

Religious Infamy as Failed Apprehension in Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* **

Abstract: Surpassing biased interpretations, *The Satanic Verses* stands as a novel about the route to identity, about the self working its definition in relation with the others and with the history it inhabits. What is offensive in *The Satanic Verses*? Mahound, the Prophet, a character in Rushdie's novel, is required to establish the status of three goddesses, the daughters of Shaitan. The first revelation is that: "[Lat, Uzza and Manat] they are the exalted birds, and their intercession is desired indeed." (Rushdie 2006: 114), consequently asserting polytheism. Shortly after, he paradoxically abjures: "«Shall He have daughters and you sons?» Mahound recites. «That would be a fine division!» «These are but names you have dreamed of, you and your fathers. Allah vests no authority in them.»" (Rushdie 2006: 124) Polytheism arbitrarily turns monotheistic. Is this the offense against Islam? I dare say no. Both sets of verses are revelation outcome, not reflections of Mahound's personal convictions. The offense lies in the way in which truth grows to be established: externally, from outside one's judgement, not internally, as a result of one's process of reasoning and reflection. Therefore *The Satanic Verses* may read not as a scandalous Islam offense, as it has generally been adopted, but as a novel about the frustrations of falsity and the illumination of understanding, about acknowledging oneself as human and therefore authentic.

Key words: cultural policy, Islam, postcolonialism, religion, the Rushdie Affair.

The publication of *The Satanic Verses* in 1988 scored neither a new literary event on the market nor another outstanding success for Salman Rushdie; it marked the start of an entire diplomatic, cultural and, above all, religious controversy: "The Rushdie Affair." Daniel Pipes starts his book bearing the same provocative title, "The Rushdie Affair", with Robert MacNeil, co-host of the "MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour", confessing to him in mid-February 1989: "You know, I've been reporting the news for decades, but I've never before seen a novel as the lead item in the day's news." (Pipes 1990, 15)

Salman Rushdie's novel stands as a paradigm of fictionality tragically impacting reality: human lives were sacrificed, governmental diplomacies

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** **Acknowledgements.** This paper is a result of the project "*Transnational Network for Integrated Management of Postdoctoral Research in Communicating Sciences. Institutional building (postdoctoral school) and fellowships program (CommScie)*" – POSDRU/89/1.5/S/63663, financed under the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013.

were (ir)remediably affected, international economy suffered more or less, cultural differences turned into unbridgeable gaps, while religious sensitivities turned political and sharpened into fanaticism. The question that immediately rises is: what if there is a tremendous misunderstanding at stake? What if we are faced with a glaring reception mistake of indeed such a provocative piece of fiction? And what if we could not manage – out of various prejudices and taboos or because of too emotional an involvement – to cross the line of easy blasphemy and move to a deeper understanding of what initially enraged masses?

The article focuses on the religious reception of the novel, starting from the accusations that Rushdie had to confront, continuing with the novelist's various responses and his diverse connotations of Islam, while a third part approaches the reasons for which religious infamy could be read as a failed apprehension of the novel.

1. From “The Satanic Verses” to “The Satanic Qur’an”: Their Islam

All incriminations Salman Rushdie was confronted with are the result of a literal and decontextualized reading of two chapters – “Mahound” and “Return to Jahilia” – in the novel, which particularly approach the story of Muhammad, the prophet of Islam. Out of more blasphemous incidents to be further detailed, Gibreel's dream about Muhammad and the very title of the novel converge to Rushdie's accusation of apostasy and consequently to Ayatollah Khomeini's Fatwa on the author.

Salman Rushdie stands the gravest indictment a Muslim could bear, namely that of doubting Qur'an as being the literal word of God as transmitted to Muhammad, therefore questioning the very premise of the Islamic faith. This conclusion draws on Rushdie's treatment of the ‘satanic verses’, a controversial topic in the Muslim world as well. A brief historical view could inform readers that Mecca, the place where Muhammad was born and in which he lived, was a long-tradition city of polytheism, which went hand in hand with a booming religion-based commerce.

Therefore, Muhammad's preached monotheism posed a serious threat both to the community and to his own tribe, Quraysh. Based on al-Tabari's account, “members of Quraysh suggested to Muhammad that he take a flexible attitude toward their idols, and in return they would adopt a more friendly attitude toward his preaching.” (Pipes 1990, 57) As a consequence, Muhammad recited the following verses as related to three prominent Meccan goddesses – “Have you thought upon Lat and Uzza, / And Manat, the third, the other?” (Qur'an, Surat an – Najm, verses 19-21) – to be followed, according to al-Tabari, by “These are the exalted birds, / And their intercession is desired indeed.” (in de Goeje 1879-1901, 1192) The refutation of polytheism comes shortly, with Gabriel unveiling Satan as

playing the role of Muhammad's tempter, and hence the establishment of the official Qur'anic text: "These are but [three] names you have dreamed of, you and your fathers. / Allah vests no authority on them. / They only follow conjecture and wish fulfilment, / Even though guidance had come to them already from their Lord." (Qur'an, Surat an – Najm, verses 19-23) Daniel Pipes' comment on the incident leaves it open to debatable answers: "Had Satan leaped into and then off Muhammad's tongue? Or had the Prophet tried to ingratiate himself with the city leaders, then regretted the effort and recanted? Or, worse, had the Prophet tried to win their favour, been rebuffed, and changed the text accordingly?" (1990, 59)

Satan's role in al-Tabari's account is replaced with Muhammad turned Mahound in Rushdie's novel, Gabriel changed into Gibreel (Farishta) testifying that "Being God's postman is no fun, yaar. / But but but: God isn't in this picture. God knows whose postman I've been." (Rushdie 2006, 156) In spite of the novelist inscribing the whole incident within Gibreel's dream, the only reading Rushdie benefited from keen Islamists was that the Qur'an is conceived as a human artefact, while the whole Islamic faith stands shattering on this deceit.

The second crucial offense is connected with the title of the novel. Although Rushdie claims that "the phrase comes from al-Tabari, one of the canonic Islamic sources" (*The Observer*, January 22, 1989), this proves a crucial misunderstanding that Daniel Pipes corrects by assigning its paternity to the orientalist tradition of Qur'an studies, more precisely to W. Montgomery Watt, in his *Muhammad at Mecca*, where he coins the "satanic verses" collocation. (Pipes 1990, 116) The offence lies in the implications resulting from translating it into the Arabic – *Al-Ayat ash-Shaytaniya*, the Persian – *Ayat-e Shetani*, and the Turkish – *Seytan Aytleri*, which would lead to a broad retranslation as *The Satanic Qur'an*. The conclusion can be but one and Ali A. Mazrui voices it: "Rushdie's blasphemy does not lie in his saying that the Qur'an is the work of Muhammad. The blasphemy lies more in Rushdie's suggestion that it is the work of the Devil." (in Pipes 1990, 117)

Other sacrilegious counts which Rushdie has to endure are as follows: the Qur'an's liability of being written and modified randomly by human intervention – Salman the scribe incident –, faked revelation – Muhammad preordains the next-to-be revealed rules –, the appeal to the name Mahound instead of Muhammad, a derogatory use via medieval Christian writers, the blasphemous naming of a brothel in Mecca as "The Curtain" (al-hijab) and of its prostitutes by means of the names of Muhammad's wives.

The very use of the Islamic Prophet as a character as well as writing a piece of fiction based on religious issues is considered a sacrilege, since "it conjures an alternative reality into existence, challenging the one created by God." (Pipes 1990, 112)

The reason behind all this is obviously “a great conspiracy against Islam” by the West, unleashing religious animosity and political mistrust. According to Rafsanjani, on Radio Tehran, February 24, 1989, “Muslims who read this book will not see a mad Indian behind it; they will see Britain, Germany, France and the United States.” Mossad is not an alien in the entire affair, “the book and its publishers being only a link in the chain of the new anti-Islamic cultural ploys.” (on Radio Tehran, February 23, 1989)

The Fatwa pronouncement by Khomeini came as no surprise, although the obvious public support of it was rather scarce from the Muslim world, not to mention the public opposition to it from countries such as Turkey, Iraq, Kuwait, Iran (the opposition), and Palestine, which condemned it immediately. One of the most provocative statements was formulated by Yousif Ashouri, in *Newsweek*, on March 13, 1989: “If Islam is so fragile and sensitive that it cannot withstand fair questioning and discussion by ordinary people, then it is worthless as a religion [...]. Rushdie should be praised for his brave stand on such a totalitarian issue.”

The question that immediately rises is where all these accusations fail? The answer may come, initially, from the position that Salman Rushdie himself adopted regarding the counts.

2. “Frankly, I wish I had written a more critical book” – Rushdie’s Islam

Salman Rushdie’s position to the implications of the act of writing can be found in the same blasphemous novel: “A poet’s work [is] to name the unnameable, to point at frauds, to take sides, start arguments, shape the world and stop it from going to sleep. And if rivers of blood flow from the cuts his verses inflict, then they will nourish him.” (Rushdie 2006, 245) Moreover, Rushdie points to the fundamental aspect that has been ignored, willingly or not, by his accusers, when proving the veridicity of historical facts in his novel: “The book is being judged by having the historical method applied to what is in fact an imaginative text. [...] To say that a work of fiction is basically a work of fact in disguise [whose aim] is to distort facts is wrong. The real purpose of fiction is not to distort facts but to explore human nature, to explore ideas on which the human race rests itself.” (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 2, 1989)

Aware of the consequences of approaching Islam sensitivities, Rushdie still expresses his preference for dealing with issues of “Islamic religion and fanaticism” because, the novelist says, “that is what I know the most about.” (*India Today*, September 15, 1989)

The controversial presence and treatment of Islam is a constant in Salman Rushdie’s both fictional and essayistic writing, its approach being manifold as well. Ian Almond therefore refers to “the presence of not one but several Islams in his work, a polyphony of different Islams [...]

different versions serve different purposes at different times.” (Almond 2003, 1138) Thus, readers are faced with a religion that can be labelled as ‘violent metaphysics’ responsible for large scale atrocities, with an Islam proud of a long tradition of democratic and critical inquires (depending on the geographical identity), or with one of the ‘world’s greatest religions.’ (Rushdie 1992, 409) The same Ian Almond discriminates the variety of Rushdie’s Islams based on “the clash of three personae: a secular but nevertheless spiritual Rushdie [...], an empirical Rushdie, who accepts that ‘the world is all there is’, and ultimately sees religion as a voluntary self-denigration [...], and the Muslim Bombayite, brought up as an insider in a faith he was to step out of, sceptical towards the narrative of Islam.” (2003, 1139)

What are, then, Rushdie’s counts against a stifled Islam? That it embodies practices that could hinder progress, that it is a ‘phenomenon inherently inimical to the passage of time’ (Rushdie 1992, 383), a ‘backward-looking and nostalgic faith’ (Rushdie 1992, 384), pervaded by a ‘humanistic desire to protect the older nomadic values of the lower classes.’ (Almond 2003, 1139) Equally convincing, Islam is described as ‘profit/prophet driven’ (Almond 2003: 1141) by use of a free – market capitalism vocabulary, an entrepreneurial Islam or one politically imbued. All in all, Almond concludes, “Rushdie’s conflicting presentations of Islam are neither contradictory nor problematic, but rather the *Verarbeiten* or working out of Islam’s identity through the contiguity of its different manifestations.”(2003, 1147)

A quite intriguing motivation of Rushdie’s accusatory attitude towards various aspects of Islam is formulated by Feroza Jussawalla, in “Rushdie’s Dastan-e-Dilruba. *The Satanic Verses* as Rushdie’s Love Letter to Islam.” The author of the article places Rushdie in the “post-Mughal” colonial tradition, thus explaining Rushdie’s perception of Islam within the confines of the Mughal-Islamic religion. “Rushdie is a victim of cross-cultural (mis)understanding,” asserts Jussawalla, because “the tradition he is writing out of is foreign to the majority of the Islamic societies of the Middle East” and because “he is writing out of the indigenous tradition that is not fully understood through Western constructs alone.” (1996, 54) The post-Mughal Islamic colonial consciousness Rushdie is inscribed in prides itself on a tradition of “dissent, dispute and criticism” (Jussawalla 1996, 67), on a secularizing and liberatory approach to Islam. However, the assumptions Jussawalla works on may appear rather jaundiced due to their situating at the very opposite end of the fundamentalist perspective: “Therefore, because of the context from which he [Rushdie] was functioning, that of the Persian and Indian Islamic writers of the last four centuries, Rushdie would not have thought of himself as consciously blaspheming but rather would have seen himself as doing the Muslim community a favour by urging the re-examination, ‘dissent, dispute and criticism’ which are possible for Islam

in India and now in England.” (1996, 57) Paradoxically, the much infamous novel is labelled as “*dastan-e-dilruba*”, which is a long prose narrative in the Persian tradition, delivered as a complaint to the beloved.

Salman Rushdie's public reactions and statements following the debut of the “affair” over his novel varied in positioning and tone, which led to being accused of a rather “immaturity of thought” (Pipes 1990, 76): “He wants to shake up the world, but, no, he will not accept responsibility for what he has wrought.” (1990, 76) Daniel Pipes harshly expresses his criticism, having in view Rushdie's varying his position from the novel as an attack on fundamentalism to *The Satanic Verses* as “not actually about Islam, but about migration, metamorphosis, divided selves, love, death, London and Bombay.” (*The New York Times*, October 19, 1988)

What stands as a certainty, however, is that Rushdie, after a BBC appearance on February 1989, stated: “Frankly, I wish I had written a more critical book”, and lit his first cigarette in six years.

3. Personal Evil – Saladin Chamcha or why the novel is not a religious infamy

The novel, however, does not limit to these two chapters; five chapters are dedicated to the intertwined stories of Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha, two characters whose identity trajectories could enlighten Rushdie's position as to his intended religious and cultural offences.

Therefore, surpassing biased interpretations, *The Satanic Verses* could be read as a novel about the route to identity, about the self working its definition in relation with the others and with the history it inhabits. It is a novel about the frustrations of falsity and the illumination of understanding, about acknowledging oneself as human and therefore authentic, beyond cultural, geographical or religious conflicting stances. However, making sense of one's own existence leads necessarily and naturally to understanding and constructing a meaningful history. The thesis above will be defended by following Saladin Chamcha's – one of the main characters – relation to history throughout the novel.

We can differentiate between two types of history that impact Saladin Chamcha's works of deconstructing and then reconstructing his identity: *history as the artificial* and *history as the natural*.

Within the delineation of *history as the artificial*, Saladin Chamcha works the conflict between what is happening at the level of appearance and what, in fact, reality stands for. The outcome is the realization that the approach to history initiated by the character is an outstandingly forced one, therefore artificial and unproductive.

At the surface level, we deal initially with *history as blind refusal*. Saladin Chamcha stands for the prototype of the immigrant: he estranges himself

from his past, dynamites his identity and, artificially, starts the building of a new one by assimilating the coordinates of the 'other.' He denies his Indian history out of preconception: it is the blunt refusal of a system of values which insinuates itself on his identity; it is an insistent rejection to understand what he denies, to comprehend his past, while using this determination forward, in a perfectly similar approach. History at this stage represents Saladin Chamcha's entire effort to avoid inscribing himself within the natural course of tradition, to assume his continuity with the values of family and his country. Home means the unfamiliar, the unnatural, Saladin Chamcha reorienting towards the "Proper London in the fabled country of Vilayet across the black water and far away." (Rushdie 2006, 35)

Secondly, *history as blind acceptance or mimesis* defines Saladin Chamcha's course of action when, out of the same preconception with which he acted against India, he acknowledges England. His 'personality' has no foundation: no personal convictions, no assumed beliefs, and no coordinating values. His self-declared spiritual emptiness takes the shape of the environment that he perceives as authentic, namely London. Saladin Chamcha starts a migrant's process of becoming and the first results are the masks borrowed from those he admires unconditionally. He speaks like the English, behaves like them, his whole life patterns perfectly similar. "A man who sets out to make himself up is taking on the Creator's role, according to one way of seeing things; he's unnatural, a blasphemer, an abomination of abominations. From another angle, you could see pathos in him, heroism in his struggle, in his willingness to risk: not all mutants survive. Or, consider him socio-politically: most migrants learn, and can become disguises. Our own false descriptions to counter the falsehoods invented about us, concealing for reasons of security our secret selves." (Rushdie 2006, 49)

However, reality means *history as in-between*. The realm of everything he was supposed to be, of his Indian history will be replaced not by a different organizing value, not by the elements that he tries to imitate, but by his relating through fury between the two worlds: the rejected one and the dreamt one. "[h]e felt the birth of that implacable rage which would burn within him, undiminished, for over a quarter of a century; which would boil away his childhood father-worship and make him a secular man." (Rushdie 2006, 43)

Since his metamorphosis cannot be complete, the Indian subconscious springing back at key moments and proving its inextricable existence, history may equally be perceived as a *failed transplant*. His newly constructed, self-imposed identity battles continuously against his old values, national and familial, which he runs away from, constantly trying to suppress. Beyond the appearance of success and the accomplishment of a true life, Saladin Chamcha remains aware of the reality of the nothingness or of his Indian identity. Back to India, he curses it and promises it that it will not catch him again.

In order to balance appearance and reality, Saladin Chamcha claims *history as acknowledgement from the others*: “A man who invents himself needs someone to believe in him, to prove he’s managed it. [...] Not only the need to be believed in, but to believe in another. You’ve got it: Love.” (Rushdie 2006, 49)

Asserting yourself as an individual is a relational process: your time and space must be connected with the coordinates of the others; therefore, asserting identity becomes a socio-political issue in Saladin Chamcha’s situation: he starts his self-defining process from the necessity of the other’s presence, now represented by Pamela Lovelace, his wife, and the whole English nation. He wants to be recognized both personally and socially, by his wife and in his job. In order to achieve this, Saladin Chamcha does not come up with his offer, but with their own registers, showing how perfectly well he managed to take them in. As Moslund (2006, 295) states: “Saladin Chamcha succeeds in inscribing himself within the new time and space, yet not as an individual, as authenticity, but as an excellent adaptable.”

The expected consequence is that of not being recognized, which triggers his perception of *history as frustration, rage and despair*. Saladin Chamcha’s landing after the explosion of *Bustan*, the plane flying from India, starts the process of his physical and symbolic transformation. He becomes the embodiment of Shaitan, the devil, a genuine goat-man. His whole previously acquired English identity starts to crack until full explosion, despite his constant self-assurance that he is a true Englishman. The English values that he so much fought for and which he assumed together with his new identity: rationality, sociability, proper emotional life, all well defined and organized, start to unveil their artificial character, thus proving that they were not personally, internally acquired, but simply claimed as proper.

Physically and metaphysically, Saladin Chamcha transforms into the Devil, Shaitan, the Absolute Other – the one who left India and tried to bury his identity without knowing it whatsoever, the one who tried to copy England without knowing it at all. A stranger to England, a stranger to India, a stranger to himself, Saladin Chamcha is the embodiment of Shaitan who scares not because of his monstrous physical appearance, but because of the despair and rage of not being recognized and legitimated, of not being a distinct identity. The drama that Saladin Chamcha experiences is the drama of the foreigner who feels the alienation despite all efforts of belonging both to himself and to the world that he considers defining for himself.

The rage and the dilemma that Saladin Chamcha experiences result from the conflict between his desperately assumed identity, his desire to conquer Englishness: “Assiduity, fastidiousness, moderation, restraint, self-reliance, probity, family life: what did these add up to if not a moral code?” (Rushdie

2006, 257) and his initial nature which, repressed without being understood, recurs obsessively, in the guise that Saladin Chamcha himself projected it: his Indian self is the evil, the sin. Rejected by the world that he had assiduously courted, Saladin Chamcha does not understand that reality and identity are not games of interchangeable masks and, at the same time, he cannot surpass his own projection of an idyllic England, only space of worthy moral values.

History as a natural and personal becoming represents the alternative to the previous conception of history, *history as the artificial*. Saladin Chamcha landed on the English seashore together with another Indian, Gibreel Farishta, Indian Bollywood superstar. After some time spent in the house of Rosa Diamond, the owner of a castle on the shore, police comes to arrest them: whereas Gibreel is considered one of them, an Englishman, Saladin Chamcha, based on his appearance, is declared to be different, the *other* and thus arrested. Gibreel's keeping silent defines what is most dramatic so far: another human being's betrayal, his own blood's betrayal therefore activating his fury that makes Saladin Chamcha take revenge. His reprisal turns personal as well, consisting in making Gibreel jealous of Alleluia Cone, the one he loves. Pouring poisonous words into Gibreel's ears, called *satanic verses*, Saladin Chamcha succeeds in making the former kill Alleluia and then commits suicide. To explain the connection between the religious reading and the secular one, Shailja Sharma stated, "Rushdie explores religious doubt as part of the larger pattern of interrogating hegemonic versions of authority whether of state, ideology, or culture." (2001, 606)

In the chapter 'The Angel Azrael' the narrator turns first person and sets wondering: "Is Saladin Chamcha a creature of *selected* discontinuities, a *willing re-invention*; his preferred revolt against history being what makes him, in our chosen idiom, 'false'? And might we then not go on to say that it is this falsity of self that makes possible in Chamcha a worse and deeper falsity – call this 'evil' – and that this is the truth, the door, that was opened in him by his fall?" (Rushdie 2006, 427)

In other words, is Saladin Chamcha the embodiment of the evil because he wants something else than what he is given initially? Is change in the natural course of things to be blamed as malefic and leading to destruction, in total opposition to the naturalness and the good of continuity, of developing within a given register, as it happens with Gibreel?

Operating with dichotomies in making value judgments and establishing values in general should not be enough. Establishing what is evil cannot be performed by applying patterns. The evil is not a patterned category. The evil is not the change, as the good is not being constant and the same. "Let's rather say an even harder thing: that evil may not be as far beneath our surfaces as we like to say it is. – That, in fact, we fall towards it naturally, that is, not against our natures. – And that Saladin Chamcha set

out to destroy Gibreel Farishta because, finally, it proved so easy to do; the true appeal of evil being the seductive ease with which one may embark upon the road (and, let us add in conclusion, the later impossibility of return.)” (Rushdie 2006, 427)

Saladin Chamcha is not the “Evil” because he leaves India and assumes a new identity, the *Civis Britannicus*. The evil must not be sought in the open trajectory of his becoming, of his transformation, an ample project, and which can invite to the prejudices of the discourse: immigrant – native, the other – the same. The evil in Saladin Chamcha is not the great evil, but the minor, mean one, springing out from the abject revenge, by means of an inferior, why not the true human, register. The most dangerous evil, Rushdie warns, is the evil as human, natural tendency. History is the sum of the small, personal evils that might degenerate, without any logics of development.

From human Saladin Chamcha moves to humane because he feels responsible for the personal injustice and the evil that he committed. Being saved from death by Gibreel, at the Shaandaar Café, Saladin Chamcha later realizes his own evil. This is the moment when he starts acquiring values, his own values, and not the ones he so much tried to mime. This is where his own history starts, where history as acknowledgement begins, thus history as personal insight, as natural process being the variant Rushdie finally opts for.

Back in India, Saladin Chamcha is offered, by his dying father, the “magic lamp” that was long promised to him. Tradition, India, family, all is offered back. Is Saladin Chamcha eager to accept them as his as well? Is this the moment he has waited for such a long time? The answer, surprisingly or not, is negative. The magic lamp of his father has proven to be no better than the values of England: both – imposed identities, both – strange histories, nothing more than fairy-tales. “[H]e could no longer believe in fairy-tales. Childhood was over, and the view from his window was no more than an old and sentimental echo. To the devil with it! Let the bulldozers come. If the old refused to die, the new could not be born. ‘Come along,’ Zeenat Vakil’s voice said at his shoulder. [...] ‘I’m coming,’ he answered her, and turned away from the view.” (Rushdie 2006, 547)

Conclusions

What is offensive in *The Satanic Verses* then?

Coming back to the first part of this article, we recall that Mahound is required to establish the position of the three goddesses. The first revelation is that: ‘[Lat, Uzza and Manat] they are the exalted birds, and their intercession is desired indeed,’ (Rushdie 2006, 114) consequently asserting polytheism. Shortly after, he abjures: ‘Shall He have daughters and you

sons?’ Mahound recites. ‘That would be a fine division! ‘These are but names you have dreamed of, you and your fathers. Allah vests no authority in them.’ (Rushdie 2006, 124)

Polytheism turns monotheistic. Both sets of verses are revealed, and not a result of Mahound’s inner convictions. Is this the offense against Islam? I dare say no. The offense lies in the modality in which truth grows to be established: externally, from outside our judgment, and not internally, as a result of our process of reasoning and reflection. This is the overall effect of following Saladin Chamcha’s evolution as well: only after establishing values personally will he eventually make sense both himself and of his history, successfully inscribing himself within his proper time. “Saladin in the end appears to transcend the opposition between the *post* and the *trans* on one hand and the *re* on the other, between continuity and discontinuity, between migrancy and return: instead of either one condition or the other, he performs the impossible fact of achieving both.” (Gane 2002, 37) Or, in the same line, Goonetilleke claims that “Saladin/Salahuddin not only turns back, but turns his back on hybridity, on the discourse of the post and the trans, and on his earlier deracinated and divided self, choosing instead such traditional values as wholeness, roots and great verities.” (1998, 78)

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