writers like himself.⁵⁵ Once imagination is imprisoned, art will die.⁵⁶ At best, artifice will be produced, which can never compare to art in respect to the benefits it offers to individuals and society at large.

Rushdie fully embraces the core characteristics of art, which are those of metamorphosis and “ ‘perpetual revolution’ ”.⁵⁷ These characteristics reflect the nature of man and the world in an imaginative way. In actual fact Rushdie believes that our response to the world is essentially imaginative in that we construct pictures of the world and then take them for the world. He considers literature as being the frontier between self and world and this frontier as becoming increasingly soft.⁵⁸ In this way our perceptions of how things are change forever. Rushdie regards the imagination also as a means to assure us that we are not helpless, that to dream is to have power.⁵⁹

Rushdie has also engaged in other art forms, which include taking on a role in a play at a young age. In addition he delves into the study of other art forms and shows his appreciation of them. This is particularly the case with Indian (contemporary) art, which he approaches through his many conversations with Indian artists about their work.⁶⁰ After such an attentive encounter with a form of art, he often takes it up in his writing, showing it as another example of border-crossing, particularly in terms of self-development. Pursuing various forms of art can obviously help to reach the highest aim in life, which is personal development that integrates tolerance, openness and the courage to express one’s own beliefs without fear and to live according to them. This means the acknowledgment of many aspects of the self and resistance to an artificial suppression of them, the latter having been the result of the internalization of certain moral doctrines or rules that have been upheld in society. It is therefore hardly surprising that often at least one of the various art forms are taken up and dealt with as a major theme in his works: this is most obvious in *The Satanic Verses* which highlights stage-acting, in *The Moor’s Last Sigh* which delves into the world of painting and certainly in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* which illuminates the world of music. *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* focusses on the imagination itself as the wellspring of the various art forms.

⁵⁴ Ibid: 429.

⁵⁵ “Salman Rushdie’s Life: ‘Dead Man Walking.’” [Rushdiebio](http://www.rockyhill.org/UPPER/ClassroomEvents/APEnglish/sl/Rushdiebio.html). 20 March 2003.

<http://www.rockyhill.org/UPPER/ClassroomEvents/APEnglish/sl/Rushdiebio.html>: 2.

⁵⁶ Rushdie. *Imaginary Homelands*: 396

⁵⁷ Ibid: 418.

⁵⁸ Ibid: 427.

⁵⁹ Rushdie. *Imaginary Homelands*: 122.

⁶⁰ *The Lost Portrait*. Pres. Salman Rushdie. BBC/RM Arts Co-Prod. (n.d.), BBC, 1995.

However, in a more unusual manner the theme is also taken up in other works, for example in Rani's creation of the historic shawls in *Shame* or the creation of Malik Solanka's puppets in *Fury*.

Rushdie knows that there are two main ways to evoke the imagination, which gives rise to the creation of art: One of them is to take instances of one's own life and transform those in one's new creation. Salman Rushdie has done this to a great extent. In fact, most of his novels can to a certain extent be called autobiographical, as he uses so many instances of his own life to create the novels' plots. Much of his choice of events and characters in the narrative can actually be explained when one has a look at his life: The repeated use of unusual, haunting and often very strong female characters is the result of having grown up among many women who were anything but the stereotype of the submissive, meek and quiet Indian woman. Instead they were all extremely self-confident women who knew what they wanted and went their own ways.⁶¹ It is therefore not surprising that the female characters in his novels more often than not actively fight for their rights and stand up for themselves.

In *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* the storyteller Rashid Khalifa bears a close resemblance to Rushdie's own father according to Rushdie.⁶² His father used to be a marvellous storyteller as well and Rushdie also saw in him due to the latter's fascinating storytelling skills also a kind of Wizard of Oz. It is probably no coincidence, as Goonetilleke also points out, that Saleem Sinai in *Midnight's Children* and Saladin Chamcha in *The Satanic Verses* had, like Rushdie himself, businessmen as fathers. This obviously highlights the importance of the persons one is confronted with in one's early childhood.

Moreover his interest in a person's culture that is so clearly reflected in his work partially stems from various conscious attempts to get involved with this issue during the time he spent in London: first working as an actor there for a year, then his post as a free-lance advertising copywriter from 1970 to 1980 but particularly his activities as an executive member of the Camden Committee Relations between 1976 and 1983 contributed to his increased curiosity in race and cultural relations.⁶³ His awareness of the injustices in American politics, which are vividly displayed both in his novel *Fury* and to an even greater extent in his travelogue *The Jaguar's Smile – A Nicaraguan Journey*, date back to his student days in Cambridge where he

⁶¹ Miller, Laura. "A touch of vulgarity." *Salon Books*. 16 April 1999. 13 September 2002. <http://www.salon.com/books/int/1999/04/16/rushdie/print.html>: 5.

⁶² Goonetilleke. *Salman Rushdie*: 1.

⁶³ "Salman Rushdie's Life: 'Dead Man Walking.'" *Rushdiebio*. 20 March 2003. <http://www.rockyhill.org/UPPER/ClassroomEvents/APEnglish/sl/Rushdiebio.html>: 1.

closely followed the Civil Rights Movement and America's involvement in the Vietnam War.⁶⁴

His story, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, which deals with a person's right to express their imagination, is of course his reaction - in the form of a protest - to the fatwa that has been imposed on him. However, it is not only an appeal for the imagination and for cultural difference which strongly oppose hatred and destruction, it is also used in a more private way, namely as an explanation to his son why many people wanted him dead.⁶⁵ The huge and destructive impact the announcement of the fatwa has had on his life is also shown in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* where an earthquake occurs on February, 14th 1989 that kills Vina Apsara, one of the novel's protagonists. The date of the earthquake in the novel is the date when the fatwa was imposed on Rushdie. By choosing the image of an earthquake he shows how his life was literally shaken up and how this caused deep rifts in him and in the ground he was standing on. At the same time by putting this terrible event of the fatwa into the context of his writing he can see the event in a different light and reclaims it in a way.⁶⁶

The unusual and intriguing idea of the palimpsest in *The Moor's Last Sigh* that Moraes so desperately tries to find again after its disappearance is actually modelled after a similar incidence in his own life where a portrait has gone missing: Speaking to the Indian painter Krishen Kanna, Rushdie is told by him how he had once painted a portrait of Rushdie's mother.⁶⁷ Like in the novel, his father had not liked the picture and refused to buy it. The portrait's rejection then led in reality as in the novel to the emergence of a palimpsest by painting a picture on top of the portrait. Rushdie's intense search for the portrait is mirrored in Moraes' search. Although Rushdie does in contrast to Moraes not succeed in obtaining the portrait, he imagined what the retrieval of his mother's portrait entailed, which is the destruction of the surface picture. This imagined event that has not taken place, has led to its vivid description at the end of the novel. Although this plot for the novel has been taken from his own life-story of his mother's lost portrait, he again greatly altered this life event during the process of transforming it into art, for example by creating a different mother-son relationship and also different circumstances of how the portrait had disappeared.

The other way of getting inspired and as a result creating an art work is the effect it has on someone to learn about other people's experiences and how they form their imagination. This is also what is meant when Rushdie claims that it is an imperative to a writer to be open to

⁶⁴ "Salman Rushdie." [brain-juice](http://www.brain-juice.com/cgi-bin/show_bio.cgi?p_id=114). http://www.brain-juice.com/cgi-bin/show_bio.cgi?p_id=114: 2.

⁶⁵ "Salman Rushdie's Life. 'Dead Man Walking.'" [Rushdiebio](http://www.rockyhill.org/UPPER/ClassroomEvents/APEnglish/sl/Rushdiebio.html). <http://www.rockyhill.org/UPPER/ClassroomEvents/APEnglish/sl/Rushdiebio.html>: 2.

⁶⁶ [Arena: Salman Rushdie and the Ground Beneath His Feet](#).

⁶⁷ [The Lost Portrait](#).

new experiences.⁶⁸ Although this seems to be a much more passive way than the one described before where the person gets inspired by the events occurring in their own lives, it can be regarded as being as effective as the more active approach. I already mentioned how Rushdie indulged in other art works and participated in activities that broadened his mind and interests. Being part in this way of the imagination of other people has obviously been a great inspiration for Rushdie to create his own works of art. In his novels this is also particularly done by taking up themes and aspects of other literary works that are interwoven in his stories. Intertextuality thus plays a great role in all of Rushdie's writing. In this way the text acquires a greater complexity that transforms it into a texture that consists of many other texts.⁶⁹ It is therefore no surprise that one of the most pervasive literary influences on him has been *The Arabian Nights* with its multiple stories. Traces of this classic can be detected throughout his work. An even earlier influence on him was *The Wizard of Oz*, although to be precise, it was the film he saw and was influenced by first and only afterwards did he get interested in the book. Rushdie was impressed by it and consequently wrote a film critique on it. His enjoyment of the story was not just the result of it being a nice entertaining fantasy, but also because it dealt with topics such as friendship and the yearning to leave home and that to return to it once you have left it. The theme of home has of course become one of Rushdie's central topics as well and his involvement with it is at least partly due to his interest in the theme after having become familiar with the Oz-story. In actual fact Rushdie claims that the story has helped him to become a writer.⁷⁰

The textual analysis at the end of this third part will show how the coming together of these influences on him created the complex patterns of his work that deal with his accounts of selfhood and the world.

⁶⁸ Max, D.T. "Manhattan Transfer." <http://www.observer.co.uk/review/story/0,6903,372211,00.html>: 3.

⁶⁹ Ben-Deggoun. "Fiction as Fission: Salman Rushdie's Aesthetics of Fragmentation and Hybridity." <http://www.scholars.nus.edu.sg/landow/post/poldiscourse/casablanca/hassan1.html>: 1.

⁷⁰ Face to Face. Jeremy Isaacs talks to Salman Rushdie.

III.2. Salman Rushdie's postmodern viewpoint

Salman Rushdie is considered to belong to those writers whose art follows the postmodern tradition. In order to show how this tradition is an integral part of his work and how it greatly shapes his view on not just the nature of the world but on identity also, it is crucial to first of all focus on some of the major characteristics postmodernism displays. It should thus become possible to decide which features of postmodernism Rushdie takes over for his writing and where he distances himself from a certain kind of postmodernism as well as to discover his reasons for doing so.

In trying to define postmodernism, we already encounter the first difficulties. Labelling and definitions are adverse to postmodernism's central claims, which express defiance and rejection of (absolute) truths.

We encounter this elusiveness of the term already by merely trying to analyse the linguistic term as such. There has been a long dispute about the meaning of the term's prefix. In particular, the question if it merely signifies – as it seems to be the case in post-colonialism - the end of an old and at the same time the beginning of a new era. I would certainly agree with critics who argue that this does not quite seem to be the case, as the relationship between postmodernism and modernism is a far more complex one than the one posed to us by colonialism and post-colonialism. Even though postmodernism reflects indeed in many respects a break with modernist practices, at the same time the latter are often adopted and then changed in some of their aspects (an example here would be further developments in technology and consumer society, these aspects having already been introduced in the context of modernism). We have thus not always an oppositional relation between postmodernism and modernism and certainly not a merely temporal one. A rather more suitable definition of the linguistic significance of the term than a merely temporal one could thus be one that “indicates a challenge or subversion, so that what has come after modernism or structuralism also implies a contestation of that which it succeeds.”¹

In order to make the position of postmodernism a bit clearer, we should approach postmodernism by having a look at what its adherents do, believe in and reject more specifically. By saying that the latter reject the adoption of absolute, fixed truths, they redefine aspects of the world by responding to the belief-system of modernism. The period that immediately precedes postmodernism reflects many features of the Enlightenment era.

¹ Soederlind, Sylvia. “Margins and Metaphors: The Politics of Post-***”. *Liminal Postmodernisms. The Postmodern, the (Post-)Colonial, and the (Post-)Feminist*. Ed. Theo D'haen & Hans Bertens. Postmodern Studies 8. Amsterdam, Atlanta: Rodopi B.V., 1994: 36.

Such imitations occur in the case of belief in progress in science in particular and in society in general.² The constant increase in knowledge becomes possible. Even though the subject and the world during modernism become increasingly fragmented by being constantly exposed to change, this process of fragmentation has been welcomed since the Enlightenment period “as a necessary condition through which the modernizing project could be achieved.”³

Modernism’s encounter with the condition of the society of its times entailed a reaction to the new ways of production, communication and consumption. Although modernism can be called internationalist and universalist due to its more or less simultaneous emergence in various different parts of the world, it is at the same time said to be situated in the city and also often believed to be rather “‘an elite international avant-garde art’”⁴. This conception, of course, provides the framework for exclusion due to its hierarchical way of thinking.

This self-understanding of the epoch, which could sometimes take on quite condescending forms, is rigorously rejected by postmodernists, who do not give preference to certain groups or places and thus reject to use any hierarchical systems.

Modernism’s ‘achievement’, which was recognised, accepted but also exceeded in its implications by postmodernism, was that of the adoption of multiple perspectives and relativism. However, modernists still believe in being able to represent the world, as they still believe in “a unified, though complex, underlying reality.”⁵ This is where postmodernists again choose another path: They believe that representation of what we call reality is not possible any more, as our idea about a unified reality is essentially flawed. Instead, they emphasise the distinction between various existing realities that “may coexist, collide and interpenetrate.”⁶

Thus, we can see that the reason for the postmodernist rejection of a single truth is the conviction of the existence of multiple (possible) realities, realities being the precondition for truths and meanings. Postmodernists are sceptical of ideological discourses, as these try to exercise power through their rigid holding on to a single truth account.⁷

Rushdie takes up this notion of the existence of many truths that are enunciated by many voices, which can give voices the right to speak that have hitherto been silenced such as those

² Harvey, David. The condition of postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change. 1989. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990: 13.

³ Ibid: 13.

⁴ Ibid: 25.

⁵ Ibid: 30.

⁶ Ibid: 41.

⁷ Baudrillard, Jean. “Simulacra and Simulations.” Literary Theories. A READER & GUIDE. Ed. Julian Wolfreys. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1999: 394.

of “women, gays, blacks, colonized peoples with their own histories”⁸, therefore trying to free these voices from the oppression and discrimination they have encountered so far. This is at the same time a fruitful attempt to combine elements of postmodernist and post-colonial critique, which is particularly successful in *The Moor’s Last Sigh*.

Rushdie concerns himself in his works with the presentation of various different worlds that partly overlap and that make the individual sometimes wonder in which world they actually live. Through the mutual interpenetration of these worlds, he tries in the postmodernist fashion to dispose of dichotomies.

Closely related to these approaches is the deferral of meaning in postmodernism. Due to the fact that the adoption of a single truth is unacceptable, attributing a single meaning to something seems to be a rather reductive act. Not only does it seem to be important to take the particular social and historical context the individual find themselves in into account, but it is also, as a consequence of this, crucial to see that meaning is actually something that is always subjectively constructed and not something that is already outside there as a given fact.

Meaning thus becomes extremely elusive and the question arises if it is always possible for individuals to establish meaning. This question is dealt with in Derrida’s deconstructionism with its element of the unending deferral of meaning.⁹

In his writings, Salman Rushdie takes up both the constructed nature of meaning as well as the existence of numerous meanings and the question about the feasibility of always establishing meaning successfully even in a personal context. His novels offer the reader multiple possibilities of text interpretation depending on the perspective they take, the latter in turn depending on the personal situation in life. This becomes particularly striking in the form he adopts in *Haroon and the Sea of Stories*. However, the fact that we often cannot arrive at interpretations of which each makes sense in itself as a logical and coherent whole, suggests not only that meaning is elusive, unstable and a process that is never finished, but also that it is not necessarily of a rational, logical nature, and nor is the world that shelters the things we give meaning to. It also suggests that persons are limited in what they are able to do or comprehend.

From a postmodernist, non-hierarchical way of thinking and the emphasis on the acknowledgment of multiple voices, the rejection of meta-narratives or grand narratives ensues. Among these narratives, which were widely used during the era of modernism, are

⁸ Harvey. *The condition of postmodernity*: 42.

⁹ Derrida, Jacques. *Deconstruction in a nutshell: a conversation with Jacques Derrida*. Ed. John D. Caputo. Perspectives in continental philosophy 1. New York: Fordham UP, 1997: 31-32.

Marxism, Freudianism or other ideologies. Postmodernists replace these by numerous small narratives.

Particularly history has from then on been treated quite differently: Due to the postmodernist stance, it is not any more - as Hegel and his adherents believed - of a kind of divine status in that it heads towards some great fulfilment at its end, but is now considered only to exist in numerous different histories. These histories are all most of all dynamic in their nature.

Furthermore, like truth and meaning, history ceases to be an objective reality, but is also subjectively constructed and can therefore not be taken any more for a collection of equally important, objective facts: "Thus the critic is neither a transcendent commentator nor an objective chronicler because he/she is always implicated in the discourses which help to construct the object of knowledge"¹⁰. In *Midnight's Children* Rushdie shows exactly how this involvement with history gives rise to subjective historic accounts of events during the time of India's Independence, which the narrator frequently repudiates or changes to create new accounts. The recognition of the chronicler's own subjectivity implies also the recognition of the exercise of power that is always present when history in the grand narrative seems to make us believe that it is detached from the chronicler. In *Midnight's Children* this power is used to draw the people's attention to the chronicler himself. This awareness of the abuse of power in (historical) writing has made Foucault and some other postmodern thinkers very much aware of discrimination and has also led them to pay particular attention to the stories that are excluded: As a consequence, Foucault's "own 'histories' resist the allure of 'total theories' which offer overarching narratives and instead focus on the 'other' excluded through such accounts."¹¹

Rushdie shows how much individuals are influenced not just by the great events in the world, but in particular by the events that occur personally to them or at least in their environment in all of his novels. The many 'small' histories displayed in his works demonstrate clearly that nobody can just simply and easily detach themselves from history, especially from their past, but nevertheless have to a certain extent the chance to deal with it, as history does not wholly determine them.¹²

Moreover Rushdie also makes great use of intertextuality, which is a phenomenon that widely occurs in postmodern practice. The idea of intertextuality is likewise not to state and make use of just one source for a work, as this involves inevitably that this source and the

¹⁰ "Histories and Textuality." *Modern Literary Theory – A READER*. Ed. Philip Rice and Patricia Waugh. 1989. Fourth Edition. London: Arnold, 2001: 252.

¹¹ Ibid: 253-54.

¹² Ibid: 256.

position inherent in it is privileged over others. Rushdie's works generally teem with references to other works, authors, but also to philosophers, artists, musicians, politicians – in short with references to persons, works or events that he knows of and from which he got to some extent his inspiration and which could possibly be known to his readers.

The phenomenon of the dissolution of boundaries can also be made out in realms of reality and fiction. Where reality is not anything unitary and single any longer, it becomes increasingly difficult – in some cases almost impossible – to clearly find its opposite that normally due to its strong contrasting nature enforces the definition of what it is compared to. In the postmodern approach, however, reality remains elusive and therefore must its 'opposite', which cannot be a mere opposite any more. There are, of course, various forms of how fiction and reality intermingle in art. Being a mainly aesthetic practice, postmodernist practice should also be briefly approached under the aspect of art, which focuses particularly on ways of representation of something that cannot adequately be represented. It is therefore non-representation that various (post-) modern art forms celebrate. In actual fact, art forms like Cubism, Dadaism and Surrealism are the first ones that radically question our capacity to represent reality through their display of the intrusion of imaginary aspects into the world as we observe it.¹³ If we look for example at Salvador Dali's pictures they might remind us of images or scenarios that occur in certain dreams or nightmares, but images or combinations of them most of us would certainly not associate with reality. By letting the former melt with the latter we have to confront the question if our everyday perception of reality is the only one that can truly assert the claim to be right. This questioning of both reality and one-dimensional ways of representing it lets us regard postmodernism "as *process*, an open and flexible mode of representation following an exhausted tradition which it can renew."¹⁴ This flexible mode of representation is for example displayed in the use of techniques such as collage and pastiche that show multiple aspects one 'item' could have.

In literature, Salman Rushdie uses these techniques of pastiche and collage as narrative techniques that scatter "the fragments randomly to form an eclectic world."¹⁵ In order to emphasise the peculiar relationship between fiction and 'reality', Rushdie makes particular use of the form of Magic Realism. Magic Realism tells events that are set in the everyday world the novel appropriates, but uses elements that are either unlikely or quite impossible to be found in this everyday world.

¹³ Introducing Postmodernism. Ed. Richard Appignanesi & Chris Garratt. 1995. 2nd Ed. Cambridge: Icon, 1999: 45.

¹⁴ Maes-Jelinek, Hena. "Teaching Past the Posts." Liminal Postmodernisms: 145.

¹⁵ Wain, Leah. "Introduction: Postmodernism? Not Representing Postmodernism." Literary Theories. A READER & GUIDE: 361.

In addition, Rushdie also uses myth, which is a combination of mainly fictitious elements with some elements we consider real, in its various facets in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*.

Furthermore, Rushdie explores especially in his first as well as in his most recent novel the genre of Science Fiction, which also undermines any strict divisions between ‘reality’ and ‘fiction’ by introducing the possibility of the existence of different worlds. Science Fiction is certainly a genre that flourishes in the present age with its characteristic high-tech industry and its mass consumerism, as the latter two also make us question the justification of our hitherto-held conception of reality by adding new aspects to it.

It is essentially the new technology of computers, in particular the internet, which opens completely new possibilities of experiencing ourselves and others. In the era of globalization it especially lets us develop a new sense of time and place, both factors being vital components of our experience of reality. Again, it is multiplicity that is argued for instead of a single, objective truth-account. Furthermore, it does not seem to be out of place to speak of “an intense phase of time-space compression that has had a disorienting and disruptive impact upon political-economic practices.”¹⁶ This is the case because huge distances are not an obstacle any more to the swift reception of information.

Mass television ownership coupled with satellite communication makes it possible to experience a rush of images from different spaces almost simultaneously, collapsing the world’s spaces into a series of images on a television screen. ... The image of places and spaces becomes as open to production and ephemeral use as any other.¹⁷

Time and space are now merely reflected “as materialized and tangible dimensions to social life.”¹⁸ Particularly in this altered experience of space and time that results from the latest scientific innovations, it becomes apparent that, like modernism, postmodernism is also a child, which means an outcome, of its age. This confirms again that it is much more than just a critique of modernism. A more suited and more comprehensive definition would be one that emphasises more strongly postmodernism’s aesthetic practice. It is the significance of the image in this context that supports this emphasis:

Time-and-space compression can only be discerned in respect to the image. It is the process of image-making that has become the very centre of activity in the postmodern world and this process has great ramifications on the sense of self and personal identity.

By means of technology, images are constantly reproduced in a way that they resemble their originals so closely that the differences between them cannot (or can hardly) be made out any

¹⁶ Harvey. *The condition of postmodernity*: 284.

¹⁷ *Ibid*: 293.

longer. The characteristics or qualities between the real and its imitation in art are partly exchanged.

We not only possess, therefore, the capacity to pile images from the past or from other places eclectically and simultaneously upon the television screen, but even to transform those images into material simulacra in the form of built environments, events and spectacles, and the like, which become in many respects undistinguishable from the originals.¹⁹

Baudrillard points out how the simulacrum has an important role insofar as it now precedes what we consider to be reality.²⁰

Rushdie shows the significance of the simulacrum in his works, for example, by describing the process of how either a star²¹ (such as Vina in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*) or art works (such as Solanka's dolls and his sci-fi characters in *Fury*) are replicated in highly efficient ways. It is the "aesthetics of copying"²² the reader experiences here. Not only does the difference between original and imitation become extremely blurred, but the original also becomes less and less important and fades so much into the background that it seems to have disappeared in the end. By pointing out this change in perception to us, Rushdie confronts us with an essentially postmodern view: "The reproduced is taking place of reality or **replacing it as hyper-reality**. We are living what has **already** been lived and **reproduced** with no reality anymore but that of the cannibalized image."²³

Rushdie also displays how the simulacrum can therefore not really be regarded as art any more in the more conventional sense of the word, but might rather be regarded as artifice.²⁴ This is particularly important for the individual's sense of identity that is not only fragmented any more, but seems to be constantly in danger to be lost altogether, leaving the individual in a state of confusion and disorientation. This is the case because the "post-modern self considers itself as a discontinuous entity, as an identity (or identities) constantly made or re-made in neutral time."²⁵ We can speak of artifice when we see how human beings in the age of the Internet become new hybrids, "new entities, neither human nor machine, neither mind nor body, neither self nor other. We become integrated human machines, 'cyborgs', able to

¹⁸ Ibid: 293.

¹⁹ Ibid: 289-90.

²⁰ Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation*. Trans. Sheila Faria Glaser. The body, in theory: histories of cultural materialism. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1994: 1.

²¹ Postmodernism embraces pop culture and tries to dissolve boundaries between high and low forms of art.

²² Soederlind, Sylvia. "Margins and Metaphors: the Politics of Post-***." *Liminal Postmodernisms*: 41.

²³ *Introducing Postmodernism*: 49.

²⁴ Baudrillard, Jean. "From 'The Orders of Simulacra', in *Simulations*, P. Beichtman, tr. (1983), pp. 142-56." *Modern Literary Theory. A READER*: 340.

²⁵ Kumar, Krishan. *From Post-Industrial to Post-Modern Society. New Theories of the Contemporary World*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995: 147.

invent our identities, as single or collective, male or female, more or less at will.”²⁶ Instead of an essential being, the cyborg shows a kind of collective self that is always in the process of becoming, which is displayed in the constant networking of its system.²⁷

Even though postmodernism could be valued and embraced among other things for standing for tolerance of and openness towards various ways of thought and voices by the emphasis on small narratives, the ideas underlying postmodernism cause nevertheless quite a few difficulties at the same time that cannot always be resolved satisfactorily. One could for example ask if postmodernists do not also try to establish the postmodernist approach as an absolute truth, for example in their adherence to small instead of grand narratives and in their belief in a multiplicity of realities and meanings, rejecting accounts that run counter to their convictions. On the other hand, the most common accusation made against postmodernism is that it ends in nihilism, as it has no real aims or makes value judgements on its own. The various voices that occur in postmodern accounts are not evaluated and it is often unclear what messages they try to convey. This is especially the case in the form of strong postmodernism where the negotiation of positions²⁸ is excluded so that it stands in contrast to the generally-acknowledged necessity for every individual to act both personally and collectively with a sense of responsibility by using their critical faculties.

Rushdie, by choosing a rather weak instead of a strong form of postmodernism seems to avoid the first problem of elevating the aesthetic form of postmodernism. This includes the acceptance and defence of other thoughts and positions such as certain ideas of post-colonialism, which are scrutinised and critically evaluated: Post-colonial and postmodernist approaches both try to improve the position of the marginalised and have thus a similar basis although they sometimes do not only complement each other but rather contradict each other – as it is the case in the post-colonial use of dichotomies such as centre and periphery, which postmodernists resolutely reject.²⁹ Furthermore, many of the concepts that serve as a basis for the development of post-colonial critique such as history, representation and truth are frequently dismissed by postmodernists – some of them even by supporters of a weak form of postmodernism.³⁰

Generally, the weak form of postmodernism that Rushdie uses is characterised by the stress on agency, which implies the necessity for every individual to experience their selves as

²⁶ Ibid: 159.

²⁷ McGuigan, Jim. *Modernity and Postmodern Culture*. Buckingham: Open UP, 1999: 83.

²⁸ Waugh, Patricia. From: ““Postmodernism and Feminism?””, in S. Jackson and J. Jones eds, *Contemporary Feminist Theories* (1998), pp. 177-92.” *Modern Literary Theory. A READER*: 354-55.

²⁹ Maes-Jelinek, Hena. “Teaching Past the Posts.” *Liminal Postmodernisms*: 147-48.

coherent and consistent, if revisable entities. It is therefore rooted in ethics, which always requires a subject.³¹

³⁰ Prentice, Chris. "Some Problems of Response to Empire in Settler Post-Colonial Societies." De-scribing Empire: Post-colonialism and textuality. Ed. Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson. London: Routledge, 1994: 53.

³¹ Waugh, Patricia. From: "'Postmodernism and Feminism?'," in S. Jackson and J. Jones eds, *Contemporary Feminist Theories* (1998), pp. 177-92." Modern Literary Theory. A READER: 356.

III.3. Limitations to and the potential of wholeness in Salman Rushdie's texts

III.3.1. Stages of Self-Awareness in *Grimus*

The theme of wholeness or complexity is first introduced in Rushdie's novel *Grimus*. Initially, Rushdie here deals with a conception of wholeness that is decisively rejected due to the negative effects on people and their incapability of dealing with the way of life conceived under it. The ideal of wholeness conceived first is replaced by another form of it, which evolves as a result of a higher stage of self-development. This change occurs through a thorough exploration of the nature of the world and mankind, which involves determining the limitations of man's possibilities in achieving greater complexity.

By focussing on man's limitations, Rushdie particularly focuses on man's mental capacities. It is the mind with its thought-processes as well as the psyche, which at that early stage of Rushdie's work seems to be subsumed in the mind, that are analysed in the novel so as to determine what the nature of human wholeness could realistically be.

In respect to the novel's motifs, Rushdie takes a culturally eclectic approach: The plot is derived from the twelfth-century Sufi poem, *The Conference of Birds*¹, and the novel's title is an anagram of the name 'Simurg'², which appears in Persian, Russian and Caucasian mythology and is the bird of the Persian Tree of Life³. This fabled bird has the ability to immolate itself like the Phoenix and is the symbol of the developing soul. Finding oneself according to the fable is only possible by climbing the mountain Qaf where one is directed by the Emerald rock before one can finally find self-realisation at the end of this spiritual journey. The significance of the bird, Simurg, which is at the centre of the story, can be compared to the meanings of the eagle in different cultures: in India, the eagle-motif is taken up in the entity of Garuda, which is half-man and half-eagle⁴, and in Amerindian culture, which the novel explicitly refers to, the Thunder Bird is considered the greatest of birds, representing the power of the Great Spirit.⁵ The power of the Thunder Bird is revealed in the flapping of his wings.⁶ The eagle as a cross-cultural symbol represents power, strength and,

¹ "Salman Rushdie (1947-)". 01 Aug 2006. <http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/rushdie.htm>: 1.

² Rushdie. *Grimus*. 1975. London: Vintage, 1996: 197.

³ Narbaraz, Payam. "Simurg – A Persian Fairy Tale". 2002. *White Dragon*. 01 Aug 2006. <http://www.whitedragon.org.uk/articles/simurg.htm>: 7-8.

⁴ "Mythology of the Phoenix". *Chevron Cars*. 01 Aug 2006. <http://www.chevrontcars.com/learn/arts-culture/mythology-of-the-phoenix>: 2.

⁵ "Hawks Mythology & Folklore". 01 Aug 2006. http://www.pauldfrost.co.uk/intro_h2.html: 2.

⁶ "Animal Mythology". *Native Online*. 01 Aug 2006. <http://www.nativeonline.com/animal.htm>: 1.

through its nomadic lifestyle, independence.⁷ The eagle can then stand for a person who rises to the highest spheres of truth. This transcultural approach with its inclusion of a variety of influences destabilises notions of cultural hegemony and one-sidedness and can be seen as a way towards enrichment and thus to wholeness.

The novel analyses the migrant's or traveller's condition, which is shown to be very complex and is on the whole regarded in a positive light⁸, but also bears the danger of leading to a loss of control. Both Flapping Eagle and his sister Bird Dog, are turned into outsiders in tribal Axona society. This is partly due to the breach of social rules present there: Bird-Dog chooses her own lifestyle and identity, for example by choosing her brave's name 'Bird-Dog'.⁹ In this context, it becomes clear that names are adopted as challenges and as guides to self-fulfilment not taking into account that they inevitably always also impose restrictions on individuals at the same time by excluding other possibilities of being.

Bird-Dog rejects the superstitious belief of being persecuted by demons when breaking the law of the Axona. The Axona tribal rules are very discriminating towards orphans and also demand a strict division of gender roles. Not observing this division is probably the most serious breach of communal rules Bird-Dog commits: She hunts and provides food even though "breasted providers were anathema to the Axona."¹⁰

In general, if anyone living in the tribe does not adhere to the rules, they are regarded as being Unaxona and that is seen as being unclean. This restrictive tribal structure resembles in a way the Indian caste system that imposes strict norms, particularly on Untouchables.

Another factor that contributes to turn especially Flapping Eagle into an outsider is that he is white whereas the Axona is a dark-skinned race. Here, colonial power relations are reversed so that to the Axona whiteness is considered alien and despicable.

This tribal structure makes Flapping Eagle (and Bird-Dog) "an exile in an isolated community."¹¹ Following this, the Axona use severe punishments for the breach of laws: Flapping Eagle is sent into exile after his sister's disappearance, which is the final rejection by the community. Like the eagle, Flapping Eagle migrates. Having arrived in a new place, he shows no resistance to get involved with a new community and to try to make himself a new home there: "Stripped of his past, forsaking the language of his ancestors for the languages of the archipelagos of the world, ... that the men he encountered thought he was thus of his own

⁷ Rashid, Iqbal Ahmad. "Eagle as a Symbol in Iqbal's Poetry". *Story of Pakistan 2003*. 25 Nov 2003. 01 Aug 2006. <http://www.storyofpakistan.com/contribute.asp?artid=C061>: 1-2.

⁸ Rushdie. *Grimus*: 136.

⁹ Ibid: 17.

¹⁰ Ibid: 17.

¹¹ Ibid: 18.

free will and liked him for it.”¹² This is especially the case because the people in the town seem to be more like him. It here becomes quite clear that a distanced traveller’s view, although allowing him a slightly less biased view, cannot undo the urge to find roots somewhere. This urge is presented as a general one, common to all mankind. This is hinted at by describing all the people on Calf Island as displaced persons who have become obsessed with a certain thing or activity on the island that is a kind of substitute for developing roots. Such substitutes are defined as “the neuroses and displacement activities that exile creates.”¹³ Likewise, Flapping Eagle also seeks a new home on Calf Island.¹⁴ Therefore, he stays much longer in K than he needs to. His engagement with his surroundings involves learning about the place’s past, present and the predominant social structure and organisation present there.¹⁵ On Calf Island, in the town of K, foreigners are regarded to fill a gap and are thus rather an enrichment.¹⁶ His condition as immigrant that involves his being confronted with a new way of life and ideology makes him more aware of the intricacies in social orders and also makes the allegedly absolute character of their values relative to him. This is certainly advantageous, as he thus gets a more comprehensive view of the nature of society. He recognises the drawbacks of K’s ideology: The communism present there at the same time creates a social pecking-order as a kind of counterforce. Cases where the differences between the different members of society have become unimportant can be explained by the presence of one overwhelming power and dangerous force. The community-spirit thus proves to be a forced one, which has evolved on the basis of fear and the need to shut out the world outside. Flapping Eagle’s critical attitude enables him to gradually recognise that he does not fit in K’s way of life either. He feels the urge to leave again and continues his mission to the Mountain of Calf. Flapping Eagle is in several instances obviously in conflict with his urge to find his roots on the one hand and with the deeper insights that should prevent him from settling down somewhere and identifying completely with the other culture on the other hand. Grimus is also a foreigner and an immigrant on Calf Island.¹⁷ Interestingly, it is a foreigner that shapes the island and controls the others. The inhabitants ascribe dark and awful powers to him, thus conceding to him exactly what he claims. Again, there are resemblances to colonial issues: the colonisers had similar experiences with the natives. At the same time,

¹² Ibid: 32.

¹³ Ibid: 15.

¹⁴ Ibid: 106.

¹⁵ Ibid: 143.

¹⁶ Ibid: 124.

¹⁷ Ibid: 208.

taking the psychoanalytic approach, Grimus can be seen as the protagonist's cast-off part that he cannot control any more. In this context, it is significant that Grimus is a refugee.

Another colonial power-relationship is enacted between the immigrant Grimus and Flapping Eagle's sister Bird-Dog. The latter is abused as Grimus' servant and allows being seen and treated as an inferior to him as the people of K allow being reduced to powerless creatures by him with a very limited field of action. They are therefore not whole in the sense of complex. The fact that Grimus exercises power over the (American-) Indian Bird-Dog contains a double meaning of 'Indian': Asian Indians during the era of colonialism were equally regarded as lower race and (mal) treated accordingly. "The dotting Axona will be a good servant, I expect."¹⁸ Likewise, Bird-Dog's willing submission to Grimus can also be compared to some of the Asian Indians' behaviour towards the English during and after the colonial period, thus playing up to the master-servant relationship the British established: "She thinks of him as a demi-god."¹⁹ By playing this inferior part, Bird-Dog loses her freedom of self-expression and feeling of equality. "This was a shadow of the Bird-Dog he had known."²⁰ She and the other people in K overestimate Grimus' power in the same way Grimus overestimates himself, considering himself to be master of life and death and playing God.²¹ Rushdie clearly shows the danger of blindly choosing or following a leader-figure like Grimus or the god Axona and not recognising their deficiencies. Their deficiencies are already hinted at and symbolised in their appearances: The god Axona appears as an "old, dark, hawknosed, feathered woman"²², which makes her look witchlike and does not give a great impression of power. Grimus is described as sitting in a rocking-chair knitting, thus resembling the figure of a peaceful old woman.²³

At the end, Flapping Eagle finds Calf Mountain as he first encountered it when he was still "an incomplete man"²⁴ equally uninhabitable and restrictive as the other places and is fully aware of the desirable but also precarious role of engaged observer.²⁵ He knows that wholeness cannot be attained in places where systems, ideologies and dictators suppress people and take away their freedom.

The main aspect, however, is placed on the discussion of what is called 'dimensions' in the novel. They refer to the possibilities of constructing man and the world in the way one would

¹⁸ Ibid: 217.

¹⁹ Ibid: 217.

²⁰ Ibid: 223.

²¹ Ibid: 210-11

²² Ibid: 87.

²³ Ibid: 228.

²⁴ Ibid: 70.

²⁵ Ibid: 253.

do a jigsaw puzzle.²⁶ This is done on a mainly cognitive level: It is the notion of conceptualism that man has certain ideas and concepts in their mind that constitute but, according to the postmodern stance, never complete the world so that there is an unending deferral of meaning at work. Rushdie here mainly concentrates on cognition and various philosophical trains of thought, focussing on the mind that comprises both, cognitive and emotional levels. Even though the dimensions can be distinguished in their nature and effects they have on the people of Calf Island, they are all supposed to lead a person as well as the world to attaining a greater complexity, but can in actual fact have the opposite result.

The first kind of dimensions are the outer dimensions, which are said to overcome the limitations of our idea of space and time.²⁷ This is done by showing the latter as relative categories, showing the possibility of living in another dimension / world and even in another time. The change from modern to postmodern views of the world is clearly illustrated here. The novel suggests how life in another world can be achieved by mental travel (= conceptualism). Space, in this instance, has become relative, as Flapping Eagle and Bird-Dog start a new life on Calf Island, which is another world. Time there has also become relative, as Calf Island is set in “a different historical continuum”²⁸. Furthermore, in the eternal world of Calf Island time plays no role because the latter does not affect people in the way it affects people in the real world in which the ageing process leads them to death. Time there is thus only of relative value in that merely minor events occur. However, the people’s desperate state of being in K and their need to close off the outer dimensions show that man can only to a certain extent regard space and time as relative. At the end man can only live in a world with a certain time-pattern and adhere to it in their way of thinking and acting. Closely related to the relative conception of time is the idea of eternity. People have always yearned to attain eternity. It shall enable them to escape the transience of human life as well as death, both of which are generally seen in antagonistic terms to man and their ideal way of life. Eternity is in almost all religions seen as a new phase of life. The issue of eternity is introduced into the novel by the peddler Sispy, who is Grimus, handing two bottles to Bird-Dog, which contain liquids that shall lead anyone who drinks them to eternity.²⁹ Not only is eternity regarded to be the ‘time’ after death, but it is also connected with present life: “The yellow eternity of life and the blue eternity of death.”³⁰ It is the victory over death by leading a never-ending earthly life that is here yearned for and presented as desirable. The great fear

²⁶ Ibid: 39.

²⁷ Ibid: 55.

²⁸ Ibid: 53.

²⁹ Ibid: 20.

³⁰ Ibid: 21

of change, especially obvious in Dolores O' Toole, stems from a deep-seated ontological insecurity.³¹ It drives Dolores into living in an unchanging past. Her limiting view of reality then finally triggers her mental illness.

Bird-Dog also gives soon in to this yearning by drinking from the yellow bottle and is soon followed by Flapping Eagle, who, however, soon discovers the undesirability of this eternal life: It means having a multitude of experiences without being able to properly deal with them. This is so because he cannot reach a deeper understanding of them due to the stasis of his own nature: "I want to grow old. Not to die: to grow old."³² He notices the impossibility of self-development in a place like Calf Island, recognising self-development to be of great importance. Reaching the age of several hundred years, he just feels tired. This points out how unnatural and burdensome such a state is. Flapping Eagle goes thus soon beyond the appreciation of the ageing-process and acknowledges how death is a part of human life when he demands: "I want to return to the human race."³³ This necessarily close relationship between life and death is something the others have not become aware of yet:

"'Interesting', said Virgil, 'that you should think of death as such a humanizing force.'³⁴

Eternity with its characteristic of stasis is also seen in the lack of children on the island.

Nothing can grow or develop or be given birth to. This becomes especially clear in Irina's continued pregnancy,³⁵ which is the price she has to pay for her yearning for eternity.

Flapping Eagle finally decides to take action when he sees that he cannot stand stasis and develops a different conviction: "Now, since consciousness is a dynamic condition ... it becomes the privilege, not to say duty, of conscious beings to move, and possibly alter the flow of their times."³⁶ However, Death comes to Calf Island³⁷ – unintentionally, it seems, by Flapping Eagle's mere presence. The reason for this phenomenon is that Flapping Eagle is the one who believes and tries to tell others that it is not possible to live in an eternal world. He makes others see the nature of human reality, into which he has now gained a somehow better insight. This results in Elfrida killing her husband by admitting her love for Flapping Eagle and in three more deaths. Dolores finally kills herself as well, which is partly due to her disturbed state of mind. The illusion of eternity is at that point finally destroyed so that everyone on Calf Island becomes fully aware of the fact that death cannot be abolished.³⁸

³¹ Ibid: 49

³² Ibid: 33

³³ Ibid: 55.

³⁴ Ibid: 55.

³⁵ Ibid: 146.

³⁶ Ibid: 67.

³⁷ Ibid: 175ff.

³⁸ Ibid: 141.

They recognise that this cannot be the right place for them because they are not of a nature that can cope with such a pattern of the world. Even Grimus himself knows that life is incomplete without death: ““But of course it is all about death. Death, Mr Eagle – that is what life is about.””³⁹ Grimus, however, has not been able to give up the idea as well as the yearning for eternity completely. The climax of the rejection of Grimus’ idea is the dying process and then the final death of the world of Calf Island. .

In this context, the Phoenix myth is explicitly mentioned: ““Through death, the annihilation of self, the Phoenix passes its selfhood on to its successor.””⁴⁰ Grimus then is one part of the life of the Phoenix, Flapping Eagle is his successor. This transformation resembles the Hindu concept of reincarnation. It can also simply be seen as a self in a more developed state.

Another kind of complexity is encountered in the so-called Inner Dimensions. They demonstrate that we have a much greater multiplicity of thoughts and feelings than we know or allow ourselves to display. Various ideas and feelings we have are normally suppressed. This is a natural process, as man is incapable of integrating them all into consciousness. A balance between consciousness and the unconscious has to be observed. An emptying of the contents of the unconscious results in a loss of self-control, which in turn leads to disasters. The world of Calf Island itself can be regarded as Flapping Eagle entering the unconscious besides analysing certain thoughts in his consciousness. Both parts need to be accessed and investigated so that the self can develop. Water as a frequent symbol of the unconscious is here taken up again in the Mediterranean Sea that has to be explored. Grimus shows what a lack of control that ensues from an attempt to integrate all of the different dimensions into consciousness could look like. His idea was to lure people to the place who live in a slightly different potential present.⁴¹ Complete knowledge and control over one’s dimensions and over those of others is presented as the perfect Dimension.⁴² This perfect Dimension, which is symbolised in the Stone Rose, is unveiled as a utopia. There are ““too many possibilities of happiness””⁴³. He has made the other people unreal as well by luring them into this world: ““You have reduced all other lives to the same level of unreality as our own ...you.””⁴⁴ The unreality of such a life on Calf Island is at least unconsciously present on people’s minds, which is shown in the people’s refusal to experience the dimensions and in their fear of their effect on them. They develop obsessions and thus one-dimensional views, which serve them

³⁹ Ibid: 231.

⁴⁰ Ibid: 233.

⁴¹ Ibid: 212.

⁴² Ibid: 235.

⁴³ Ibid: 236.

⁴⁴ Ibid: 327-28

as defence against the overwhelming effect of the dimensions: “He says the island creates the need ... he says that the Grimus Effect can only be survived by obsessed minds.”⁴⁵ The people’s obsessions are of various kinds: one of them is sexuality and the house of Jocasta.⁴⁶ Other obsessions stem from the total immersion into one’s preoccupations. These obsessions defeat almost all dimensions. The people’s rejection of facing the dimensions is not squeamishness, but the expression of a natural inability to cope with all of them. Man cannot cope with an endless number of dimensions.

Our limitations result in the fact that we cannot have clarity about the relationship between man and the world. This implies that we have no complete idea of what the Inner Dimensions (man’s mind with the psyche) are like either. Grimus integrates quite contradictory notions of what the Inner Dimensions and thus human nature could be like: He considers them to be of two kinds: one kind is said to be atomic, complete and static on the one hand; the other part is assumed to be ionic, incomplete and dynamic on the other hand.⁴⁷ The latter idea is the more convincing one in that it accounts for changes in individuals – changes that must be natural as we can see from the vain attempts of some of the people on Calf Island to achieve stasis.

These kinds of essences are energy processes.

It thus seems unclear to me what the static and complete essence should be in a person. Even though, completion is always aspired to, it is never achieved. The idea of a static essence in ourselves is highly questionable. A possible explanation for Grimus’ understanding of human nature is that he thinks of free will as an illusion, believing instead that “people behave according to the flux-lines of their potential futures.”⁴⁸ This structure that determines people’s behaviour does not leave any room for autonomy. I refute this notion of a person being determined, however, as it seems only to serve Grimus as a convenient tool to legitimate the enactment of his power.

Dimension-Fever is to a certain extent necessary and important. This is the case when one tries to come to terms with *some* thoughts or feelings one has not faced so far. This does not mean facing and integrating all of them at once into consciousness though. The interaction of unconscious with conscious contents is important provided it leads at the same time to the recognition of one’s own limitations.

Flapping Eagle and Virgil Jones, in having Dimension-Fever experience a battle with their own deficiencies, the deficiencies being both unpleasant contents from the unconscious that

⁴⁵ Ibid: 161.

⁴⁶ Ibid: 188.

⁴⁷ Ibid: 234.

⁴⁸ Ibid: 239.

have lingered there as well as their own recognised limitations in encountering the world. The disagreeable unconscious contents are impressively captured in the following description: “Lurking in the Inner Dimensions of every victim of the fever is his own particular set of monsters. ... encasing a ruined mind.”⁴⁹ One of these struggles with one’s monster is exemplified in Flapping Eagle’s struggle with the god Axona. This struggle is really a struggle with his own self-doubts and feelings of guilt about having left his people. The fact that he achieves a victory over the god turns him into a new person. At the same time, this struggle can be seen in post-colonial terms as the struggle with the dark sides in one’s self that have been transferred onto ‘the other’, the foreigner. In this instance, Flapping Eagle treats the god Axona as a foreigner that poses a threat, as the god embodies what Flapping Eagle has tried to expunge from his self, namely elements of the Axona culture.

The Inner Dimensions suggest then also the potential of embracing a multiplicity of thoughts, ideas and emotions as long as this multiplicity can be dealt with, thus avoiding the disastrous outcome the Inner Dimensions have had on the people on Calf Island. Even there, however, our hitherto known world is shown as being limited in its potential, as is our conviction that only this kind of world exists for human beings: “... the limitations we place upon the world are imposed by ourselves rather than the world. ... a man is sane only to the extent that he subscribes to a previously-agreed construction of reality.”⁵⁰ This passage mocks society’s understanding of sanity, which is really a reflection of ascribing to sanctioned social norms and viewpoints, thus revealing madness as a social construction, which has emerged in order to blot out other, particularly challenging and provocative viewpoints. Although our worldviews must be of a certain narrowness due to our human nature, which cannot easily allow for the possibility of the existence of other worlds in everyday life with different conceptions of space and ways of perception, we should at least be open-minded enough to question these assumptions on a theoretical level. This is why doubt to a certain extent is essential. It is the continued questioning of one’s own certainties, which can broaden our views: “‘I disapprove of certainties’, said Virgil Jones. ‘They limit one’s range of vision. Doubt is one aspect of width.’”⁵¹ This statement is certainly true and its idea will also be used in Rushdie’s future novels as one of his main ideas (adhering to the theory of postmodernism), but at the same time doubt cannot be an absolute concept, as man cannot live in a continuous state of uncertainty. The endless multiplicity of vision is assumed to be acquired by pushing the intellect to the limit. This process is embodied in the figure of the

⁴⁹ Ibid: 84

⁵⁰ Ibid: 52.

⁵¹ Ibid: 159.

Gorf. The imagination is an additional creator of dimensions. Among the possibilities we have available to our consciousness, which is considered as person marker, is that of mind-entering. It resembles the process of psychotherapy, also in that it contains its dangers.⁵²

To sum up the meaning of the Inner Dimensions and the various symbols associated with them it is first of all important to recognise the Stone Rose as representing both the sum of all possible dimensions as well as the confrontation of consciousness with the unconscious contents, which could include the discovery of a complex. The Stone Rose can be related to the Emerald rock in the fable of Simurg, which indicates ways of gaining a higher degree of self-awareness. The confrontation of the mind's contents can imply either a healing or rather a destructive process, depending on its nature: "So the Rose can heal as well as hurt."⁵³ As it has been abused by Grimus, Flapping Eagle, by becoming aware of the distorted nature of the Stone Rose, decides to destroy it and thus to set him free. To be more precise, the Stone Rose mirrors Grimus' arrogant over-estimation of his abilities, which must be recognised and then eliminated by Flapping Eagle in order to ensure his own self-development.

The mountain of Kaf can be called a model for the structure and the workings of the human mind. The fact that it is analysed is again a parallel to psychoanalysis. In addition, the structure of Grimus' house also resembles the structure of the human mind and the psyche, its shape displaying "labyrinthine excesses"⁵⁴. Personal development and enrichment are achieved when Flapping Eagle finally recognises that Grimus is part of himself, a part that has become independent and needs to be integrated so that it cannot do harm to him any longer. It should be observed that the fact that Grimus and Eagle are part of one and the same individual is indicated quite early in the novel, namely when people in K are stunned by Flapping Eagle's features, which mirror those of Grimus. In fact, Grimus seems to be a self that has been split off such as it is the case in schizophrenia where the selves then seem to live in different worlds. A re-integration process then occurs, whose outcome is that "the man who had been Flapping Eagle" "was now part-Eagle, part Grimus... wrong."⁵⁵

Not only is this re-integration process symbolised by the destruction of the Stone Rose, it is also represented by first the change⁵⁶ and then the dissolution⁵⁷ of Calf mountain, which show a heightened (self-) knowledge and the completion of a crucial stage of Flapping Eagle's self-development.

⁵² Ibid: 74-75.

⁵³ Ibid: 216.

⁵⁴ Ibid: 241.

⁵⁵ Ibid: 253.

⁵⁶ Ibid: 224.

⁵⁷ Ibid: 253.

One idea behind the multiplicity of dimensions that remains to be desirable as an aim to pursue is the rejection of a black-and-white picture of the world. Fixed dualisms are rejected. This will also become an ongoing theme in Rushdie's work. Flapping Eagle is partly drawn towards this easy, dualistic conception of the world, though. The two extrapolations are reflected in the figures of Khallit and Mallit, who debate this dualistic view on things. They first argue how the opposite-looking items of the pairs like those of good and bad or of war and peace must inextricably belong together: "Then if good is on one side of the coin, bad is on the other. If peace is on one side, war is on the other."⁵⁸ The question that ensues then in the absence of death, is if life can exist without the other side of the coin. According to a dualistic approach, this would not be possible, which again shows the world of Calf Island as an unreal and impossible one. However, it becomes soon clear that a merely dualistic attempt to understand the world is not enough when we think about how life on Calf Island resembles death closely due to its static nature and also how death is considered by many people as an entrance to a new life. Consequently, the interplay of so-called opposites, especially in their interchanges of meaning, must be a complex and a never-ending one: "With that and the eternal interplay of thesis and antithesis a man must be happy."⁵⁹

The need for integration of apparent opposites becomes also clear regarding the briefly-mentioned issue of attraction and the possibilities of love relationships: Flapping Eagle is quite stunned at first to find himself become attracted to two very different women, who even appear as opposites of each other. Only gradually does he begin to understand not only that love has room for very different lovers and that the conception of us being in love with a particular type of person cannot hold, but also that Elfrida and Irina are not mere opposites, but that they are both alike and unlike, depending on the view or perspective one adopts.⁶⁰ He acknowledges finally that his own enrichment would be greater if he could experience both the predominant aspects in Irina as well as those present in Elfrida more intensely. However, he also has to learn that such wholeness through love can only occur when the integration of these aspects of others into the self occurs other than by betraying one woman with the other.

We can thus see that there is not only another side to something, but each side also contains from the start its opposite: "In the ancient symbol of yin and yang, the yin hemisphere contains a yang dot, to show each half contains the seeds of its opposite."⁶¹ As we have seen

⁵⁸ Ibid: 77.

⁵⁹ Ibid: 131.

⁶⁰ Ibid: 171.

⁶¹ Ibid: 133.

before, this is also the way our psyche works: Consciousness is always partly invaded by unconscious contents and the other way round. It is therefore only logical to abandon simple dualities.

It should thus also be clear that one-sided pursuits leave the individual on the long run entirely dissatisfied and often let them become intolerant, as the individual does not even want to face another person's way of thinking: “ ‘When they are at one extreme, they yearn for the other side. Such men are habitually alone, unloved by most others, incapable of making a friend, since to make a friend would be to accept the other's way of thinking.’ “⁶²

Like the thirty birds in the myth of Simurg, Flapping Eagle has engaged on a quest. Both in the myth and in Rushdie's novel, the protagonists only learn at the very end that this quest has in fact been a quest for the self or soul, which is symbolised by the mountain of Calf, and not for a different entity.⁶³ Flapping Eagle is able to live up to the meanings his name carries, especially to its association with the Phoenix: He gains valuable insights when he confronts the Outer and Inner Dimensions and finally the Stone Rose about the nature of man and the world in general and about himself in particular. These insights, including an increased self-awareness, lead to genuine self-development and wholeness.

⁶² Ibid: 134.

⁶³ Yüksel, Ahmet F. “Where are you going Simurg?” 19 Mar 2002. 31 Jul 2006.
http://sufizmveinsan.com/aksam/where_are_you_going_simung.html: 1.

III.3.2. *Midnight's Children* as a bundle of intertwining histories

Unlike this relatively unpopular first novel, Salman Rushdie's first real success as a novelist came to him after the publication of *Midnight's Children* in 1981. The success of the novel could partly be explained by the fact that it mingles the most important historical events in India of the last few decades with fiction. This combination evokes more interest on the reader's part than any mere historical account would have done, this great interest being also a result of the use of various devices in the novel, such as comedy, the high use of symbolism, Hindu mythology and postmodernist techniques like magic realism. The form of *Midnight's Children* has thus definitely achieved a greater complexity than the one found in Rushdie's first novel, *Grimus*. Thematically, the novel approaches the concept of wholeness by concentrating on the actually existing restrictions that were and / or have been imposed on the people in India by either themselves or by India's leaders or the colonizers, thus dealing with the concept's counterpart. The novel explores at great length the concept of history and on how and to what extent an individual may be able to gain a greater complexity by leaving traces of them and their actions behind. This theme is raised against the background of the changing situation of the subcontinent. In addition, the work also explores multiplicity in this context by referring to the tenets of Hindu belief.

One of the outside factors that played a big role in the oppression of many people in India, was the imposition of the colonizers' culture on the Indian population and the ramifications of this as described in the novel.

One instance of where Indians are presented as being inferior to Europeans is in the way Mr Zagallo, Saleem's teacher, treats his Indian pupils. He humiliates them, thus trying to compensate for his own feelings of inferiority in respect to his background: He denies having a Goanese mother as well as being a bastard. He calls the children "feeltth from the jongle"¹, thus demonstrating his feeling of standing apart from them by his accent. The Indian children are treated with violence and are regarded as animals. Unfortunately, this cruel behaviour against others is his only way of raising his self-esteem.

A more detailed description of typical colonial British attitudes is found in the delineation of Methwold's vision of Bombay:² Methwold, one of the departing Englishmen in 1947, feels the strong need to leave at least some traces of Britishness in India. He tries to achieve this by

¹ Rushdie, Salman. *Midnight's Children*. 1981. London: Vintage, 1996: 231.

² Ibid: 92.

imposing certain conditions on the Indians who buy his estate, such as the obligation to take the houses with all the items in them. He justifies his decision by glorifying the achievements of the British: ““You’ll admit we weren’t all bad: built your roads. Schools, railway trains, parliamentary system, all worthwhile things. Taj Mahal was falling down until an Englishman bothered to see it.””³ Methwold still has this condescending colonial attitude that makes him smile at Indians when they talk to him due to their imperfect Oxford accent. In actual fact, the people moving to the Estate are influenced by the English environment they move into: they learn how to use the tools available to them, pursue the same customs as the British did and even try to imitate their accent. By doing so, they behave in exactly the way that is expected from them, namely by being submissive. Methwold is content by their lack of resistance: “All is well.”⁴

Saleem’s mother, Amina, is one of the few people who is unaffected in her own habits by and also critical about the people’s adoption of this English lifestyle, which seems to turn them into something which they are not: ““Even if we’re sitting in the middle of all this English garbage ... this is still India, and people like Ramram Seth know what they know.””⁵

As soon as the proposal has been made to them, she has shown resistance to the project by protesting: “ ... And look at the stains on the carpet, janum; for two months we must live like those Britishers? ... with papers only!””⁶ Although, after Methwold’s departure they get rid of most of his things, some items (and therefore also the influence the colonizers exercised on them) are still kept.⁷ In fact, many Indians are strongly influenced by discriminating views expressed by the colonials. They take them to themselves, adopting this inferiority-superiority way of thinking and exercising it such as when they adopt the view of a whiter (Indian) skin being more desirable than a darker one⁸. When Saleem’s mother comes across a white beggar in the street, her view on the world is destroyed: whites are supposed to be the superior race and this idea is incompatible with the sight of a white beggar.⁹ The adoption of the colonizers’ narrative does here not go beyond repetition so as to create a strong counter-narrative.

However, Amina has her negative views on whites as well and finds also reasons for looking down on them, regarding some white women as “cheap female types”¹⁰. She shows her

³ Ibid: 96.

⁴ Ibid: 99.

⁵ Ibid: 100.

⁶ Ibid: 96.

⁷ Ibid: 128.

⁸ Ibid: 56, 70, 179.

⁹ Ibid: 81-82.

¹⁰ Ibid: 133.

ignorance about the various different nationalities of the white women that work together with her husband by taking them all for Anglos, whereas their names suggest that they are from other European countries. Her derogatory way of speaking about them suggests the possibility of a reverse power-relationship, which is equally discriminating though. This possibility is again emphasised in the description of Saleem's and his friends' superior attitude towards foreigners, no matter what race or nationality they belong to. Here I would suggest that it is fear and the longing for power that makes them encounter the unknown in such a negative manner. How the lust for power makes people act snobbishly at the very best towards others is also demonstrated in Ahmed Sinai's treatment of his workers: "Ahmed Sinai began treating his workers as peremptorily as once, in Bombay, he had mis-treated servants to inculcate, in master weavers and assistant packers alike, the eternal verities of the master-servant relationship"¹¹.

Aadam Aziz is the one who shows neither a submissive nor a completely rejecting attitude towards European influences. He is critical and establishes a dialogue between the different cultures, thus making an attempt to achieve a better mutual understanding. He goes to Germany and is deeply influenced by his experiences there. He rejects the colonial ideas upheld by his friends, "this belief of theirs that he was somehow the invention of their ancestors"¹². In this rejection, he is very critical of their opinions. During his time abroad Aziz also learns about modern medicine, which he now uses in India. This can be definitely seen as a valuable contribution and as a complement to alternative, indigenous medicine such as practised and believed in by the boatman Tai. Tai, though, has a fairly narrow-minded view and rejects these new healing techniques: "To the ferryman, the bag represents Abroad; it is the alien thing, the invader, progress ... and yes, it sits between the doctor and the boatman, and has made them antagonists"¹³. There is a particular stress in the novel on this effectiveness of both old and modern medicine when Saleem is healed by cobra poison.¹⁴ This emphasis points towards a more broadminded view of the world than both Tai and Aadam's German's friends have. By adopting some ideas and viewpoints from abroad on the one hand, and retaining some of the cultural values he has grown up with on the other hand, Aadam (and through him also his grandson Saleem) becomes a more complex being and can in terms of natural belonging be rather called a hybrid, a fact that is further underlined by his childhood in the separated Kashmir: " ... so that he and I find in its ceaseless throbbing the answer to the

¹¹ Ibid: 332.

¹² Ibid: 11.

¹³ Ibid: 21.

¹⁴ Ibid: 148-49.

question, Indian or Kashmiri? Stained by the bruise of a Heidelberg bag's clasp, we throw our lot in with India; but the alienness of blue eyes remains"¹⁵. The lack of firm roots suggests a chance to overcome intolerance, discrimination and power-abuse. This is the case because the individual is here from the time of their youth exposed to several different cultural influences and therefore probably more open to other ones they have not met with than an individual would be who has only encountered very few influences outside the society they live in and tends therefore to be more prone to be biased towards such foreign influences.

Some of the main restrictions imposed on many of the people in India after her Independence were introduced by Indira Gandhi. One has to see that her politics tried to tackle some of the most striking of the country's problems, which could in turn be regarded as restrictive conditions under which people had to live. Among these were the poverty and squalor one came across in the slums: People living there suffered from sexually-transmitted diseases, children had black teeth and hardly any clothes on and many untouchables became beggars because the parents mutilated them to cripples "to ensure them of a lifelong income from begging."¹⁶ There were gross inequities in wealth distribution¹⁷ and the untouchable problem also remained acute. Democracy and votes for women were irrelevant. Instead, the country was marked by corruption,¹⁸ a very low literacy level and overpopulation.¹⁹ The measures, however, that Indira Gandhi chose to employ in order to deal with these serious shortcomings reflected power abuse and made a great part of the population suffer in other and new ways. They have already been described in detail in the discussion of Mistry's novel *A Fine Balance*. It is important to acknowledge the combination of Gandhi's good intentions and the cruel means she and others resorted to, which makes any one-sided depiction of her reign untenable. The double nature of her time in office is displayed in her black-and-white hair, which thus stands on a bigger scale for the "centre-parting in history"²⁰. Indira Gandhi's hair is interestingly described as "green and black"²¹ when the focus is on the sufferings the Emergency brings on. Keeping in mind that Rushdie is an author with a vey synchretistic approach, I suggest that these colours could be the two added colours of the Tabernacle in the Hebrew tradition of cabbalah, which stand for total negation and non-

¹⁵ Ibid: 107.

¹⁶ Ibid: 81.

¹⁷ Ibid: 245.

¹⁸ Ibid: 291.

¹⁹ Ibid: 206.

²⁰ Ibid: 400.

²¹ Ibid: 422.

perfection.²² The cabbalah ties in with some ideas of Hinduism insofar as it is also a belief system that is based on mystical insight into the divine.

I claim that the novel attempts to explain at least partly Gandhi's power craving obvious in her politics by pointing out Indira's widow status. Throughout the novel, Indira Gandhi is spoken of as 'the Widow' and is only at the end named. This suggests that her status as a widow influences not just her personal, but also her social identity to a great extent. This is definitely true in India where widows had to face discrimination and also had a low reputation. Although suttee had officially been abolished before the reign of Indira Gandhi, the widows' true lives still ended with the death of their husbands. They remain in what is called "the widow's hostel"²³. They are not really part of society any longer, but isolated and torn women: "In the palace of the widows lives a tribe of women whose chests are irremediably bruised by the power of their continual pummellings, whose hair is torn beyond repair, and whose voices are shredded by the constant, keening expressions of their grief"²⁴. Such a widow is obviously what Indira Gandhi at the same time fears and actively rejects to become.

Like the status of a widow in India should be seen as discrimination against women, the treatment of female sexuality in India equally poses severe restrictions on women in the free expression of their sexuality. Instances of this circumstance can be found when we have a look at most of the female characters in the novel:

The narrator's grandmother, Naseem, adopts an attitude towards sex and sexuality that strongly reflects society's opinion of what a woman should be like. We can observe how her opinion of female sexuality is formed by her upbringing: When she meets her later husband Aadam Aziz for the first time in her role as a patient, she is not allowed to show herself to him, but has to conceal herself behind a perforated sheet.²⁵ This is a way of saving her honour and of ensuring that she remains chaste before her marriage. At the same time, this lack of immediate, full revelation of the other person certainly has the exciting effect of heightening curiosity and of creating a very erotic atmosphere between Naseem and Aadam. The gradual revelation of various parts of Naseem's body and the ensuing enchantment with the latter also stand for the process of falling in love, in which one discovers and desires more and more aspects of the other person. However, there is also a very restrictive element at work here.

²² „Hebrew Tradition.“ 21 Jul 2006. <http://www.colorsystem.com/projekte/engl/65hebe.htm>: 3.

²³ Rushdie. *Midnight's Children*: 433.

²⁴ Ibid: 433.

²⁵ Ibid: 22.

During her marriage, Naseem regards sex as a mere duty that has to be performed and is also unwilling to come out of purdah. The cultural values of her society, which were mirrored in her upbringing at home, have thus been completely internalised by her. Her world is now out of tune due to the discrepancy between the way she has been brought up and the demands on her as a married woman. This entails that her unquestioned, highly polarised way of conceiving purity and impurity cannot seem to hold any more. This change is linguistically expressed in new language creations, such as Naseem's expression "whatsitsname"²⁶, which is really a combination of several words. This new way of representing the break-up of dualistic ways of thinking and creating new, hybrid forms is a device that is both postmodern as well as post-colonial in nature.

Naseem's daughter Amina has a slightly more complex attitude towards sexuality. Although she is very soon attracted to Nadir Khan and engages in some sexual activities with him even before their marriage, she is also disdainful about sex itself. The result of this aversion to sex is that she and her husband avoid it for the two years of their marriage.²⁷ The new marriage with Ahmed and the name change to Amina do not immediately change her attitude towards sex due to her learned dislike of it. In fact, her relationship to Ahmed is one that is rather based on the cognitive exploration of the other's values than on physical enjoyment: As Amina cannot fall in love with him, she consciously trains herself to gradually develop loving feelings, which seem to be the result of acknowledging and appreciating certain qualities that Ahmed possesses.

However, her existent longing for physical contact and sexuality become very apparent when she meets Nadir Khan, the man she really loves, again. Her own sexual longing that has been disregarded for such a long time is now in full bloom²⁸, and she gradually admits to it, which is the first step to coming to terms with her sexuality.

Surprisingly, the narrator's normally very rebellious sister Jamila, who grows up at a much later point of time, does not reflect a particularly emancipated, modern view on sexuality either. There is no visible breakthrough in her attitude: When she starts her career as a singer, which is a career that is not considered respectable, she submits to the demand to hide behind a veil.²⁹ We encounter a direct parallel to her grandmother's perforated sheet, which shows nothing much has changed in the overall Indian society's attitude towards women and the latter's freedom to express their sexuality freely.

²⁶ Ibid: 41.

²⁷ Ibid: 60.

²⁸ Ibid: 218.

²⁹ Ibid: 313.

Amina's younger sister Emerald, who is from her youth on very conscious of her charms and her own sexual attraction, once runs out of the house unveiled³⁰. Obviously, she does not always adhere to the rules of female decency, which society expects her to observe. Still, Emerald does not make a complete break with the gender rules of society, as she shows a very strict judgement of Pia's liaisons after Pia's husband's death: "Emerald thin-lipped: 'But be a little respectable ... the family name...'"³¹

Pia indeed makes a break with the strict adherence to gender conventions – in a much more determined and absolute manner than the others. She consciously breaks with the conventions of her widow status and thus explicitly rejects society's conviction that a woman's life has ended with her husband's death – a conviction that she obviously shares with Indira Gandhi. How difficult and brave such a rejection of being dictated by society's ideas about appropriate behaviour is, becomes apparent when focussing on how Parvati and Lila Sabarmati are treated by the Indian society they live in: Parvati, one of the midnight children, is avoided by society due to her illegitimate child.³²

Lila Sabarmati similarly is also regarded to be a shameless woman due to her unfaithfulness towards her husband. Many people go as far as justifying the murder of her lover by Commander Sabarmati, thus regarding murder as a justified retribution for a wife's unfaithfulness.³³ Her final punishment is that she is denied custody of her children.

Sonia, the wife of the narrator's uncle Mustapha, is presented in her insignificance and reduced to a mere number, which is due to the many other wives Mustapha has.³⁴

Padma, the narrator's listener, finally disrupts the fear of sexuality completely when she shows her eagerness to have sex with Saleem, the narrator, several times throughout the course of the novel. She fully admits to her frustration when Saleem is taken up too much with his writing to fulfil her sexual needs.³⁵

Padma's sexuality certainly enforces what women like Pia have already introduced before, namely a new development in modern Indian society that lets women enjoy their sexual freedom much more. This freedom is now claimed much more self-confidently.

It is striking how much emphasis is placed on female characters in the novel. I believe that this stress is not only there to examine women's emancipation or the reasons for the lack of it but also to highlight the power of women according to Hindu mythology in which they

³⁰ Ibid: 61.

³¹ Ibid: 329.

³² Ibid: 414.

³³ Ibid: 262.

³⁴ Ibid: 391.

³⁵ Ibid: 39.

represent the dynamic aspect, shakti, also associated with the active power of a deity.³⁶ This reference can be seen as an appeal to make more extensive use of this power. Concerning Saleem's narrative it is Padma who gives Saleem's story a clearer direction and dynamic.

Other restrictions that were and partly still are imposed on people belonging to various different groups in India are due to what is called regionalism. Regionalism usually means strife between groups from different parts of the country, some of them speaking different languages, being of different denominations or religions or having different ideologies. The strives at that time pointed towards "the whole disjointed unreality of the times"³⁷. Especially the dissatisfied poor became criminal and entered into riots with each other.³⁸ The emergence of Pakistan also caused fights and struggles, a "mass bloodletting in progress on the frontiers of the divided Punjab", which was particularly strong in Bengal. In 1965 the fights culminated in the Indo-Pakistani war over Kashmir.³⁹

Furthermore, there were many campaigners who called for the partition of Bombay on linguistic boundaries.⁴⁰ These language marchers zealously demanded the emergence of Maharashtra and Gujarat. The people's intolerance and hate towards each other increased until India became finally multiply divided by language "into fourteen states and six centrally-administered 'territories'"⁴¹ The election campaigns of 1957 increased the existence of regionalism when the parties made their ideologies public. The formation of political parties was in actual fact sometimes the result of language marches that created their ideologies. Examples of these were communism, which promised everyone food and jobs and the party focussing on reforms of Hinduism, promising Hindu women equal rights of inheritance. However, these ideologies, positive and open-minded as they sound, were often discriminating towards some people, contradictory in the relationship between theory and practice,⁴² and also frequently showed splits between the various party members.⁴³ The new state of affairs in India with its new democracy establishing itself a few years after Independence, contributed to the fostering of regionalism. The reason for this was that the people were still confused about the new situation and uncertain as to how to deal with it.

...the new-born, secular state was being given an awesome reminder of its fabulous antiquity ... so that people were seized by atavistic longings, and forgetting the new myth of freedom

³⁶ Ibid: 406.

³⁷ Ibid: 76.

³⁸ Ibid: 104.

³⁹ Ibid: 338ff.

⁴⁰ Ibid: 167.

⁴¹ Ibid: 189.

⁴² Ibid: 403.

⁴³ Ibid: 399.

reverted to their old ways, their old regionalist loyalties and prejudices, and the body politic began to crack.⁴⁴

All these various factors that led to regionalism are nicely summarised in the description of the behaviour of the midnight children, which can be seen as “a mirror of the nation”⁴⁵:

“...children from Maharashtra loathing Gujaratis ... while among the low-born, the pressures of poverty and communism were becoming evident”⁴⁶. All these confrontations and frictions turned “India into the most macabre of theatres, the Theatre of War.”⁴⁷

The prominence of India’s history in this novel is not only reflected in such descriptions as those mentioned above, but is also obvious in the novel’s frequent symbolic use of the colours saffron and green, which are the colours of India’s national flag.

Religion as one of the factors that leads to regionalism deserves to be looked at a bit more closely, as it has been one of the greatest contributors to the emergence of hate and violence. The focus should here especially be on Pakistan, the ‘Land of the Pure’ where fanaticism flourishes and no alternative realities are allowed beside the narrow-minded account offered by these fanatics. Religion is here alienated from its original idea and shown under a very destructive aspect, which tries to take away other persons’ freedom. Various instances and aspects of such a religious understanding are shown: The restrictions imposed on women that I mentioned earlier are in actual fact an expression of certain strict religious beliefs.

Also the Hindu-Muslim hostilities reflect this great intolerance towards others, trying to convert people and turn them into something which they are not. Not surprisingly, intolerance and segregation enter all parts of life so that even some films are singularly addressed to a Hindu audience.⁴⁸ Gangs are founded that mock the other groups’ beliefs in very offensive ways:

That it posed as a fanatical anti-Muslim movement, which, in those days before the Partition riots, in those days when pigs’ heads could be left with impunity in the courtyards of Friday mosques, was nothing unusual. ... to paint slogans ... MUSLIMS ARE THE JEWS OF ASIA!⁴⁹

Groups of the population, which have little in common except for their religion, bond in order to face the shared enemy. The Hindu-Muslim hostilities and the violence used by the groups creates in turn intolerance towards them by a third religious group, namely by Christians.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Ibid: 245.

⁴⁵ Ibid: 255.

⁴⁶ Ibid: 254-55.

⁴⁷ Ibid: 295.

⁴⁸ Ibid: 50.

⁴⁹ Ibid: 72.

⁵⁰ Ibid: 105.

The army is also infiltrated with religious (militant Islamic) ideology, which is reflected in the soldiers' vocabulary: How an expression such as 'holy war' can be justified can of course be questioned: "What a thing this holy war is, in which one supreme sacrifice men may atone for all their evils!"⁵¹ The intention of such a holy war is to "root out undesirable elements", which aim for the "destruction of family life, murder of God, expropriation of landowners, abolition of film-censorship"⁵². Obviously, the army is deeply dictatorial in its principles, demanding absolute obedience from everyone, as the soldiers are said to have the special privilege to be "soldiers-for-Allah"⁵³. The soldiers, however, are not men any more, but man-dogs, a circumstance that is shown in the central role that submission plays in their lives. The fact that men are neither treated nor behave as individual human beings is shown in the merging of the names of three soldiers into one long one: "Ayooba Shaheed Farooq"⁵⁴.

Purity is the ideal everyone in these rather extreme forms of Islam aspires to, which is again in particular reflected in the adopted attitude towards female sexuality. It is especially important in the everyday life of Pakistan, "the land of submission, the home of purity"⁵⁵ and celebrated by Jamila: "Purity – that highest of ideals! – that angelic virtue for which Pakistan was named, and which dripped from every note of my sister's songs!"⁵⁶

Jamila's longing for and embracing of purity stems from her adoption of a rather strict form of Islam (which is the expression of her protest against her increased status in the family).

This adoption is especially surprising because – like Rushdie's family – her family practises a rather moderate, open form of Islam. Jamila now says her prayer at prescribed times and even asks for a nun's outfit.⁵⁷ Saleem, however, whose subconsciousness displays the notions of vice and punishment, which are so typical of these extreme forms of religious beliefs, acknowledges that purity can also have a rather limiting effect on the individual:⁵⁸ Purity is here a part of a religion that has become more and more rule-dominated. Truth is reduced to a few dogmas only, and the narrator who, like Rushdie, hates Pakistan and particularly the rule-dominated way of life there, recognises how much harsher and more numerous and absolute these rules are in Pakistan than they are in India:

⁵¹ Ibid: 340.

⁵² Ibid: 348.

⁵³ Ibid: 357.

⁵⁴ Ibid: 348.

⁵⁵ Ibid: 405.

⁵⁶ Ibid: 329.

⁵⁷ Ibid: 292.

⁵⁸ Ibid: 461.

... and maybe this was the difference between my Indian childhood and Pakistani adolescence – that in the first I was beset by an infinity of alternative realities, while in the second I was adrift, disorientated, amid an equally infinite number of falsenesses, unrealities and lies⁵⁹.

Even though the narrator knows that he exaggerates the contrast between these two countries, the difference is definitely there. The quotation shows that dogmatists and dictators have the wrong idea of what ‘truth’ is. The truth accounts they create are considered to be absolute and the very opposite to what the narrator suggests they must be like, namely subjective accounts that cannot be generalised, thus remaining “alternative realities”. Saleem is aware of the fact that “it’s a dangerous business to try and impose one’s view of things on others.”⁶⁰ He thus echoes one of the most important principles in Hinduism, which is openness towards different viewpoints. References to Hindu culture are made throughout the novel in a way that presents aspects of Hinduism as being deeply embedded in the subcontinent’s psyche.

Saleem’s conception of the world and the nature of belief is therefore in strong contrast to those dictatorial forms of religion he finds himself surrounded with, which also show the characteristic of making a strict differentiation between ‘good’ and ‘evil’ things and activities. A dualistic way of thinking is typical in these cases. The narrator mocks this way of thinking here: “Sacred: purdah-veils, halal meat, muezzin’s towers, prayer-mats; profane: Western records, pig-meat, alcohol ... and lust”⁶¹. The divisions made here do not seem to be comprehensible in their logic, but seem to be rather arbitrary instead. This arbitrariness is shown in such contradictory expressions as “holy war”⁶² and “soldiers-for-Allah”⁶³, which are made fun of here. The dualistic way of thinking necessarily also includes censorship, as no other opinions are allowed: “O prolific seizures of professors and poets!”⁶⁴

How unstable and close to destruction through other influences this form of faith is, is shown in the separation of East and West Wing, which have only been held together through a shared religion.⁶⁵

Religion is also not conducive to any personal development in the form of superstition, which is particularly strong in Naseem and her daughter Amina, who believes in seeing ghosts. Their superstitions take on rather grotesque forms: “... the supernatural conceits of Naseem Aziz had begun to influence her thoughts and behaviour – those conceits which persuaded Reverend Mother that aeroplanes were inventions of the devil, and that cameras could steal

⁵⁹ Ibid: 326.

⁶⁰ Ibid: 212.

⁶¹ Ibid: 318.

⁶² Ibid: 340.

⁶³ Ibid: 357.

⁶⁴ Ibid: 357.

⁶⁵ Ibid: 35.

your soul ... head.”⁶⁶ They both limit the world’s complexity by explaining its phenomena in merely religious terms: bad events are regarded as a punishment on them by god.⁶⁷ By doing so they merely reflect the attitudes and the behaviour of most people in the country: “... any physical or mental peculiarity in a child is a source of deep family shame.”⁶⁸ Even Saleem cannot be exempted from superstition, as he believes in omens and destiny.⁶⁹

However, even though these approaches to religion go extremely wrong due to the restrictions they impose on the world and individuals, the need of man for religion is shown in the character of Saleem’s grandfather Aadam Aziz: His religious doubts create a hole in him,⁷⁰ which he tries to fill by turning to women instead. But he soon shows cracks and finally disintegrates.⁷¹ The climax of his disintegration is reached when he believes to see God in person, whom he makes responsible for Hanif’s death. Aadam thus creates an image of a very destructive God as a result of his forceful suppression of his belief as well as of his inability to live without it. As a consequence, he renounces God and refuses to go to Pakistan, which was said to be a country “built especially for God”⁷². Aadam will find a mirror in Gibreel later on in Rushdie’s novel *The Satanic Verses*. Gibreel also falls apart as a result of his incapability of living with his doubts about God and of coming to terms with them; he also blasphemes God and becomes insane.

All these various factors that pose severe restrictions on people’s personalities, are factors that have evolved in Indian society through the course of history.

The novel’s main emphasis, however, is on the individual’s link to history and tries to explore the latter’s complexities as well as its shortcomings compared to human assumptions of what it is. The question of how history can bring into the open a person’s potential is particularly highlighted in the text: A person is first of all seen as a dynamic entity capable of undergoing what seems to look like fundamental changes of character. This idea is illustrated by the delineation of name-changes – a process that was already introduced in *Grimus* and is taken up in this novel in a more convincing way. It is first of all the narrator, Saleem, who undergoes name-changes.

The first name-change he consciously chooses to undergo is the one that makes him adopt the title of “buddha”⁷³. By choosing this title, he demonstrates to everyone his retreat from the

⁶⁶ Ibid: 100.

⁶⁷ Ibid: 158.

⁶⁸ Ibid: 169.

⁶⁹ Ibid: 414-15.

⁷⁰ Ibid: 12.

⁷¹ Ibid: 277.

⁷² Ibid: 277.

⁷³ Ibid: 356.

world, which is the complete opposite to what he has been and done so far. Name changes are also striking in many of the novel's main female characters: Naseem becomes 'Reverend Mother' after her marriage and after having founded a family. This title alludes to her new immersion into the roles of mother and housewife. Saleem's mother demonstratively rejects being the shame of the family when she gives up her name Mumtaz and calls herself Amina. "Change your name', Ahmed Sinai said. 'Time for a fresh start. Throw Mumtaz and her Nadir Khan out of the window, I'll choose you a new name. Amina. Amina Sinai: you'd like that?'"⁷⁴

Saleem's sister, who is for a long time only known as the 'Monkey' due to her rebellious nature, uses her real name 'Jamila' when she starts her singing career and also behaves in a submissive and thus contrary way to what she has behaved like before.

The dynamic aspect of the adoption of new names can be linked to Hinduism's embrace of change and evolution: In fact, the *Midnight's Children* are given the name of gods such as Shiva and Parvati and Saleem adopts the name of elephant-god Ganesh due to his prominent nose. This process also points out the belief in Hinduism that gods are not above the realm of man but are rather part of a cosmic unity, which contributes to the formation of a complex whole. Change is not presented as irreversible, which is shown in that names, such as 'the buddha', are adopted and then sometimes dropped again in order to re-adopt one of the old names.⁷⁵ The meaning of change is thus even more emphasised by describing its incessant activity. Changes in a person that are brought on by that person themselves also tie in with the Hindu concepts of karma and dharma, which explain how a person can influence their destiny by adopting a certain attitude and behaviour.

Furthermore, I want to argue that these name changes do not mean that the persons have changed their identities completely. Although it seems as if some defining characteristics of the persons have been displaced, they have merely become a lot less prominent. I will attempt to show in the following that Saleem's assumption that one can be "wiped clean as a slate"⁷⁶ if one wishes to be so is in actual fact an illusion. Not only does this assumption contradict some other statements he has made, it also contains a wrong idea of the nature of change. Besides, Saleem's name changes show another dimension to that of personality change: His various nicknames⁷⁷ do not only show different characteristics of him as perceived on

⁷⁴ Ibid: 64.

⁷⁵ Ibid: 377, 379.

⁷⁶ Ibid: 350.

⁷⁷ Ibid: 370.

different occasions, but also reflect people's different perceptions of who he is, which implies that our view of another person is constructed in a very subjective way.

To what extent is Saleem's involvement with history then an attempt to achieve wholeness?

In order to answer this question satisfactorily, we have to focus on the form of writing

presented here, which is an autobiographical account. Autobiography can be seen as a special instance of historical writing – to be more precise, it is the writing of one's personal history.

However, in his autobiography, the narrator does not only write about himself and some of the persons he is surrounded by, but reports the great events of the time that occur in India and links these directly to his own person and influence. In actual fact, the narrator defines himself and his identity entirely through history in the widest sense and vice versa: "Who what am I? My answer: I am the sum total of everything done-to-me. I am everyone everything whose being-in-the-world affected was affected by mine. ... to understand me, you'll have to swallow a world".⁷⁸ This definition alone contradicts Saleem's idea of change as quoted above. If an individual is deeply influenced by their upbringing and environment, then they cannot all at once change completely by an act of will. He stresses these multiple influences on him several times during the course of the narrative. They are usually shown in the form of parataxis.⁷⁹

One characteristic of an autobiography is, of course, that it gives a very subjective account of events and persons. As alluded to earlier, Padma, the narrator's listener and lover, tries to force Saleem into a more objective and a less self-centred one with a faster pace. She voices the reader's own impatience with the elaborate account Saleem gives, especially in respect to himself. This urge for greater objectivity can, of course, only be successful to a small extent. This subjectivity of writing is not only limited to the instance of autobiography, but is a feature of various forms of historical writings or reports in general. This is shown in the news reports by the Indian and Pakistani side about the war over Kashmir. The same incidents are reported in completely different ways and are then elevated so that at the end it remains uncertain what really happened and also how it happened:

Who to believe? Did Pakistani fighter-bombers truly make that 'daring raid' which caught one-third of the Indian Force helplessly grounded on tarmac? Did they didn't they? ... Did bombs fall? Were explosions true? Could even a death be said to be the case?⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Ibid: 383.

⁷⁹ Ibid: 342-43.

⁸⁰ Ibid: 341.

Thus, even the sources of information that we consider the most reliable ones, namely those received by the serious newspapers or radio stations, are anything but objective.

Furthermore, both autobiography and general historical writing are arbitrary in the time span they cover. Beginning and end, which are symbolised here both in Alpha and Omega and also in the time of midnight, are the choice of the person and depend on how far they want to go back in their narrative. Here, the real beginning of the story is the day of India's Independence (we just get some background information about the time before this event) and the end is the end of the Emergency. The time of midnight, which is crucial in the novel, comprises both, beginning and end: It is the beginning of India's independence and the end (at least formally) of the colonial rule there. This shows that it is impossible to separate beginning and end from each other so that a one-dimensional historical account – one that regards an event only as an ending, for example – must necessarily be wrong. Although the symbolic use of Alpha and Omega seems to encourage the notion that a personal / historical account must be a linear description of something with a clear beginning and end, this frequently-held notion is again questioned by the narrator: “... but must I now become reconciled to the narrow one-dimensionality of a straight line?”⁸¹ The refusal to be restricted to a linear account, ties in with the cyclical view of the world in Hinduism. Then, however, the form of Saleem's narrative becomes increasingly postmodern as it goes back in time at some points: these flashbacks show how the human mind works: “... And now I, Saleem Sinai, intend briefly to endow myself–then with the benefits of hindsight; destroying the unities and conventions of fine writing, I make him cognizant of what was to come”⁸².

It is these interruptions and flashbacks that make us aware of the constitution of the human mind, which seems to be far less homogeneously formed than we assume it to be (if it were we would almost certainly get a more linear account of events) . This theme has already been introduced in *Grimus* and is taken up here again: “Because a human being, inside himself, is anything but a whole, anything but homogenous; all kinds of everywhichting are jumbled up inside him, and he is one person one minute and another the next”⁸³. We here come again across the idea of a person as being essentially dynamic by nature.

The Kolynos Kid on the billboard Saleem comes across, shows a person's confrontation with change in life: “... and you may wish to think of me, too, as an involuntary Kolynos Kid, squeezing crises and transformations out of a bottomless tube, ... stripes”⁸⁴.

⁸¹ Ibid: 150.

⁸² Ibid: 236.

⁸³ Ibid: 236-37.

⁸⁴ Ibid: 240.

The various energy processes that are at work in such a dynamic account of a person are also reflected in the discontinuous narrative. It is this postmodern technique of using multiple story-lines for the narrative that mirrors the discontinuous individual. At the end of the novel we become aware of the fact that there is no such thing as one main plot or grand discourse of history. At the same time, there must be many story-lines and events that have been left out. This again shows that the narrator must be an unreliable one. However, the leaving out of story-lines is not only due to a conscious choice on the part of the narrator, but partially due to the failure of memory.

Memory is of a nature that is prone to natural lapses, holes, omissions and distortions:

‘Memory’s truth, because memory has its own special kind. It selects, alters, exaggerates, minimizes, glorifies, and vilifies also; but in the end it creates its own reality, its heterogeneous but usually coherent version of events; and no sane human being ever trusts someone else’s version more than his own.’⁸⁵

The narrator himself admits to these inaccuracies, thus making us conscious of them:

Re-reading my work, I have discovered an error in chronology. The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi occurs, in these pages, on the wrong date. But I cannot say, now, what the actual sequence of events might have been; in my India, Gandhi will continue to die at the wrong time.⁸⁶

This selection process of the memory is symbolically shown in the process of chutnification:

“In the spice bases, I reconcile myself to the inevitable distortions of the pickling process”⁸⁷.

Pickling thus means the mixing of various “memories, dreams, ideas”⁸⁸ so that any kind of linear narrative is necessarily destroyed. This shows the disorganised, chaotic, but at the same time dynamic state of a person’s mind as well as its processes. If a person was defined by one prevalent characteristic as the narrator tries to make us believe at some point when he describes Saleem’s impersonation of the buddha, which seems to be the product of having left all his former characteristics behind, the mind would hardly be in such a chaotic state.

Another aspect of distorting the narrative is the narrator overestimating himself, in particular his influence on other individuals in the course of events. That implies giving himself too much importance and not recognising his restricted influence on his environment. In some of his moments of insight, Saleem admits to this: “From my very first days I embarked upon an

⁸⁵ Ibid: 211.

⁸⁶ Ibid: 166.

⁸⁷ Ibid: 461.

⁸⁸ Ibid: 460.

heroic programme of self-enlargement.”⁸⁹ This is of course partly due to the people surrounding him, these people attributing an immense meaning to his birth, which he takes towards himself. This means that he does not only elevate himself due to imagined personal achievements, but that he also takes the responsibility for all the negative things that occur in India while he grows up: “And my grandfather was the founder of my family, and my fate was linked by my birthday to that of the nation, and the father of the nation was Nehru. Nehru’s death; can I avoid the conclusion that that, was all my fault?”⁹⁰

The main reason for his need to shape the course of history, is the need to give his life more importance and possibly a greater complexity. It is also an attempt at establishing a link between personal history and events occurring in the outside world in order to cope with the immensities of history.⁹¹ In this way, Saleem lowers the latter down to a more manageable human scale. The fact that history understood as countless storylines of life can be threatening and overwhelming is shown in Saleem’s escape into the unconscious where history recedes into the far background. I have already mentioned Saleem’s impersonation of the buddha. It can be seen as another instance of leaving the complexities of the world and history behind. The fact that it is impossible to do so completely however, is shown in his clutching of the silver spittoon: “What you were is forever who you are”⁹². The silver spittoon is used as a symbol of the link between the generations throughout the novel. It shows how the connection between oneself and one’s ancestors remains even after the latter’s death. Not surprisingly then all different generations, children, adults and old people play ‘hit-the-spittoon’, but each generation plays a different version of the game: the adult play includes their sexuality and is about the enjoyment of having sex and of sexual attraction in general. Therefore, the spittoon is mentioned in the encounter of Mumtaz and Nadir in the cellar as well as in the relationship between Padma and Saleem. The spittoon also alludes to a new birth. It shows the process of change that underlies history. The impression of a continuous flow of history is given by the fast ageing process of the generations, which entails that only a finite number of incarnations is possible. The fact that history changes the nature of things is shown in Saleem’s final return to Bombay: “...yes, it was my Bombay, but also not-mine ...; the city has been changed”⁹³. The image of the umbilical cord also refers to the close relationship and interaction between the individual and the world. It shows how every person is rooted in history and takes part in the course of things: “Through my umbilical cord, I’m taking in fare dodgers and the dangers

⁸⁹ Ibid: 124.

⁹⁰ Ibid: 279.

⁹¹ Ibid: 345.

⁹² Ibid: 368.

⁹³ Ibid: 452.

of purchasing peacock-feather fans; Amina's assiduity seeps into me, and more ominous things - ... left to go"⁹⁴. Quite importantly, travelling to another place does not mean that we leave our heritage completely behind us. This is shown in the umbilical cord travelling with Saleem to these new places. Naturally, the interaction between history and individual can be of a more or less productive nature:

What I surmised about umbilical cords: although they possessed the power of growing houses, some were evidently better at the job than others. ... The city obscured the desert; but either the cords, or the infertility of the soil, made it grow into something grotesque.⁹⁵

The fact that the umbilical cord is not attached to us any more, however, refers to the fact that we also have freedom of will and a choice between various ways of possible actions instead of just being subject to the course of events in history, the latter which seems to assume an almost godlike status. One could say that the god of religion is replaced by history that becomes transcendent to Saleem.

We can see clearly that the interaction between the world and the individual creates history insofar as the individual leaves traces in the world by their actions, but is in turn shaped by other persons in their environment. It seems to be the case that the individual can develop their own potential by influencing others and is not merely subject to destiny as revealed through the course of history and therefore passive. However, we need to realise that the individual's influence on their environment has boundaries: It is not hard to see how false the notion of the narrator's influence on basically all important events in India at his time is.

The issue of the individual's possibilities of and limitations to influencing history is greatly explored in the *Midnight Children's Conference* and in the function of the midnight children. Both, the midnight children as well as the *Midnight Children's Conference* are elements of Magic Realism, which, as a postmodern technique, reinforces here the importance of post-colonial events beginning with the major event of India's Independence. The latter should still be seen as real and thus as having occurred despite postmodern revelations of the relative truth accounts of events. Rushdie thus rejects an extreme postmodern view on historical events, which would question them all not just in the way they are narrated but also in terms of their occurrence as such. It is clear that Rushdie has to reject such an extreme stance, as it would disable him to develop his post-colonial approach, which he now develops further. The process of merging reality and fiction also refers to Hinduism's legacy of combining these two aspects and the tendency to regard fiction as a kind of reality.

⁹⁴ Ibid: 108.

Even though it is certainly true that there was a great number of children born in India at around the hour of India's Independence, it is very unlikely and can therefore be already called magical, that all these children have special gifts that allow them to take influence on the course of history in a rather decisive way – a way that sets them apart from other children. "...the nature of these children, every one of whom was ... endowed with features, talents or faculties which can only be described as miraculous"⁹⁶. Typically, the narrator believes to possess the greatest gift of all of them, namely the gift of seeing into the minds and hearts of men. However, the midnight children do not seem to take any real action. As I already mentioned above, Saleem often quite absurdly attributes the occurrence of events to himself. The lack of influence of the whole group stems also partly from the fact that there is a lack of cooperation within the group. Instead, there are dissensions and splits that cannot satisfactorily be resolved:

"The gradual disintegration of the Midnight Children's Conference ... and on top of all this, there were clashes of personality, and the hundred squalling rows which are unavoidable in a parliament of half-grown brats"⁹⁷. The Midnight Children's Conference stands thus for any party or organisation where people come together and try to use their influence on their environment. It shows that there must always be limitations to this influence. More specifically, the Conference stands for the splits in the parties of India and for the deep rifts and disagreements that were typical of relations between groups of the Indian population at the time.

The major problem for the disintegration of the Midnight Children's Conference is the lack of a common aim between its members: "At this point I introduced the Conference to the notions which plagued me all this time: the notions of purpose, and meaning. 'We must think, 'what we are for''"⁹⁸. In order to leave any real traces in history that further the cause of the nation, it is necessary to pursue a certain aim together.

However, I think there is another layer of meaning involved here. I want to suggest that the midnight children are actually different parts of the narrator, each of them embodying by their magic gift a certain characteristic Saleem believes to have. This interpretation can be supported insofar as the narrator points several times towards the fact that the voices, thoughts, beliefs and emotions of the midnight children can all be entered by Saleem. Therefore, they are all in his head. "That's how it was when I was ten: nothing but trouble

⁹⁵ Ibid: 309.

⁹⁶ Ibid: 195.

⁹⁷ Ibid: 254-55.

⁹⁸ Ibid: 228.

outside my head, nothing but miracles inside it”⁹⁹. The lack of agreement among the midnight children really reflects Saleem’s difficulty of dealing with his various characteristics and therefore of coming to terms with himself and his own complexity.

... I am refusing to distinguish the voices from one another; and for other reasons. For one thing, my narrative could not cope with five hundred and eighty-one fully-rounded personalities; ... they were the very essence of multiplicity, and I see no point in dividing them now.¹⁰⁰

No matter which of the two interpretations we look at, something seems to have gone wrong with the concept of multiplicity, which is held in such high esteem in Hinduism, both, in respect to the individual and the world. The reason for this lies in the unproductive nature of the form of multiplicity displayed here. The various different groups in India do not co-operate constructively and closely with each other in a way that would resemble the Hindu ideal of achieving a union of free nations. Nor does the narrator, Saleem, successfully deal with the various aspects of his personality, as he lacks integrative power.

This inability to come to terms with himself causes cracks in the narrator,¹⁰¹ which precede his impending disintegration, which is symbolised by the deaths of many of the midnight’s children.¹⁰² His alter ego, Shiva, is presented as his greatest enemy.

On the individual-oriented level of interpretation, Shiva represents one of the most defining characteristics of Saleem. My view that Shiva might not be a separate individual can be supported by the strange coincidences that they were born at the same time in the same place and then swapped as babies and that their fates seem to aim for a balance so that when Shiva rises Saleem falls or that they are, in a way, both the fathers of the boy Aadam.¹⁰³

Saleem, however, rejects Shiva as an essential part of his personality. Whereas Saleem lives in a magical reality (which is also shown in his life in the Magician’s Colony), which elevates the imagination, Shiva explores the reality of the ratio and believes in materialism: ““No little rich boy; ... The world is not ideas, rich boy; the world is no place for dreamers or their dreams; the world, little Snotnose, is things. Things and their makers rule the world; ..., you fight””¹⁰⁴. It is clear that both aspects are necessary: Shiva’s presence should prevent the narrator from over-estimating himself; Saleem’s ideas are needed in order to make changes possible at all. In a similar vein, in Hinduism dreams and, more generally, the unconscious,

⁹⁹ Ibid: 207.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid: 229.

¹⁰¹ Ibid: 461.

¹⁰² Ibid: 436.

¹⁰³ Ibid: 407, 425.

which Saleem fully embraces, are celebrated but have to be complemented by logic and reason. The one-sided use of the imagination is also shown as being problematic, as it leads to illusions as demonstrated in the Magician's Colony and thus to *maya*, which is in contrast to knowledge and fulfilment. These aspects are different truth accounts of the same person and have to be recognised as such in order to make the person whole.

Furthermore, Saleem's hostile attitude towards Shiva, who stands for ambiguity in Hindu belief¹⁰⁵, shows his antagonism to the very idea of ambiguity, which explains why a successful integration of very different or even opposite personality aspects does not occur. In other instances, however, Saleem's attitude towards ambiguity is of a very different nature such as when he considers the game, Snakes and Ladders, and contemplates its symbolism in a similar way Khallit and Mallit reflect the nature of ambiguity in *Grimus*. At first, these symbols might strike us to be signs with clearly defined meanings, which are in opposition to each other: We see the snake as an essentially dangerous creature, whereas we regard the ladder as an item that is full of promise, as it takes us up to a place:

... is the unchanging twoness of things, the duality of up against down, good against evil; the solid rationality of ladders balances the occult sinuosities of the serpent; in the oppositions of staircase and cobra we can see, metaphorically, all conceivable oppositions, ...nose.¹⁰⁶

However, this common way of perceiving things lacks "one crucial dimension, that of ambiguity"¹⁰⁷. This previously described approach to things does not take into account that you can regard things and events from different perspectives and that they are also often context-dependent. In this example of snakes and ladders it means that "it is also possible to slither down a ladder and climb to triumph on the venom of a snake"¹⁰⁸. Furthermore, it is not the case to experience only one side of things for a longer time: "For every ladder, there is a snake ... but for every snake, there is a ladder... name"¹⁰⁹. Saleem regards this insight as valuable. "...but something was given in exchange for what was lost: life, and an early awareness of the ambiguity of snakes."¹¹⁰ His attitude towards ambiguity is thus ambiguous in itself.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid: 255.

¹⁰⁵ The Chinese counterpart to the ambiguity of Shiva in Hinduism is the yin and yang symbol, which I mentioned above in my analysis of *Grimus*. "Yin and yang". [Wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/yin_and_yang). 21 Jul 2006. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/yin_and_yang: 1.

¹⁰⁶ Rushdie. *Midnight's Children*: 141.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid: 141.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid: 141.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid: 143.

¹¹⁰ Ibid: 149.

The final encounter between Saleem and Shiva can also be interpreted in very different ways: At first glance, it seems that Saleem's persistent rejection of Shiva leads to his final doom. This conjecture is based on the scene at the very end of the narrative when the Angel of Death presents itself to Saleem in the personification of Shiva, in his role of destroyer:

... Shiva and the Angel are closing closing, ... only a broken creature spilling pieces of itself into the street, because I have been so-many too-many persons, life unlike syntax allows one more than three, and at last somewhere the striking of a clock, twelve chimes, release.¹¹¹

The final disintegration of Saleem into the many fragments he consists of and which he failed to coordinate, occurs then not surprisingly at the hour of midnight – the hour that symbolises beginning and end.

Another, and in my opinion more conclusive way of making sense of that scene, is to regard the confrontation with Shiva as a rather positive encounter that allows the integration of Shiva. By integrating Shiva, Saleem accepts ambiguity in himself and thus also accepts multiple, partly contradictory aspects as being part of him. This interpretation can be substantiated by the physical contact of Shiva's knees with Saleem's neck¹¹², which resembles the embrace of shakti and shakta, which stands for moksha, the ultimate meaning a person can find. It can also be backed by the event of the birth of a new generation of Midnight's Children, who seem to be a lot more co-operative and proactive than the first generation. Saleem thus re-defines himself and does this in a way that leads him towards wholeness or brahman. This attainment is expressed in the term 'release', which is here the release from the cycle of rebirth. It is also expressed in the mentioning of the number 1001, the number that reflects a person's attempt to reach maturity.

On the more historical and political level of interpretation, the disintegration and death of Saleem can be conceived as the failure of politics in the independent India in achieving a tolerant and more harmonious co-existence of the different groups that live there. On the other hand, seeing Saleem's physical death as the successful completion of a path towards greater maturity and transcendence opens up hope for India in that it shows that the country has the power to overcome the excessive use of violence as well as regionalism, intolerance and discrimination.

We now see that the possibilities of influencing history are as manifold as the midnight children's gifts. They also point out the many-sidedness of both the world and persons. As

¹¹¹ Ibid: 463.

aspects of Hinduism point out, it is a many-sidedness that also contains ambiguity. The restrictions to our influence on our surroundings should not be neglected however either, such as Saleem does, in order not to end up having huge misconceptions of ourselves. The restrictions exist due to the world's and other individuals' high complexity. Self-development through taking action in the course of history is thus possible, but within limits. A person's power is not boundless and it is vital to acknowledge this to embrace brahman or wholeness. We are able to question and overcome some of the restrictions that we pose on ourselves as a result of the way we have been brought up, especially those in respect to culture and religion, which contain aspects of sexuality and gender. Undoing these restrictions might in turn cause changes in the attitudes of future generations.

¹¹² Ibid: 432.

III.3.3. The impact of fundamentalist politics on a nation's people in *Shame*

In his following novel, *Shame*, Rushdie nevertheless concentrates on the powerful nature of some restrictions, which can have devastating consequences on the persons and pose strong obstacles to them to attain wholeness.

It is written in the old tradition of oral storytelling with its various subplots, each of them introducing a new story and thus a new fragment of something that cannot be grasped in full. Formally, this tradition is revealed in paragraph beginnings like “And one day”¹ or “Once upon a time”². This underlines the fictitious character of the novel even though the imaginary country that is presented in these stories and that is set in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries bears close resemblances to Pakistan. The country described in the text exists in this way “at a slight angle to reality”³, but which I will nevertheless call Pakistan for the sake of a smoother reading. By using these devices, an indirect but nevertheless clear and forceful critique of Pakistan is offered here. The indirectness of the approach is also useful in that it leaves the option open that the place the narrator describes could stand for many other countries or places where fundamentalism reigns and should certainly not merely be reduced to represent only one specific country. Salman Rushdie presents in this text a gloomy picture of most aspects that have become characteristic of Pakistan and that he obviously considers inhumane and therefore harmful to human nature and its integrity. Among them are corrupt regimes that use violence against their people as well as the role of fundamentalist belief in Pakistan's leaders and the significance of the army's power. The novel reflects Rushdie's rejection of the idea of this separate country Pakistan in the first place and exposes the consequences of inhumane rule, which prove to be extreme in their violence and destruction.

A particular emphasis on the role of women in the novel will be made⁴, as they are the ones that suffer most under the various governments and who have to struggle hardest in order to survive.

The character of Pakistan is from the beginning presented to be to a very great extent determined by politics. Every act, such as showing or watching a film at the cinema⁵, becomes a political statement that carries many dangers. Mahmoud the Woman, grandfather

¹ Rushdie, Salman. *Shame*. 1983. London: Vintage, 1995: 11.

² Ibid: 133.

³ Ibid: 29.

⁴ Ibid: 173.

⁵ Ibid: 61.

of our protagonist Sufiya Zinobia, loses his cinema as a result of his openness towards both Western and Eastern influences. Showing films of both backgrounds on the same day, a fire breaks out after someone has planted a bomb. The fire caused by the explosion of the bomb is also used as a symbol of the destruction of open-mindedness and tolerance in respect to culture and nationality. Tolerance is ironically called a “fatal personality flaw”⁶ by the narrator who thus imitates the people’s speech. The trigger that has led to this violent act was the display of a love scene that met on strong criticism by religious fanaticists, as they are adverse to physical love. They hence disregard a crucial element of a person.

Religious intolerance and division constitute the ideology Pakistan was founded on. One can therefore convincingly conclude that the country was doomed from the very beginning. A strong repercussion of intolerance in Pakistan was censorship that assails freedom of expression. One of the most imaginative forms of self-expression, art, was almost entirely denigrated for example by the above-mentioned film censorship and the ban on books that contain words or ideas that run counter to the rulers’ beliefs.

Pakistan does, in the next stages of nationhood, not become a more tolerant state at all, not even when first the reign of the mullahs and then that of the army ended and Bhutto, embodied in the character of Iskander Harappa, established a so-called democracy⁷ that promised elections and thus seemed to assume the image of freedom and liberation. Iskander, however, displays the same superior attitude many people of the country’s West Wing have towards both the East Wing and India, which finally leads to the Bangladesh War. His government is not democratic at all, but is instead soon characterised as “autocratic, intolerant, repressive”⁸. It broke the law by using bribery, conspiracies, tax evasion and treason. In addition, Iskander humiliates his employees and shows them their inferiority by letting them wait for audiences, by constantly interrupting them and on top of it by disregarding all the cultural conventions and traditions that are important to observe in diplomatic business relations. His destruction of the diplomatic network soon leaves him more or less alone in charge.

His daughter Arjumand, who mirrors Benazir Bhutto, follows her father’s footsteps, treating people in the most inhuman ways one could think of. One example of her behaviour is that “when Arjumand had Captain Ijazz imprisoned and tortured slowly to death”⁹.

⁶ Ibid: 62.

⁷ Ibid: 151.

⁸ Ibid: 183.

⁹ Ibid: 190.

Raza Hyder, who embodies General Zia, recognises the danger to national stability and orders Iskander's imprisonment that leads to the latter's hanging after having been shot dead by Hyder. In this criminal manner Hyder takes over the government without having been placed into power by new elections.¹⁰ It is thus not surprising that his government also proves to be a disastrous one. In contrast to Iskander, he justifies the forms of terrorism he uses by putting forward religious arguments. He makes it clear from the very beginning when he appears on national television holding the Holy Book and saying a prayer that people have to follow his religious ideology if they do not want to be maltreated or discriminated against. Hyder relates almost all events and phenomena to faith, which has devastating consequences for the people around him, especially for his daughter Sufiya. The novel's narrator sharply questions Raza's regime and laws through a television interviewer who (allegedly) represents the opinions of many people in the west:¹¹ His institution of Islamic punishments such as flogging and the cutting-off of hands is considered to be a barbaric act. Furthermore it is pointed out how Raza justifies his laws in the name of god and religion and how he thus uses religion as an excuse for any behaviour including violence. Hyder's (Zia's) regime has stripped people off their humanity and instead treated them as they would treat beasts. It has therefore violated human rights. Raza himself has certainly denied his humanity so that he becomes an extremely imbalanced person who increasingly suppresses his conscience (shown in Iskander's voice) and elevates faith (shown in Maulana Dawood's voice). Censorship becomes even more powerful under his regime: Television is now only allowed to show religious programmes; on the Prophet's birthday everyone is ordered to go to the mosque and pray, otherwise they are sent to jail; beggars are incarcerated, as Raza believes that Islamic socialism is the worst kind of blasphemy imaginable. Raza has obviously become a religious fanatic who carries the title of President. Other extreme and / or inhuman measures introduced by him are the ban on imported movies, the objection against unveiled women and women who show their midriffs on the street, strangulation for smoking a cigarette during the month of fasting and the dismantlement of the legal system due to the lawyers' too profane viewpoints. Unsurprisingly, particularly women who have to suffer most under these repressive measures start marches against god. Their voices though, are quickly calmed.

The narrator emphasises that it is not religion as such that should be blamed for all the injustices that occurred, as religion could even have become "an effective unifying force in post-Bangladesh Pakistan"¹². It is fundamentalism, which has been imposed on the people by

¹⁰ Ibid: 223.

¹¹ Ibid: 245.

¹² Ibid: 251.

their rulers in the name of religion, which has brought on the violence and misery. Raza, as other dictators before him, inevitably falls from power as well and has to escape before he also encounters a violent death that is really just the logical conclusion of his own inner death as a human being. Omar's mothers use this viewpoint at the end of the novel to justify their killing of Raza Hyder: "There is no shame in killing you now, because you are a dead man anyway. It is only the execution of a corpse."¹³

Another danger to the people of 'Pakistan' is posed by a terrorist group from Afghanistan, which is named the Al-Iskander group.¹⁴ The latter strikingly resembles the actually-existing Al-Kaida group.

It is obvious that all these regimes cannot last because they all have such an unrealistic concept of man and the world at their very foundation. The pointless activities of these groups as well as their lack of values and the transience of their existence is shown in the symbolic activity of throwing pine kernels away, which occurs several times in the novel. None of the consecutive regimes proves to be beneficial in any way to the people of 'Pakistan'. At the end there have just been "too-many-pine-kernels"¹⁵ and even Iskander Harappa and Raza Hyder soon become myths in people's minds¹⁶ that wrongly enough present the former as victim and the latter as perpetrator in a very one-sided manner.

I now want to give instances of the repercussions the theistic, military regime has on women. It should be noted that even though the history of Pakistan's regimes is a particularly male-based one, the women play an increasingly big role in Pakistan's history: "But the women seem to have taken over; they marched in from the peripheries of the story to demand the inclusion of their own tragedies ... that their stories explain, even subsume, the men's."¹⁷ The narrator explores this theme by particularly concentrating on techniques of repression, neglect and exploitation. "Repression is a seamless garment; a society which is authoritarian in its social and sexual codes, which crushes its women beneath the intolerable burdens of honour and propriety, breeds repressions of other kinds as well."

The first example of women's encounter with difficulties under the present system is that of our protagonist's, Omar Khayyam Shakil's, three mothers. They refuse to adopt the country's moral codes of shame and attempt to lead lives that are free from moral constrictions. Such resistance, however, only seems to be possible by their withdrawal into their house where they are secluded from the outside world. An exciting and adventurous life in the outside

¹³ Ibid: 281.

¹⁴ Ibid: 256.

¹⁵ Ibid: 283.

¹⁶ Ibid: 240.

¹⁷ Ibid: 173.

social sphere is replaced by the adventures they undertake in their imagination. Their active unconscious is alluded to by the image of the labyrinthine character of their mansion.¹⁸ Some attention should be paid to the fact that these three women are presented in the form of a trinity. This can be read as an allusion to the Christian 'Holy Trinity', which can be substantiated by the fact that they were raised by Christian ayahs. Even though they do not engage in the Christian ideology, the symbol points out that the sisters, rejecting Muslim fundamentalism, found a religion of their own, which is the belief in their strength through their union. Divine love is replaced by human love. In addition, the trinity of the three sisters can also be read as a critique of the Partition: Their need to stay together here reflects the opinion of many anti-Partitionists who did not believe in the advantages of destroying India's unity.

However, their seclusion does not only stifle their protest, it is also revealed to be an unnatural form of life that proves to be a hindrance to self-development. This consequence is shown in the occurrence of two phenomena regarding the sisters: Firstly, their chastity that necessarily accompanies their withdrawal is presented to be not healthy. This is displayed in their excessive, almost violent fulfilment of their sexual and social needs on the two occasions they open the door of their mansion and let officers come in. Secondly, the unsoundness of their lives is vividly illustrated in the loss of their identities: Due to not having an actually-present, individualistic 'other' they can contrast themselves with (the other is just the vague memory of the hostile world), their sense of identity becomes increasingly vague so that they become ontologically very insecure. The activities in the house can be seen as displacement activities and defensive actions, which are supposed to give them a sense of security: They now stick so closely to each other that they can only notice the similarities between each other. This extremely close union between the three sisters goes so far that they even make the absurd claim of all being the physical mothers of Omar. The rigour with which they close ranks is certainly also a method of defending themselves against any allegations from the outside world, knowing that most people of Pakistan consider a child out of wedlock as highly immoral and call a woman shameful who has committed such an act. The notion of shame is here further explored. It becomes clear how particularly female sexuality is condemned by the religious fanatics living in Pakistan. It is of course significant that 'shame' is the title of the novel, as it can be described as being the main repercussion of the system of Pakistan. Thus it becomes obvious that they keep close to each other so that there would not be one of them who has to confront the shame the people outside would have imposed on her. Furthermore,

¹⁸ Ibid: 13.

the sisters commit another crime that runs counter to Pakistan's religious ideology: they do not let the religious rites be performed on their son Omar, which means that he is not taught God's name, does not get a haircut and that his foreskin is not removed: here, the sisters show active resistance to the religion taught and to its practices as well. It now again becomes apparent, though, that this close union can only give them a false sense of security and wholeness: The three mothers make mistakes that show that they are, despite the appearances they want to keep up, not identical: they form different opinions and have disagreements.¹⁹ However, the re-establishment of their separate identities proves to be very difficult, as they have difficulties "to remember the people they once were."²⁰

The feeling of closeness and friendship can only make each of them whole when there are certain differences. Taking the sisters for the three different parts of the former India, this means that India could and possibly should have persisted without undergoing Partition, thus still forming a union, but that at the same time the character of the country's different parts should have been acknowledged. This expresses a demand for a union that embraces multiplicity.

It is however only at the very end of the novel that the sisters take more active and much more violent resistance to the country's regime that committed so many atrocities: they punish Raza and Bilquis Hyder when they are in the sisters' mansion by letting them lie in their own excrements²¹, thus making particularly Raza feel the shame he has taught the people. Afterwards they kill him in a very cruel manner and thus revenge not just the shame they would have felt had they immersed themselves in the outside world, but also the shame almost every citizen of Pakistan – and in particular her women – have felt at one stage because it is hardly possible to observe all the regime's fanatical rules. Furthermore, even their own son Omar is punished by them insofar as they make him feel shame. The mothers do in this way the same thing that other members of society have done to its weaker individuals, namely turning them into scapegoats for their own sufferings that result from very one-sided lifestyles. In the end, even though the sisters show some resistance, this resistance cannot really be described as a success, as it ends in violence and destruction and has not achieved to take influence on politics, as resistance has just been enacted in their home.

Farah Zoroaster, Omar's fellow student, deals with the country's ideology of shame also in a critical although a different manner. By having an affair with her teacher Eduardo

¹⁹ Ibid: 38.

²⁰ Ibid: 38.

²¹ Ibid: 279-280.

Rodriguez and by getting pregnant as a result of it she is rejected by society and cruelly thrown out of her home by her father, who has completely internalised society's attitude towards shame and who has thus no space any more to house his daughter.²² However, Farah does not entirely depend on the people's attitudes and subject herself to them: She has the courage to come back some time later without a child and husband and thus faces discrimination and hostility. She shows her pride though and does not let the people punish her by their strict moral code particularly concerning female sexuality. She shows resistance to the country's views in a much more obvious way than Omar's three mothers have done and due to the fact that she does not withdraw from society and suppress her needs, she remains a healthy person with a constructive approach to introducing new ways of life into society that seem to beg for tolerance. She is a 'whole' person insofar as people's views are not all internalised by her, but undergo a critique that is expressed in her behaviour.

Another female character that has to confront difficulties in such a radical society is Bilquis, Raza Hyder's wife: Like many other characters in the novel, she is a migrant in several ways. This offers her the opportunities migrants usually get, namely to overcome frontiers of the mind and to find instead a more tolerant and open way of living: "To fly and to flee: both are ways of seeking freedom."²³ Migrants are often according to the narrator (and to Rushdie) more optimistic and have a brighter outlook on life, which is in my opinion due to the fact that they experience a greater variety of life that makes it almost impossible to them to remain rooted in some particular, rather negative ways of thinking, failing to see other aspects that often counterbalance negativity: "What is the best thing about migrant peoples and seceded nations? I think it is their hopefulness."²⁴

At the same time, however, it means leaving things behind, which includes memories that gradually fade away into forgetfulness. This is the most difficult aspect of migrancy and it depends also very much on the surroundings if this factor can be turned into something positive or not: "And what's the worst thing? It is the emptiness of one's luggage. ... we have come unstuck from more than land. We have floated upwards from history, from memory, from Time."²⁵ This negative aspect of migrancy can often be outweighed by the advantages that are gained, but we soon realise that this is not possible for Bilquis, as the obstacles she meets in her new environment prove to be too big: The first one she has to face occurs in her childhood when Bilquis is already symbolically stripped of her past when the fire breaks out

²² Ibid: 52.

²³ Ibid: 86.

²⁴ Ibid: 86.

²⁵ Ibid: 87.

in her father's cinema and she is stripped of her clothes.²⁶ She recognises how national and religious tolerance have been responded to with violence and destruction and as a result she cannot see how tolerance can win in such a country and thus cannot use the migrant's potential. Any changes are – understandably in her case – from then on only seen in a very negative light, having fostered shame in her, the latter finding on this occasion literal expression in her being unclothed. She starts to react in an increasingly obsessive manner to any changes that occur. Change is symbolised in the novel by the wind that often blows very strongly in Pakistan. It is a hot wind, the heat alluding to the destructive power of fire: "... to me she is, and will always be, the Bilquis who was afraid of the wind."²⁷

Bilquis meets new occasions on which people try to make her feel ashamed when she stays with Raza's family in a huge bedroom with various members of the family before her marriage to Raza Hyder: not only is she often treated in a harsh manner by the family matriarch, but also soon learns, in preparation for her future life, that shame is even attached to a woman sleeping with a man. After her marriage she is slighted by the family when she does not achieve to give birth to a living child but gives birth to a dead son instead, which a patriarchal society certainly considers to be shameful. This closed world of family relations carries on the tradition of oral story-telling, sets up a moral code in its context and thus establishes a group identity. However, the way this is being done has its cost: Not only are the moral guidelines in these stories extremely limiting; in addition, no deviations from a particular version of a story are allowed. At this early stage of her marriage though, Bilquis has moments when she does not accept the slights and reproaches or the label of "unnatural female"²⁸. She also defends herself when the people want to make her feel ashamed of her origin: coming from India, she is now the 'mohajir, the immigrant, the word here being used in a very derogatory way. This is another incidence that aggravates her difficulty of seeing her status as a migrant as a chance. By the time she gives birth to a daughter she has internalised the widespread attitude towards women to such an extent that she feels shame about the gender of her child. The feelings of guilt and shame become more severe when her daughter Sufiya becomes mentally retarded after having suffered from brain-fever, mental illness being another social stigma. In consequence, she can also only think along these lines: "That birdbrain, that mouse! I must accept it: she is my shame."²⁹ Bilquis, being left on her own most of the time, lets herself into an affair, which causes her relations to her husband to

²⁶ Ibid: 63.

²⁷ Ibid: 68.

²⁸ Ibid: 84.

²⁹ Ibid: 101.

deteriorate and she is again left alone in her exile with “a daughter who should have been a son.”³⁰

Bilquis’ dependency on public opinion results in her final disintegration that can be compared to a kind of inner death after having gone through too many incidents of shame. During and after her disintegration she becomes a cause of shame to the others who try to keep her away from society: “... also the accelerated disintegration of Bilquis Hyder, whose breakdown could no longer be concealed, ..., because Raza Hyder kept her away from society, under a kind of unofficial house arrest.”³¹

Her inner death, which can be regarded as severe depression, is finally symbolised in her hand-made black burqua³² and then in the shrouds she has made for all of them before their departure into exile. The black burqua and especially the shrouds also allude to the real, physical deaths she expects to occur to all of them in exile. On a larger scale, Bilquis’ shrouds are a powerful social commentary on the extreme limitations that are imposed on women, which deny the latter their full humanity. At the same time, Bilquis inflicts shame on the men, who do not only have to wear the shrouds in order to escape, but also need to frequent the ladies’ latrines so that their deception would not become immediately obvious.³³ The fact that they do not expect to be questioned in their disguise as women is symptomatic of a very one-sided conception of the nature of women as harmless and meek.

Rani, Raza’s cousin who marries Iskander Harappa, is in many ways in a similar situation to Bilquis: her husband also retreats from her and enters the world of politics more fully so that she is left to her own devices. Rani, however, does not disintegrate in this situation but is rather made stronger by it and exercises a silent but obvious and more detailed critique than Bilquis.³⁴ This critique is expressed in her embroidered shawls, which are rooted in the tradition of the craft heritage of India³⁵: they depict all the injustices of the events occurring around her in various scenes, especially the numerous atrocities that are her husband’s responsibility.

What did eighteen shawls depict? Locked in their trunk, they said unspeakable things which nobody wanted to hear: ... in silver threads she revealed the arachnid terrors of the days ...; and the torture shawl, on which she embroidered the foetid violence of his jails, blindfolded, prisoners tied to chairs while jailers hurled buckets of water ... house.³⁶

³⁰ Ibid: 104.

³¹ Ibid: 171.

³² Ibid: 208.

³³ Ibid: 262, 267-68.

³⁴ Ibid: 152.

³⁵ “Art – Culture. Embroidery.” 07 Aug 2006. <http://www.lupinda.com/art-culture/embroidery.html>: 1.

³⁶ Ibid: 191-95.

She, who has observed the politics of discrimination for a long time and had to explain to Bilquis how regularly it occurs that husbands beat their wives,³⁷ even achieves to show the shame many women have internalised due to the regime's teachings by displaying female blushes on the shawl. Traditional art is here – in contrast to the way the story-telling tradition is followed by Bilquis' in-laws – engaged with in a more creative, innovative and personal way whilst at the same time ensuring a sense of belonging and identity. Rani values the traditional continuity of the craft, which becomes apparent in that she bequeathes her shawls to her daughter³⁸ – an act that has been carried out between mothers and daughters in India for many generations.³⁹ Combining social cohesion through traditional art and individual expression through the subjective choice of motifs, should be seen as a path towards wholeness. Even though the critique she exercises is still silent, it is a form of resistance that is the first step towards introducing change and that must therefore be a danger to the regime. Even though, like Omar's mothers, she revolts against the system merely within the space of her home, she does it in a more successful and less repressive way so that she is – in contrast to the three mothers – not in danger of losing her identity but rather enforces it.

Bilquis' and Raza's younger daughter Naveed, also called 'Good News' due to the fact that she is albeit a daughter at least a healthy one, does in her early life not observe social rules too closely: She brings shame on herself by escaping with Captain Talvar although she has already before been promised to Haroun Harappa.⁴⁰ Not only her sudden decision for another bridegroom, but even more so the fact that she loses her virginity before marriage is considered as unacceptable and therefore "drove her wild with worry."⁴¹ Even though she morally crosses marriage rules, she is not capable of making people think about their attitudes by facing up to their angry reactions as Farah Zoroaster did. Instead she becomes strongly affected by the public's opinion so that she merely feels humiliation afterwards, which quickly increases as it did in her mother.

When she gives birth every year to an increasing number of children she feels personally ashamed and reduced as an individual human being. The development of the constantly increasing number of children, which is an element of Magic Realism, presents in an exaggerated manner how women are abused as birth-machines and how they have to comply

³⁷ Ibid: 97.

³⁸ Ibid: 277.

³⁹ "Rich tapestry of embroidery". *The Hindu*. Sunday, September 09, 2001. 07 Aug 2006. <http://www.hinduonnet.com/2001/09/09/stories/13090074.htm>: 1.

⁴⁰ Ibid: 163.

⁴¹ Ibid: 165.

with their husbands' wishes. The increasing number therefore shows the increasing pain and burden women have to suffer under such conditions. Furthermore the extreme religious views are criticised here that lead the husbands often into refusing birth-control techniques. Naveed becomes completely overwhelmed by the situation and can in the end merely define herself through her birth-giving function: "... , until she felt like a vegetable patch whose naturally fertile soil was being worn out by an over-zealous gardener, and understood that there was no hope for women in the world, ... the men would come and stuff you full of alien unwanted life."⁴² As a result Naveed disintegrates. In contrast to her mother, she is not only fully conscious of her misery but also feels still the full pain of it. Thus, unable to bear the situation any longer she chooses another escape in committing suicide. Her rejection to live such a pitiful life can only be seen as a protest that remains a denial without suggesting any alternatives for women to lead more fulfilled and more individual lives. Naveed thus stands for many women in Pakistan or in countries with similar regimes, women who refuse to content themselves with a life that places them on the fringe of society and exploits them in all possible ways.

Arjumand Harappa, called the Virgin Ironparts, is the only woman in the novel who actively rejects to be marginalised in society by getting fully involved in politics and by making full use of her influence there. Getting involved in this predominantly male political domain is for her the alternative to marriage, which is traditionally the women's fate. Arjumand Harappa is of course modelled after Benazir Bhutto and follows in her cruel and violent methods in her father's footsteps.⁴³ However, she does this not by developing a positive counter-model to the repressed woman who stays at home but by pretending to be a man. Arjumand knows that without a man, particularly though in the role of a widow, a woman is not worth much and cannot really be defined without references to any male connection: "... and Woman is left a widow, that is to say less than a daughter, less than a wife, worthless."⁴⁴

It becomes soon obvious how she restricts herself through her ignored sexuality, the latter being an important part of her self, when she falls unhappily in love with Haroun Harappa and nothing comes of this love. She becomes more and more bitter and it cannot be surprising that she has a violent outbreak of her sexuality when she goes to the red-light district and plays a whore there. At the end Arjumand has made no contribution to develop a more emancipated view of woman in this society, but has on the opposite elevated the roles men play by her own rise to power in 'male disguise'.

⁴² Ibid: 207.

⁴³ Ibid: 190.

⁴⁴ Ibid: 158.

Our female protagonist, Sufiya Zinobia, can be seen as the epitome of the country's ideology: She feels shame about even the smallest of things. "Tell a lie, sleep with a white boy, get born the wrong sex."⁴⁵ This feeling of shame is already present at the time of her birth when she starts blushing to such an extent that people can hardly believe what they see. Significantly her first blushing occurs at the moment when her parents start being ashamed of her due to her sex. Sufiya begins then to completely internalise her parents' feelings: "Then, even then, she was too easily ashamed."⁴⁶ This phrase alludes to how destructive this feeling of shame could become to an individual's personality. The danger of excessive shame is also revealed through the device of Magic Realism that is used when later on her body temperature rises to such a high degree that people who touch her actually burn their hands.

By moving round the furniture in the house all through her life, she makes some vague attempts to show that change to her position is absolutely necessary. When she catches brain-fever, which might have been induced by her parents' hostility towards her, and her mind becomes permanently damaged as a result, she is in addition regarded as a "judgment"⁴⁷ and as the "wrong miracle"⁴⁸ by her parents, especially by her mother. This is of course anything but a good basis from which to develop a positive self-image.

This process of instilling shame instead of love into Sufiya, who receives all of it like an open vessel, lies at the root of Sufiya's violent outbursts that soon follow such treatment.

Sufiya acts in a violent way for the first time when she starts pulling out her hair. This violence to herself could also stand for the violence Pakistan applies to her women.

Soon after, her violence is directed to the outside world such as when Sufiya tears off the heads of some turkeys and then draws their guts up through their necks. The perversity of the act shows in what a bad state Sufiya is already in. From then on shame and violence are closely connected in Sufiya:

What seems certain is that Sufiya Zinobia, for so long burdened with being a miracle-gone-wrong, a family's shame made flesh, had discovered in the labyrinths of her unconscious self the hidden path that links *sharam* to violence; and that awakening, she was as surprised as anyone by the force of what had been unleashed.⁴⁹

Sufiya has now entered a vicious circle. Her violent expression of her suffering merely brings on severe punishment but not what she has cruelly been deprived of, which is parental love, which could have given her ontological security: Her mother is more ashamed of her and

⁴⁵ Ibid: 122.

⁴⁶ Ibid: 90.

⁴⁷ Ibid: 107.

⁴⁸ Ibid: 107.

wants Sufiya to feel her own shame and to suffer by cutting off Sufiya's hair so that she should be reminded of 'only' being female. As a result, matters get unsurprisingly worse. What has been tested was again "her excessive sensitivity to the bacilli of humiliation"⁵⁰ so that she then attacks her sister's husband at Naveed's wedding ceremony. By doing so she can point out to everyone the shameless behaviour that couple has shown before. Again, she tries to kill on this occasion by twisting a neck. This is an indication of the uselessness of people's brains and their ideas during that time. After this action, which takes her to hospital, Sufiya is believed to have a beast living inside her and is also superstitiously regarded as "one of those supernatural beings, those exterminating or avenging angels, or werewolves, or vampires, about whom we are happy to read in stories, sighing thankfully or even a little smugly while they are no more than abstractions or figments; ... the world."⁵¹ She is thus either demonised or her violent behaviour is ignored, especially by the people closest to her. Neither of these actions shows an adequate approach to Sufiya and her suffering. Such an approach should have been an attempt to get to the roots of the problem, namely to the shame that was instilled into her by these other people and to the lack of concern and empathy she had to experience. The people's inability to cope with Sufiya's madness shows at the same time their inability to deal with the insane state of the country. Most people try not to face the nature of the government they live under and the fact that so many persons have lost all sense of proportion and seemed to have become mad. This is meant by the description

A Beast is born, a 'wrong miracle', within the citadels of propriety and decorum. ... - because her expulsion would have laid bare what-must-on-no-account-be-known, namely the impossible verity that barbarism could grow in cultured soil, that savagery could lie concealed beneath decency's well-pressed shirt.⁵²

Had people started to understand Sufiya, they would have had to face themselves in a way they had never imagined themselves to be. It is easier to shut madness out from their lives. Being now forcefully denied in her personhood and therefore in her existence as an individual by others, Sufiya's state further deteriorates into one of petrification. She is only allegedly protected, in reality however completely ignored in her own wishes and needs during her marriage: she is not even offered the chance of entering into any sexual relations whatsoever with her husband due to being regarded as a mere child. Once again Sufiya is deprived of love, at least of the aspect of sexuality in this instance, that she so badly

⁴⁹ Ibid: 139.

⁵⁰ Ibid: 141.

⁵¹ Ibid: 197.

⁵² Ibid: 200.

needs. She learns that, in her stead, her ayah Shabanou offers herself to Omar so that he does not demand his marital rights from Sufiya.

She can now clearly feel both erotic passion and feelings of anger coming up from her unconscious, which is symbolised by the ocean. I suggest that her disappointed sexual needs increase the anger and frustration in her and her mental instability so that she finally falls apart.

Sufiya seeks what she has been deprived of when she picks up four boys on the street and has sexual intercourse with them. Due to the consequences of her internalised shame and the lack of compassion though, she also uses violence and kills all the four boys by beheading them with the mere power of her hands. Interestingly, once she has finished these actions, she sleeps peacefully, which shows that she has been starving in respect to her sexual needs. Still her father and her husband are unable to recognise that the reasons for her behaviour are feelings of “inadequacy, guilt and shame.”⁵³ Instead, Raza attributes with increasing certainty devilish characteristics to his daughter, regarding her behaviour as a test to his faith. He is even prepared to sacrifice his daughter if god wants him to do so.

Sufiya’s personality disintegration becomes obvious now, as she seems to embody two persons in herself: “the edges of Sufiya Zinobia were beginning to become uncertain, as if there were two beings occupying that air-space, competing for it, two entities of identical shape but of tragically opposed natures.”⁵⁴ Her increasingly unstable state of mind has now developed into schizophrenia.

Sufiya, who is brought into connection with the murders of several children, is finally locked away in the attic. Again, as it has been the case before with her mother Bilquis, aspects of society that cannot be acknowledged are thus hidden. Sufiya is stigmatised as being such a great shame that she cannot even be talked of: “The family had to be told; nobody’s hands were clean. They were all accomplices in the matter of Sufiya Zinobia; and the secret was kept. The ‘wrong miracle’ ... she disappeared from sight. Poof! Like so.”⁵⁵ Sufiya’s extreme anger, however, enables her to be strong enough to get rid of her manacles and to take flight from this prison. While she is away, she is further demonised in people’s, especially Omar’s, imagination and becomes a creature that is now a complete animal and has no human traits any more. When people elsewhere claim to have sighted a ‘white panther’, Sufiya’s relatives associate this animal immediately with her.

⁵³ Ibid: 218.

⁵⁴ Ibid: 235.

⁵⁵ Ibid: 237.

The choice of animal is of course significant insofar as it catches prey, uses violence and kills others. This is exactly what Sufiya does. The sightings of the white panther coincide with murders of both animals and persons.

This terrible form of violence has become Sufiya's only means to escape the atrocious and repressive conditions she has grown up in. At the same time she thus shows protest and revolt. At times Omar realises this, and, like Sufiya's father, also fears that Sufiya whose killings occur increasingly closer to her house, comes back to take revenge.⁵⁶

She also exercises revenge in another way, namely by disrupting the Hyders' good reputation through all her violent deeds. In consequence the Hyders decide to flee so that they might escape both Sufiya's possible attacks as well as attacks by the public.

Sufiya has to a great extent now become what people wanted her to become, namely "a chimaera, the collective fantasy of a stifled people, a dream born of their rage."⁵⁷ She becomes at the same time as being the personification of the dreadful consequences of the regime's teachings a scapegoat on which the enraged and oppressed people can unload all their anger and pain. In this way it is shown how the victims of the system such as the ordinary people victimise in turn the weakest people of society so that the means of oppression and power are employed again and again.

At the very end of the novel, when facing her husband Omar Khayyam, there is still a spark of hope for a better life in her, for the fulfillment of her wishes by the possibility of releasing her sexuality in a love-relationship, but it is too late: Her hope cannot last after all her traumatic experiences. Her disintegration is too far advanced. She can only react in a violent manner that is at its full climax when she kills her husband and thus any hope of experiencing mutual love. As a result of this killing she also dies. This chain of events and especially her death signify that real life is not possible any longer where there is only destruction and rage. Her disintegration shows that there are only very few possibilities for people to live under such a regime without being completely destroyed by it. They are not allowed to live up to their human potential and as a result of having to live very limited, one-sided lives, the people's psyches crumble and their personalities become unsurprisingly corrupted, destructive and seem to gradually disappear. "..., and that the power of the Beast of shame cannot be held for long within any one frame of flesh and blood, because it grows, it feeds and swells, until the vessel bursts."⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Ibid: 260.

⁵⁷ Ibid: 263.

⁵⁸ Ibid: 286.

The narrator points out clearly that there is no positive outlook for the people and their development until the regime changes, until such repressive conditions also make “a gesture of farewell”⁵⁹.

Omar, our male protagonist, has felt from the beginning as “being a person apart”⁶⁰, which is at first obvious in the exclusion he faces from the intimacy his three mothers share at home and the lack of a father that leads him later on to look for a substitute father figure. At the same time he was also called a ‘hero’ when he was born. This suggests that Omar has it in himself to change things in Pakistan by his otherness, by having a “sense of being a creature of the edge: a peripheral man”⁶¹. Only by being different and by keeping a certain distance to the attitudes of the people that surround him does he actually have the possibility of exercising criticism and showing alternative viewpoints and ways of behaviour. It is not surprising that Omar starts life in the outside world first of all in the role of spectator in order to learn something about this new world.⁶²

This is of course the typical situation migrants find themselves in – being apart from the others and not too deeply involved with the country’s ways often enable them to form more unbiased views on their new surroundings than its inhabitants do, which also often lead them to question certain views or actions of the new society, which are sometimes no longer recognised by the population due to the latter’s constant adherence to them. We also have the idea of a hero inversed here insofar as a hero is normally not seen as a peripheral person in the first place. Another indication that Omar is really a kind of migrant is his name, which is that of the poet Omar Khayyam, who has been a translated man. Like the poet and also the narrator and Rushdie, Omar is also a translated man.⁶³ Having been brought up in the secluded world where his mothers live and try to go against some of the religious conventions of the day by showing a more tolerant and open lifestyle, he must naturally be shocked when he faces, after having entered the world outside, the religious fundamentalism of his peers that frequently clashes with his own secular convictions, which are the result of having been brought up entirely without any teachings of shame. His background is thus the complete opposite of Sufiya’s. His secular convictions are of course a chance to introduce reforms into society. This action would show the positive, rewarding process of translation namely that people can learn from the different views another person introduces into society. The latter’s different approach is something on which the others can measure their own convictions and

⁵⁹ Ibid: 286.

⁶⁰ Ibid: 24.

⁶¹ Ibid: 24.

⁶² Ibid: 45.

⁶³ Ibid: 29.

beliefs and by the adoption of new, tolerant, open ideas can enrich themselves and thus gain a higher complexity of understanding and possibly of feeling as well. “It is generally believed that something is always lost in translation; I cling to the notion – and use, in evidence, the success of Fitzgerald-Khayyam – that something can also be gained.”⁶⁴

Fitzgerald’s translation of the *Rubaiyat* is a good example of the transformative and creative nature of translation insofar as Fitzgerald, by referring to his work as ‘transmogrification’, acknowledged his own contribution to the poems, which changed their nature in part.⁶⁵ This should be seen against the background of the novel’s emphasis of the lack of equivalents in translation for every expression. This conviction becomes manifest in the inclusion of words in *Shame* that are left untranslated such as the word “takallouf”⁶⁶. This is of course a post-colonial strategy, which reveals how newness comes into the world when different cultural influences interact. Metaphors are also mentioned as means of conveying something, which cannot be directly expressed or translated.⁶⁷ At the same time, these strategies also show the difficulties migrants face in conveying some of their viewpoints, which are largely culturally formed, in a different cultural environment. These difficulties are encountered by Omar – who is a migrant of sorts insofar as he mentally crosses social barriers – when he criticises the narrow-minded views of others he is surrounded by.

The novel’s character also resembles his Persian namesake in the versatility of his interests in scholarship: while the composer of the *Rubaiyat* was well-known not only for his literary writings, but also as a mathematician and astronomer⁶⁸, the character in Rushdie’s novel is open to many Eastern but also Western influences, which are shown in his reading and in the languages he learns such as Arabic and Persian, Latin, French and German.⁶⁹ Omar thus embraces hybridity and a holistic approach, thus fulfilling the preconditions for becoming a truly cosmopolitan person.

Omar’s different views are especially shown in his early attitude towards Sufiya: He falls in love with her because he can see beyond her destructive behaviour and her mental slowness and sees her as a feeling human being.⁷⁰ Due to his upbringing that has prevented him from engaging in superstition, he is able to see that her psyche’s balance is out of order. He therefore attributes Sufiya’s condition to the presence of a disorder or illness and not to some

⁶⁴ Ibid: 29.

⁶⁵ “Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam”. [Wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rubaiyat_of_Omar_Khayyam). 07 Aug 2006. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rubaiyat_of_Omar_Khayyam: 2.

⁶⁶ Rushdie. *Shame*: 104.

⁶⁷ Ibid: 208.

⁶⁸ “Omar Khayyam”. [Wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omar_Khayyam). 07 Aug 2006. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omar_Khayyam: 1-2.

⁶⁹ Rushdie. *Shame*: 33-34, 36.

⁷⁰ Ibid: 141-42.

form of religious punishment: ““Sir, I am a man of science; to the devil with this talk of devils. I will not cast off a loved one because she fell ill; it is rather, my duty to make her well. And this is being done.””⁷¹ Thus he cannot detect any shame in her or in his love to her. Nevertheless the extremely discriminating viewpoints of the others prove at the end to be too strong for him to resist their powerful influence on his love to Sufiya.

In addition, he has been brought up not to feel any shame whatsoever, such teaching entailing by its nature unscrupulous and immoral views and behaviour. After having for a long time been in service for the dictatorial Iskander (Bhutto) and having also become a relative-by-marriage to Raza Hyder (Zia) with his radical and extreme views, he starts doubting the veracity and the utility of his own tolerant secular opinions. In addition he is sick of having “a low reputation as a human being”⁷² and of being called “a degenerate”⁷³ due to the lack of shame in him.

As a result, his loving and tolerant attitude towards his wife Sufiya undergoes dramatic changes, which means that he firstly treats her like a child who has no sexual needs⁷⁴ and secondly as a beast that has to be locked away⁷⁵ after adopting the superstitious views of the others on Sufiya’s condition:

...even though he rejected possession-by-devils as a way of denying human responsibility for human actions, even though God had never meant much to him, still his reason could not erase the evidence of those eyes, could not blind him to that unearthly glow, the smouldering fire of the Beast.⁷⁶

This viewpoint strongly contrasts with his attitude shaped by “his uncircumcised, unshaven, unwhispered-to-beginnings. It was as though he had divined that it was time for the Almighty to step forward and take charge of events.”⁷⁷

At the end Omar has not been able to use his potential of a migrant who travels different worlds, such as the one of his childhood home, the one of being in service for Iskander and the one of being Sufiya’s husband. Pakistan’s restrictions have proven to be too great to be overcome by his own strength. This is shown in the fact that he finally returns to his childhood home where he is killed. His childhood home, even though having initially induced him to hold more tolerant views has at the same time always been suffocating and repressive,

⁷¹ Ibid: 198.

⁷² Ibid: 81.

⁷³ Ibid: 81.

⁷⁴ Ibid: 210-11.

⁷⁵ Ibid: 236.

⁷⁶ Ibid: 235.

⁷⁷ Ibid: 239.

as he did not have the opportunity there to expose himself to different opinions and thus develop his personality there. No real border-crossing was possible there for him and coming back to this enclosed place means that he gives up any more attempts at crossing borders and instead draws now consciously strong boundaries around himself that only lead him to the “gaping mouth of the void.”⁷⁸ He recognises now that he has never in actual fact crossed borders as he could and should have done: “ ‘I watched from the wings, not knowing how to act.’”⁷⁹ Omar has never really gone beyond the spectator-role that he assumed when he left his mothers’ house. It seems it needs more persons like Omar that support each other in their struggle to really make changes in Pakistan by being active agents - changes that enable people to lead a freer and a happier way of life.

Pakistan’s repressive character is gradually revealed to us through the various subplots that highlight the lives of the various characters in the novel. At the end we are faced with the image of a theistic, dictatorial regime that teaches shame to people and particularly to its women and thus dehumanises them. Sufiya has been used as the shocking embodiment of this shame that is the consequence of fanatical and extremist ways of thinking. She and to a lesser extent the other, especially female characters illustrate the damaging consequences of the teachings of shame on the individuals, which are accompanied by a lack of love.

They cannot develop or lead fulfilled lives in such a climate, but instead take refuge in despair and hopelessness that lead to severe alterations of personality, which in some instances take on forms of madness that include violent acts against themselves or others, which can go as far as committing murder(s) or suicide. Finally the loss of personhood ensues.

Shame is probably the only one of Rushdie’s novels that does not counterbalance limiting factors to identity and the world but instead stops at showing obstacles to social and personal development. We get only glimpses at more positive, alternative ways of life in Pakistani society, which cannot prevail though. This deeply negative world view that stands in strong contrast to Rushdie’s normally critical, but nevertheless hopeful attitude can be explained by the highly negative impressions he has formed of the country, especially during the time he lived there.

⁷⁸ Ibid: 268.

⁷⁹ Ibid: 283.

III.3.4. Political resistance to imperialism and dictatorship through revolution in *The Jaguar Smile – A Nicaraguan Journey*

The theme of violent, repressive regimes that repress individuality and even the idea of personal wholeness is also taken up in Rushdie's travelogue, *The Jaguar Smile – A Nicaraguan Journey*, which focuses on the repercussions of governmental change, a change that involves in this particular case the fall of an inhumane dictatorship through a revolution and the gradual establishment of that revolution's winners.

It delineates both alternative ways of ruling the country and the opposition the new rulers face both within and outside the country. In respect to the latter, Rushdie delineates the imperial, outrageous US policy against Nicaragua and the effects on that Latin American country of certain measures adopted against it.

The travelogue depicts the difficult attempts of the new government at the time to deal with resistance, bias, violence and injustice in an appropriate way, revealing both its lapses and its achievements in creating space for more freedom in the country.

The Jaguar Smile – A Nicaraguan Journey depicts how Nicaraguans used to suffer almost half a century under the Somoza government, which used oppression and violence and was in fact regarded as one of the longest and most brutal dictatorships in the world¹: The most cruel atrocities such as feeding persons to panthers that belonged to the dictator's private zoo, torture, castration and rape were all frequently exercised and can be compared to the excessive human rights abuses Hyder (Zia) committed in Pakistan as delineated in *Shame*. The government is presented as having been clearly totalitarian in its ways so that it does not come as a surprise that many Nicaraguans at that time seemed to have felt exiled in their own country.² They acknowledged that the country under Somoza had never been their home,³ but was rather experienced as imprisonment.⁴ The revolution was thus an act of migration for the people, who invented both their country and themselves anew and could finally feel liberated insofar as they stopped being passive victims of a regime but now started to have much more control over their own lives.

The changes that had taken place and the new situation they had given rise to were in one instance depicted in a limerick about a young girl from Nicaragua, who rides on a smiling

¹ Rushdie, Salman. *The Jaguar Smile – A Nicaraguan Journey*. 1987. London: Vintage, 2000: 9.

² Ibid: 45.

³ Ibid: 65-66.

⁴ Ibid: 125-26.

jaguar. According to Rushdie, one interpretation of this image is that of regarding the young girl as the revolution, still suffused with idealism, and the jaguar as geopolitics or the United States. This view reflects on the attempt to create a country, which had for so many decades merely been an appendage of the United States. Although the country could still not be regarded as strong at the time the travelogue was written, it at that time tried to stand up to a powerful enemy. Another interpretation of the limerick Rushdie suggests is that of the girl as being Nicaragua itself and the jaguar as being the revolution. Nicaragua here seemed to struggle to come to terms with the new state of affairs, which to some people seemed dangerous and risky, but which could take the country to new pastures.

The image of the jaguar as a symbol for a country, the state it is in and for the changes it undergoes, bears close resemblance to the image of the panther, which Sufiya and, by extension, the conditions in Pakistan are linked with. States and state power, which can so easily be abused, are thus quite appropriately represented by a predator whose nature it is to use violence to kill its enemies.

Furthermore, Rushdie regards the revolution at least partly as the cause to and as a deep influence on a martyr-culture that developed rapidly.⁵ After Somoza's assassination, a fate many dictators have met, his shadow had apparently remained in the people's memory. It is a not uncommon phenomenon that dictators of the past gradually turn into myths and thus seem to stop being human. In a similar way, great revolutionaries turn into super-human leader figures in the people's minds and thus also into myth: Similar to Gandhi in India, this was the case with Augusto César Sandino in Nicaragua, who has been regarded as a martyr since his assassination by Somoza's men and whose hat became the most powerful icon in Nicaragua. Masks, which had played an important role in the country's folk culture, became closely associated with the revolution. They signify transformation and thus point out processes of change. It is thus possible to say that the country had always ideologically welcomed metamorphosis, which then found direct and passionate expression in the Nicaraguan revolution, which was a fusion of religious and secular factors.

The group that initiated the revolution, the 'Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional' was founded in 1956 and achieved victory in 1979. Its ideology, which was to some extent based on socialist and communist ideas, showed a clear break with the ideas that underlay the Somoza dictatorship. As a result, the Sandinistas were frequently accused of being a disguised Soviet-style state and were sometimes even called Stalinists despite keeping a low profile.

⁵ Ibid: 9.

During the 1970s there were problems of unity within the Frente,⁶ a situation that often emerges in parties or certain political organisations and particularly in the context of revolutions.

Rushdie greatly sympathises with both the situation this group found itself in as well as with the cause they fought for.⁷ Drawing the parallels to India, he recognises how the new ideas of the revolution formed the people's consciousness with the result that the particular changes that were under way were increasingly supported. This growing support from the population was necessary, as the difficulties the revolutionists encountered were grave and manifold: Like India, the country was an impoverished one and thus not very resistant to major changes in the use of its resources.⁸ Furthermore, also similar to India, the country was dominated by a foreign power,⁹ namely the USA, and had therefore to engage in a harsh fight. The travelogue suggests that it was particularly the threat the United States posed to the Sandinistas, which proved to be the major obstacle to the successful outcome of the latter's efforts to achieve better and more equal living conditions in the country:

It is Rushdie's argument that America had practised imperialism in Latin America in general and in Nicaragua in particular in various ways. One very striking form of imperialism in this context is said to be the cultural imperialism whose effects seemed to be glaringly apparent: The American entertainment industry with its Hollywood films, series and certain types of music soon became part of everyday life in Nicaragua.¹⁰ Furthermore, US-products such as Coca-Cola could be found everywhere in the country. In addition, Nicaraguan poets were greatly influenced by US literature.

These US American influences are not surprising considering that the old Somoza government fostered this connection, which gradually developed to an "omnipresence of US culture"¹¹. These developments have been accompanied by an influx of US citizens.

Rushdie argues that a striking form of power abuse the US practised was the imposition of economic embargoes, which appeared to be particularly harmful to Nicaragua, as the latter depended to a large extent on imports.¹² Service facilities were withdrawn, and even charity organisations like Oxfam were prevented from sending items such as farm equipment and seeds over. These actions meant constant economic pressure from America on Nicaragua, the latter already suffering from an extremely high inflation rate and immense prices. US strikes

⁶ Ibid: 60-61.

⁷ Ibid: 4.

⁸ Ibid: 80-81.

⁹ Ibid: 4.

¹⁰ Ibid: 23-24.

¹¹ Ibid: 36.

at Nicaraguan facilities could easily paralyse the country, thus doing even more harm to the already damaged economy of the country. In view of this disastrous economic state of affairs it is not surprising that there was high corruption and that the black market flourished.¹³

Although the US tried to make Nicaragua look as the “regional aggressor”¹⁴, thus turning the victim into the guilty party, they were ordered to repair the economic damage by the International Court at the Hague.

Rushdie adds how on top of these actions taken America established and then started to fund and arm the Contra group through the CIA.¹⁵ Although this act was declared to be in breach with international law by the International Court of Justice in the Hague, President Reagan received approval and support from the House of Representatives so that he then requested 100 million dollar for new aid for the counter-revolution. This counter-revolutionary organisation had frequently resorted to terrorist acts, which had aimed at the civilian population, such as the mining of roads, and damaging production.

Rushdie clearly condemns how the US determinedly tried to topple the actually existing government of Nicaragua through the Contra, which had legally come to power as a result of uncorrupted elections.¹⁶ He emphasises that the vast majority of Nicaraguans claimed a right to self-determination, demanding that internal structures should not be interfered with from the outside. This demand, he adds, could easily be extended to the whole of Central America. As an expression of protest against America’s interference with Nicaragua’s politics and their determination not to be crushed by the superpower, some Nicaraguans put scarecrows on roadside trees. Also some Nicaraguans took action through campaigns making the US American people more conscious of the injustice of their situation, thus gaining support from many.¹⁷ It is the CIA that was particularly feared, as the CIA controlled assets in Latin America and also planned budgets, which were highly disadvantageous to Nicaragua, as the amount of money spent in the region went into aid for the Contra forces.¹⁸

Rushdie observed an immense fear in Nicaragua that Reagan, once he realised that the Contra had not achieved enough despite the aid allocated to them, orders a US invasion. It was assumed that Reagan had invested too much personal prestige in the issue to let it go, which would entail an overt breach of diplomatic relations, thus neglecting dialogue, which was essential to find a constructive solution to this already extremely tense situation.

¹² Ibid: 24.

¹³ Ibid: 59.

¹⁴ Ibid: 26.

¹⁵ Ibid: 5.

¹⁶ Ibid: 26.

¹⁷ Ibid: 83.

The US also paid a lot of money to Nicaragua's neighbouring countries in order to 'buy' their support for their policies in the country. Not being able to get support of all the states in the region for invasion, they attempted to set up a small group against Nicaragua, concentrating on Honduras, Costa Rica and Salvador.¹⁹

The travelogue also claims that US citizens, unless they were made conscious of these injustices in such campaigns as mentioned above tended to be blind to these proceedings, as Nicaragua had no reality to them. Similarly, Europeans generally spoke of the US as 'America'²⁰, claiming in this way that the US owned the entire continent. This colonial-style jargon shows how Europe continued to hold on to hegemonic notions, thus marginalising poorer and less powerful countries.

Despite these pressures from the US the Sandinistas had, in Rushdie's opinion, achieved to improve many of the country's predicaments. Amongst those positive attainments he mentions an intense fostering of culture and creativity, particularly of (Nicaraguan) poetry. The deep honouring of culture culminated in the foundation of the Sandinista Association of Cultural Workers, an umbrella organization that brings writers, artists, musicians, craftspeople, dancers and other culture-producing groups together.²¹ The reverence of poetry was expressed in the belief that everyone can be a poet, thus finding their own way to express themselves and to unfold their potential. There existed a great importance of creating an authentic poetry, which involved more often than not tackling the events that occurred in the country emotionally. Political issues were thus approached in the form of poetic expression.²² Cultural preconceptions, however, existed nevertheless: As much as Rushdie was surprised to be connected to Tagore due to his Indian origin, the Nicaraguans could not agree to be identified with anti-realism.²³

More changes initiated by the Sandinistas were, as Rushdie stresses, those that aim at greater equality among the different parts of the population. One of them were the Agrarian Reforms that took place in the new Nicaragua:²⁴ The campesinos were given land titles for 70 000 acres, which meant that the land was radically redistributed. This allocation of the country's scarce resources, however, could also be understood as an incentive and mobilization of the peasants to participate in the revolution. Closeness between the politicians and the campesinos

¹⁸ Ibid: 18.

¹⁹ Ibid: 47.

²⁰ Ibid: 136.

²¹ Ibid: 4.

²² Ibid: 28.

²³ Ibid: 40-41.

²⁴ Ibid: 15.

was thus established,²⁵ which was also expressed in that the former armed the latter, thinking that arming the people was the best defence against an attack. All these procedures were also meant to be an attack on a strictly class-based society.

The travelogue also focuses on another new measure that was intended for the benefit of the peasants, which was that of resettlement:²⁶ That was done to protect them because many campesinos, usually living in areas that were not far away from the Contra people, had regularly been kidnapped and had been forced to grow food for the counter-revolutionary soldiers or had been killed. The plan was to establish child-care centres at each co-operative settlement, the latter being a collective organisation of all the land held and farmed, or at each plot of land that was owned and farmed by individuals and where the government merely acted as the supply of power, wealth, health care and distribution facilities. Resettlement procedures also included the building of schools and health care facilities.

Rushdie admits, however, that despite the advantages the campesinos gained from the resettlement project, some problems remained for a long time: One was the difficulty for women to raise their children and earn a living at the same time. In addition, the resettled campesinos from the north were not used to live in communities, having led isolated lives in jungle clearings before. Other factors were the lack of resources, as the authorities could not always provide the resettled families with completed houses, offering them sometimes merely a roof, and the fact that attacks on the settlers by the Contras continued and merely slightly abated. Also, many of the new settlers were racially different from the local mestizos: they were Amerindians, Miskito or Sumo with their own culture and languages and they felt colonised.

However, the travelogue reveals how gradually some of the problems seemed to have become better: By learning about the Miskito culture, for example, and by thus becoming more sensitive towards them and their needs, the Miskitos started to feel less alienated. Rushdie believes that this improvement was widely the result of the implementation of the autonomy scheme, a scheme that showed that the Sandinistas learned from mistakes such as the neglect of dealing with power clashes between minority groups. The autonomy scheme allowed the Miskitos to go back to their old territories and also guaranteed the cultural rights of all minority groups in one part of the country where a large federation of self-government was introduced, which led to a large federation between two wings.²⁷ These changes met with great enthusiasm among the people about getting more opportunities for self-determination.

²⁵ Ibid: 38-39.

²⁶ Ibid: 56.

²⁷ Ibid: 104-05.

Also, by giving the Atlantic coast this degree of independence, the bonds between the coasts were likely to be strengthened.

Salman Rushdie hailed the draft of a new constitution as one of the most important achievements by the Sandinistas, as it was a constitution that could be characterised by the construction of a society with broad participation of the people.²⁸ The rights that were set out there included the right to vote and to be elected, freedom of speech and education and health care. In practice, this guarantee of the appropriate provision of health care led to the development of health programmes that made co-operation between western and indigenous doctors possible. The draft of the new constitution also promoted political pluralism, and freedom of conscience, thought and religion were considered to be essential and should not be violated. Social security and welfare became a responsibility of the state. On the whole, this version of the new constitution was, according to Rushdie, a clear break with the ideology that had underlain the Somoza government. Although many issues were not likely to be resolved quickly and although the Emergency was still in place at that time, the eagerness with which the Sandinistas let themselves into the constitution-making process demonstrated in Rushdie's opinion that they were in fact creating a new reality as well as a new identity for Nicaragua and her people.

Rushdie, comparing the Emergency in Nicaragua to that in India under Indira Gandhi, remarks how the Emergency under the Sandinistas should be seen as the necessary result of the existence of an aggressor and should not be presented in a very negative light. He thus points out the importance of distinguishing between the different radical actions taken by governments or political groups even if their aims of improving the condition of their respective country might look very similar. Rushdie sees his sense of hope for Nicaragua taking shape in a cloud of butterflies, which he describes with something resembling religious awe, and which comes close to a spiritual revelation.²⁹

In spite of these numerous improvements the Sandinistas initiated, there were, as Rushdie points out, some severe mistakes that had not been acknowledged as such by them and therefore had not been rectified. One such error was the use of censorship by the Sandinistas: They censored the press first of all by banning some articles of the newspaper, *La Prensa*,³⁰ and then finally closed it altogether.³¹ Freedom of the press was obviously merely regarded as a cosmetic issue that could be justified by the revolution: The fact that there was a state of war

²⁸ Ibid: 71.

²⁹ Ibid: 115.

³⁰ Ibid: 123.

³¹ Ibid: 33.

as well as that that the paper was financed by the CIA³² were reasons enough for the Sandinistas to take such action. Furthermore, there had been problems with the editorial line in that the paper's editors clearly made their support for Reagan clear.³³ Censorship of the press also was an issue when the latter kept quiet for six months after a popular FSLN leader had been killed.³⁴

There is of course once again a parallel to the situation in Pakistan in 1965, when it was clear that all information one received was hopelessly and deliberately misleading. Having had such negative experiences with censorship, Rushdie strongly criticises this practice as employed by the Sandinistas here as well. He is convinced that they took a wrong turning, a development that surprises him, as he did not expect a government of writers to turn into a government of censors.³⁵ Their own paper was of very bad quality.

The implementation of such censorship was also called unwise because the Sandinistas could then to some extent rightly be accused of being undemocratic by the US. It would thus have been hardly unexpected if the US compared this form of censorship with that being in place in the Soviet Union, which had led to certain denials such as the existence of labour camps.³⁶ Revolutionists, being so immersed in their cause, tend to overlook the dark spots of their actions. However, the instance of censorship that the Sandinistas imposed is a reminder of the significance of distinguishing carefully between not only the actions taken by different political groups, but also the various courses of actions by one revolutionary group instead of simply glorifying them on the basis of them being undertaken by a revolutionary group that has a progressive agenda. In addition, censorship might also have had more of a chance in Nicaragua because Nicaraguans were shown as not being very keen on news from the world in the first place. They were said to be very naive about what happened outside their country and regarded a certain kind of information as not very important.³⁷ It was thus easier to disregard the importance of information generally and to establish censorship.

Censorship was even extended in one instance when foreign workers from the war zone were banned, which meant that they were forbidden to enter most areas in Nicaragua. This measure was an unconstructive response to a Contra attack in which several people lost their lives.

Another problematic act by the Sandinistas was the dismissal of the priests. This undertaking has to be regarded within the context of the changes that took place within the

³² Ibid: 51.

³³ Ibid: 89.

³⁴ Ibid: 67.

³⁵ Ibid: 34.

³⁶ Ibid: 76-77.

³⁷ Ibid: 134-35.

Church at the time: Religion had become an increasingly important issue and centre for debate when a rift in the Church became clear.³⁸ Some people started to find religious justification for the revolution in the Gospels. Biblical stories were thus increasingly reread in a way that wove in the actual, political situation in Nicaragua. A struggle over the correct interpretation of the word ensued between the hierarchy of the Church and the priests. There was obviously soon no contradiction any more between the Church, understood in this new way, and the Revolution.

Rushdie also attributes the increasing adherence to this new religion to the power the priests were able to exercise over the population. This can be explained by their enormous influence on politics, as they held government positions, such as those of Foreign Minister, Minister of Culture and others. There was even a debate if the new constitution should invoke the name of God. Some priests were very uncritical towards injustices, turning a blind eye on the abuses that occurred in Cuba, such as human rights abuses, the mistreatment of political prisoners, torture and attacks on homosexuals and writers. The taking of such wrong paths could be taken for a warning to the Nicaraguan revolutionists as well as an inspiration.

Against this background it is understandable that the Sandinistas were adverse to the power the priests exercised often in very detrimental ways over the people. It was thus a sound demand by the Sandinistas to establish a clear divide between the clergy and politics. In addition, the Sandinistas recognised that the influence of Catholicism on the people often put women in vulnerable positions, as the latter believed that they were deprived of valuable rights, such as the one to decide over their own bodies by not getting access to legal abortion.³⁹

On top of that, they considered the fact that some priests supported the counter-revolution unacceptable and saw the need to expel them.⁴⁰ The fact that numerous persons of the clergy had been supported by Somoza money could not be silently accepted either.

However, the dismissal of priests without serious attempts to establish dialogue first, has to be seen as one of the shortcomings of Sandinista rule, as this can also be described as dictatorial behaviour.

On the whole, it seems there was a harmful mechanism in operation in that any condemnable actions by the US met on reprehensible behaviour by the Sandinistas: The response to US aid to the Contra triggered the closure of *La Prensa*. In reply to this action, the

³⁸ Ibid: 30.

³⁹ Ibid: 72.

⁴⁰ Ibid: 84.

New York Times accused the FSLN to be Stalinists, to which the FSLN answered with the expulsion of the priests and then had to fear a US invasion.⁴¹

The progressive and destructive repercussions of the Sandinistas' actions are summed up in the notions of beauty and beast, which are presented as being closely intertwined in this case. The Sandinistas did fight for greater justice in the country and for more equality, but their precarious position and their rebellious, volatile nature also made them susceptible to make mistakes, such as suspending certain rights. These mistakes cannot merely be justified by the threat of the US American superpower having destroyed their military and economic force. However, as Rushdie observes, disapproving of a government's policy does not mean to oppose the government. He called Nicaragua a flawed democracy on the left⁴² and found himself for the first time not to be a writer in opposition, but to be on the side of the people in charge.

Rushdie thus convincingly emphasises that it was essential for the Sandinistas to keep on fighting, as it was the revolution that kept the hope for further improvements alive. Their implementation was seen as the precondition for the people in the country to be able to lead more fulfilled and autonomous lives, which include the development of their own individuality and creativity that should take them closer to the acquisition of a sense of wholeness.

⁴¹ Ibid: 52.

⁴² Ibid: 35.

III.3.5. The descriptive nature of roles in *The Satanic Verses*

The Satanic Verses discusses the theme of wholeness by concentrating on aspects such as national identity, profession and a person's central activities, religion as well as censorship. These aspects are part of the self and determine one's identity. They try to answer the novel's central question, 'Who am I?' or 'What idea am I?' – a question that is repeatedly asked in the course of the novel. It implies that identity is a construct, a self-constructed concept on the one hand, and an 'other-constructed' concept on the other hand. The analysis will mainly be focussed on the novel's protagonists, Saladin and Gibreel, but also on some minor characters who contribute something valuable to the mentioned aspects of the wholeness – theme.

Saladin Chamcha has long cherished the desire to become English. This longing started when he still lived in the old Bombay and felt that he was destined to go to the country. London is, in all its imagined splendour, a construct of his mind and England a "great civilization".¹ In defiance to his father, he escapes from India, the country of his birth, and intends to settle down for good in England, his new chosen homeland where he also changes his name, Salahuddin Chamchawala, to the Anglicised version 'Saladin Chamcha'. This is supposed to be a sign visible for everyone that he has now adopted, not just officially by getting a British passport and thus citizenship, but also through his inner conviction, the British national identity. However, it soon becomes clear that this radical change of feeling of national belonging that implies the leaving behind of everything Indian, is not entirely successful. When he flies back to England after a short stay in India, he inadvertently falls back into his Bombay jargon. This is a very unpleasant experience for him and rekindles memories of his education in England many years before when he was – similar to Rushdie when attending school in England - excluded by his classmates due to his accent. Saladin's masks prove to be transparent at these times and show his Indian heritage underneath, which he despises. His father's scorn for Saladin's behaviour is displayed in regarding Saladin as a devil from now on. This view of his father on Saladin is one of the first instances that are part of a greater process of turning Saladin into a devil.

Saladin's wish to become English makes him act in a play that deals with many stereotypes by showing aliens as freaks and by lacking positive images, an act that will find an echo in the character of second-generation immigrant Karim in Kureishi's novel, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, whose publication followed that of *The Satanic Verses* two years later. Englishness

¹ Rushdie. *The Satanic Verses*: 39.

is still something worth aspiring to even though he soon after the plane crash has increasingly negative experiences, which are bound to challenge his romanticised idea of England. One example of such an experience is the debasing behaviour by the English, which Saladin simply decides not to notice.² Furthermore, the police place him under arrest on which occasion they ‘mistake’ him for an Indian shortly after he and Gibreel have been stranded ashore.³

England suddenly resembles hell, a comparison that is quite fitting regarding the fact they all treat him like a devil in prison for the reason that he claims to be English, but is not recognised by them as an Englishman. The need to reinvent the country in his mind that he has felt before this arrest becomes even stronger: “He was in a void, and if he were to survive he would have to construct everything from scratch, would have to invent the ground beneath his feet before he could take a step, ... breeze.”⁴ At that time he continues to put up his resistance to anything Indian, which makes him among other things reject Indian food that he is being offered in the house of the Sufyans. The next traumatic event occurs when the film director, Hal Valance, gives Saladin notice in a very short and straightforward way, telling him that the show he directs and Saladin acts in becomes too racial with him.⁵ Again, Saladin has been identified as an Indian. Furthermore, his eyes are opened to the violence of some white people against coloured people in his beloved England. What Saladin fails to do by continuously rejecting his Indian background, is what a so-called devil-cult in the neighbourhood of where he lives does: namely to reclaim the language that has been denigrated as being evil and devilish by the British authorities. The final event that questions Saladin’s conviction of what England is like and also of his English self and that finally changes his attitude, is his return to India when his father is dying.⁶ The encounter between son and father is a positive one so that old wounds are healed and Saladin’s adamant rejection of India and an ‘Indian’ identity, which was to a great extent a result of his rejection of his father, shows itself to be pointless now. India becomes home to him again: This is made apparent in Saladin’s acceptance of his Indian name and also of the fact that his Urdu comes back to him and that he is not adverse to using it any more. Saladin’s re-evaluation of his relationship with India is also emphasised in the events surrounding the magic lamp owned by Saladin’s father: the magic lamp, as a fulfiller of dreams, refers to the world of the *Tales from the Thousand and One Nights* and derives thus clearly its meaning from its Eastern, here

² Ibid: 75.

³ Ibid: 140.

⁴ Ibid: 132.

⁵ Ibid: 265.

⁶ Ibid: 514.

Indian, context. The lamp as an artefact from Saladin's own cultural background is significantly withheld from him by his father as long as he denies his Indian origin and identity.⁷ Only at the end when he comes back to India and revises his idea about his sense of belonging does he get the lamp, which has then become an inheritance.⁸ The indication, given by keeping the magic lamp out of Saladin's reach, that some of his wishes cannot be fulfilled as long as he denies an important part of himself stresses the limitations Saladin has imposed on himself. Only when he recognises this connection does Saladin find peace with not just his father but also with himself and finally finds happiness with the woman he loves.

It is crucial to see that his return to India does not mean that he has simply turned towards the India he knows from his childhood. He has become more critical of it and has a more realistic conception of the place now. In addition, it should be obvious that Saladin has learned from his indulgence in one-sidedness and that England has left her marks on him, as "history was not so easily shaken off."⁹ This means that, although certainly more at home again in Indian culture, he feels now at home in two cultures at once, but without becoming wholly absorbed by one or even both of them. A broader view is gained that leaves more room for the unbiased encounter with new impressions. Saladin has overcome his self-limited view on his national identity after he has been helped to recognise the nature of it by others in a painful process of seemingly unceasing rejection.

Gibreel, in sharp contrast to Saladin, despises England and Englishness and has no inclination to become immersed in English culture. This aversion and indifference in his attitude is amazing when one thinks of Gibreel's excitement and expectation after their fall out of the plane.¹⁰ From the beginning, he repeatedly speaks of a new birth, taking the water he and Saladin hit after their fall as the symbol of rebirth, and he also considers London to be the "chimera of renewal"¹¹. Reincarnation comes to mind, a concept Gibreel does not only limit to its relevance in Hinduism, but rather approaches it in a more comprehensive, transcultural fashion.¹² He expects to undergo some form of personal transformation, most likely that of an enlargement of his personality. This suggests a change of Gibreel's feeling of belonging and an enthusiastic absorption of the new country. However, this is exactly what does not happen. Gibreel expresses himself in classical stereotypical language when he calls

⁷ Ibid: 48, 69.

⁸ Ibid: 533.

⁹ Ibid: 535.

¹⁰ Ibid: 3.

¹¹ Ibid: 201.

¹² Ibid: 84.

the English “damn cold fish”¹³ and tries to invert colonial power-relations when he thinks of tropicalising England so that it resembles the home country more closely.

His attitude towards and views on England do not undergo any fundamental changes throughout the novel. He either continuously insults the English and their culture or ignores them altogether, while living on a kind of secluded island where he is surrounded by Indian influences. “‘All this Western art-house crap.’ His top ten of everything came from ‘back home’, and were aggressively lowbrow. *Mother India, My India, Shree Charsawbees.*”¹⁴ Although he is not blind to rude behaviour by the English like Saladin and thus recognises negative behaviour and characteristics of some of the people he meets in England, Gibreel’s idea of England and the English is also very much imaginatively constructed due to his undue generalizations and his lack of real involvement with country and people. Gibreel, in contrast to Saladin, remains in this one-sided way of thinking in respect to national and cultural identity. No attempt is undertaken to distance himself from his own culture or see it from a different perspective. The rebirth he has so much longed for to experience does not occur.

It is also of importance how other people influence Saladin’s and Gibreel’s feeling of belonging or, respectively, of non-belonging. There are Anahita and Mishal Sufyan, for example, who deny their cultural Indian heritage and try very hard to define themselves as young Western (American) women by having “Bruce Lee pajamas worn loosely over T-shirts bearing the image of the new Madonna.”¹⁵ Like Saladin, they refuse to speak their mother tongue, imitating instead an upper-class English accent. However, Saladin sees through their masks and is conscious of their origin with the result that he does not accept their new, chosen identity even though they insist on it. “But they weren’t British, he wanted to tell them: not *really*, not in any way he could recognise. And yet his old certainties were slipping away by the moment, along with his old life... .”¹⁶

Saladin is not fully aware of the fact that he does exactly the same thing the English people he meets do in his presence, namely taking his own preconceptions towards others. He does not consider Anahita and Mishal as British any more than others regard him as British.

The two women Saladin sees, Pamela and Zeeney, also play a great part in Saladin’s feeling of belonging. It is quite significant that Saladin has chosen to be together with the English Pamela. In fact, it is her Englishness he is in love with and not her as a person. Ironically, Pamela in turn, rejects exactly this Englishness while she seeks the Indian in Saladin:

¹³ Ibid: 352.

¹⁴ Ibid: 439-40.

¹⁵ Ibid: 244-45.

¹⁶ Ibid: 259.

“... Chamcha was not in love with her at all ... It had been a marriage of crossed purposes, each of them rushing towards the very thing from which the other was in flight.”¹⁷ Each of them admires in the other person national characteristics, which the other person rejects and claims not to have or display. The intense attribution processes, which are at work here, prevent them from getting to know the other person better and therefore from experiencing any real intimacy. It does not need any further explanation that this relationship is doomed to fail.

Saladin’s relationship with Zeeney also meets with great difficulties at the beginning: She is the first Indian he has made love to and upsets his strong aversion to India and Indians at least momentarily. She is the first one who shows him how unconvincing his adopted English identity is¹⁸ and also warns him of wasting his energy on getting into the ‘Aliens Show’, already anticipating his failure there and his probable success in India. Zeeney undertakes these actions, trying to correct his misguided, one-sided views about himself, because she shows real concern for Saladin and wants the best for him. She succeeds in getting close to him by observing him closely and by using her imagination in a way that enables her to empathise with him but to remain critical towards his views and actions at the same time. She thus lays the foundation for a love relationship that can develop. Thus, Zeeney is partly responsible for Saladin’s change which she regards as a true home-coming: “‘About time,’ Zeeney approved when he told her of his return to Salahuddin. ‘Now you can stop acting at last.’”¹⁹

In Gibreel’s life Allie confirms and supports indirectly Gibreel’s feeling of being a true Indian by looking exactly for that in him. Her name has, like Saladin’s, also been Anglicised.

However, it was her Polish father who has done this and Allie, having no positive memories of her childhood, rejects both her Polish and British (her European) identities: “‘The fact is, I don’t even like my league.’”²⁰

This dislike of European culture and the fascination by the East is exactly what Gibreel and Allie have in common and what draws them to each other. In this instance, the woman closest to one of the protagonists rather affirms his one-sided feeling of belonging than questions or counters it as in the case of the two women in Saladin’s life. In contrast to Saladin, there is therefore no impulse given to him by the woman he is together with to change his views and undergo the process of self-development.

¹⁷ Ibid: 180.

¹⁸ Ibid: 53.

¹⁹ Ibid: 534.

²⁰ Ibid: 299.

Gibreel's hate towards the English is not even directly attacked by the English persons themselves whom he meets. They cheer him as a star in spite of his hate towards them. Thus, in Gibreel's case the persons in his close environment seem to signal him that there is absolutely no need for change.

The aspect of profession (as well as important activities of a person) in the *Satanic Verses* contributes to a great extent to the identity definition of the protagonists. The profession of actor is an artificial demonstration of a person's behaviour in everyday life, which means here, the automatic taking on of roles as well as the change from one role to another. By becoming aware of this parallel, we can actually transfer the fact that Gibreel takes on far too many film roles²¹ on another level and say that he constantly seems to display different personalities in real life. This assumption is confirmed by the fact that Gibreel as a person is identified by others with the roles he plays and that he undergoes this identification process without resistance. These roles are those of various Indian deities. He changes from one deity to the other until he starts behaving like the film-characters all the time, thus becoming "a creature of surfaces."²² The acting profession and the other people's views on it do not only turn Gibreel into a superstar and a living legend, but also trigger his insanity: He starts seeing himself as the archangel Gibreel²³ and seems to believe in Saladin's idea of the death of Gibreel's old self and the birth of the dream-angel into his flesh.

His main problem, the enacting of too many roles at once, is reflected in his dreams where he also plays three roles at once, namely those of Gibreel as the Messenger and Mahound as both Prophet and Businessman.²⁴ Due to these sudden changes of perspective, he becomes increasingly confused about his self. His conscience, personified in the figure of Rehka, tells him: "You played too many winged types for your own good!"²⁵

Alleluia Cone is also on the search for her true identity (rejecting those of their parents) by testing where her boundaries are. This test is undertaken through mountain-climbing, which becomes not just her main activity, but also an addiction to her. Allie thus tries to overcome despair that has been caused by her suffering in childhood and to become whole. These attempts at change are compared to the mutations of the landscape: "An iceberg is water striving to be land; a mountain, especially a Himalaya, especially Everest, is land's attempt to metamorphose into sky; it is grounded flight, the earth mutated – nearly – into air, and

²¹ Ibid: 11.

²² Ibid: 27.

²³ Ibid: 83.

²⁴ Ibid: 118.

²⁵ Ibid: 323.

become, in the true sense, exalted.”²⁶ Her ambition in respect to the nature of her possible change is, however, higher than what could realistically be achieved: Not only does she want to gain happiness, but she also wants to achieve perfection. She thus ignores the limits imposed on her due to being human.

Allie and Gibreel do not only construct each other by confirming the other person’s sense of belonging in terms of nationality as shown above, but they also construct each other by confirming their chosen professional and leisure roles as well as certain religious aspirations that are embedded in these roles: One should here note the religious meaning of Allie’s name. This might certainly be partly the reason why Gibreel is drawn towards Allie – he seems to see someone in her who equals his own strife for (religious) role identification through his profession or major activity.

Allie’s and Gibreel’s restricted, one-sided ideas of themselves coincide with the constructs they have of each other, these constructs never being recognised as such.²⁷ She and Gibreel become a couple mainly by constructing the other. “... for had not Gibreel and Allie come together very largely by imagining out of their own needs, an ‘Allie’ and a ‘Gibreel’ with whom each could fall in love - ... heart?”²⁸

They are not able to transcend these ideas by recognising other aspects of their identities. Gibreel’s illness can be seen as an identity crisis, which makes him very insecure and turns him into a very possessive person whose acts are driven by mad jealousy. This excessive jealousy is not so much the result of caring for Allie, as he only knows very little of her as a person, but an expression of his self-doubts. The fact that he is now in turmoil about his identity shows that the many, closely defined roles he has decided to enact have a rather destructive impact on him, which makes him increasingly unable to engage in a relationship. This destructive impact unfolds because he – as well as Allie - has set himself unattainable role models. Therefore, it is not surprising that Gibreel does not live up to his newly-chosen role as archangel and is even called “no good devil bum”²⁹, which is the very opposite to what he wants to be called and be recognised as. His conviction to be the redeemer of the city is also questioned in his dreams where the question comes up: “WHAT KIND OF IDEA ARE YOU?”³⁰ Nevertheless, Gibreel does not change the course he has taken so far and still goes on enlarging his person even after people stopped supporting his adopted role. Significantly, he intends to play the role he enacts in reality in a movie as well. This shows how much the

²⁶ Ibid: 303.

²⁷ Ibid: 437.

²⁸ Ibid: 437.

²⁹ Ibid: 331.

³⁰ Ibid: 335.

boundaries between reality and illusion have already become blurred by his over-identification with his profession, the latter being the illusionary presentation of reality. Gibreel thus lives increasingly in a world based on illusions or *maya* – a Hindu concept that can be appropriately used in this context in which Gibreel enacts the roles of Hindu gods. Another crack in his angelic image or role appears while he is standing in a godlike manner in the city that he tries to conquer and suddenly ‘sees’ Saladin’s face, which reminds him of having left Saladin alone at a time when the latter most needed Gibreel.³¹ Allie, for her part, is no “icequeen”³², but a human being who again blocks her own self-development when she takes on the roles of nurse, scapegoat and crutch during Gibreel’s illness.³³ Being in love with Gibreel makes her for a long time blind to the fact that these roles run counter to her own nature and can thus not be performed satisfactorily by her for a long time. Gibreel is compared to a puppet by Saladin when the latter enacts his revenge on him by abusing his power and manipulating him. This comparison reflects how limited Gibreel has become in his personality: he enacts certain roles, but by doing so gives in to a certain inner obligation and is thus not autonomous any longer in his thoughts and behaviour. He is a puppet controlled by both his own obsessions and by others.³⁴ This means the suppression of many of his characteristics, feelings and thoughts that are considered to be bad or incompatible with his role. These processes of personality decline are symptomatic of his increasingly deteriorating schizophrenia: Playing more and more personae in the outside world, his ‘real’ personality becomes more vague and unrecognisable to him, which brings forth extreme mental derangements such as major delusions. His disintegrated personality finally takes on his last role, which is the one of a murderer, killing Allie and Sisodia as a result of unresolved extreme jealousy, suspecting the two incorrectly of having an affair. Gibreel, as in his profession, feels under obligation to enact a certain role and rejects due to this obligation responsibility for what he has done. Gibreel acknowledges his final failure to gain autonomy and realises that a real enlargement of personality that he has aspired to has not been achieved. Any belief Gibreel might earlier have had in undergoing a process of self-development (for example in his role as archangel) is thus revealed as an illusion, which is symbolised in the depiction of a magic lamp, which in fact proves to be a revolver and only brings destruction and death³⁵: he regards suicide as the only way to become free. Gibreel’s

³¹ Ibid: 401-02.

³² Ibid: 195.

³³ Ibid: 429.

³⁴ Ibid: 460.

³⁵ Ibid: 546.

profession, instead of displaying the various facets of his personality, limits him to a disastrous extent by taking control and self-determination away from him.

Saladin's decision to become an actor is at the beginning a step towards becoming more independent from his father in that he acts against the latter's will and acts in an autonomous way.³⁶ However, he also lets himself be determined by his roles when he starts his career as an actor. The influence of his roles on him is at this stage a similar one as the one on Gibreel. Zeeney observes this absorption into roles and also senses the resulting danger of Saladin becoming or even already being a nothing or nobody besides his roles. "...when you aren't doing funny voices or acting grand, and when you forget people are watching, you look just like a blank ... An empty slate, nobody home."³⁷ Saladin indulges in replacing his identity whenever he wants to or feels he needs to and feels more secure and reassured as a result: "When he was young, he told her, each phase of his life, each self he tried on, had seemed reassuringly temporary. Its imperfections didn't matter, because he could easily replace one moment by the next, one Saladin by another."³⁸ This continuous attempt at metamorphosis, which his profession enables him to undertake, is mainly a rebellion against his parents' home where everything remains as it has always been and no developments are made possible. Saladin recognises the importance of change, but does not recognise that his changes are as forced and artificial as the role changes in the theatre.

Soon though he finds it increasingly difficult to 'change his identity' so frequently and probably senses that the roles he enacts in films or on the radio cannot alone determine his identity. Zeeney makes it her project to make more of his personality appear.

Saladin, however, soon changes his attitude and behaviour towards role expectations from others towards him in everyday life. As we have seen, Saladin is turned into a devil in other people's eyes. In contrast to Gibreel, who does not put up any resistance towards role allocations, Saladin starts on a process of self-development by autonomously choosing his own roles in life, which also means defining himself as a person who is more than just the sum of the roles he plays in his profession as an actor. This process is a long and difficult one, though, which is shown by the slow disappearance of his look as a goat or devil.

While Saladin is detained in prison, he recognises how role-allocation occurs through ascription of certain characteristics in one way or another or through labelling. This is what happens when the inmates are turned into beasts by the authorities: "'They describe us,' the other whispered solemnly. 'That's all. They have the power of description, and we succumb

³⁶ Ibid: 49.

³⁷ Ibid: 61.

³⁸ Ibid: 63.

to the pictures they construct.”³⁹ The role of beast and devil is attributed to him both in prison and also at the house of the Sufyans’. This process of demonising Saladin is of course a very colonial practice, which turns the foreigner into a dangerous and evil creature. However, a counter-discourse starts to take shape in Saladin’s first successful attempt to reject the role and label of the devil, which is manifested in his violent outburst against Gibreel, who is responsible that Saladin has ended up in places where these role attributions occur. As a result of this outburst, Saladin’s horns diminish. Although this is the first decisive step in his new homeland to resist unwanted identity-constructions, he feels how powerful the descriptions by the others are on him and weakens again for a while in his determination to resist unwanted designations. Instead, he becomes more devilish again by appearance when he wonders if his so-called badness should not be taken at face value: “ ‘I really can’t say what came over me, - but at times I fear I am changing into something, - something one must call *bad*.’ ”⁴⁰ This reflection on change of personality introduces a short discussion on change in general, which briefly explains Ovid’s and Lucretius’ positions on that matter.

So far Saladin seems to have adhered to Lucretius’ philosophy of complete change (acquainted with it through his acting roles) whereby the former person or self needs to die. Sufyan contrasts this position with Ovid’s idea of the presence of a soul that underlies all these visible changes. Ovid’s following comparison seems to be compelling: “ ‘As yielding wax ... is stamped with new designs And changes shape and seems not still the same, Yet is indeed the same, even so our souls ... Are still the same forever, but adopt In their migrations ever-varying forms.’ ”⁴¹ Ovid’s account is naturally in contrast to the one experienced in the world of actors where radical changes occur.

Saladin’s growth in the attic continues while he is unable to resist the ‘truth’-accounts of others: “ ‘Illegal migrant, outlaw king, foul criminal or race-hero, Saladin Chamcha was getting to be true.’ ”⁴² Lucretius’ account now seems to be more convincing than ever to him. He especially believes in the power of fate and of other people on an individual.

However, as soon as Saladin concentrates on the injustice of the people’s role-attribution that turns Gibreel into an angel despite the latter’s quite unangelic deeds while he himself is regarded as the very opposite even though he has not, as Gibreel has, committed numerous betrayals, he effects a lasting change. Saladin becomes fully conscious of possessing the power to reject unwanted roles and this increased awareness enables him to use this power.

³⁹ Ibid: 168.

⁴⁰ Ibid: 276.

⁴¹ Ibid: 276-77.

⁴² Ibid: 288.

This change is shown in his outward re-transformation to an ordinary human being again. He is now

no mythological creature at all, no iconic Thing of horns and hellsbreath, but Mr Saladin Chamcha himself, apparently restored to his old shape, mother-naked but of entirely human aspect and proportions, humanized – is there any option but to conclude? – by the fearsome concentration of his hate.⁴³

In this way, his autonomy manifests itself in the disappearance of his devilish appearance: “What he was rejecting was a portrait of himself and Gibreel as *monstrous*. Monstrous, indeed: the most absurd of ideas.”⁴⁴

Saladin undergoes another learning-process of grasping that being to a great extent independent in his views and actions is not enough to cause a decisive self-development. He abuses his newly gained autonomy over Gibreel by enacting the role of puppeteer when he plays with Gibreel’s feelings, especially with that of jealousy. This drives Gibreel further into a state of insanity and has thus been a destructive use of power that runs counter to the idea of wholeness as the result of a continuous self-development process.

This cruel behaviour of Saladin is triggered by the strong envy he feels towards Gibreel: The latter is liked and appreciated, which he does not even value, while Saladin who longs most of all for receiving such a welcoming and friendly reception by British society, is condemned and despised. His envy is heightened, as he knows that Gibreel and he have a certain bond due to their unusual arrival in England together. In the end, Saladin tries to make up for his mistake. Even though he is not successful in doing so with Gibreel, he manages to make peace with his father and is aware at the end that he has undergone a “process of renewal, of regeneration, that had been the most surprising and paradoxical product of his father’s illness.”⁴⁵

In contrast to Gibreel, Saladin has learned how to differentiate between his identity as an actor and his identity in real life, acknowledging that he is something more than just the sum of his acting roles. He has also learned how to choose his own ‘roles’ in everyday life and thus how to be to a great extent in control of his own life.

Religion in *The Satanic Verses* has a mainly limiting effect on the characters. This becomes particularly clear in Gibreel’s case: He, who has always been convinced of being a firm believer in God, is suddenly assailed by doubt, and breaks with various religious rituals, such

⁴³ Ibid: 294.

⁴⁴ Ibid: 408.

as with the refusal to eat pork, in a very aggressive manner that really is the attitude of spite towards God: “And to prove to himself the non-existence of God, he now stood in the dining-hall of the city’s most famous hotel, with pigs falling out of his face.”⁴⁶

His unconscious expresses this doubt in the form of dreams. The centrality of Gibreel’s dreams in *The Satanic Verses* lends itself to an interpretative approach taken in Western psychology and in Hinduism, which considers the unconscious as a significant part of a person. In the novel, we are presented with dream sequences whose acknowledgement proves to be crucial in order to understand Gibreel’s changing state of mind when being assailed by doubt. The interdependence between dreams and waking life is formally underlined by the use of identical names for characters in Gibreel’s dream world and in the actual world he lives in, such as those of Gibreel and Mishal. Gibreel’s partner, Alleluia, shares her surname, Cone, with the mountain in Gibreel’s dream setting, and the abbreviation of her first name, Allie, closely resembles the name of the main female goddess, Al-Lat, in Gibreel’s dreams. The recitation of verses that cause an enormous stir occurs in Gibreel’s dream about Mahound and in his waking-life when listening to Saladin’s voice. Furthermore, two different characters in different dreams share the same name, Ayesha, which also points out the connectedness of the dreams and justifies a reading of them as sequences.

The structure of dreams clearly resembles that of a drama, showing Gibreel’s situation at the very beginning, his central doubt about the authenticity of the holy words as transmitted by the prophet as the climax in the middle and the possibility of a solution to these doubts at the very end.

Gibreel considers his doubt as a fundamental attack on his conviction and part of his identity and regards it as something evil and destructive. Consequently, he tries to suppress his doubt by struggling against the onset of sleep.⁴⁷ He continually fails to recognise these dreams that reflect his religious doubt as something crucial to every conviction in order not to let the latter develop a static or extremist nature. He tries to disregard the messages that his unconscious sends him at regular intervals. Disregarding them becomes increasingly difficult though and finally this part of his self is just split off. Thus, it is the total neglect of a vital part of his personality (and not its appearance, as Gibreel believes) that is destructive and gains such power to make Gibreel commit suicide. He regards religion as something absolute that should not be confronted with any form of doubt.

⁴⁵ Ibid: 534.

⁴⁶ Ibid: 30.

⁴⁷ Ibid: 82.

Most of the characters in his dreams also have a very limiting and limited conception of what religion is or should be like. Both leaders, Mahound and Hind, in Gibreel's first and third dream use 'religion' to restrict others (unlike Gibreel who mainly imposes restrictions on himself by narrowing down his perspective on religion) by justifying their actions that affect them in the name of religion. "From the beginning men used God to justify the unjustifiable."⁴⁸ This, of course, is both a clear power abuse and a misrepresentation of religious principles. Especially Mahound, whose name is also understood as "the Devil's synonym"⁴⁹ or as a contemptuous designation of Mohammed, is guilty of this. It is Salman the Persian who casts doubt on Mahound's greatness and the unassailability of his words by testing him when he changes the words Mahound dictates him to write. This is not done in order to negate God or the power of religion, but to show the fallibility of persons who speak in the name of religion. It shows that prophets are only humans themselves. The justified doubt that is shed on the source of Mahound's verses should be seen as a possibility to enlarge and enrich one's mental horizon and views. Instead, this doubt is regarded to be devilish (as it undermines Mahound's elevated status and power) by Mahound and his followers so that they become the 'satanic verses'. It is illuminating that an outsider, who has the necessary distance to the society he enters to be conscious of discrimination and to introduce a new perspective, expresses doubt and criticism in this way.

Censorship is then imposed on both Salman's and Baal's verses. Baal, who questions the idea of submission, is even sentenced to be beheaded.⁵⁰ Mahound's religion is thus revealed as a dictatorial regime that does not allow freedom of speech, a conception of religion that is mirrored in the radical form of Islam embraced by Hyder for political ends in *Shame*. In the face of the events following the publication of the *Satanic Verses*, it seems almost as if Rushdie anticipated the fate of the novel and his own treatment by some radical authorities. Salman brings up some issues that he finds discriminating in the revelation and also the doubtful way of the revelation process itself: He utters strong criticism of Mahound's discrimination of women in the name of Allah: Women are supposed to submit to men's wishes, the latter being allowed to have several wives at once. It is suggested how Mahound introduces this rule to justify his own promiscuity.⁵¹ Hind's religion with its female goddesses is an attempt to attack the patriarchal character of Mahound's religion. It is also an attempt to replace monotheism by polytheism, which is supposed to be more complex, as it comprises

⁴⁸ Ibid: 95.

⁴⁹ Ibid: 93.

⁵⁰ Ibid: 392.

⁵¹ Ibid: 366.

more elements. “This is the world into which Mahound has brought his message: one one one. Amid such multiplicity, it sounds like a dangerous word.”⁵² Hind’s religion thus seems to represent Hinduism, but a form of Hinduism that fosters extremism and that has thus become alienated from Hinduism’s original ideas: it is, like Mahound’s religion, intolerant towards other faiths, and abuses power in the form of oppression on a regular basis. ““Between Allah and the Three there can be no peace. I don’t want it. I want the fight. To the death; that is the kind of idea I am.””⁵³

The disagreements and hostility between Mahound’s and Hind’s disciples are thus likely to stand for the rifts between so many Muslims and Hindus in India who embrace exclusive notions of religion.

It is typical of such an intolerant and extremist form of religion that it does not allow changes to occur and remains widely static, a characteristic that is exemplified in the person of Hind herself who does not seem to become older or look in any way altered.⁵⁴ The rejection of change is of course a perversion of Hinduism’s central principles, which emphasise evolution, the integration of new aspects and viewpoints and does not allow for dogmatism.

At the end, Mahound has introduced so many rules that there is hardly any area left in life that is not regulated by them: “It was as if no aspect of human existence was to be left unregulated, free.”⁵⁵ In order not to lose his followers, Mahound temporarily adopts the three main goddesses of Hind’s religion for his religion as well and then repudiates them later on when the first difficulties arise explaining to the people that he has mistaken Satan’s voice for the voice of God. Again, he refuses responsibility for his own actions.

The revelation process is also presented as a doubtful one by Salman, especially as regards the source of Mahound’s revelation. Mahound claims all the time that he gets his inspiration from Gibreel, who conveys God’s messages to him. The original source of his revelations to the people is thus described to be definitely a divine one. Salman repudiates this source, as he has observed that the order of ‘revelation’ is incorrect here: “It would have been different, Salman complained to Baal, if Mahound took up his positions after receiving the revelation from Gibreel; but no, he just laid down the law and the angel would confirm it afterwards.”⁵⁶ He guesses that Mahound, in bringing the revelation to people, expresses in this way his own desires. Gibreel is the personification of hitherto mainly unconscious desires in Mahound and can thus also be called Mahound’s inner voice. The latter has already admitted this in a way

⁵² Ibid: 103.

⁵³ Ibid: 121.

⁵⁴ Ibid: 369.

⁵⁵ Ibid: 364.

⁵⁶ Ibid: 365.

earlier on when he tells Salman: ““You know, Salman, that I have learned how to *listen*... . Often, when Gibreel comes, it’s as if he knows what’s in my heart. It feels to me, most times, as if he comes from within my heart: from within my deepest places, from my soul.””⁵⁷

Here, Salman shows again that Mahound is not infallible and that the process of revelation is a long and complicated one.

Both Mahound and Hind have created something that they call religion, but which is really their specific form of power abuse by imposing restrictions on people. These manmade religions run completely counter to the idea of self-development and to that of the religious leaders and their people.

In Gibreel’s second dream, the Imam as religious leader and Ayesha are also to a certain extent presented as polarizations in religious practice.⁵⁸ Like Hind, the Imam in his secluded world yearns to live in a timeless world and is, as a result, against progress and science. He believes firmly that “the sum of knowledge was complete on the day Allah finished his revelation to Mahound.”⁵⁹ Spiritual development in such an account is made impossible, of course. His archenemy is Ayesha, who stands for secularism and the Western ruling world – America, in particular. The Imam sees no other way to consolidate his power than by ordering the killing of Ayesha in the name of faith.

Gibreel’s third and fifth dreams deal with extremist persuasions as well. The girl, Ayesha, who suffers from epilepsy, also uses ‘religion’ for her own purposes, claiming to be inspired by the Archangel Gibreel. It is likely that her motive in doing so is to draw attention to herself. The strict religious principles that she proclaims cause Mirza’s wife Mishal to go into purdah again and give up her former life as a modern young woman. Furthermore, Ayesha predicts Mishal (rightly) that she has breast cancer, which causes Mishal to attribute to her a quasi-divine status. She therefore believes Ayesha’s statement that this was a test of faith and that god would save her if she followed his instructions. Gibreel, however, does not believe in the divine source of Ayesha’s announcement: “But not his; never his original material. – Then whose? Who is whispering in their ears, enabling them to move mountains, halt clocks, diagnose disease?”⁶⁰ When she is later on asked what form Gibreel’s revelation to her takes, her answer is merely ridiculed by some doubters who believe that she has made up her answer on the spot.⁶¹ But she soon has many disciples around her who interpret anything as a sign that would justify their belief in Ayesha and in her preaching. In this instance, the butterflies

⁵⁷ Ibid: 106.

⁵⁸ Ibid: 205ff.

⁵⁹ Ibid: 210.

⁶⁰ Ibid: 234.

⁶¹ Ibid: 497.

that follow Ayesha everywhere are seen as a proof of her supernatural powers. They are thus, in a similar way as in Rushdie's travelogue, taken as a revelation or epiphany. Everything Ayesha does on this pilgrimage to Mecca goes against reason, but Ayesha cannot take this criticism. Mirza, who is the counter-figure to Ayesha, is strongly opposed to such a way of exercising religion. Like Salman in two other dreams Gibreel has, he rejects to adopt such a fundamentalist as well as superstitious belief, which – in this instance – proves to confirm his suspicion of the pilgrimage being a suicidal journey. Mirza's understanding of religion seems to be a sound one when he calls the mystical experience ““a subjective, not an objective truth.””⁶² He senses that Ayesha abuses her power and sees this confirmed in several instances in which she just appears as a spoilt little girl: “... those were the bad-tempered glances of a young girl who was no longer sure of getting her own way.”⁶³

Mirza's gloomiest anticipations are confirmed when the pilgrims finally walk, under Ayesha's supervision, into the sea and drown there.⁶⁴ However, although he insists on his rejection of this absurd 'faith' as lived by Ayesha and the pilgrims, he wonders at the end whether the pilgrims did not experience a deeply religious moment when entering the sea nevertheless. This belief is the result of being told by the other survivors that they have all witnessed the parting of the waves in front of Ayesha and the other pilgrims that died, but that the waters closed just in front of them. Thus, he considers it likely that they shared a moment of spiritual enlightenment. Finally, while dying, Mirza himself has a deeply spiritual, in his case very mystical, experience that gives him peace at the end: “His body split apart from his adam's-apple to his groin ... and at the moment of their opening the waters parted, and they walked to Mecca across the bed of the Arabian Sea.”⁶⁵

It is this kind of mystical (that means deeply personal) religious experience that contributes to a person's wholeness by bringing happiness and peace along with it. This experience is in strong contrast to the other extreme forms of belief in Gibreel's dreams. The latter hinder any form of self-development and restrict others due to their limiting nature, whereas the personal religious experience as experienced by Mirza is a liberating and enriching one.

In a similar way, this subjective religious experience is also shown in the death scene of Saladin's father, Changez. Saladin himself turns from religious belief almost in disgust when his father, who had been – like Rushdie's father - a moderate Muslim, suddenly started to turn towards an increased observation of religious rules.⁶⁶ The young Saladin made the mistake of

⁶² Ibid: 239.

⁶³ Ibid: 482.

⁶⁴ Ibid: 503.

⁶⁵ Ibid: 507.

⁶⁶ Ibid: 48.

elevating his father to an almost godlike entity from which only disappointment could result – a disappointment that was turned into a rejection of not only religious figures in general, but also of religious experiences on the whole. To see his father dying makes a profound impression on Saladin however, and seems to be a moment of enlightenment: While his father seems to experience some form of deep terror first, his features finally relax into an expression reflecting peace and happiness at the moment of death itself. Saladin is puzzled by these expressions on his father's face and cannot find a rational explanation: "*What did he see? Salahuddin kept thinking. Why the horror? And, whence that final smile?*"⁶⁷

This suggests that his father has had an unworldly experience, an experience that is so personal that it cannot be fully shared with another person.

On the whole we can see how Gibreel repeatedly fails in the several aspects mentioned above to change and to let him into a process of self-development. The reason for this are the limitations he imposes on himself, which are not questioned by his partner, and, in the case of role expectations resulting from his profession, those limitations he lets others impose on him. The forced suppression of doubt and various other characteristics of his personality leads to the latter's disintegration and finally to suicide.

Saladin, however, has clearly undergone a learning process in the course of the novel. He has managed to integrate more characteristics of his personality and has thus gained a broader perspective as well as a greater inner balance and independence.

⁶⁷ Ibid: 532.

III.3.6. The restoration of the imagination and of the creative impulse in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*

As mentioned above, the children's novel, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, can certainly be seen as a response to the scathing criticism *The Satanic Verses* has received, the novel's main theme being the defence of the products of the imagination. The novel shows how the imagination is a – if not *the* – major factor in making us whole. The way Rushdie displays this is by taking a predominantly psychological - Jungian - approach, concentrating on the way man, especially their psyche, is constituted. At the same time, important ideas of Hinduism can also be found in the novel, which I will also point out.

Rushdie's choice of genre is certainly of importance here as well, as it shows how crucial it was to him to reach as many people with his message as he could: Although it can be seen as a novel written for children, it has certainly also been written for adults. To attract such an extended readership in respect to age is something that is very rarely achieved. I claim that Rushdie has achieved a kind of complexity in the novel's narrative that has in this form not been present in his previous novels. This kind of complexity of the narrative is the result of addressing readers on two different levels, namely on one where the words can be taken literally, and then also on one where we have to take the words as symbols or metaphors. We could draw a link here with Jung's objective and subjective levels of dream interpretation. The former one leads to a reading of the novel as a kind of fairy-story, whereas the latter requires more interpretation and should lead to a better understanding of ourselves as persons. Furthermore, the choice of using the story-telling tradition of the East as it can be found in the *Tales from the Thousand and One Nights*, which are explicitly referred to several times in the novel, is also one that appeals to both, adults and children. In addition, Rushdie chooses the device of using at the beginning a setting in the real world and then soon enters a magical world from there. This device is very popular among children. Adults might find it interesting that the real world at the beginning of the novel is already interspersed with magic elements, such as the place names. This close relationship between reality and magic or fiction also lies at the very heart of Hinduism. Rushdie thus borrows elements from Eastern culture and creates a story, which at the same time – like the passages on Gibreel's dreams in *The Satanic Verses* – easily lends itself to psychoanalytic approaches, which have become popular in the West.

The nature of the imagination in the story-telling by Rashid Khalifa is displayed in an ambivalent way at the beginning of the story. The ambivalence is shown in the bynames that

are attributed to Rashid and which are opposite in nature: His admirers call him “Rashid the Ocean of Notions”¹, whereas his adversaries call him the “Shah of Blah”². In the first instance, storytelling is evaluated in a very positive way, suggesting that it implies wisdom and entails an enlargement of the mind. The second label aims to classify Rashid as someone who talks nonsense and sees storytelling as a pointless activity.

In the context of names and bynames, it should be noted that the names of Rashid Khalifa and his son Haroun are based on the name of the fifth and most famous Abbasid Caliph, Harun al-Rashid. ‘Al-Rashid’ is a honorific title³ whose significance can be compared with the sense of awe with which Rashid’s admirers in Rushdie’s novels approach him as displayed in the above-mentioned byname ‘Rashid the Ocean of Notions’. Rushdie’s choice of the figure of the Caliph as the historical person on which he based his main characters for this novel and which is immortalised in *Tales from the Thousand and One Nights* can be explained when one has a look at the aspects of power and art: The Caliph’s power, which was put to just use during his reign, can be compared to Rashid’s narrative powers, which are also regarded to have a decisive and beneficial impact on the people around him. The fact that the Caliph gave great encouragement to learning, poetry and music is mirrored in Rashid’s conscientious pursuit of regular story-telling activities.

In addition, many of both the characters’ and the place names in the novel are derived from Hindustani words, which describe the nature of who or what they are such as the place of Cup, which translates as quiet or the character Mali, who is the gardener.⁴

The novel shows how the influence of the environment, which is shown in the labelling of a person, proves to be a decisive one on the imagination: Rashid with his wife Soraya and his son Haroun have hitherto been the only happy people in town. This circumstance can be explained by Rashid’s storytelling powers and the support he gets from his family, Haroun regarding him as a magician. The Khalifa family values art and creativity very highly so that they seem to experience self-fulfilment or, in Hindu terminology, *rasa*, which is transcendence achieved through aesthetic experience. However, their neighbour, Mr Sengupta, who is one of Rashid’s adversaries, tries to undermine their attitude towards creativity and temporarily succeeds in doing so. This is shown firstly in Soraya’s loss of belief in stories, which finally causes her to leave her husband, doubting and then rejecting an important part of their love relationship.

¹ Rushdie, Salman: *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*. 1990. Granta: London, 1991: 15.

² Ibid: 15.

³ “Harun al-Rashid”. *Wikipedia*. 07 Sep 2006. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harun_al-Rashid: 4.

⁴ Rushdie. *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*: 217-18.

As a result of this event, Haroun finds it hard to keep his inner balance any longer. In actual fact, he is from then on not able any longer to focus on something for longer than eleven minutes at a time, eleven being the time when Soraya left them and when also the clock stopped.

The description of Haroun's inability to concentrate for longer than eleven minutes is a magical element, but mirrors a real event. By adopting Magic Realism as a way of writing here, the message that is conveyed is much more emphasised due to Magic Realism's rather striking nature: It shows how devastating the consequences of Mr Sengupta's influence really are. The latter's influence also lies at the bottom of Rashid's decreasing belief in stories, which is best shown in his failure to tell stories when he is requested to do so at a performance.⁵

Rushdie shows in the following how the only way for Rashid to get his creativity back is to re-establish the connection between consciousness and certain parts of the unconscious. This is undertaken by the exploration of his psyche and in particular his unconscious. This exploration takes on symbolic form in his and Haroun's voyage to the moon Kahani. This moon consists of a bright and a dark side and an interim zone that is called the twilight zone. The nature of the moon can be said to represent the structure of the psyche. Alternatively, it might more specifically be the unconscious part of a person's (here Rashid's) psyche or even the unconscious as such, being thus not limited to one individual.

The approach of interpreting Kahani as a person's psyche leads to a distinction between Chup as the unconscious part and Gup as the conscious part of a person and the twilight zone would be the area where the two of them intermingle. It would only be logical to represent consciousness as being suffused with brightness, as it contains the contents that are actually known to a person – contents a person is aware of having, whereas the unconscious contains elements that the person is not aware of having – contents that lie in the dark so to speak. Regarding the moon Kahani as the unconscious as such, the bright side of the moon refers to persons whose relation to the unconscious is a positive and productive one in that it leads to the development of the imagination and thus to creativity. Persons who have a negative, rather unproductive way of dealing with their unconscious would therefore be situated on the dark side of Kahani. They would not acknowledge certain contents of their psyche, but suppress them as soon as they try to make themselves heard. Nothing of value issues from such an attitude towards the unconscious.

⁵ Ibid: 26.

However, it will be the interpretation of Kahani as a symbol of the unconscious of one person that is the one I will mainly focus on in my approach. The bright side of the moon mirrors the contents of the unconscious that are integrated into a person's psyche and that are in an exchange with conscious contents. It is this interaction between the contents that results in the emergence of the imagination. There are energy processes at work that give birth to something new, namely creativity. As light – both the sun's light as well as artificial light – is also a result of energy processes, it is reasonable to show this creative part of the unconscious as being bright in nature. The dark side of Kahani is then constituted of the unconscious parts of a person that do not interact with conscious contents at all. There is no energy flow present here, which explains the absence of light. The contents remain more or less as they are, thus achieving a static nature. The twilight zone would then be the zone where only a few of the conscious and unconscious contents meet. These seem to interact in a superficial manner only, which is shown in their production of a very dim light.

The fact that both, Haroun and Rashid, undertake this journey into the unconscious can mean either that both of them have to re-establish the connection between the different parts of their psyche after having at least partly lost it, or it alludes to a kind of therapeutic relationship that evolves between them. The latter can be explained by the fact that Haroun decides to help his father to regain his former happiness, which can be seen as an act of deep filial love that involves kindness and concern about bringing about what is best for the other person. In order to find happiness again it is not enough that Haroun explores his own psyche as suggested, but that he goes beyond this preliminary stage and tries to explore the workings of Rashid's psyche. This is the way psychoanalysis / psychotherapy works, which seems here also to be regarded as an efficient means of helping another person to (re)gain inner balance and as an important step in a person's self-development.

The journey into the unconscious and the element of help and support as shown in Haroun's attitude towards his father also ties in with the Hindu concept of moksha: not only can the journey to Kahani be regarded as a an individual's search for greater self-consciousness, but the ethical component of establishing close contact with another person, which is required to reach self-fulfilment or moksha is also present in Haroun's supportive behaviour.

Again, we are confronted with various possible meanings and thus led to come up continuously with alternative interpretations so that the cycle of interpretation never ends and the possible meanings seem to be endless. This intentionally used strategy by the author does not only show us how semiotic processes as literary devices work, but also – and in this context more importantly – illuminate a constructive form of psychoanalysis that is based on a

complex understanding of the human psyche: Haroun's and Rashid's stay on the moon Kahani seems to be taken out of a dream, which is especially obvious in the fantastic creatures they meet there. Everything on the moon seems to be of a dreamlike quality and can thus be legitimately interpreted in the same way as dreams are. Due to the richness of dream contents, one interpretation only can never be enough to grasp the full meaning of the symbols employed in the dream and must always remain reductive. Rushdie uses this way of trying to understand more of the complex nature of things, not just in the observation of dreams, but on a much grander scale. He does this by inviting the reader to enter the narrative's hermeneutic circle. Fixed, one-sided meanings have thus, like in the previously presented form of dream analysis, to be instantly dismissed. It shows us that there is never just one truth-value existent in things or events.

Similarly, Hinduism favours openness towards different viewpoints and interpretations and claims that there are various ways of reaching self-fulfilment.

It is significant that Haroun and Rashid have to enter an ocean on their journey, water being an old symbol of the unconscious, which they enter. This correlates with the Hindu notion of the ocean as a significant symbol that captures the options of creative activity. The ocean is called "*the Ocean of the Streams of Story*"⁶, which shows that the products of the imagination are symbolised in these story streams. Rashid and Haroun first of all learn about the source of these creations: They are shown as emerging from a water tap, which is more precisely called the "Story Tap"⁷, in extremely versatile combinations of conscious and unconscious contents. However, the exact nature of the imagination's source and the way it works cannot be revealed to us, even if our analysis of it /ourselves is a very thorough one. There are obviously limitations to our knowledge of the psychic constitution. This insight is expressed in the frequently repeated expression "Process Too Complicated To Explain"⁸. Similarly to psychoanalysis, Hinduism also conceives man's personality as complex.

The fact that the connection between Rashid's consciousness and his unconscious is not in proper working order any more is symbolised in the Chupwalas' attempt of closing the tap by constructing and using a plug that exactly fits the shape of the source of the story waters: "Its edges were raggedly and uneven, however, because it was being constructed to fit precisely into the Wellspring, or Source of Stories, and the two shapes, Plug and Wellspring, had to be a perfect match."⁹ Haroun knows that he has to prevent precisely this from happening: "In

⁶ Ibid: 51.

⁷ Ibid: 55.

⁸ Ibid: 59.

⁹ Ibid: 167.

that moment Haroun understood that if he could prevent the Source from being Plugged, everything would eventually be all right again.”¹⁰

Later on, Haroun sees how the source releases the story waters and is fascinated by their nature: “... the glowing flow of pure, unpolluted stories came bubbling up from the very heart of Kahani. There were so many Streams of Story, of so many different colours, all pouring out of the Source at once, that it looked like a huge underwater fountain of shining white light.”¹¹ It is already his first impression of this great and colourful ocean that makes him aware of the richness and complexity of the imagination’s products. He sees a “liquid tapestry of breathtaking complexity.”¹² The variety of different stories and the fact that they change all the time show that men can express different aspects of their selves in that way and underline how self-expression (which always implies at the same time the process of self-development) is always liable to change and never anything static. Storytelling is thus compared to juggling where you equally have to control and coordinate various items that continuously change their position. ““You keep a lot of different tales in the air, and juggle them up and down, and if you’re good you don’t drop any. So maybe juggling is a kind of storytelling, too.””¹³ The stories as products of the human imagination thus reflect the complexity of human nature, and the happiness and enthusiasm of the inhabitants of Gup shows the rewards of expressing this complexity. They are obviously in harmony with themselves and display an inner balance. This is what Haroun hopes to achieve with Rashid, namely that ““the magic of the story can restore his spirits.””¹⁴

The way the imagination works and art is created is described as well: It is a merging of old and new ideas and stories so that old stories are changed by adding new ideas to them. This is what keeps them alive: “... , to become new versions of themselves, to join up with other stories and so become yet other stories; so that unlike a library of books, the Ocean of the Streams of Story was much more than a storeroom of yarns. It was not dead but alive.”¹⁵

The changing nature of the imagination and of its products should ensure that none of them becomes absolute. Rushdie again makes us aware of the fact that there is no one absolute truth, as this would always be one-sided and imperative and would strongly contradict the multiplicity of ideas and associated meanings. A questioning of a tale is also essentially rather positive than negative, as it equally tries to ensure that it does not reach an absolute status.

¹⁰ Ibid: 168.

¹¹ Ibid: 167.

¹² Ibid: 72.

¹³ Ibid: 109.

¹⁴ Ibid: 72.

¹⁵ Ibid: 72.

“‘Any story worth its salt can handle a little shaking up!’”¹⁶ The fact that the ancient stories are increasingly neglected shows how people disregard in particular what they could find deep down in their unconscious. This leads us to the archetypes, which are the images used in the ancient stories and which are also a basis for the new stories. Most people are not aware of the archetypes’ existence and thus reject the idea of them together with that of the collective unconscious where they are located. The archetypes are the ones that are left behind first. Their importance in being an inheritance shared by all mankind is ignored.

“‘Nothing comes from nothing, Thieftlet; no story comes from nowhere; new stories are born from old – it is the new combinations that make them new.’”¹⁷

The various ideas of the imagination are symbolised in the many mouths of the Plentimaw Fish, which express these ideas in their almost endless talk. Again, the complexity of the human psyche as expressed in the imagination is displayed. It is striking how the Plentimaw Fish always appear in pairs and speak in twos as well. This possibly suggests the need in every human person of finding harmony in a partner who might be able to help them to fulfil more of their potential. Furthermore, it points out the human need for dialogue and understanding of other viewpoints. The fact that their talk is all perfectly synchronised suggests that none of them tries to gain power over the other and that each story is considered to be of equal importance, which can be interpreted once again as the tolerant and open-minded stance taken by Hinduism, which also favours – like the Plentimaw Fish – a kind of unity in multiplicity. They use old stories and try to create new ones of them in the way described above. However, their ability to talk and create has recently been diminished, which is due to the influence of the terrible Khatam-Shud who reigns over the dark part of Kahani. This is not the only negative development in the land of Gup though: The ocean has been subject to “vile poison”¹⁸ that has been injected into it. This poison has caused the stories to go all wrong: “‘Something, or somebody, has been putting filth into the Ocean. And obviously if filth gets into the stories, they go wrong.’”¹⁹ The Plentimaw Fish’s decreasing ability to invent new stories and the new negative twist the old stories undergo is obviously the result of Rashid’s increasing distrust in the power of stories, which is in return the repercussion of Mr Sengupta’s negative opinion of Rashid’s stories. If we take the approach of interpreting the moon Kahani as the unconscious in general, we can interpret the twisted stories and the already partly successful attempt to silence the Plentimaw Fish as a dictator’s

¹⁶ Ibid: 79.

¹⁷ Ibid: 86.

¹⁸ Ibid: 91.

¹⁹ Ibid: 75.

or a fundamentalist's (and this includes critics who take an extremist line) attempt to forbid certain thoughts and ideas, which is a break with the legally manifested right to freedom of speech. This, of course, is an allusion to what has occurred after Rushdie's publication of *The Satanic Verses*. Not only was his right to express himself freely taken away from him by condemning his questioning of certain beliefs, but his sentences and their meaning were also twisted round so that they became something completely different from what the author said and meant in the first place. The increasing amount of poison that is released into the ocean shows the increasing influence of such dictatorial voices and the disastrous consequences this has on a person's imagination and therefore on the complexity of their personality.

'In the old days the Cultmaster, Khattam-Shud, preached hatred only towards stories and fancies and dreams; but now he has become more severe, and opposes Speech for any reason at all. In Chup City the schools and law-courts and theatres are all closed now, unable to operate because of the Silence Laws.'²⁰

The subtle resistance Rashid shows on one level of interpretation and the author's attempt to correct falsified accounts of his stories on another interpretative level is expressed in the figure of the Floating Gardener. He is the one who tries to restore the imagination to its original form: "Untwisting twisted Story Streams. Also unlooping same. Weeding. In short: Gardening. ... Floating Gardeners, you can say, are like the hairdressers of the Sea of Stories. Brush, clean, wash, condition."²¹

In order to stop this negative development, Haroun and Rashid have to go to the source of what caused these changes. This implies going to the Land of Chup and confronting the person of Khattam-Shud. Before they enter Chup, they imagine the place to be almost the direct opposite to what Gup is like, namely "a place of shadows, of books that wear padlocks and tongues torn out; of secret conspiracies and poison rings."²² This is, of course, mainly the Cultmaster's doing: It was he who introduced the "Cult of Dumbness or Muteness, whose followers swear vows of lifelong silence to show their devotion."²³ This cult resembles a fanatic religion, which becomes especially obvious in the adoration of the gigantic idol Bezaban, which shows clear similarities to the statue of Jupiter in Sartre's play *The Flies*. The fanaticism can especially be observed in the cult members' readiness to sacrifice a human being. Instead of fanaticism, freedom of expression and individuality should be restored. "And is not the Power of Speech the greatest Power of all? Then surely it must be exercised

²⁰ Ibid: 101.

²¹ Ibid: 83.

²² Ibid: 102.

²³ Ibid: 101.

to the full?”²⁴ However, even in this case, we soon notice that the Land of Chup with its darkness cannot just be seen in merely negative terms, but that its meaning must be a much more complex one. “Dark, my sirs, has its fascinations: mystery, strangeness, romance”²⁵ Haroun in actual fact tires of the endless daylight he is surrounded by in Gup. He recognises that there must be a change of day and night so that real changes can occur. The Land of Gup thus cannot in this form, as it had first seemed, be the place where people should aspire to be.

This suggests that the suppressed aspects of the psyche that are considered to be ‘dark’ and that are symbolised in the Chupwalas should enter a discourse with other aspects (symbolised in the inhabitants of Gup). It is possible to draw a parallel here to Hinduism’s demand for the interplay of opposites and the acceptance of ambiguity’s vital status. The entering of these darker and deeper regions of the human psyche is described by the mazelike and therefore confusing surroundings Haroun now finds himself in. The difficulties of exploring the deeper layers of the unconscious are acknowledged: “So it’s a *complicated* palace and we’re a *little* lost”²⁶. The great efforts that have to be made also cause Haroun to be at least temporarily discouraged in the psyche’s exploration.²⁷ This is again also something that frequently happens in the therapeutic process when either patient or therapist or both of them wonder if they make any progress in their work. When entering Chup, however, they discover more severe consequences of the poison, which are really the negative effects of a person’s suppressed aspects: “The poisons had had the effect of muting the colours of the Story Streams, dulling them all down towards greyness ... Worse yet, the Ocean in these parts had lost much of its warmth.”²⁸ The vivacity as well as the multiple characteristics of a person can thus not show and are finally almost completely stifled: “The waters of the Ocean were growing thicker by the mile, thicker and colder; many of the Streams of Story were full of a dark, slow-moving substance, that looked like molasses.”²⁹

On further exploration of Chup, they are struck by coming across a shadow warrior who fights his own shadow with a blade. This shadow is the side that contains the darker aspects of the warrior, which lie hidden in the unconscious and remain there most of the time. It is also an aspect of Rashid’s shadow, as are the other shadows of the characters they meet at a later point of time. The fight between the warrior and the shadow is a confrontation of the person’s

²⁴ Ibid: 119.

²⁵ Ibid: 103.

²⁶ Ibid: 107.

²⁷ Ibid: 121.

²⁸ Ibid: 122.

²⁹ Ibid: 140.

consciousness with these darker aspects. The fact that the shadow has a will of his own over which the warrior has no immediate control relates to the fact that the shadow lies in the unconscious part of a person, which is not instantly accessible to consciousness. This would probably not have been revealed to Rashid, had he not made the effort to explore his unconscious. Also, taking one of the other interpretative approaches, most other people cannot recognise the necessity of coming to terms with their shadows by dealing with the nature of them:

The shadow was attached to the warrior at the feet, but other than that seemed to be entirely free. It was as though its life in a land of darkness, of being a shadow concealed in shadows, had given it powers undreamt of by the shadows of a conventionally lit world. It was an awesome sight.³⁰

The shadows in the conventionally lit world that are mentioned here are really parts of the shadow a person agrees to deal with, whereas the shadow fought with here seemed from the beginning of a more negative nature so that it had to be suppressed and thus gained power. The danger now lies in it possibly causing a complex to emerge so that the shadow warrior (and thus Rashid) would be a victim to a certain extent to its workings. However, this is not the case with this particular shadow, as the shadow does not dominate the warrior and they are both of about equal strength. “No matter what tricks his shadow played, the warrior was its equal.” Again, it is emphasised that this struggle with the so-called negative part in oneself is not something to be rejected, but something of value, which is expressed in the beauty and grace the encounter between the shadow and the shadow warrior is described: “... Haroun began to think of their combat as a dance danced in perfect silence, because the music was playing inside the dancers’ heads.”³¹ The completely opposite-coloured irises and pupils of the shadow-warrior also show that they deal with another part of a person’s psyche, which is however as important as a person’s consciousness or the more pleasant aspects of the unconscious. Indeed, it turns out that terms like good and bad are therefore inappropriate in this context:

... because the dance of the Shadow Warrior showed him that silence had its own grace and beauty (just as speech could be graceless and ugly); and that Action could be as noble as Words; and that creatures of darkness could be as lovely as the children of light.³²

³⁰ Ibid: 124.

³¹ Ibid: 124.

³² Ibid: 125.

Their eyes' colours of black and white that are here reversed reminds of the yin and yang symbol, which shows very well the interaction between consciousness and the unconscious or between higher and deeper levels of the unconscious. None of them can be strictly separated from the other for a long time so that no exchange between their contents takes place at all – at least not without demanding its price. ““Opposites attract, as they say.””³³ Furthermore, neither of these parts should completely take over and thereby suppress the other part. In case of the Chupwalas, the unpleasant unconscious contents seem to move very much to the centre of their personality due to having been suppressed for such a long time. This is why they are described as having eyes that ““are the wrong way round, like a film negative that somebody forgot to print.””³⁴ The inhabitants of Chup are therefore completely dependent on the whims of their shadows, which try to start a life on their own: “ ‘ ... in the Land of Chup, a Shadow very often has a stronger personality than the Person, or Self, or Substance to whom or to which it is joined! ... So peace with the Chupwalas means Peace with their Shadows, too.’”³⁵ The Shadow is furthermore understood as being transforming in character. Haroun notices the importance of their interaction: ““They put on opposite acts, so nobody knows what they really feel; which may of course be a third thing completely.””³⁶ Haroun becomes gradually aware of the fact that restoring the imagination on Kahani – that means in himself and Rashid – means being an active Shadow Warrior: ““In a way, you’ll be a Shadow Warrior, too.””³⁷ The Shadow Warrior also uses a different language, namely the Language of Gesture. This is also due to the fact that he is mainly influenced by his suppressed, unconscious parts. It is an inadequacy on both sides, on Haroun’s as well as on the Shadow Warrior’s, that they cannot understand what the other wants to say. Prince Bolo’s derogative way of speaking about the Warrior’s language only shows his own inability in understanding the language of the unconscious’ deeper layers, but not the Shadow Warrior’s stupidity. In addition, it also points out the problem of non-understanding between people who speak different languages, which also suggests the difficulties of translation. It can never fully restore the meaning of the original version. At the same time though it can create something new.

In this Language of Gestures, the Shadow Warrior describes Khattam-Shud as someone whose personality has been taken over by his Shadow. Even worse, Khattam-Shud has become a split personality, which happens when a complex manifests itself over a long period

³³ Ibid: 125.

³⁴ Ibid: 125.

³⁵ Ibid: 132.

³⁶ Ibid: 135.

³⁷ Ibid: 138.

of time. “... that is, he has separated himself from his Shadow! He goes about in the darkness, entirely Shadowless, and his Shadow goes wherever it wishes.”³⁸

The journey they undertake to get to him is a journey that goes into the extreme depths of the unconscious. It is depicted in a very similar way as Kurtz’s journey in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* is described, namely as going “deep inside the heart of the weed-jungle”³⁹. In Conrad’s novel, it was also the depth of the human psyche that was explored in the context of colonialism. At the end of all this, there sits someone who has a lot of power and goes to extremes in his dictatorial behaviour towards others. Khattam-Shud’s power is hard to estimate due to the disintegration of personality. This makes the journey that Haroun and his fellow travellers undertake much more laborious and difficult and causes delays in their progress. This is symbolically shown when they are caught in a web of night. Again we see that it takes a long time to restore a damaged personality to a more balanced state again, which also explains the long process psychoanalysis normally takes or the lengthy course to reach moksha. An image is created of the person that sits at the other end of their journey, which is that of a mysterious and imposing person who exercises a kind of deadly influence on his environment: “The oldest stories ever made, and look at them now. We let them rot, we abandoned them, long before this poisoning. ... No colour, no life, no nothing. Spoilt!”⁴⁰ At their final location of their journey they find “a colossal ship, a vast ark-like vessel standing at anchor in the clearing.”⁴¹ This image reminds one clearly of Noah’s ark, which promises rescue. Thus, the discovery of the source of a person’s disintegration is at the same time a promise of rescuing the person and restoring them to their original state.

The disintegrated person is also symbolised in the temporarily disintegrated and therefore non-functioning brain of the Hoopoe. The repair-work that is done on it again points towards the psychotherapeutic process. The ship as the complex, which is responsible for the disintegration of the personality due to it not having been treated, is described as being artificially dark, thus showing that it indeed is a disorder in the normal functioning of the psyche. The black poisons that are released from the ship are the negative effects the complex has on the personality by preventing the development of creativity: “The cauldrons were brim-full of the black poisons that were murdering the Ocean of Stories – poisons in their most potent, pure, undiluted form.”⁴² The ship must be shadowy, as the suppressed shadowy parts are at the root of its (that means the complex’s) emergence. The Chupwalas as part of

³⁸ Ibid: 133.

³⁹ Ibid: 142.

⁴⁰ Ibid: 146.

⁴¹ Ibid: 148.

⁴² Ibid: 151.

the unconscious that are strongly influenced by the complex do not seem to be of any kind of impressive nature, but just some mechanical items that follow a certain set of given rules. Finally, the Cultmaster, Khattam-Shud himself, shows to be a very inconspicuous person: “‘*That’s him? That’s him?*’ Haroun thought, with a kind of disappointment. ‘This little mingling fellow? What an anticlimax.’”⁴³ This suggests that dictatorial persons do not objectively have more power than others, but that this power is attributed to them by individuals who are intimidated by the farce they put on. It is also shown in Haroun’s disillusionment with the Cultmaster’s voice, which he assumed to be of an almighty power: “... but spoke clearly, in a dull, inflexionless voice, a voice nobody would ever have remembered if it hadn’t belonged to so powerful and terrifying a Personage.”⁴⁴ The striking self-contradictions in the Cultmaster indicate his disintegrated personality. He is apparently adverse to speech. However, he speaks himself: “‘Isn’t it typical ... the Grand Panjandrum himself does exactly what he wants to forbid everyone else to do. His followers sew up their lips and he talks and talks like billy-o.’”⁴⁵ This behaviour is not unusual in dictator-figures whose behaviour just tries to cover their own deficiencies. The fact that they now deal with Khattam-Shud’s shadow shows how the Shadow-part of him has now completely taken over and cannot in return be controlled any more by the rest of Khattam-Shud’s personality. Haroun now discovers that Khattam-Shud is no one but Mr. Sengupta himself. This discovery means that he gets to the root of his and Rashid’s negative change that prevents them from being productive. In order to halt this change and restore their former balance this negative element, which is in actual fact the result of Mr. Sengupta’s corrupting influence, has to be effectively dealt with. The corruption lies in his arguments that he gives for his command to others to keep silent and especially not to engage in storytelling: it is allegedly the inability to discern the truth and the real state of affairs and instead to mix truth and the imaginative up with each other. It is obvious how the true nature and aim of the imagination and its potential is here not recognised and therefore misrepresented. The other one of Khattam-Shud’s arguments has already been rejected by me: it is the one stating the lack of necessity and also the inefficiency of stories: The argument is invalid insofar as the creation of stories is really the outcome of a more highly-developed personality that is in harmony with itself due to the continuous interaction between consciousness and the unconscious. The ship is thus tackled now before attacking Khattam-Shud’s separated Shadow itself, which is the outcome of the manifested complex.

⁴³ Ibid: 153.

⁴⁴ Ibid: 153.

⁴⁵ Ibid: 154.

Khattam-Shud has, however, correctly discovered that everything has an opposite (this discovery however is at the same time contradictory to his dictatorial behaviour that does not allow the existence of any convictions but his own) and that there is no thing that cannot be countered with something else: “I personally have discovered that *for every story there is an anti-story*.”⁴⁶ However, his conclusion of the coming together of such different versions is the wrong one: they do not have to cancel each other out, but can question and possibly supplement each other. Khattam-Shud’s biggest problem, however, is a problem that illustrates a wide-spread human need, namely that of having to control everything in the world: “‘Your world, my world, all worlds,’ ... ‘They are all there to be Ruled. And inside every single story, inside every Stream in the Ocean, there lies a world, a story-world, that I cannot Rule at all. And that is the reason why.’”⁴⁷

The notion of being powerless and out of control over not just parts of oneself but also over the thoughts and actions of other people seems to be an unbearable one. During the exploration of the ship Mali, the Floating Gardener, shows how best to survive and overcome the dangers of Khattam-Shud’s power, which is through undergoing a series of changes. This seems to point out that man best copes with the difficult confrontation of their own disagreeable aspects and their damaged parts by being open to new developments, as they keep them alive. The darkness is encountered with light, meaning that the suppressed unconscious parts are encountered with former unconscious parts that have been recognised and integrated into the psyche, or with unconscious parts that have not been damaged by forceful suppression: “... now the light poured in every direction, illuminating the entire vast interior of that massive ship.”⁴⁸ The power of our will to restore our balanced personality, here by the means of psychotherapy, is shown in the symbol of the wishwater that is effectively used: “And then, with a mighty juddering, Haroun Khalifa’s wish came true. The Moon Kahani turned ... and the sun rose, at high speed, and zoomed up into the sky until it was directly overhead; where it remained.”⁴⁹ In return, Gup City, which has been suffused with endless sunshine, now lies in darkness. This change in Gup is a necessary result of the changes in Chup. In return for aspects of the higher layer of the unconscious entering the deeper layers, suppressed contents of the deeper layers of the unconscious now rise up so that they might interact with conscious aspects at some stage. As a result of this healing process, the complex vanishes. “Shadows could not remain solid in that brightness; and the huge ship

⁴⁶ Ibid: 160.

⁴⁷ Ibid: 161.

⁴⁸ Ibid: 165.

⁴⁹ Ibid: 171.

itself had started to melt, had started losing its shape, as if it were a mountain of ice-cream left out in the sun by mistake.”⁵⁰ Furthermore, all the split-off shadows disappear, Khattam-Shud’s included. Without the source of what had caused them to detach themselves from the person they belong to in the first place, they cannot lead separate lives any longer:

... because once the sorcery of Khattam-Shud had been destroyed by the sunlight, no shadow could survive without someone or something to be attached to, to be the shadow of. The Cultmaster, or to be precise his Shadow-Self, was nowhere to be seen.⁵¹

In consequence, the source of stories is now entirely unblocked so that “fresh stories would go on pouring out of it, and so, one day, the Ocean would be clean again, and all the stories, even the oldest ones, would taste as good as new.”⁵² The moon Kahani is now not permanently divided any longer between a light (‘good’) and a dark (‘evil’) part, but each part will frequently change between these two aspects so that a calm balance, which is also aspired to in Hinduism, is now achieved. One-sidedness due to suppression of some of the psyche’s contents has now been destroyed. “From now on, Kahani will be a sensible Moon ... with sensible days and nights.”⁵³ Irony is used here in the expression “sensible”: Whereas the adjective rather characterised a state of mind that only reflected the presence of facts to Mr Sengupta and the Chupwalas, it refers in this case instead to a healthy psyche, which goes hand in hand with a well-functioning imagination. The quote also shows that it is not in the nature either of the world or of a person’s psyche to be static and strictly divided, but to fluctuate between different aspects. The next step is now that the complex has been destroyed to integrate the long-suppressed unconscious contents. This is again a difficult process. This is symbolically shown in the Chupwalas being disunited among each other and also in their aggression towards others due to their discontent. However, these contents now are not as one-dimensional any longer as they used to be while the complex was active: The Chupwalas recognise the value of the freedom of self-expression and break their vows that bound them to silence. The suppression of emotions or ideas has now stopped: “Sunrise! It tore away the shrouds of silence and shadow which the sorcery of Khattam-Shud had hung around the Citadel.”⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Ibid: 173.

⁵¹ Ibid: 173.

⁵² Ibid: 175.

⁵³ Ibid: 176.

⁵⁴ Ibid: 189.

Regardless of the interpretative approach we take, the dictatorship has now come to an end. The complex's sphere of power as well as Khatam-Shud's cult do not exist any more, which is also shown in the destruction of Bezaban, the cult's figurative representation. The Cultmaster himself is killed by the figure. This is a necessary outcome of the figure's destruction: once the foundation of the Cultmaster's sphere of power as well as its visible representation are destroyed, the Cultmaster has no place where he could exercise his power any more and therefore has to die as well. He is killed by his own unsound ideology, which he is unable to defend from this attack. The positive message the novel conveys is that dictators can be countered in their arguments and actions and toppled. Furthermore complexes, which can lead a person to disintegrate, can be healed. The various parts of the unconscious and, assuming Kahani is the whole of a person's psyche, the conscious and the unconscious parts interact again with each other so that the ongoing process of achieving some kind of balance, but not again complete entropy, has set in once more. "The new government of the Land of Chup . . ., announced its desire for a long and lasting peace with Gup, a peace in which Night and Day, Speech and Silence, would no longer be separated into Zones by Twilight Strips and Walls of Force."⁵⁵ The most important thing here is that "a dialogue has been opened"⁵⁶ between the different parts so that Rashid's imagination and with it his story-telling powers are restored.

Although when being back in the 'real' world, the whole adventure on Kahani seems to have been part of Haroun's dream, this interpretation is clearly not sufficient, as it does not account for the fact that both Haroun and Rashid have the same memories of this adventure. Again, we recognise how both, the world in its structure as well as man in their actions, are too complex to be accounted for in a single interpretation. By telling the story about their adventures on Kahani, Rashid makes his listeners aware of the dangers of dictator-figures. As a result of their newly gained awareness, they expel their dictatorial leader. The final victory of the imagination is shown in Haroun's mother awaiting him and Rashid at home when coming back from their journey. By coming back to them and leaving Mr Sengupta, she has recognised the value of the imagination and, connected with this, the nature and beauty of true love, which always incorporates a great deal of imagination. As in the past, there is harmony in the household again. Haroun's wound is now also healed, which is shown in the fact that his concentration does not stop after eleven minutes any more and that he has "a new clock, fully operational, and telling the right time."⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Ibid: 191.

⁵⁶ Ibid: 193.

⁵⁷ Ibid: 211.

Rushdie has clearly shown us the necessity of interplay between various parts of the unconscious as well as that between unconscious and conscious contents of one's psyche. Only then can the imagination be developed accordingly and creativity be set free, which is seen as an essential element of man. It displays a greater complexity and an enlarged mental horizon so that arguments that emphasise the uselessness of it can readily be rejected. Rushdie has also shown how the imagination is immune to counter-arguments that are a warning against the lack of truth values in the products of the imagination. This is done by showing that the moment when conscious and unconscious contents merge and set the creative impulse free has a truth value of its own, thus making it clear that we usually have a very limited sense of what we call truth: there is another truth beyond what we call 'objective facts', namely an inner truth of ourselves. In the context of Hinduism, one could say that moksha is reached in the form of rasa.

By writing this novel in response to the fatwa after the publication of the *Satanic Verses*, Rushdie has done exactly what he expresses in the form of an appeal or even demand in the novel's plot, namely refused to let censorship restrict him in his self-expression. Instead of backing down, he has not only defended the crucial right of freedom of speech, but elevated at the same time the human imagination from the low level on which it has been placed by his adversaries, by explaining its nature and function.

III.3.7. Forms of multiplicity and hybridity in *The Moor's Last Sigh*

In *The Moor's Last Sigh* Salman Rushdie takes up the issue of colonialism, which he has introduced in his early novels, focussing now especially on the consequences of both colonial and imperial interventions for the conquered people and by doing so highlights in particular strategies of resistance to colonial power and thinking. Furthermore, Rushdie illustrates how 'the post-colonial individual' changes over time and takes on new forms.

Postmodern elements, which are characteristic of his writing in general, are particularly in this novel deeply intertwined with post-colonial issues. This points towards the shared characteristics of post-colonialism and postmodernism, which make them in some cases and situations compatible with each other. The devices used in *The Moor's Last Sigh* by postmodernism and post-colonialism can be regarded as means to restore the individual's integrity and thus their awareness of their own complexity. However, as already mentioned in my interpretation of *Midnight's Children*, there are forms of the two critiques and techniques that they employ which Rushdie determinedly rejects for the reason that they do not give any positive meaning to a person's life, meaning and self-development going hand in hand. Instead, these forms and techniques dismissed by Rushdie prove to be destructive.

At the beginning of the novel Rushdie displays the attitudes of the various members of the da Gama family towards British colonialism in India at the end of Britain's reign there. Their opinions on British colonialism reflect at the same time how they deal with their ancestor's conquering and colonial activities: Understandably, a rather uncritical attitude towards Vasco da Gama's exploitation used in the spice trade can be expected to entail a lack of criticism of actually-experienced colonialism. This occurs in the cases of Epifania and her son Aires: Epifania's heart mainly belongs to Portugal¹ and she honours her husband's rich and famous ancestor by continuing work in the spice trade, which has also been part of her own family's life. Her feelings towards Portugal and the proud claim of the family name 'da Gama' suggests that she cannot see anything wrong in Portugal's conquests and its use of force and is rather proud of what Vasco and some of his countrymen have done. Likewise, Epifania is only able to recognise the achievements of the British in India, which makes her a willing subject to their power. She has completely internalised the colonizers'

¹ Rushdie, Salman. *The Moor's Last Sigh*. London: Vintage, 1994: 26.

attitudes believing that they would be devoid of any identity of their own in the case of the departure of the British:

‘What are we but Empire’s children? British have given us everything, isn’t it? – Civilisation, law, order, too much. Even your spices that stink up the house they buy out of their own generosity, putting clothes on backs and food on children’s plates.’²

At the same time she herself behaves like an empress in her own household towards her servants, thus showing an extreme class-consciousness, which also finds expression in her attending cricket matches and tea ceremonies – typically British lifestyle pursuits at that time. These pursuits and their underlying attitudes are soon adopted by her son Aires. Even the news of the Amritsar massacre cannot destroy Epifania’s and Aires’ Anglophilia and their excessive belief “in the omnipotent beneficence of the British.”³

Francisco and Camoens, however, refuse to be blinded by the justifications of power abuse and oppression by the British and demand vehemently the subcontinent’s independence as well as Home Rule. Francisco’s main emphasis is on how the British economically exploit India and her workers: “Taxes doubled! ... The nation’s wealth is shipped off, madam. ... Bombay-wallahs getting rich and nation going to pot.”⁴ As an expression of his resistance he adheres to nationalism, which is by many colonized regarded as a useful means to their struggle for independence. Camoens turns towards communism, which he and many others consider to be a useful counter-ideology to colonialism’s dual way of thinking in terms of superiority and inferiority.⁵ The difficulty of implementing the communist ideology in India, however, leads to Camoens’ rejection of it and to his turn towards Nehru’s Congress.

Yet, Camoens’ critique of colonialism does not make him turn away from British influences. Instead, he is the one who starts to embrace (probably rather unconsciously at the beginning) both Indian and English influences, which can for example be seen in his choice of literature. This is definitely an early attempt at breaking down the frontiers between colonizer and colonized and at merging the influences of the two countries. Furthermore he increasingly integrates contradictory aspects in himself. At this point postmodernism and post-colonialism meet: they both stand for multiplicity and the defeat of hierarchic ways of thinking. This should enable the individual to live up to their full potential and therefore the narrator rather sees beauty and a full humaneness in the contradictions of such a life instead of deficiencies.

² Ibid: 18.

³ Ibid: 22.

⁴ Ibid: 18.

⁵ Ibid: 29.

Camoens is capable of making a distinction between actions and persons, which makes it possible for him to like many English people whilst at the same time condemning colonial activities.

Due to these strongly opposing attitudes towards the British and the possibility of India's independence, a deep split emerges in the da Gama household,⁶ which can be compared to the splits and frictions in the country that result in the creation of sharp frontiers.

Like in *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*, the female characters soon move to the centre of the story: Camoens' wife, Belle, rejects the patriarchy that has been a prevalent feature of colonialism by reversing stereotypical colonial gender assumptions such as the association of maleness with activity, power and strength. Not only does she take care of the family's fortune and get the business back, she also uses 'male' business methods to achieve this. She thus radically breaks with the notion of the passive, gentle woman who does not take any part in life outside the home and it is certainly no coincidence that she is called 'Queen Isabella of Cochin', which shows a recognition of the exercise of female power by remembering the reign of Queen Isabella of Spain. She undertakes a reconquista of the neglected place of the female in society but dislikes her nickname due to its link with oppression and violence.

Her daughter Aurora follows in both her mother's and father's footsteps in respect to female strength and the ability to integrate various very different aspects in her self. Aurora's marriage to Abraham is a step across class, religious and racial frontiers: Aurora, who is herself a well-off Christian, marries not only a poor Jew, but also a hybrid that has Moorish blood in him.⁷ True genetic hybridity has especially during colonial times been regarded as a stigma and people 'tainted' by such an inheritance tried to hide it. Abraham's mother Flory has therefore not revealed to her son that their common ancestor was Boabdil, the last Sultan of the Moors who was expelled from Granada by Isabella and Ferdinand of Spain during the reconquista. Imperialism was then justified in the name of Christianity, which attempted to eliminate especially Jewish and Arab – and thus Moorish - influences. Flory's animosity towards Christians can therefore hardly be surprising. Abraham, however, rejects colonial ideals of racial purity that his mother adopted and instead feels compassion with his ancestors' fate. He unveils the ambivalent attitude of Flory towards such an ancestor, which is a mixture of hidden and unadmitted pride and the feeling of shame, the latter which she displays quite openly: “ ‘Because of secret pride in the royal link, the crown was kept;

⁶ Ibid: 45.

⁷ Ibid: 82.

because of shame, it was concealed.”⁸ He furthermore points out the hypocrisy of Flory when she denigrates Aurora due to her impure ‘conqueror’s’ blood, but is herself of mixed race: “Mother, who is worse? My Aurora who does not hide the Vasco connection, but takes delight; or myself, born of the fat old Moor of Granada’s last sighs in the arms of his thieving mistress – Boabdil’s bastard Jew?”⁹ The ambivalence inherent in Flory’s attitude is a reflection of the ambivalence in the dualistic colonial attitude that has then later been used as a strategy to dismantle colonial convictions. Flory displays the same prejudiced way of thinking in respect to race and religion as the colonizers have done. Her belief in the necessity of racial purity is so great that she demands to live with and educate Abraham’s and Aurora’s first son, whom she wants to bring up in the way a male Jew of Cochin has to be brought up according to her.¹⁰

Aurora and Abraham go beyond these preconceptions and do not only accept but in fact welcome their own and each other’s hybrid descent even though their ancestors’ histories could have easily made them enemies. However, they try to find a way of coming to terms with the past and to find ways of reconciliation. Aurora also attempts this by her conscious integration of Eastern and Western aspects into her life, which makes it impossible to reduce her to just one position, but at the same time makes her an easy target to sharp criticism especially by people who believe in the adherence to just one clearly-defined set of values and aims.¹¹ Another important strategy she uses to overcome not only colonial mechanisms of oppression but also the communal riots that are partly based on the language question is her attempt – similar to the one undertaken by Naseem in *Midnight’s Children* - to use the English language in a way different from the British. She argues for the advantages of the use of English as a lingua franca that enables the various communities in India to enter into a dialogue with each other, but is neutral insofar as it is a language from outside India so that none of the Indian languages is privileged above the others: “‘All these different lingos cutt off us from one another,’ she explained. ‘Only English brings us together.’”¹² The use of mimicry, which is displayed in her different use of English, shows that she has resisted to be subjected by the use of the colonizer’s tongue, as she has created something new from it that is in actual fact a means of resistance to colonial and imperial power.

Furthermore, her most striking attempt to come to terms with imperial and colonial power abuse in both past and present and her attempt to link the different times and places of such

⁸ Ibid: 82.

⁹ Ibid: 82-83.

¹⁰ Ibid: 112.

¹¹ Ibid: 178.

¹² Ibid: 179.

abuse is through the depiction of these themes in her art. This course of action is comparable to that Rani takes by embroidering shawls in *Shame*, which depict the power abuse by Pakistan's rulers of her citizens. Similarly, Aurora's paintings, which are based on the narrative-painting traditions of the south of India¹³, deal with history and politics. However, Aurora does not stop at mere description and mimesis in her art, as she reveals how art is more than social commentary or criticism: it needs to be able to transcend the world's imperfections by including the magical aspect¹⁴, which gives us hope and ideals we can and should pursue in order to create something more constructive and enriching. Against this background, she engages with the Boabdil story, which she re-imagines and re-writes by using her son Moraes, who is a dark-skinned Indian and has Moorish blood in himself from Abraham's side, as a model thus combining personal history and history that is set in a wider context. She paints Mughal palace-fortresses and imagines the world of a fictitious Mooristan, which is a place where different worlds and thus different layers of reality meet¹⁵ and in which she places her son first by portraying him in her picture and then by sending him to Spain, the home of his ancestors: "Go find Palimpstine; go see Mooristan"¹⁶. Mooristan, which in her art contains carnivalesque and playful elements, is regarded as solution to a violent, hostile world that is characterised by discrimination and prejudice. It is certainly a place that can be called post-colonial in its attempts to re-write the history of Mughal Spain by presenting a version of tolerance and communication and the intermingling of cultural aspects. At the same time Mooristan alludes to the post-colonial situation that we increasingly encounter today, which is the situation of the traveller going to different places and living in exile, and that often enables them to get a certain distance to both the place they come from and to the new place. This emotional distance often leads to their adoption of a less biased position.

Aurora's narration of the Moor in his hybrid fortress is also very much "a romantic myth of the plural, hybrid nation"¹⁷. In this way she uses Arab Spain to re-imagine India. Aurora thus creates a sketch of what the nation could be like, which can be related to the evocation of a new India in the case of the midnight's children. Aurora's India is many-tongued, multi-coloured and at the same time unifying.¹⁸ Her vision of the subcontinent is complex and

¹³ Ibid: 102.

¹⁴ Ibid: 173, 220.

¹⁵ Ibid: 226.

¹⁶ Ibid: 235.

¹⁷ Ibid: 227.

¹⁸ Ibid: 51.

contradictory.¹⁹ The narrator's claim that Aurora's Arab Spain refers to India can be substantiated by paying attention to the many cultural allusions to India such as the novel's inclusion of an extract of the *Ramayana*²⁰ and of the film *Mother India*²¹. Especially *Mother India*, which has become an all-conquering major Bollywood movie whose characters and their behaviour can partly be based on Hindu mythology and can thus be described as a piece of Hindu myth-making, plays a dominant part in *The Moor's Last Sigh*. In fact, Aurora comes to stand for the figure of Mother India, and her complex relationship to Moraes resembles that of Mother India and her son Birju. Aurora becomes a goddess in people's minds insofar as she seems to incorporate the constructive potential of India and hope for her future. She has become "the light of our lives, the excitement of our imaginations, the beloved of our dreams"²².

Aurora's depicted Mooristan is more than the sketch of a post-colonial hybrid nation though. She also calls this place Palimpstine. By doing so she responds to the numerous possibilities such a place can offer. This place stands also, more concretely, for Bombay, which is described as a palimpsest. The narrator – like Saleem in *Midnight's Children* – identifies himself with Bombay's multiplicity such as when he states that he has not been brought up according to one particular faith but can relate to more than one without reaching full identification with any of them.²³ Moraes furthermore stresses Bombay's central meaning in respect to India's history of hybridity: whilst once conquered by the Portuguese and English, it has been the most Indian of Indian cities.²⁴

At the same time, the image of Palimpstine challenges one-sided and often extreme positions that attempt to rule out the possibility of any other truths: Palimpstine and the motif of the palimpsest on which it is based tie in with the conviction "that so many covert truths exist behind Maya-veils of unknowing and illusion"²⁵. By employing terms that have a prevalent place in Hinduism, another discourse, which also upholds the view of the existence of many possible truths, supports some of the central tenets of post-colonialism and postmodernism. Aurora observes, however, how both her husband and her children reject such open-mindedness and instead adopt one-sided and exclusive ways of thinking and acting: Abraham, who has due to his half-Jewish and half-Moorish heritage the best preconditions to embrace multiplicity, does in the end not make use of them. Although he continues the not just colonial

¹⁹ Ibid: 204.

²⁰ Ibid: 368.

²¹ Ibid: 60-61.

²² Ibid: 172.

²³ Ibid: 104.

²⁴ Ibid: 350.

but certainly also deeply Moorish and Jewish practice of the spice trade, he becomes so obsessed with it that he neglects other things such as – despite his sincere and deep love – spending more time with Aurora and engages in illegal and finally in highly criminal activities. His constantly increasing lust for power and wealth, the two becoming his only truths in life, soon lead him to collecting weapons and using terrorism. He gives up all scruple until “the only limit to the money that could be made was the boundary of the imagination”²⁶. The narrator defines Abraham’s activities as a symptom of the time they live in, which is characterised by confusion and disorientation due to the fact that reality has become slippery and vague: “How could any of us have escaped that deadly layering? How, trapped as we were in the hundred per cent fakery of the real...How could we have lived authentic lives? How could we have failed to be grotesque?”²⁷ This obsessive clinging to very few ideas or truths in one’s life is obviously harmful and destructive: in Abraham’s case it has led to terrorism.

In Aurora’s and Abraham’s daughters it has also led them to take on extreme positions: Ina constantly lets herself into numerous affairs with men and reduces herself in her licentiousness to a mere model and lover and the world to the aspect of sexuality.²⁸ Minnie cannot see beyond her extremely narrow-minded Christian views, which lure her into a simple convent life. Human behaviour is merely seen in terms of sin and redemption, the latter serving together with good works as a means to alleviate the consequences of the former. Mynah, even though apparently more considerate in her choice of action in her fight for women rights, becomes so intense with her cause that she disregards any possible dangers and is finally killed by the consequences of her carelessness.²⁹

All three women restrict themselves in their self-development by clinging to just one cause or idea they believe in at the cost of ignoring all the other various facets of reality.

Moraes goes for some time along a similar path when he finds himself suddenly in Raman Fielding’s extremist Hindu group.³⁰ It offers him, as it does many other people, a certain security and orientation in all the confusion he is surrounded by. This orientation is based on their common Hindu identity, which is elevated to such an extent that Moraes and the other members of the group do not hesitate to use terrorism to make their ideology known to others and to destroy other ways of thought by which they might feel threatened. Once again, the

²⁵ Ibid: 334.

²⁶ Ibid: 182.

²⁷ Ibid: 184-85.

²⁸ Ibid: 207-08.

²⁹ Ibid: 275-76.

³⁰ Ibid: 293ff.

original ideas Hinduism embraces such as tolerance and openness towards other views are completely perverted and even turned into their opposites. Both the representations of the Lord Ram and of the nature of man in this extremist Hindu group do not bear any resemblances to conceptions of the god and mankind generally advocated in Hindu thought.³¹ Intolerance is here at its height and the impending destruction is thus not surprising. Moraes needs some time to learn that the weapon machinery used here reduces people to inhuman robots that have been trained to obey certain commands but are not allowed to think for themselves any more. The aims of these methods are in strong contrast to what his mother and the early Vasco Miranda tried to achieve – namely to show and make use of a person’s constructive potential. By having been drawn into this terrorist group, Moraes has learned that the meanness of violence and hate slumbers in everyone of us and that everyone has the responsibility to fight this tendency for the sake of themselves but especially for the sake of others:

In those days of cooking for Mainduck I learned some of the intricacies of the man. ... But the point is they are not inhuman, these Mainduck-style Hitlers, and it is in their humanity that we must locate our collective guilt, humanity’s guilt for human beings’ misdeeds; ... then the rest of us are excused³².

Moraes’ insight into his wrongs and his ensuing transformation of his ideas and perspectives is metaphorically shown in his fast ageing-process, a device of the postmodern technique of Magic Realism, which is also a sign of the rapid and massive changes that occur in India about the time of its turn into an independent nation: “How many of us feel, these days, that something that has passed too quickly is ending: a moment of life, a period of life, a period of history, an idea of civilization, a twist in the turning of the unconcerned world”³³. This almost supernatural speed with which changes occur both in Moraes and in the subcontinent creates an atmosphere of unreality which is in turn embodied in Moraes’ physical deformations that make him feel that he is no more than “manhood’s simulacrum”³⁴.

Moraes’ lover Uma chooses a lifestyle that has no other values than the experience of as many facets of the world in general and of herself in particular as possible. Experiencing and displaying multiplicity is the only guideline she observes. Therefore she does not see any fault in deceiving others, lying to them and causing them a great amount of pain,³⁵ as she has done when she deliberately estranged Moraes from his mother, thus inducing the final break

³¹ Ibid: 351.

³² Ibid: 297.

³³ Ibid: 145.

³⁴ Ibid: 192.

between these two that leaves both of them inconsolable. Unsurprisingly, Uma's and Moraes' relationship cannot last, as it is not built on mutual love but, at least on Uma's part, entirely on wilfulness and pretence: She relates to him and others by offering them an image of herself that she assumes the other people want to see. Due to the different needs and expectations people have in respect to others, she seems to change her personality like a chameleon, presenting each personality at the moment of displaying it as THE truth about her: "Her ability to take on radically different personae in the company of different people ... was exceptional; but this was a talent for acting that had been pushed to the point of insanity, and beyond... truth"³⁶. Truth is thus an entirely relative and elusive term for Uma, which is a fact Moraes has been blind to for a long time due to his romantic feelings for and his idealization of her. In fact, her identity becomes just a collection of roles without a stabilising core that allows for changes but holds the different facets of her personality together. There is no factor that balances her excessive adoption of constantly changing roles, a situation which Rushdie has also depicted in *The Satanic Verses* in relation to Gibreel. "It was possible that she had no longer a clear sense of an 'authentic' identity that was independent of these performances, and this existential confusion had begun to spread beyond the borders of her own self ... contact."³⁷ It is therefore hardly surprising that her psyche is – like Gibreel's - out of joint and that she sometimes takes strong medication, which she seems to need to cope with her intensely schizoid disposition and the overwhelming ontological insecurity, which must lie at the bottom of it. In her refusal of any moral guidelines for her life she is not concerned about her own or other people's deaths. As a result, her relationship with Moraes becomes increasingly destructive. In the scene that leads to Uma's death, it remains – due to the accident of the dropped pills - open in the novel whether she had any real intentions of killing Moraes or whether she was keen on presenting a theatrical suicide attempt. Either way however indicates that she does not attribute any real meaning to human life and therefore not to love either.

Uma's lifestyle is not restrictive in the way Abraham's and his daughters' are. However, in its arbitrariness and failure in making value judgements, it is the frequent and typical result of the form of postmodernism that is nihilistic in character and that leads, in Uma's case, to disintegration. Aurora presents the destructive lifestyle of persons like Uma in her later Moor-pictures, which reflect her latest insight that a life characterised by multiplicity can go

³⁵ Ibid: 269-70.

³⁶ Ibid: 265-66.

³⁷ Ibid: 266.

dreadfully wrong as well if it takes on a form of nihilism: The Moor-figure in these paintings, here the bearer of a destructive plurality, becomes

a semi-allegorical figure of decay. Aurora had apparently decided that the ideas of impurity, cultural admixture and *mélange* 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.³⁸

Vasco Miranda has for a long time shared the same dream with Aurora of a combination of a Mooristan and a Palimpsest. Vasco also deeply engages with the fate of the Moors, which is shown in the surface picture of his palimpsest painting that displays the pain Boabdil the last Sultan must have felt after his final eviction.³⁹ He thus sympathises with the victims of imperialism and colonialism and demands in addition the recognition of various different truths, which is firstly shown in the paintings he does in the nursery. They show figures of several magical worlds that are in a constant process of flux. The display of a multiplicity of different realities that continuously metamorphose is his postmodern approach to achieve greater tolerance among people and to convey his own view to them of what the world is like.

The palimpsest that he creates is itself a demonstration of the existence of different layers of reality even though it simultaneously reveals the difficulty or impossibility of not evaluating the different aspects by setting up a hierarchy between them. A hierarchy is the result of placing a lower esteem on some aspects in comparison to others. In the palimpsest this is shown in that the first picture is covered with another painted motif and therefore hidden and seems at first sight to be replaced. However, a palimpsest does not damage any covered layers and thus ideas, reality aspects or viewpoints but preserves them instead. Sometimes, the evaluation process that leads to the establishment of a hierarchy might in fact become necessary in order not to become indifferent to values that should protect society from harm. We have seen in the figure of Uma how much destruction can otherwise occur.

The palimpsest idea is therefore a symbol of a weak form of postmodernism that is tolerant by nature and invites polyphony and multiplicity, but evaluates the various aspects still according to the degree of benefit they bring along for society. Precisely this is shown in its embrace of post-colonial ideas that undertake the effort to do justice to discriminated and oppressed people by removing their marginalised status. In Vasco's case this has been done with the Sultan Boabdil.

³⁸ Ibid: 303.

³⁹ Ibid: 159.

Vasco abandons his broad-minded view, however, because he gets - like Abraham and his daughters - obsessed with one idea, namely that of his unreciprocated love for Aurora, which gets twisted and filled with hate and discounts any other aspects as valueless. This change is clearly visible at the very end of the novel when he commands a restorer of paintings to destroy the surface layer of his palimpsest picture, which shows the sad, ejected Boabdil.⁴⁰ This reality has not just become unimportant to him, but he sees it even as an awkward diversion to what he believes is only worth paying attention to – the figure of Aurora, which was the motif for the first picture he has drawn and which lies hidden underneath the Sultan. This narrowing of focus leads to the literal destruction of what he has believed in before when the female restorer of paintings whom he holds captive in his fortress removes the top layer of the picture.

Therefore his palace even though it is built in a Moorish way does not seem to be a genuine attempt to engage with imperial history. In actual fact, Vasco has not so much thought about the fate of the Moors, but about Aurora who has dealt with this theme extensively: “Vasco... had spent fortunes, and the kind of energy born of the most profound obsession, to appropriate her vision for himself. ...The ‘Little Alhambra’, for all its size and flamboyance, was no New Moorusalem, but an ugly, pretentious house.”⁴¹

Vasco denies by such obsessive thinking and behaviour, which resist change by nature, some important aspects of his humanity, the latter always including change and self-development and a multi-faceted pattern. In his almost timeless-seeming existence in the fortress, he has died a kind of inner death that is highlighted in his actual death that follows his inner emptiness.

The atmosphere around Vasco that seems beyond time is partly reflected in the village of Benengeli that Moraes enters before he reaches Vasco’s abode. Life there seems to have been stifled due to the town’s “narcotic quality”.⁴² At first glance, however, the society that lives there seems to Moraes like “the new Moors”⁴³, the realization of Vasco’s early dream to “renew, in his ‘Little Alhambra’, the fabulous multiple culture of ancient Al-Andalus”⁴⁴, and thus, by extension, the polyphonic nature of India. Yet this ideal society must remain only a dream in Benengeli.

Vasco does not only soon neglect the pursuit of creating such a society due to his obsession with Aurora, he also does so because he has never successfully integrated his own Portuguese

⁴⁰ Ibid: 420.

⁴¹ Ibid: 409.

⁴² Ibid: 403.

⁴³ Ibid: 390.

⁴⁴ Ibid: 398.

background with its history of using oppression and violence against others.⁴⁵ This is one of the reasons why the citizens, especially the many immigrants entering Benengeli are left to their own devices and have difficulties due to the lack of help from others to set up a transcultural society. Instead, when we take a closer look at the society of Benengeli we can recognise a form of multiculturalism that keeps frontiers: Even though there are numerous cultures and nationalities living close to each other in one place, they actually separate and are separated from the indigenous citizens of the village. There is a mutual atmosphere of resentment and distrust in the village, which is the result of deep-seated prejudice and racism. The newcomers call the indigenous people names such as “the Nazi”⁴⁶ and the latter in return call the foreigners “Parasites”.⁴⁷ Thus the different communities live in ghettos and there is no real exchange or constructive conversation between them that could contribute to the creation of a society that undergoes continuous changes while establishing a dialogue between cultures that is based on a kind of ‘critical tolerance’. It is this latter idea of transculturalism that Moraes finds lacking in Benengeli and in which he now starts to believe like his mother Aurora and the early Vasco have believed in it. In Benengeli he only finds stasis due to non-communication that makes it impossible for the people there to get rid of their prejudices. Both, the indigenous population as well as the immigrants continue displaying the same attitudes based on binary conceptions as the colonizers did. They have not stepped beyond colonial strategies and as a result feel empty and lifeless.

At the same time, they do not have any clear aims based on certain values they believe in. Everything becomes questionable and relative to them except for their belief in the other group being their enemy. This position of relativism is even stronger in the neighbouring town of Erasmo: “‘Everything in life is so diverse, so opposed, so obscure, that we cannot be certain of any truth.’ ... ‘All is possible.’ ...; relatively speaking, of course.”⁴⁸ In this way the inhabitants come close to embracing such a strong postmodern worldview as Uma has done and that leads normally, as we have seen, to destruction due to its rejection of any moral considerations.

In spite of all the destruction and violence Moraes has experienced he has a clear positive vision at the end of a place beyond such appalling events and actions, of “a place that did not bind, but dissolved.”⁴⁹ Like his mother Aurora who has at the end of her life fully returned to

⁴⁵ Ibid: 165-67.

⁴⁶ Ibid: 392.

⁴⁷ Ibid: 392.

⁴⁸ Ibid: 386.

⁴⁹ Ibid: 388.

her belief that a valuable hybrid life is possible⁵⁰ despite having seen forms of hybridity that cause great damage, Moraes can now clearly picture such a place: In the interlocking forms of the Mughal palaces the various parts and layers of identity are mirrored. This Mooristan or Palimpstine is

like a testament to lost but sweetest love, to the love that endures beyond defeat, beyond annihilation, beyond despair; to the defeated love that is greater than what defeats it, to that most profound of our needs, to our need of flowing together, for putting an end to frontiers, for the dropping of the boundaries of the self.⁵¹

Rushdie shows us in this novel how his protagonist Moraes has undergone a learning-process due to his observation of the characters he is surrounded by. By watching their approaches to the world they live in and the consequences of their actions, particularly the destructive ones, he becomes gradually aware of the approach to the world he personally considers to be advantageous to both personal development and to a positive development of society. Moraes finds that it is the life of the migrant and the hybrid individual that carries the preconditions to such changes within his self. He also learns from his own mistakes. By confronting violence committed both in the past and in the present in a critical manner, he is able to transcend one-sided, narrow viewpoints as well as dualistic ways of thinking. He has understood that the end does not necessarily justify the means employed and that there are certain values that are important in order to keep a happy, well-organised society alive. Only if these values are observed can frontiers between people melt in a way that enables the growth of society. Likewise, the critical integration of other viewpoints into the self makes the growth of a personality possible.

Rushdie has achieved to give us an idea about how post-colonial and postmodern ideas can meet and how their strategies of dismantling power and absolutism can effectively complement each other. Saying this, he is careful to affirm some of the many strategies that are used by these critiques, such as mimicry in post-colonialism and multiplicity in postmodernism, while rejecting some forms these critiques can take on, such as an almost obsessive nationalism or, conversely, an uncritical multicultural society that is based on segregation as well as a form of postmodernism that is almost devoid of value and ends in nihilism. I would therefore regard Rushdie's view of the potential of both critiques, especially in their interaction and when they take on a character that is critical and open at the same time, as a realistic and certainly as a constructive one.

⁵⁰ Ibid: 315.

⁵¹ Ibid: 433.

III.3.8. *The Ground beneath her Feet* as an exploration of the impact of love and art on individuals

The novel, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, was written after Rushdie emigrated to America and settled down in New York. Unsurprisingly, it does not just deal with his impressions of America, but most importantly, focuses also very much on the condition of the outcast, the emigrant and in particular on the question whether it is possible to lead a life not just without roots, but also without any firm attachments or ties. The characters in the novel seem to be torn between the need to be free and experience the changing nature of the world on the one hand, and the need for roots and close relationships that should give them certainties on the other hand. In order to comprehend a person's need for relationships, Rushdie explores in this novel the role of love and the extent to which it could contribute to make a person whole. This theme is connected with the role of art in its various forms.

Firstly, I want to focus on the individuals' various self-imposed restrictions as presented in the novel – restrictions that, as demonstrated also several times in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, shall allow the individuals to find certainties in the confusing complexities of the world. They hold on to these certainties in order to act and establish their identities. Afterwards, the protagonists' attempts to reject such certainties and experience as many aspects of life as they possibly can, shall be dealt with – in particular their success or failure in doing so and what such success or failure means in respect to a person's self-development.

The need to have and to hold on to certainties in life is first of all strongly present in both Ormus' and the narrator-figure's, Rai's, parents:

Ormus' mother, Spenta, indulges excessively in spirituality, which provides her with a tunnel vision that makes it possible for her to function. Her conversation with angels¹ and also her belief in the literal power of names and in certain events as bad omens² are part of her superstitious nature. Superstition naturally implies turning away from reality: "And of course I know that superstition is a retreat, a way of not facing the real"³. Facing the real would imply for her to confront her rejecting attitude towards her son Ormus and later on also towards her insane son Cyrus: she needs to believe in an image of herself as a good and charitable person. In order to turn this belief into a certainty instead of facing this other part of

¹ Rushdie, Salman. *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*. 1999. New York: Picador, 2000: 22.

² Ibid: 329.

³ Ibid: 63-64.

her nature, she indulges in good works.⁴ Throughout her life she prays to angels when she cannot deal with a problem in an adequate manner⁵ because it proves to be too difficult or complex. Without this belief in supernatural beings that help her and others, she would lose all her stability, as (almost) everything would be uncertain: “There are days when Spenta feels mortally afraid. Deserted by angels, she and her family may now have fallen prey to demons”⁶. In actual fact, for Spenta “the miraculous had long ago supplanted the quotidian as the norm, and who would have been utterly lost, without her angels and devils, in the tragic jungle of the everyday”⁷.

Her husband, Sir Darius Carma, turns away from the present by indulging in myth.⁸ Myth can be situated somewhere between the ‘real’, which means here the apparently historically verified (even that is, however, distorted and thus turned into necessarily biased perspectives, as we have seen earlier), and the fictitious. His immersion into myth makes him cling to the past. Even though he gives this pursuit of the study of myth temporarily up and turns towards the realities of his time by criticising many of the people’s living conditions in India, he is still caught in a small, restrictive world. This is the case because he merely speaks of the possibility of leading a different life than the majority of the population, but does not go beyond his theories by actually putting them into practice. He remains in this fairly withdrawn, intellectual circle instead of taking action and thus making a difference. This is for example reflected in his decision to keep his mentally ill son Cyrus away from the family at all times. By doing so he acts in the same way as most people he criticises for this behaviour and turns Cyrus into an outsider.

Some of the certainties Darius tries to establish concern the preconceptions he has about England, which involve imagining England as a highly desirable country to live in that only reflects positive aspects. This Anglophilia is the result of Darius’ creating a myth of England, which he does by opposing it to India, which he clearly rejects and believes

‘is in a state of advanced decay. Old virtues – service of community, discipline of personality, memorizing of poetry, mastery of firearms, pleasure in falconry, formal dancing, building of character through sport - these things have lost meaning. Only in the mother country can they be rediscovered.’⁹

⁴ Ibid: 137.

⁵ Ibid: 323.

⁶ Ibid: 327.

⁷ Ibid: 84.

⁸ Ibid: 40.

⁹ Ibid: 90.

He is therefore, like Saladin in the *Satanic Verses*, completely unprepared when he enters England and meets the unsympathetic immigration officers, who point out a very harsh reality, which strongly contrasts his idealistic vision of England. His construct of England is shattered: "Life's bruises demythologise us all."¹⁰ The result is that he loses this certainty of England as his newly-chosen, welcoming home place. He cannot cope with this loss and, feeling unable to cope with the insecurities and dangers he faces everywhere in the world, turns to drink, thus failing to deal with his life successfully.

It is obvious how both Spenta and Darius fail in coming to terms with the world as it is presented to them. Their escape into spiritual or mythological worlds does not prove to be satisfactory:

... For Sir Darius Xerxes Cama, "somewhere better" was England, but England turned against him, and left him shipwrecked, marooned. For Lady Spenta, the good place was the place of illumination, where dwell Ahura Mazda and his angels and the blessed; but that place was far off, and Bombay increasingly felt to her like a labyrinth without an exit.¹¹

The narrator's father, Vivvy Merchant, also finds himself lost in the chaotic state of the modern world. He turns towards history and, more specifically, his ancestry, as he considers these as reliable areas that might show him his own place in the world and therefore contribute to an identity definition Vivvy might think he could hold on to. "Vivvy Merchant, however, dreamed of the past. That was his promised land. The past was the truth, and like all truths, it lay hidden. You had to dig it out. Not just any past; just the city's"¹².

In Vivvy's attempts to define his identity through his home town where he feels he belongs to, we face a strong contrast to Darius' identification with England, the faraway country. Vivvy is "architect, excavator and local historian"¹³ all in one, and Rai knows that one "can interpret my father's desperate diggings into the city's past as a quest for his mislaid personal identity"¹⁴. However, by digging out his ancestry's past, he also practises a form of escapism, as in that way he avoids engaging himself in the present. "V.V. Merchant's first love would always be the city's pre-history; it was as if he were more interested in the infant's conception than in her actuality"¹⁵. This is in strong contrast to Moraes' and Saleem's close relationship with Bombay in Rushdie's earlier novels, in which these two characters take stock of the past and historical changes in order to gain a better understanding of the city's present situation

¹⁰ Ibid: 138.

¹¹ Ibid: 167.

¹² Ibid: 60.

¹³ Ibid: 63.

¹⁴ Ibid: 75.

¹⁵ Ibid: 81.

and to be thus in a position to influence the nature of the city's future. Furthermore, Vivvy's conception of the world, even of the world of the past, is a very limited one, as it only revolves around Bombay (more specifically around his ancestry), but the rest of India – not to speak of other parts of the world – holds no interest for him. This attitude is once again completely different to Moraes' and Saleem's, as they do not view Bombay in isolation but very much in relation to the rest of the country, in whose developments they take a keen interest. The important events of the day simply seem to pass Vivvy Merchant unnoticed:

Can't it be that his preoccupations blinded him to the momentous nature of those years, to the Navy Strike and Partition and all that followed... if he dug himself into the past, seeking fixity in knowledge, seeking solid ground beneath the shifting sands of the age, well, there's no shame in that.¹⁶

His viewpoint is further limited by not being aware of the fact that a lot of the history of Bombay he teaches his son can actually be described as "local legends".¹⁷ That means that his accounts are, contrary to his conviction, anything but 'facts' or 'objective reality'.

Furthermore, his addiction to gambling has devastating effects on both himself and his marriage:¹⁸ His personality as well as his relationships enter a process of decline.

This decline indicates that not even his strong sense of home and belonging, this certainty he holds on to, can fulfil his hopes or make him feel really stable, which is finally proven when he decides to commit suicide after Ameer's death.¹⁹ This occurs after he has become conscious of having privileged a place of the past to his living partner, thus greatly reducing the present world and especially the most important person in his life:

My father, Vivvy, who adored both my mother and the city of Bombay so deeply that he sometimes referred to himself, only half jokingly, as a protagonist, had taken to referring to Ameer as if she were a metropolis herself: her fortifications, her esplanades, her traffic flow, her new developments, her crime rate.²⁰

Ameer's response to the disorientating complexity of the world is to seek stability through construction work.²¹ Engaging in this kind of construction work can be seen as an engagement in the world's complexity. However, she fails to see that there are boundaries to how much she can influence and contribute to the world. Consequently, she overestimates her own possibilities and becomes megalomaniac in her dreams of the construction of high buildings: “

¹⁶ Ibid: 63.

¹⁷ Ibid: 61.

¹⁸ Ibid: 158.

¹⁹ Ibid: 212.

²⁰ Ibid: 107.

... and Ameer Merchant, dreaming of Cuffscrapers and such, was likewise seeking lost certainties in visions of high-rise apartment blocks and Art Deco cinemas, in bricks and mortar, in reinforced cement-concrete.”²² Ameer’s unceasing effort to influence the world turns her into a “master-builder”.²³ In contrast to her husband, she lives for the fulfilment of an ideal future. In only striving for what is profitable, she neglects to observe many other values in life, such as beauty, aesthetics, antique value (i.e. the respect for bygone periods) and the appreciation and protection of nature.

It is clear that both Ameer and Vivvy have very narrow world views. Due to this and to the opposite nature of their views, their relationship has to break apart at the very end:

For Ameer Merchant, my cosmopolitan mother, the better place was the city she was going to build. V.V. Merchant, true provincial that he was, was tormented by the idea that the good place had existed, we had possessed and occupied it, and now it was being destroyed, and in its obliteration his beloved wife was profoundly implicated.²⁴

The results of Vivvy’s gambling debts as well as Ameer’s obsessive aspirations to construct profitable buildings regardless of other aspects are revealed to the other person, and these revelations end in shock and disillusionment.

Ormus’ older twin brothers, Cyrus and Virus, are striking examples of how persons may escape from the many-faceted world and live in private worlds that reflect relatively few dimensions. This retreat from the world is due to their mental conditions:

Virus withdraws into a world of his own by not communicating any longer and possibly not grasping most of what goes on around him - even though one cannot be entirely sure of that. “He had moved into the mystery of inner space and had no time for play.”²⁵

Cyrus’ split personality seems to evolve from his incapacity to integrate his feelings, especially his negative feelings, such as anger and hate, which becomes a difficulty that is not adequately dealt with: On the opposite, his parents deprive him of their affection and send him away to a school instead where he receives extremely harsh treatment²⁶. These measures that are applied to Cyrus can hardly be said to encourage any progress in his condition and can be seen - as in the case of Sufiya in *Shame* - in the greater context of the sometimes abominable treatment that people who are considered to be mentally ill receive, which is based on prejudice and discrimination. The refusal of his parents to welcome him during the

²¹ Ibid: 64.

²² Ibid: 75.

²³ Ibid: 80.

²⁴ Ibid: 167.

²⁵ Ibid: 36.

²⁶ Ibid: 139.

holidays furthermore demonstrates how society frequently stigmatises otherness in general and mental illness in particular. “One may ascribe the Camas’ harsh decision to the widespread Indian abhorrence of psychiatric problems and mental illness, but to explain is not to condone”²⁷

The lack of parental love and support and the judgemental treatment at school in combination with his discarded feelings finally cause Cyrus’ personality to become schizoid. This is shown in its disintegration into Cyrus, the dangerous killer or “Pillowman”²⁸, and Cyrus, the sweet and wise person, who attracts all the people around him by his gentle nature. Finally, Cyrus cannot control his murderous urges any more. This suggests a lack of autonomy in him so that one can say that he has lost control over his different personae and has also lost personhood.

However, there is nevertheless a possibility of the twins having an extraordinary mental connection - telepathic powers, for example,²⁹ which might here even lead Virus to commit murders in Cyrus’ stead. These powers, which can be linked to the phenomenon of synchronicity, might mean that they have developed spiritual capabilities that exceed the ones one usually encounters in people. They might see things or have abilities most people normally do not develop due to not paying attention to the spiritual side of themselves. In this sense, Virus and Cyrus might outdo many other people in the development of this particular aspect. However, their numerous limitations in respect to the interaction between them and others certainly outweigh these special abilities.

The three protagonists of the novel, Ormus, Vina and Rai certainly recognise these almost obsessive ways of finding certainties in the world as undertaken by the others. They try to overcome such a clinging to certainties because they recognise how they lead to stasis in the personality. A static personality contradicts completely their idea of what life should be like. Instead, they recognise and embrace the world’s complexity by revealing their own complex natures to the world. They seem to live in what Sir Darius called the “fourth function of *outsideness*”.³⁰ This implies the lack of having roots anywhere, of not becoming wholly absorbed into and attached to a place with its culture and also to other people. (However, Vina does not quite succeed in this, as she remains deeply attached to India all her life.³¹) This semi-detachment opens up new possibilities and the freedom found in it is shown to be something we seem to have a deep-rooted desire for. One of these new possibilities is that of

²⁷ Ibid: 139.

²⁸ Ibid: 140.

²⁹ Ibid: 197ff.

³⁰ Ibid: 74.

³¹ Ibid: 254.

gaining a greater insight into the world and how it functions. “The only people who see the whole picture,” he murmured, ‘are the ones who step out of the frame’”.³²

The four functions mentioned are now directly related to the four elements, which are treated both, in a literal and in a symbolic way here. The four elements play an important role in the course of the protagonists’ lives: The elements, earth and air, might be said to be the most significant ones dealt with here. The earth stands for stability, certainties and roots – characteristics the protagonists shy away from, but are in need of at the same time. The fact that Vina is finally killed by an earthquake shows her gradual disintegration and the failure in attaining the degree of stability that is necessary to function at all. She literally lost ‘the ground beneath her feet’.

‘Air’ is the element the protagonists choose, especially in their early lives, to live in. It contains the idea of freedom, of embracing the unknown and of crossing frontiers, such as the breaking of taboos, the leaving behind of certainties and the taking of risks. This metaphorical frontier-crossing is again literally demonstrated in the flights the protagonists take – first to England and then finally to America. How necessary such a crossing of frontiers is for anyone, should be made clear by our dependence on air to live at all. Without the element of air we would die, as is shown in Cyrus’ killings by suffocation. This means that part of us dies if we haven’t got or do not use the necessary freedom to act sometimes independently from society’s rules.

‘Water’ has strong associations with cleansing and purifying powers. It is linked to the exploration of the unconscious and because of the latter’s often rather mysterious nature it is called the “magic element”³³ by Rai. The latter certainly treats water and the sea in particular as a metaphor. It is also no coincidence that he meets Vina for the first time at the beach. Water signifies here the lifelong attachment the two of them form or, as Rai puts it, “my instant infatuation, the commencement of a lifelong enslavement.”³⁴

In addition, Ormus’ increasing dive into the unconscious, the alternative world, is also linked to the sea image: “But he will spend his early days on the sea, within sight of land, which will remain just out of reach but which will listen, as though hypnotized, to his seductive, imagining voice.”³⁵ This voice also represents the spiritual realm, which – especially in Hinduism – is likewise related to the sea and the ocean.

³² Ibid: 43.

³³ Ibid: 79.

³⁴ Ibid: 65.

³⁵ Ibid: 276.

‘Fire’ finally implies, like ‘air’, the leaving behind of things. This can be regarded in a positive as well as in a negative way: It is negative insofar as it means the destruction of things. Literally this is displayed in the fire that destroys the house of the Merchants.³⁶

Although we are left in uncertainty about the arsonist’s identity, there is a strong suggestion of Vina having committed this crime, as the fire breaks out just after she and Ameer had a devastating argument that makes Vina take flight from the place. The strong effect of this argument on Vina can be explained by Vina’s personal history with her terrible childhood, which has made it very hard for her to let herself into any close connections with people that contain trust. It has thus meant a lot to her when she achieved to form a ‘family bond’ with Ameer, which has provided her with a basis on which she could develop a sense of ontological security. Now, regarding her affection for and her trust in Ameer as misplaced, the disappointment and shock about it goes deep, any sense of vague existential security she might have developed disappears, and she feels the strong need to make this broken bond visible and by doing so also takes revenge.

Fire has also a positive potential, however, as it can also mean getting rid of unpleasant, destructive aspects in oneself. It implies the possibility of replacing them with more constructive aspects.

The four elements, taken together, constitute the various inclinations and needs of an individual and suggest that, discarding just one of them entails a loss of balance in the person. They remind us of the necessity of interplay of our various facets and warn us of prioritising one of them too much above the others. How difficult this proves to be is shown in the protagonists’ actions. Each of them tries to achieve a high personal complexity that strives to go beyond what many other people attempt to achieve in terms of personal development. The protagonists try out means to help them to achieve this:

One of it is the undertaking to live life to the full, i. e. to experience all the various aspects of life and embrace as many as possible. Vina is the person who indulges in this in particular. She accepts the nature of change in life, she recognises that life is transient and tries to go with the flow, picking up theories in life that suit her, embracing certain ideologies for a time, while discarding others. “Whereas the most obvious lesson of travelling...was that reality shifted.”³⁷ She finally even crosses the colour-line,³⁸ as she recognises how much a colour definition reduces a person and usually entails all sorts of discriminations. Ormus expresses this as follows: “Do I have to be a color, Ormus mutters, coloring. Can’t we get beyond,

³⁶ Ibid: 172.

³⁷ Ibid: 246.

³⁸ Ibid: 406.

finally, I mean can't we get under our skins."³⁹ The outcome of such behaviour is a very interesting, often contradictory mixture of various aspects in her personality, which seems – due to the multitude of its displayed facets – almost to disappear, to become something non-distinct.

She was a ragbag of selves, torn fragments of people she might have become. ..., and when she jerked into life you would never know who would be there, in her skin. ..., who would transform himself over and over again if you tried to grab him, for he knew that if you did capture him he would have to grant your deepest wish.⁴⁰

Obviously, Vina's attitude towards life is to embrace it fully in its changing aspects, to cross as many frontiers set up by society as would suit her and thus fully immerse herself in being a creature of the fourth dimension, of choosing her element, which is the air (and to a lesser extent fire and water). Ormus undergoes, especially in his youth, many changes as well and seems to be Vina's equal: "..., the truth is he's just another one of us chameleons, just another looking-glass transformer. ...we career between selves, lane-hopping wildly, trying not to run off the road and crash."⁴¹ The passage suggests that Rai, the narrator-figure, also considers himself to be a person who does not resist but welcomes change:

Yet I myself am a discontinuous being, not what I was meant to be, no longer what I was. ... inventing myself anew to make a new world in the company of other altered lives – that there is thrilling gain in this metamorphic destiny, as well as aching loss.⁴²

Rai clearly sees the potential of change as much as Vina and Ormus do, and his attitude affirms also the necessity of loss.

He regards metamorphosis as "human magic"⁴³ that is so powerful that it even "supplants our need for the divine"⁴⁴. He is therefore only too ready to stay with Vina and Ormus in "the condition of transformation."⁴⁵ Rai recognises quite correctly that metamorphosis can be a kind of revelation in that it reveals certain aspects of the personality that have not come to the surface before the change.

However, we soon learn that this method of attaining wholeness is insufficient. We can observe this in the protagonists' gradual disintegration. They quite obviously lack something that holds their different characteristics together somehow and has a regulating function on

³⁹ Ibid: 386.

⁴⁰ Ibid: 125.

⁴¹ Ibid: 273.

⁴² Ibid: 456.

⁴³ Ibid: 476.

⁴⁴ Ibid: 476.

the chaotic jumble in their selves. They need a stabilising factor – the earth-dimension – in their lives and look for it particularly in their art and also in love. “Stability is what’s rare. ... Yet the everyday is what we need, it’s the house we build to defend us against the big bad wolf of change.”⁴⁶

Rai unconsciously tries to find some stability through his profession as photographer: Even though his pictures show the many-sidedness of reality in the many different places he takes pictures of, there is also an organising principle inherent in them. This organising principle is he himself: he controls the pictures, he decides on the angle and perspective of the pictures and furthermore gives these otherwise fleeting moments duration. This implies the control of and also the putting an end to change to a certain extent: “Something of the double self of the photographer, the ruthless *tant- pis* killer and the giver of immortality also.”⁴⁷ Photography is a means of understanding the world⁴⁸ through creativity.

However, Rai indulges too much in the control he has through his camera and overestimates what his art can do for him: “... - these things have, as they say, a downside. When I’m facing the enormities of the actual, when that great monster is roaring into my lens, I lose control of other things.”⁴⁹ This is the case because he stays a voyeur for a long time and does not engage in actual life as much as would be advantageous to his personal development, which can only occur if direct interactions with others take place. His camera therefore also creates a distance between himself and others, as others are merely observed and possibly recognised due to reflection on the pictures and images he has, but it does not go beyond that. Thus we can say that he uses this technical instrument in a way that is, in some respects, inappropriate. Nevertheless, it is interesting to see how the artificial process of photography reflects the natural process of creating an image of the other person in one’s mind – of constructing their identity.

Ormus and Vina also use their art, which is music, to hold on to something in a constantly changing world. Their music expresses both, their experiences of the various transitory aspects of life, which are raised in their songs and are expressed in the songs’ melodies, as well as something more permanent, something they can rely on insofar as the songs do not suddenly disappear, but will exist even after they have become unpopular. It is again the permanence of art that is sought. The merging of different contents in their songs is

⁴⁵ Ibid: 476.

⁴⁶ Ibid: 517.

⁴⁷ Ibid: 229.

⁴⁸ Ibid: 82.

⁴⁹ Ibid: 15.

demonstrated in the description of the technical mixing process in music.⁵⁰ Furthermore, it is no coincidence that it is rock music that is the genre Ormus and Vina have chosen to make theirs: like the protagonists, rock music is seen to be transcultural in its nature. Not only is it highly popular in the West, it is also established and very much appreciated in Bombay. It thus crosses (geographical) boundaries and unites. Insofar as music embodies and expresses essential urges present in a human being, it can definitely contribute to the characters' self-development and to an increased experience of life's complexity – an experience that does not exclude any more the aspect of permanence. Their own complex personalities are thus experienced: "What I want the music to say is that I don't have to choose ... I'll be all of them, I can do that. Here comes everybody, right? That's where it came from, the idea of playing all the instruments."⁵¹ In a way they are successful in their undertaking: they always find a sense of relief from troubles and experience a sense of fulfilment in their art. This fulfilment is due to the fact that they are able to express a great range of feelings and therefore experience and learn a great deal about their selves: "The music offered the tantalising possibility of being borne on the waves of sound through the curtain of *maya* that supposedly limits our knowing, through the gates of perception to the divine melody beyond."⁵² As in some of Rushdie's other novels, especially in *Midnight's Children* and *The Moor's Last Sigh*, Hinduism is clearly evoked: transcending the illusionary veil of *maya*, the concept of *rasa* is thus introduced as the artistic means of release and possibility of establishing a union with the infinite that the protagonists choose to explore.

Not only do Vina and Ormus get to know their selves better through their art, but they also investigate their relationship in this way. This ties in with Hinduism's emphasis on establishing a close bond with other people in order to gain self-fulfilment and transcendence. This connection, this love, between them seems to be at least as – if not probably more – important as their art, and their art, in many instances, merely serves them to give this love a voice. "Vina sang to us, reminding us of love."⁵³ Music and love can rightly be described as "twin powers"⁵⁴, but it is love that they hold on to as the most crucial stabilising factor in respect to their personalities. They take the risk of forming a love-relationship in spite of having been greatly disappointed in this idea by their families during their childhood and adolescence. It now becomes a necessity to them to form a constructive love-relationship: "So also Ormus Cama, exiled from love by the parents whom he had failed to transfix with love's

⁵⁰ Ibid: 309.

⁵¹ Ibid: 312.

⁵² Ibid: 126.

⁵³ Ibid: 161.

⁵⁴ Ibid: 457.

arrow, shrivelled by their lack of affection, is restored to the world of love by Vina.”⁵⁵ This process is evocative of the episodes associated with the Hindu love god, Kama, whose name bears a deliberately close resemblance to our protagonist’s surname: in the Hindu myth, Kama tried to shoot the powerful Shiva with a dart of love, an action that is punished (as Ormus is punished by his parents) insofar as Shiva burns him to ashes with a thunderbolt. It is only due to the goddess, Rati, Kama’s wife, who pleads for his life, that Love is brought back from the dead. This is also an inversion of the Orpheus myth insofar as it is the woman who successfully intervenes here.

Only through the security of the permanence of this bond do Vina and Ormus seem to be capable at all to embrace and also bear the variety of transitory experiences of life. “Vina, I’ll be the ground beneath your feet and you, in this happy ending, will be the earth I need.”⁵⁶ But it soon becomes clear that they make a mistake in setting their love above every other aspect of life, even above their art. Love, as a special form of human relationship is another important factor that can contribute to personal development, but it is counterproductive to neglect other aspects in that process, as development is a process that is normally caused by more factors than just one. Their love cannot trigger a real maturity process in their personalities because of the unrealistic ideas they have about what human love can be like and do for them, expecting from it much more than it can possibly achieve. Furthermore, their ideas of love in general, and their love-relationship in particular, are partly very different, even opposite, and they have huge difficulties in finding compromises: Even though both of them have a very idealistic notion of their relationship, it is Ormus who really adheres to the principle of romantic love. This includes marriage, absolute faithfulness to each other and being in each other’s company more or less all the time. Having rejected Persis as a partner for Vina as the much better alternative in his opinion⁵⁷, he soon becomes increasingly disinterested in other women although he has had affairs with numerous women the years before.

This romantic love takes gradually on more and more obsessive forms: The ten-year period of Ormus’ celibacy is definitely an episode that could be called to be very unhealthy, as he denies his own sexual needs and turns his love for her into something almost divine – into something that appears to be superhuman.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Ibid: 152.

⁵⁶ Ibid: 278.

⁵⁷ Ibid: 148-49.

⁵⁸ Ibid: 442.

Vina, in contrast, even though regarding the bond between herself and Ormus as possibly the most crucial thing in her life, is not prepared to promise faithfulness and, for a long time, not even marriage either. She sees no contradiction between her deep love to Ormus and the indulgence in sexual freedom. “‘You are the only man I will ever love,’ she promises Ormus. ‘But do you seriously suppose you’re also the only guy I will ever fuck?’”⁵⁹

These opposing views on love cause serious difficulties in their relationship. The question arises in both of them if their love is really a stabilising and supportive factor of their personalities or not:

... it could not have hit Ormus harder than Vina Apsara’s disillusionment with love. He too had lost confidence, and faith in the very idea of Vina, the idea of there being an eternal and perfect partner whom he might perfectly and eternally love and by whom he might in turn be rendered perfect and eternal.⁶⁰

Ormus thus starts to question the myth of the perfect union, which makes the lovers, who have originally been one, complete again.

It is Rai, however, who is fully aware of their love as being entirely human in spite of all the various appearances of divinity.⁶¹

Even though they give support to each other through their love, the disagreements between them have an increasingly destabilising effect on Vina and Ormus and finally lead to the disintegration of their personalities.

The novel seems to suggest that Ormus’ romantic notion of love is also unrealistic for the reason that man obviously has both the capacity and the tendency to love more people than just one and that the different people one falls in love with normally fulfil different needs one has.

She loved him like a student, needing his good opinion, playing up to him in the hope of drawing forth the magic of his smile. But she also, from the very beginning, needed to leave him and go elsewhere to play. He was her seriousness, he was the depths of her beginning, but he could not also be her frivolity. That light relief, that serpent of the garden, I must confess, was me.⁶²

Rai’s function for Vina is an important one. Even though he usually plays second fiddle, he is someone Vina trusts and has a deep bond with. “I was her secret, to whom she told her

⁵⁹ Ibid: 167.

⁶⁰ Ibid: 195.

⁶¹ Ibid: 331.

⁶² Ibid: 116.

secrets.”⁶³ Knowing this, Rai’s envy of her relationship with Ormus is kept within strong limits. He knows he can give her pleasure and a good time without making any demands on her. She would take what she wants from him without giving more than she is ready to give, which is a commitment. She needs this feeling of freedom, not just in the way every person does, but even more so due to her early disappointments in trust and relationships. Vina thus tries to come to terms with her deep fear of engulfment by another person. “How, even loving him, even adoring him, she might run to find room for herself.”⁶⁴

People do not always act on these unfulfilled needs and there are instances where the partner can fulfil almost all the most important needs of the other person so that the urge to look for a fulfilment of the needs that are not fully satisfied is hardly present; but it obviously proves to be dangerous not – like Ormus – to take this inclination in us into account. At the end, this neglect is one of the factors that drives Ormus into his madness.

Another important factor that leads towards his madness is the neglect of his spiritual side. It is not only the stability of the earth he has to seek obsessively after exposing himself too much to the endless freedom of the air, but it is also the lack of water, which is the suppression of his spirituality, which causes the disintegration of his psyche. Due to the fact that he mainly seems to embrace the tangible, material world, he does not only not know how to deal with these other aspects of himself, but does not even recognise these aspects as truly belonging to himself, that is, to his own psyche. Instead, he attributes them, ludicrously enough, to his dead twin brother Gayomart, who becomes in this way his shadow self:

“... sitting on the top step of his dreamworld, staring into the dark, the purple stain on his eyelid glowing with the effort of searching out his lost sibling, his shadow self, ... , Ormus Cama can hear Gayo singing his songs.”⁶⁵ He believes also to get his creative impulses from him. This is insofar true, as art as a product of the imagination, is the result of a merging of conscious and unconscious contents: “...searching for the points at which his inner life intersected the life of the greater world outside, and calling those points of intersection ‘songs’.”⁶⁶

The fact that he hears Gayomart sing and acknowledges his need to be set free relates to his unconscious impulses urging him to let them become active. This is, of course, impossible for Ormus, as he does not acknowledge these impulses as his own. This lack of self-awareness leads to the split in Ormus’ consciousness. His schizophrenic condition is finally displayed in

⁶³ Ibid: 426.

⁶⁴ Ibid: 442.

⁶⁵ Ibid: 101.

⁶⁶ Ibid: 187.

Gayomart's escape from his brain that entails Ormus' double vision. "...that ever since she awoke him from his long beauty sleep he's been living in – or rather with – two worlds at once."⁶⁷ This double vision also makes the mysterious figure of Maria appear. She seems to be a character from another world. I suggest that she represents the female archetype of the sensual, highly sexual woman. It is therefore not surprising that she appears quite a few times during his ten-year celibacy⁶⁸, thus pointing out to him that it is very unhealthy to discard sexuality and other parts of him so forcefully. This suppressed part now often takes over in a completely uncontrolled way. Normally, either consciousness or the unconscious dominate an individual for a while, but they cannot dominate at the same time to equal parts. However, Ormus can switch from one world to the other without fully knowing any longer, which one the real one is. "... it's difficult to tell where this world ends and that begins."⁶⁹

To a certain extent the magical and the real always merge with each other so that it is useless to draw a sharp line between them. However, they have to be differentiated somehow in order to orientate oneself in the outside world at all. Ormus fails more and more to do so. "The frontiers are softening"⁷⁰ and his insanity gets worse. As a consequence, he is a torn personality who is most of the time not in control of himself. "He hasn't fully grasped how to make of multiplicity an accumulating strength rather than a frittery weakness. How the many selves can be, in song, a single multitude ...plural voice."⁷¹ The melting of the different spheres in Ormus together with the difficulties in his relationship with Vina, especially with the fact that he is often jealous due to the fact that he can never be certain with whom Vina has affairs, let him age too early and make him very ill. It is not helpful here that Vina cannot cope with Ormus' mental illness and leaves him often on his own instead of trying to help where help might still be possible: "For all her fearsome competence, Vina didn't know how to deal with Ormus' deepening obsessions."⁷²

She thus fails in displaying the kind of charity that is such an important element in mature love relationships and that could have helped Ormus especially in this situation.

Ormus' insanity is complete when, after Vina's death, he tries to find substitute Vina figures that have to play the parts of his lovers.⁷³ This behaviour shows how unhealthy his love for Vina has been. It has not made him whole at all at the end, but – due to his exaggerated expectations for this love - has contributed to his final downfall.

⁶⁷ Ibid: 357.

⁶⁸ Ibid: 394.

⁶⁹ Ibid: 400.

⁷⁰ Ibid: 400.

⁷¹ Ibid: 308.

⁷² Ibid: 452.

But it is not only Ormus who cannot cope with Vina's death. There are also Vina's fans, who have followed both the news of her singing career as well as her private life insofar as it was possible for them to do so, who cannot grasp the fact that they would never see or hear her alive again. Even before her death, many of them have both envied and admired Vina like a goddess. To them, she has become "Vina Divina".⁷⁴ Not only that. They have created a myth of her relationship with Ormus, comparing it, among others, to the Orpheus and Eurydike myth. "Many different versions of the first encounter between Vina Apsara and Ormus Cama are presently in circulation, thanks to the clouds of mythologisation, regurgitation, falsification and denigration that surrounded their story for years."⁷⁵ Rai, the narrator, mentions the myths associated with them numerous times so that they become an ever-present theme in the novel. "In my lifetime, the love of Ormus and Vina is as close as I've come to a knowledge of the mythic, the overweening, the divine."⁷⁶ Vina becomes, especially after her death, an idol to the people. Everyone believes to see in her something different they aspire to and admire. This exaggerated attribution of meaning to her, makes her paradoxically meaningless because she becomes everything at once and disappears completely behind people's projections. "*...she has become an empty receptacle, an arena of discourse, and we can invent her in our own image, as once we invented god ...her years.*"⁷⁷ The grandiose projections surrounding Vina can be seen as part of a wider context in which secular society shows a great need for some kind of religious or at least quasi-religious experience. Traditional religion is thus replaced by human idols, which are elevated to the rank of divine creatures without taking into account their true personalities. "*Dying when the world shook, by her death she shook the world, and was quickly raised, like a fallen Caesar, to the ranks of the divine.*"⁷⁸ This is particularly the case with Ormus, who finds in Vina his personal goddess. Furthermore, the repressed and outcasts identify with her to a great extent, and by her tendency to take risks and to embrace change, she has become "a patron divinity of the age of uncertainty, the goddess with the feet of clay."⁷⁹ Her life and death have achieved that people are more ready to embrace change and thus, if this is done in the right way, develop their personalities. "Instability, the modern condition, no longer frightens them; it feels like possibility."⁸⁰ Vina has become a symbol to the people and this is illustrated in the

⁷³ Ibid: 535.

⁷⁴ Ibid: 494.

⁷⁵ Ibid: 92.

⁷⁶ Ibid: 594.

⁷⁷ Ibid: 502.

⁷⁸ Ibid: 495.

⁷⁹ Ibid: 499.

⁸⁰ Ibid: 503.

impersonations of what they see in her. It is obvious that in death she has achieved what she wanted to achieve all her life: "...she has indeed transcended all frontiers: of race, of skin, religion, language, history, nation, class."⁸¹ Such a love is a most unrealistic love and does not contribute to the people's self-development, as they merely project their own wishes and longings onto her, while they mainly remain passive themselves in their stunned admiration of her person.

A positive change in the attitude towards love occurs in Rai. Although he was on the verge of disintegration after Vina's death, as his sense of identity depended very much on Vina's view of him, he succeeds in overcoming this crisis and some of his insecurity. He eventually accepts that he needs to find love in a fulfilling relationship as well, that he cannot always blend with the background and find security there.⁸² He is conscious of the many doomed love triangles he has either been part of or has observed: triangles such as the one he, Ormus and Vina, or the one he, his mother and Bombay or the triangle Persis, Ormus and Vina constituted, have only led to his invisibility. Rai has further contributed to his invisibility by his escape from engaging in life, which includes taking part in the experience of love's complexities. In the end, he overcomes this tendency of making himself invisible and takes the risk of starting a new relationship. He develops a broader viewpoint than Vina and Ormus by not only seeing the advantages but by also acknowledging and accepting the difficulties of being to some extent a discontinuous being: "Yet I myself am a discontinuous being ... inventing myself anew to make a new world in the company of altered lives – that there is thrilling gain in this metamorphic destiny, as well as aching loss."⁸³ It should be noted though that there has to be some continuity present still in order not to lose personhood. Rai, in contrast to Vina and Ormus, is fully prepared to welcome human love without elevating it to something almost divine.

The novel shows us the difficulties involved in the process of self-development in the face of the world's complexity, which often seems to be almost unbearable. In the first part of this interpretation of the novel I have shown how the characters escape this many-faceted world by pursuing a particular interest in an almost obsessive way. This leads to the stagnation in their personal development. In the second part the three protagonists attempt to face this complexity of the world and the many facets of themselves by fully living up to it. By doing so, Vina and Ormus reject to acknowledge the importance of factors such as roots and other

⁸¹ Ibid: 496.

⁸² Ibid: 444.

⁸³ Ibid: 456.

stabilising factors for a long time. They cannot see that there is a limit as to what they can take in of the world or live up to. They become desperate about the aspects of themselves that they have hitherto neglected and do not properly integrate them. This is the case with Ormus' spiritual and many other of his unconscious aspects, and it is also true for Vina's attitude towards bonds, especially towards love. At the end this incapability leads to their disintegration.

Rai, in contrast, undergoes a greater learning-process and recognises both his potential and his limits. Especially the factors of art and love are eventually dealt with in an adequate, realistic manner and are not overestimated or turned into something that they cannot become – such as Vina and Ormus did.

Rai's self-development and his satisfaction with himself and his surroundings at the end show that an individual can indeed attain a greater complexity and approach wholeness by taking into account the various striving forces, here symbolised in the four elements, struggling for action within themselves. Art and relationships, especially the intimate form of a love-relationship, can contribute to this maturity process as long as one does not overestimate their possibilities by attributing magic powers to them.

III.3.9. The imitation of art and of 'real' life: *Fury*'s investigation of the autonomy or heteronomy of human nature

Salman Rushdie's most recent novel, *Fury*, also concentrates on the roles of art and relationships and illustrates misconceptions about them and the repercussions of those on society. The society analysed here is American society, which should serve as an example of a contemporary Western consumer society. The novel reveals how it works and what impact this has on the people. In this analysis, it is particularly the role of man's 'destructive' emotions that is highlighted in the context of wholeness and that is dealt with both in art and relationships. It will be particularly the distinction between art and artifice that becomes crucial when dealing with the expression of our inner lives - a distinction that is not made by mainstream American society, which has disastrous effects on the individuals as parts of that society.

I want to start concentrating on politics and how the latter can cause such emotions in people who are patronised or attacked, before focussing on the individual's personal history and the social influences under which they live as factors that contribute to the emergence of these feelings.

However, I will also show that what we call 'destructive' feelings are not simply negative in their nature, as they have the potential to introduce change in various ways, which can also be seen as a chance in the individual's life. Dealing with them in the context of the individual's personality is essential, as they are among the most powerful feelings we have and as characteristic of human nature as the emotions we consider to be more positive.

Quite early on, the destructive influence of American politics on many people's lives and emotions is directly shown and criticised. It is America's showing-off of wealth and money that is identified as a way to make other, less well-off nations angry and arouse their hate.

America insulted the rest of the planet ... by treating such bounty with the shoulder-shrugging casualness of the inevitably wealthy. But New York in this time of plenty had become the object and goal of the world's concupiscence and lust, and the 'insult' only made the rest of the planet more desirous than ever.¹

America is also once again criticised for showing a superior attitude towards other countries and places by playing the policeman of the world. The protagonist's, Malik Solanka's, fury

¹ Rushdie, Salman. *Fury*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2001: 6.

especially rises when he thinks of America's policy in Central America, vividly illustrated before in Rushdie's travelogue, and in Southeast Asia. Even though he lives in America now, he still strongly employs his critical faculties about its policies. The great injustice felt by Solanka about these policies is expressed in the language he uses when displaying his angry feelings: "Yes, but, Solanka wanted to say, rising to the bait, what's wrong is wrong, and because of the immense goddamn *power* of America, the immense fucking *seduction* of America, those bastards in charge get away with"² America's alleged self-confidence is shown in the labelling of various products as 'American'.³ America's attitude is thus reflected in the nationalist rhetoric. This rhetoric completely veils the fact that America is a salad bowl of various different, particularly European influences.

Furthermore, both America's but also Britain's politics (especially their imperial and colonial strategies) are criticised indirectly by presenting them in the form of the powers present on Lilliput-Blefuscus – a place that is obviously imagined by the author, but present as actually existing in the novel. The place bears strong resemblances to colonized states in general and to India in particular. The names are inverted, however, insofar as it is the Indians who enter the country as invaders, whereas the indigenous population bears the mythological name of Elbees. Oppression of 'the other' takes place in both ways, however. The Indians remain for a long time numbers to the indigenous Elbee population,⁴ which eliminates the Indians' individuality due to fear and suspicion and instead treats them like a homogenised mass. The Elbees' fear that their land will be taken away from them by the newcomers results in laws that forbid the Indians to own land. The improvement of the country's economy by the Indians, which is ignored by the indigenous inhabitants, could be a reflection of the economic measures the British colonial power once adopted in India. It can also be seen in the context of the economic success many Indian migrants enjoyed in their new homelands. Like the British colonials, the invaders into Lilliput-Blefuscus also adopt a superior attitude towards the natives, who are presented as cannibals who are lazy and not able to cope without their help. Two completely different systems clash with each other here: the immigrants, like the former colonizers, are entrepreneurs and know that the world speaks their language, whereas the Elbees are collectivists and lead a tribal way of life. Both communities can only see the differences that stand between them, but cannot see that they share for example the same kinds of problems, one of them being alcoholism. The power struggle between them also reflects America's imposed politics on others and the resistance it meets with the people

² Ibid: 68.

³ Ibid: 55.

⁴ Ibid: 156-57.

concerned. The worldwide consequences of oppression, discrimination and violence are emphasised, showing how interlinked and interconnected the whole world has become in the postmodern age.

The narrow, superior viewpoints that are taken on by powerful nations in respect to others let people become increasingly intolerant and aggressive towards others, which in turn triggers a great amount of anger and fury in the persons who encounter these attitudes. Again, it is the immigrant's condition that tries to transcend these views. Neela, who has for a long time not questioned the military interventions of her own people in Lilliput-Blefuscu, becomes finally critical of their despicable practices and turns against her own people in her new adherence to justice.⁵ Neela recognises the underlying ideology of Social Darwinism that characterises their way of thinking:

Our culture is ancient and superior and will henceforth prevail. Let the fittest survive, isn't it. For one hundred years good-for-nothing Elbee cannibals drank grog – kava, glimigrim, flunec, Jack Daniel's and Coke, every kind of godless booze – and made us eat their shit. Now they can eat ours instead.⁶

Solanka does for a long time during his stay in America not attempt to achieve a broadminded outsider's view on either India or England, but rather tries, like Saladin in *The Satanic Verses*, to erase his memories of his former home places and to merely concentrate completely on the impressions he has of his new abode – in both their positive and negative forms. “America, to which he had come to erase himself. To be free of attachment and so also of anger, fear and pain. ... Eat me, America, and give me peace.”⁷ He believes that “his old self must somehow be cancelled, put away for good.”⁸ He hopes to regain his inner stability by leaving behind the places where he had many unpleasant experiences and where he started losing control. In spite of his recognition of America's many weaknesses, especially its means of oppression applied to others, he has the idealistic notion that America can achieve this by its “hybrid, omnivorous power”⁹.

Gradually he learns, however, that it is impossible to wholly invent oneself anew – even at an entirely new place. Instead of leaving everything unpleasant behind, he brings “along his ghosts”¹⁰. “This was what we brought with us on our journey across oceans, beyond frontiers,

⁵ Ibid: 253.

⁶ Ibid: 238.

⁷ Ibid: 44.

⁸ Ibid: 82.

⁹ Ibid: 44.

¹⁰ Ibid: 48.

through life: our little storehouse of anecdote and what-happened-next, our private once-upon-a-time.”¹¹

This shows the power of past experiences in general and childhood experiences in particular on our present lives and personal development. Apart from the already mentioned discriminating state-politics of America or imperial and colonial Britain, this is the other important factor that could give rise to very strong emotions in us. Especially Solanka’s and Mila’s backgrounds are quite significant insofar as they can explain their present behaviour and emotions to a great extent:

Solanka’s past is gradually revealed in the course of the novel: Having been abused as a child and having been dressed as a girl, he has developed extremely strong emotions later on in life. Solanka has obviously internalised the behavioural pattern shown by his father and adopts it now in his relationship with Mila: Instead of being in the position of victim, he now takes on the part of the abuser or perpetrator by imagining the role of the abusive father in his mind. He also sees his own creation, Little Brain, in Mila and also thinks of her as the daughter he has never had.¹² It is hinted that he might even have done a similar thing to his son Asmaan: “... even though he knew there was one last gate he had not unlocked: the gate of full disclosure, of absolute, brutal truth, behind which lay the strange thing that happened between Mila Milo and himself.”¹³ His past has not been dealt with and he therefore behaves in this regressive and uncontrolled way, which includes all these transference processes. Both his thoughts and his emotions that seem to elude his control are a product of his upbringing and incorporate his fury.

Mila’s attraction towards Solly and the kind of relationship she indulges in with him, also reflect her personality’s needs, which are in that form certainly the result of her own upbringing. Mila, who had to replace her mother very early, was – like Solly - also sexually abused by her father. As the grown-up Mila is only acquainted with this kind of ‘loving’ relationship, she looks for another father-figure who would love her like her father loved her. She takes on the role of victim again: ““This is an echo, isn’t it, Mila, a reprise. You sang this song once before.””¹⁴

It becomes obvious that Mila’s need for a father-figure complements Solanka’s need to imitate what his father had done to him when being a child.¹⁵ Solly believes wrongly he can find release from his tormenting feelings in the relationship with Mila, whom he considers to

¹¹ Ibid: 50-51.

¹² Ibid: 124.

¹³ Ibid: 223-24.

¹⁴ Ibid: 133.

¹⁵ Ibid: 134.

be “his angel of mercy, his living doll”¹⁶, thus turning her into a highly imaginary figure which does not bear much resemblance to Mila as a person outside his mind. However, he soon recognises that they do not really tackle their problems, as they (especially Mila) do not acknowledge them in spite of re-enacting them:¹⁷ “Phoney experience that feels so good that you actually prefer it to the real thing. That was me: her fake”¹⁸. The “real thing” would have been an authentic love relationship that involves more recognition of both the self and the other instead of the strong projections that are at work between the parties. In such a case the relationship would not have become the harmful, masochistic and angry one Solanka and Mila are engaged in. Both of them have to find more inner stability in order to establish a more constructive relationship.

Solanka’s relationship with Neela can be seen as a development, as there seem to be far fewer projections involved on his side and instead, it seems that there is more care and predictability involved.¹⁹ This new love has a very healing effect on Solanka’s tumultuous state of mind and, by increasingly allowing intimacy to grow between them, takes the edge off things. “...their love was stronger than fury by stretching out a long scarred arm ... set free.”²⁰ This improvement in him is not changed by the fact that at the end it becomes clear that Neela – like Vina in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* - had unrealistic expectations towards the relationship that were different from Solanka’s and chooses to go on a very different path that does not include Solanka.²¹

While fury, such as in Solanka’s and Mila’s case where it has underlain their regressive, unhealthy behaviour, has so far mainly been shown from a very destructive aspect, it is worth noting that it can also take on all kinds of both positive and negative forms. Fury can simply be regarded as life energy and this energy makes itself visible in all kinds of different states of mind and the behavioural forms that result from them. “Out of *furia* comes creation, inspiration, originality, passion, but also violence, pain, pure unafraid destruction, the giving and receiving of blows from which we never recover.”²² Solanka personifies his fury in the mythological ‘Furies’. This personification emphasises that he feels to be at the mercy of another controlling agency and helpless to intervene and control his fury: “A low, simmering, disconnected anger continued to seep and flow deep within him, ... as if it were its own master, as if he were merely the receptacle, the host, and it, the fury, were the sentient,

¹⁶ Ibid: 131.

¹⁷ Ibid: 173-74.

¹⁸ Ibid: 232.

¹⁹ Ibid: 206.

²⁰ Ibid: 219.

²¹ Ibid: 249-51.

controlling being.”²³ This anger is part of his shadow-self, which he – like other people – dismisses and fears because it is “boundary-breaking, rule-disproving, shapeshifting, transgressive, trespassing”²⁴ and therefore elusive, “the true ghost in our machine.”²⁵ The degree of destruction inherent in his anger must be considerable, as it made him nearly kill his wife and son,²⁶ an occurrence that led to his sudden departure to the United States, leaving his family behind. The fact that he cannot escape himself (or more precisely this angry part of himself) in America and achieve “the complete erasure, or ‘master deletion’, of the old program”²⁷ is reflected in several instances where he has to confront people in the new country, such as strangers who point out his British accent to him²⁸ or Mila who introduces herself to the dollmaker.²⁹

Mila’s belief that we are not subject to our emotions, that we are no puppets, but are fully in control of ourselves³⁰ contrasts sharply Solanka’s fear of being completely ruled and controlled by his anger. This fear rises to such an extent that he has blanks quite frequently, which even make him wonder whether he might have committed murders and not realised it: “Aspects of his behaviour had been escaping from his control.”³¹ He feels that his personality is on the verge of disintegration, a state that reflects quite well the postmodern condition of his times, which is particularly prevalent in America.

His violent fury, which has slumbered in him for a long time after his traumatic childhood experiences, seemed to have been triggered off by his realizations of the misconceptions he had about his art and especially what art can possibly do for him.

Art has been a means to Solanka of coming to terms with his experiences, another means that should enable him to find a form of release for his long-suppressed anger. At first, this creative way of dealing with his past and emotions seems to be a much more promising way to find peace within himself than his escape to America and the attempt to erase the past from his memory. It thus seems to be a positive form of fury. He creates dolls by using the material of his own life and surroundings and by making the latter strange.³² By doing so he creates little worlds he delves into more and more often until he ends up putting art before everyday life, thus using it as an escape from the present. His first wife recognises that he is just about

²² Ibid: 30-31.

²³ Ibid: 128.

²⁴ Ibid: 128.

²⁵ Ibid: 128.

²⁶ Ibid: 39.

²⁷ Ibid: 79.

²⁸ Ibid: 5.

²⁹ Ibid: 90.

³⁰ Ibid: 173.

³¹ Ibid: 85.

being able to handle art.³³ Art products become closer and more important to him than life outside. In actual fact, his dolls become so real to him that he can hear them talk.³⁴ This newly-created world is “the unreal world that ruled the real one.”³⁵ Solanka gives his dolls individuality and humanity by individualising them. This means that his dolls have grown in psychological complexity,³⁶ especially his creation called Little Brain of which he is particularly fond.

Another mistake Solanka makes in his approach to art is that he overestimates his own powers by believing himself capable of controlling his creation even after it has entered the commercial world. He sees himself as a puppeteer who is fully in control of his dolls. He has to face, however, how Little Brain is turned into something completely different, something which he has never intended it to become. She “had attained the fiction’s version of freedom.”³⁷ It is this lack of control over Little Brain that makes his fury erupt in him. Mila tries to make him aware of his limitations in order to gain a better understanding of the situation: “‘Little Brain? Let her fly, Malik, let her be what she is. She’s all grown-up now. Let her go. You can still love her. She’s still your child.’”³⁸ It is obvious that Solanka underestimates other people’s influences on his art products. This vision, together with a wrong assumption about the nature of art, has destructive effects on him.

This attempt to replace real life by art is also reflected in the way American society behaves. It dehumanises persons by ignoring their individuality. As shown in Solanka’s approach to art, the border between life and art melts. Life imitates art in American society by creating an artificial atmosphere. As a result of this unnatural environment, people’s feelings go wrong and often turn into fury, anxiety and related feelings.

Even though automorphosis, the transformation of the self (by itself), is said to be America’s special, defining characteristic, it does in actual fact not occur that often in individuals there.³⁹ People are rather transformed by the ideals and ideas of society. Indeed, it is the nation – or rather some of the so-called representatives of the nation – that creates images of what America is like and guidelines of how people have to behave. These images are displayed in phrases like the ‘American Dream’, the ‘American Tune’ and many others. If a nation has to

³² Ibid: 16.

³³ Ibid: 30.

³⁴ Ibid: 50-51.

³⁵ Ibid: 56.

³⁶ Ibid: 95.

³⁷ Ibid: 97.

³⁸ Ibid: 178.

³⁹ Ibid: 55.

display such labels to its citizens, it shows as a whole “the mark of an odd insecurity.”⁴⁰ We have already seen how this insecurity is exploited by showing off in front of other nations and by playing policeman of the world. Now it is also shown by a power abuse on her citizens, restricting their freedom (which, absurdly enough, they have been promised to find in America) by placing ideals - model-figures with certain attributes - in front of them and putting pressure on them to live up to them. By doing so America creates various ideologies and metaworlds⁴¹ its citizens are supposed to identify with. This, however, results in many persons’ confusion and disorientation, which often lead them to extreme pursuits.

This becomes apparent in the behaviour of three young men and their girlfriends, the latter who are later on killed by the former: They belong to a club that indulges in practices of sado-masochism and go to the very extremes in their experience of sexuality. “These young girls, so desperately desirous of desire, had only been able to find it at the outside extremes of human sexual behaviour.”⁴² The women appear as dolllike and try to represent their families by aiming at perfection: “All three were beautiful, all three long and blonde and formidably accomplished.”⁴³ They respond to an image that is recognised as beautiful in (American) society. By living up to it and trying to get attention, they eliminate all individuality from their personalities and become object-like: “*A living doll*. These young women were born to be trophies, fully accessorized Oscar-Barbies, to use Eleanor Masters Solanka’s phrase.”⁴⁴ By presenting themselves this way, they become generally eligible women: “They were property.”⁴⁵

A possible motive for the murder could have been the rage at the artificial nature of these women, this nature having evolved as a result of society’s (for example the families’) value-system. The women’s lovers are drawn towards them, certainly at least partly because of the latter’s dolllike characteristics; but they certainly also need a human encounter and at the end cannot deal with the women’s “lack of humanity, their breakability.”⁴⁶ This shows that man ultimately needs another human being, not an artificially perfected creature that almost constantly indulges in extremes. The young men could neither deal with their or their girlfriends’ excessive desires nor with their own fury, which remains undiminished, as they “had never been able to acquire: lessness, ordinariness. Real life.”⁴⁷

⁴⁰ Ibid: 56.

⁴¹ Ibid: 28.

⁴² Ibid: 202.

⁴³ Ibid: 72.

⁴⁴ Ibid: 72.

⁴⁵ Ibid: 73.

⁴⁶ Ibid: 73.

⁴⁷ Ibid: 202.

These women have become uniform and characterless in their dolllike existence. Although, Solanka's approach to art and life shares the great fluidity between these two areas with the view American society takes on them, the former contrasts the latter by individualising art products instead of abstracting individuality from persons. America's culture starts from art as the basis that determines real life with its complex human interaction:

Now the doll was the original, the woman the representation. These living dolls, these stringless marionettes, were not just 'dolloed up' on the outside. Behind their high-style exteriors, beneath that perfectly lucent skin, they were so stuffed full of behavioural chips, that there was no room left for messy humanity.⁴⁸

Solly is aware of the fact that an attack on them is at the same time an attack on America whose values these girls represent by embodying them. However, these women are certainly not aware of their lack of self-determination, but believe that they are "their own women, playing with their own appearance, their own sexuality, their own stories: the first generation of young women to be truly in control... and they loved it."⁴⁹ Society's influence works mainly on an unconscious level and becomes even more powerful due to the media's unashamed delineation of people's behaviour leaving them no private sphere,⁵⁰ which is for example shown in Solly's first wife's, Sara's, battle to inherit her husband's money and property.⁵¹ Due to the strong influence America exercises on her citizens, psychological disorders of all sorts erupt: "... psychological disorders and aberrations of all sorts were having field day back home ... people were stressed-out, cracking-up, and talking about it all day long in superstrings of moronic cliché."⁵² He identifies the way of how most of the Americans handle these disorders as superficial as well: They often merely take tablets against the illness' symptoms, but do not get to the root of them by confronting the real causes: "Yes, but the medication was a mist. It was a fog you swallowed that curled around your mind. ... Were we just cars now, cars that could take themselves to the mechanic and get themselves fixed up any way they wanted? ...to confront?"⁵³ This account unfortunately fails to see that there are some real benefits involved with this medication in respect to people's extremely unbalanced minds. However, Solanka nevertheless makes a point here in showing how America pretends to bring everything under control mechanically and explain everything in simple terms even though often no simple explanation can be found. Finding simple

⁴⁸ Ibid: 74.

⁴⁹ Ibid: 74.

⁵⁰ Ibid: 201.

⁵¹ Ibid: 214.

⁵² Ibid: 115.

⁵³ Ibid: 182.

explanations for everything is also at work in the great influence religion plays in American politics:

And in Washington's country, the supposedly insufficiently devout citizenry said, when asked, that over ninety per cent of them would vote for a Jew or homosexual for president, but only forty-nine per cent would vote for an atheist. Praise the Lord!⁵⁴

Religion here stands in very strong contrast to other tendencies in American life, such as the emphasis on mass consumerism and unreflected scientific progress. The forms that religion can sometimes take on are for example manifested in the extreme views and attitudes of the "fire-and-brimstone *preachers*, who blamed the coming catastrophe on the godlessness of Rijk culture."⁵⁵ These views with their often-inherent prudishness are certainly also contradictory to America's openness towards sexuality.

On the whole the incapability to solve things by coming up with simple solutions is shown in the increasing fury and in the augmenting crime rate in American society. Both the way politics work in America and America's value system, make the individuals' development very difficult.

In this greater context in which artifice is produced and art is used in rather unproductive and unsuccessful ways, Solanka gradually recognises both the possibilities as well as the limitations of art and thus comes to a new and better understanding of art itself. This better understanding, however, is only fully developed after he has undertaken another effort to exercise control over the world and now particularly over his emotions by dealing with them in his art, which of course had to fail as well. This time his art takes on the form of a science-fiction story. Again his art is based on material from his own life that is made strange by the use of his imagination. Science-fiction deals with other alternative worlds and in this function served him as a means of escape when he was still a child: "In flight from his own life's ugly reality, he found in the fantastic ... a ceaselessly metamorphosing alternative world in which he felt instinctively at home."⁵⁶ The refuge he again tries to find in science fiction reflects his own, very postmodern insecurity about his place in the world: "... Professor Malik Solanka felt more than ever like a refugee in a small boat, caught between surging tides: reason and unreason, war and peace, the future and the past."⁵⁷ In his science-fiction story he tries to capture the world's complexity by presenting the different layers of reality that he experiences: his first creations, the dolls, are dealt with as well as his real experiences in life.

⁵⁴ Ibid: 183.

⁵⁵ Ibid: 162.

⁵⁶ Ibid: 169.

The influences of both real life and the art products he created in the past (the latter being an imaginary reality), are thus expressed. These multiple influences that have led to the creation of the science-fiction story can be seen to constitute a kind of collage, which is also an art form that is mainly postmodern in character:

The backstory was a skeleton that periodically grew new bones, the framework for a fictional beast capable of metamorphosis, which fed on every scrap it could find: its creator's personal history, scraps of gossip, deep learning, current affairs, high and low culture, and the most nourishing diet of all – namely, the past.⁵⁸

In the story, the characters reflect these real-life influences in that they are almost mirror-images of the persons in Solly's environment and of Solly himself. The leader and commander on Lilliput-Blefuscu, Akasz Kronos, for example, is obviously in many ways a portrait of Solanka.⁵⁹ Not only the creation of the puppet-kings and the independence of the latter from his influence, but also the figure of Zameen and her desertion by him, have of course strong echoes in Solly's art, life and marriage.

The form of the collage shows also very well that our "experience is fragmentary, cause and effect, why and how are torn apart."⁶⁰ The activity of the unconscious when the imagination is at work is stressed by taking up images that have already been used in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*: "..., and the river of Solanka's imagination was fed from a thousand streams. It began to swell and grow."⁶¹ This quotation also emphasises that creativity that underlies artistic production is a process. It is something that is always in flux, always 'Becoming', "as the work never settled, never stopped being a work in progress but remained in a condition of perpetual revolution."⁶² Change is regarded as normal instead of atypical of life – a notion that has already been embraced by modernism, but has gained a new, stronger component in the postmodern era insofar as the search for an underlying point of stability has been given up. During the early time after the publication of his story everything seems to go well and his story becomes successful without being altered too much by other people. Solanka is intrigued by the possibilities of the new technology:

This freedom from the clock, from the tyranny of what happened next, was exhilarating, allowing him to develop his ideas in parallel, without worrying about sequence or step-by-step

⁵⁷ Ibid: 144-45.

⁵⁸ Ibid: 190.

⁵⁹ Ibid: 163.

⁶⁰ Ibid: 252.

⁶¹ Ibid: 191.

⁶² Ibid: 191.

causation ... Now, however, such omniscience was available to all, at the merest click of a mouse.⁶³

The technology used by him reflects the postmodern experience of time, which turns against chronology but instead emphasises the freedom from the clock. Borders that have been accepted so far dissolve with this new technology: “On the website, as it came into being, visitors would be able to wander at will between the project’s different storylines and themes.”⁶⁴ Solanka’s present project becomes a “many-armed, multimedia beast”⁶⁵, which is definitely postmodern in its character in that questions are not expected to be answered, but just asked and rephrased. Also, there is no soon end intended to his story, which correlates to the postmodern story-form, which is always open.

By the means of the new technology, however, his art is soon mainly used for commercial purposes. The commercialization of art is in itself a characteristic of the postmodern age. The speed with which this is undertaken is almost overpowering. At the end, something similar happens to his science-fiction story as it did to *Little Brain*: Images of the website’s character appear everywhere, as they “burst out of their cages and take to the streets.”⁶⁶ This shows again that it is illusionary to assume to be completely in control of one’s creation even after finishing it.

This lack of control over his creation is likewise shown when Solanka goes to Lilliput-Blefuscu and there meets persons who enact the roles of his characters as described in the story. It becomes apparent how art has become so important to Solly that he neglects to observe the boundaries between art and life, which are by nature already fuzzy and which now become completely blurred. “In those unreliable ... Real life had started obeying the dictates of fiction, providing precisely the raw material he needed to transmute the alchemy of his reborn art.”⁶⁷ The concept of solipsism is put forward: Everything that occurs on Lilliput-Blefuscu seems to be enacted for Professor Solanka:

A strange piece of mask theatre was being played out on this remote island stage, and Professor Solanka had been unable to shake off the notion that the action intimately concerned him, that the great or perhaps trivial matter of his perhaps significant, more probably rather pitiful life – but, still, his life! – was arriving, here in the South Pacific, at its final act.⁶⁸

⁶³ Ibid: 187.

⁶⁴ Ibid: 187.

⁶⁵ Ibid: 190.

⁶⁶ Ibid: 225.

⁶⁷ Ibid: 170.

⁶⁸ Ibid: 235.

The mentioning of the mask theatre establishes another connection between Lilliput-Blefuscus and India where mask theatre has had a long tradition. However, whilst traditional Indian theatre has treated the mask as an ethical archetype⁶⁹, it seems that the mask is here used in the way it is conceived in the West, which focuses on the contrast between the real and the alleged presentation of the real, which just becomes an imitation of something that is elusive and cannot be clearly defined. The concept of reality becomes extremely vague and questionable and it seems to be unclear what is original and what has become imitation: "... the creation was real while the creator was the counterfeit! It was as though he were present at the death of God and the god who had died was himself."⁷⁰ It questions our usual, fairly fixed ideas of what reality is like.

The fact that Kronos has given his creatures psychological and moral liberty reflects both the fact that we cannot control other beings (Solly cannot control the persons around him) as well as the fact that we have not much – if at all – control over our creations once we have finished them, which is revealed in Solly's inability to control the reception of his dolls by others. "By now they had learned how to modify their own systems without Kronos' help, and they added new skills and aptitudes by the day."⁷¹ The revolt of Kronos' creatures against him mirrors what has become of Solly's creation Little Brain, namely that the imitations are in many ways opposite to what Solanka had imagined them to be. The conditions of real life are mirrored on Lilliput-Blefuscus by showing at the same time the individual's strife for freedom as well as the limitations that are present by nature on what they can achieve.

It is therefore telling that even though the people seem to enact a play about his own ideas, Solanka cannot control what happens in any way. Instead of holding the strings of 'his puppets', he has to watch powerlessly how his creation partly destroys itself and how he cannot even rescue Neela, the woman he seems to love and who is part of both worlds. The apocalypse that occurs at the very end of Solanka's stay on Lilliput-Blefuscus seems to mirror the narrator's fear, if not his premonition, of how the world we live in might be destroyed by its people. This world might have been created by a god who is, however, not almighty, but quite powerless over his own creation and merely watches what happens on the earth. It is needless to say that these apocalyptic visions have partly become true by events like September 11th and other terror attacks following this event.

⁶⁹ Chatterjee, Sudipto. "Hayavadana: Transposed Cultures". Department of Drama & Dance. 11 Oct 2006. <http://ase.tufts.edu/drama-dance/balch/Hayav/default.htm>: 4.

⁷⁰ Rushdie. *Fury*: 239.

⁷¹ *Ibid*: 165.

Even though art is an important factor in our lives, it obviously has destructive effects both if art products attempt to replace real human beings and also if life imitates art by replacing its natural characteristics so that at the end artifice evolves.

We have seen how the conditions of (here, the American) society – and this is particularly the case during childhood – are decisive for the development of the individual's emotional life. Wholeness can only be achieved by dealing with the emotions in the context of the circumstances that are mainly responsible for their emergence. This is what Solanka gradually learns in the course of the novel: First he recognises the futility of attempting to solve his problems by leaving home. He finally acknowledges the presence of this rather destructive form of fury and tries to face it, which has been facilitated by his encounter with Neela. Furthermore, he recognises that art, as a substitute for reality, cannot integrate his strong feelings, as it is dealt with in the wrong way, rather limiting instead of broadening his vision by concentrating on alternative worlds. He also has to admit to his limitations in controlling his art products and life in general, which entails giving up the image of himself as puppeteer. The hope to find wholeness in his relationship with women is – at least in the case of Mila - not fulfilled either, as he treats love-relationships for some time as an excuse for not having to deal with his destructive emotions.

His flawed attempts at coming to terms with his disintegrated emotions cannot be successful, as they are all rather means of escape from his feelings instead of tackling them.

Although Solanka's means of escape run in many ways counter to what one could consider to be a mature person's actions, they nevertheless can help him to look for another direction in his individuation process as soon as he recognises their uselessness. This is the case because he has not only managed to release some of his anger in his attempts to come to terms with himself but has also gained insights into his and other people's disadvantageous behaviour on which he can now act successfully. This entails the integration of his strong feelings by directly confronting them and experiencing the healing impact of his love with Neela. He now no longer feels like a puppet that is moved by his fury, but rather as a more independent and autonomous being that has also managed not to become American society's puppet or doll by developing a more critical understanding of the processes of this society.

As a result of being able to integrate his feelings again, he is able to return home to his family in England and is prepared to take the consequences for his sudden departure from them.

Final Words

This study has tried to re-conceptualise the idea of wholeness. Instead of speaking of our fragmented nature that leaves no space for wholeness any longer whatsoever, it seems more useful to regard parts of our selves as facets that interact with each other in ways that include constructive transformation. Wholeness then can be understood as variety, versatility and complexity. Self-development occurs through the conscious integration of new facets, by our openness to change and by a certain control of our thoughts, emotions and inclinations. Instead of using words like uniformity or harmony, we should rather speak of integrated complexity. If parts of our selves are not integrated or if they are emphasised in a one-sided way, they prove to be an obstacle in achieving wholeness. They need to engage in a well-balanced interaction with other aspects, which they do not dominate.

We can illustrate this interaction between the various parts of the self by using an approach of Gestalt-psychology, which conceives the self as equilibrated structure.¹ This term describes a system of transformation, which regulates itself by striving towards equilibrium.

Wholeness should also be seen as a relative instead of an absolute concept. Only then does it make sense to speak of the aim of working towards “greater wholeness”². In addition, we then start to regard individuals as agents who are responsible for their own lives.

Returning to my initial mentioning of wholistic approaches to individual wellbeing, I want to take up their notions of the interconnectedness between body, mind and conscience, a stance I have also purported in this study. Health in this approach leads to physical and psychological wholeness, which reflects balance between external and internal environments.³

Consciousness of our human needs is involved here, which refers to both our physiological needs such as the need for food, sexual satisfaction and freedom from pain as well as our psychological needs like the need to be appreciated by and to be close to someone and spiritual needs like that of mental growth and enlargement. Only if we recognise our needs can we start a process of integrating them into a whole and, by then acting on them in a controlled way, become more healthy beings and especially more stable and secure in our selves. We thus attempt to maximise our potential. This includes also following our own goals

¹ Mylov, Peer. “Gestalts as equilibrated structures – Part and whole in the genetic epistemology.” University of Copenhagen, Center for Urban Studies. 13 Dec 2004. <http://www.hum.aau.dk/~mylov/Piaget4.html>: 1.

² „Wholeness, Explicit and Implicit.“ [The Co-Intelligence Institute](http://www.co-intelligence.org/I-implicitwhole.html). 13 Dec 2004. <http://www.co-intelligence.org/I-implicitwhole.html>: 1.

³ “Health as Wholeness: Wholistic Health as whole Person Health or ‘Wellness’”. 13 Dec 2004. <http://www.holisticeducator.com/wellness.htm>: 1.

and taking responsibility of our environment, which extends to other living beings that we interact with.

The part of my study that focuses on Anglo-Indian texts has shown that wholeness is sometimes difficult to attain though. This is particularly obvious in the colonial situation, which describes power-situations in which individuals are subjugated and often deprived of their humanity and individuality. Unsurprisingly, it has also frequently been difficult for individuals during the years after Independence to find and ascertain their own worth and values, which would have necessitated giving up the belief in the once-established hierarchical relations between the former colonizers and the colonised. The confusion most individuals experienced in this context has sometimes led to the adoption of radical forms of nationalism. Colonial policy has aggravated violent nationalisms between Indian groups, such as Hindu nationalism by making apparent differences blatantly obvious.

However, Indian society itself has also often imposed restrictions on or has erected barriers between persons. These barriers have been strong between religious and ethnic groups where a person is expected to clearly be on one side. Individuals are also strictly categorised on the basis of caste, status and class and, although these divisions have partly loosened, they still exist and, as a result, reduce persons to some functional roles associated with the respective cause of division. Another crucial factor in Indian society has been the allocation of clearly-defined gender roles, which do often not leave much room for individual variation.

However, my analysis of the texts has shown how individuals have tried (and sometimes at least partly achieved) to deal with their national, ethnic, religious and other aspects of their identity in new ways that go beyond the specific set of expectations set by their social and cultural environment. While doing so, provided they are at the same time still an active part in that society, they are not only able to discover their more authentic selves, but also react back on the social fabric by introducing alternative ways of being and living. As a result, society might take some of these new elements up in return and become enriched. It is worth mentioning though that society also provides the person with possibilities of identification that foster individual development, for example through confronting them with certain elements, and does not merely pose as an obstacle to individual development.

Salman Rushdie develops this interaction between the individual and society especially in the context of migration. To him, it is the notion of border-crossing that becomes central to individual and social development. He approaches the issue of border-crossing in a literal and in a metaphoric sense: In the post-colonial situation and in view of migration waves border-crossing has been a striking phenomenon of movements of a great number of people.

As a result these migrants had to learn how to cross other, invisible borders, which can be of a linguistic, racial, national and / or ethnic nature. This involved learning how to live with insecurities and the confrontation with completely new ways of life, which led to a questioning of everything one was certain of. This process is presented as a chance to enrich one's own experiences and to widen one's horizon.

Instead of borders and categorizations that leave persons in a clearly-defined, static sphere, there is now activity and movement, a constant intermingling of various spheres and aspects within the individual: The latter is thus predominantly hybrid and ambivalent by nature. As the search for meaning is a never-ending process, Rushdie emphasises the importance of questioning, deferment of meaning and the rejection of closure as important processes for self-development. In Rushdie's writing the complexity of a person, which mirrors the complexity of the world, is reflected in his postmodern approach, which includes the technique of Magic Realism and post-colonial - such as linguistic - elements of hybridity.

Both Rushdie's and the analysed Anglo-Indian texts reveal the strife of persons to establish meaning in their lives as something fundamental to identity. The tendency to develop and to undergo transformations by integrating new facets and to achieve wholeness in this way is acknowledged as a shared inclination in human nature. As individuals are social beings and part of collectives, wholeness has to contain a humaneness that reaches out to others and particularly displays openness, tolerance and imagination. Wholeness therefore implies being at home with oneself and in tune with the world.

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