verts both gender and class conventions by transgressing gender boundaries imbued with class ideology, and Hurston exerts a powerful critique of "the race" by ironically separating Janie from mainstream ideals also in space. By allowing Janie to enact her vision, Hurston subverts "controlling images"[107] of the black female, and proposes an autonomous subjectivity which is yet embedded in a sociocultural space.

Autonomous subjectivity can be detected in the fact that Janie is able to form a communal space with her friend. However, Hurston deconstructs female transparent space individually and socially already before the Everglades. Hurston's strategy is not to construct an entirely new, alternative universe, which is ultimately proved by the devastation in the Hurricane scene, but to build in fissures in masculine and female transparent spaces. In the focal point of these schisms one can detect the genuinely individual that is able to shape nurturing social relations as well.

It is Southern black cultural space, where Hurston's female characters ultimately reach the horizon of their female subjectivities and sense of place. It is not that gendered space becomes overridden, but rather that Hurston constructs a space in which gender relations are embedded in a pluralist context. On the muck in *Their Eyes* female and masculine spaces are juxtaposed in natural heterotopia and, at the same time, intertwined not to abolish gender, but to form an integrated space (from a womanist perspective) of a large variety of mosaics. Janie's overalls undergird this statement as they symbolize a "nice bit of cross-dressing, signifying equality and sexuality in gender terms. . ."[108] Thirding renders possible for Janie, for instance, what previously only men have power to do with women: in an inverted, yet parallel scene with *Jonah's*, Janie "cut him [that is, Tea Cake] short with a blow"[109] in a fit of jealousy; and after they make love, "she had to crow over the fallen Nunkie,"[110] just as John in *Jonah's* "held Lucy tightly and thought pityingly of other men."[111] This shows the neatness of the mechanism of integrating feminization, problematizing the supposed homogeneity of social space, and effecting polyvalence. For Hurston feminine space-off cuts across gender lines and class boundaries, and it is realized idealistically in the geographic region of Florida, where spacing off is not a matter of life instinct only, but a possibility of choice.

107. Rupert Simms, "Controlling Images and the Gender Construction of Enslaved African Women," *Gender and Society* 15.6 (2001) 879–897, p. 879.
108. DuPlessis, p. 25.
109. Hurston, *Their Eyes*, p. 131.
110. Hurston, *Their Eyes*, p. 132.
111. Hurston, *Jonah's*, p. 111.

Ágnes Györke

"Who has the best tunes?"

Sounds of Englishness in *The Satanic Verses*[1]

This paper offers a reading of *The Satanic Verses* as a secular narrative: focusing on the chapters set in London, I analyse spaces of Englishness in the novel. It is my contention that "imagined communities," to use Benedict Anderson's term, are allegorized by the trope of voice in the text: national identifications are portrayed as secular miracles, collective moments of national unisonance, suggesting that the most ephemeral entity is invested with the greatest possible significance in the novel. Focusing on three episodes (Rosa Diamond's vision of William the Conqueror, Saladin's quest for Englishness on the streets of London, and the recreation of Dickens' city in the Shepperton film studios) I argue that the more disarticulate and intangible the sound effects allegorizing these moments are, the less controllable they become by pedagogical discourses, and the more they are able to survive in the postmodern text.

Who has the best tunes? The Devil, of course. That is, in Salman Rushdie's novel, *The Satanic Verses*, which is often considered to be narrated from the perspective of Satan, or Iblis, his Muslim equivalent. The allusion is, as Paul Brians notes, to John Wesley, who set his hymns to popular melodies, arguing that "the Devil shouldn't have all the best tunes."[2] It suggests that the devil's voice is tempting and seductive, which is, of course, hardly a surprising idea; the snake in The Bible, Mephistopheles in *Faust*, Lucifer in Madách's *The Tragedy of Man*, or professor Woland in *The Master and Margarita*, just to mention a few examples, are all famous for their cunning and tricky voices. The motto of Rushdie's novel, taken from Daniel Defoe's *The History of the Devil*, endows Satan with an equally seductive power by locating him in an unfixed, "liquid," ambiguous space:

> Satan, being thus confined to a vagabond, wandering, unsettled condition, is without any certain abode; for though he has, in consequence of his angelic nature, a kind of empire in the liquid waste of air, yet this is certainly

1. The work is supported by the TÁMOP 4.2.1./B-09/1/KONV-2010-0007 project. The project is implemented through the New Hungary Development Plan, co-financed by the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund.
2. Paul Brians, "Notes for Salman Rushdie: *The Satanic Verses*," *Washington State University*, 1 September 2011 <http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/anglophone/satanic_verses/1.html>.

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> part of his punishment, that he is. . . without any fixed place, or space, allowed him to rest the sole of his foot upon.[3]

This transitory, fluid space becomes miraculous in the novel: characters start to fly in the air, Mahound (Muhammad) receives divine revelation on top of Mount Cone (Mount Hira), Allaluia meets the ghosts of famous mountain climbers on Everest, and so on. The airspace is the realm of voices as well, as if this space itself endowed these categories with magical power: a voice commands Gibreel to fly *and sing*; Allah *speaks* to Mahound through his Archangel, Gibreel; and Allie *converses* with the ghost of Maurice Wilson on top of Mount Everest. Gibreel and Saladin's flight at the very beginning of the book already suggests that magic voices will be located in a fluid, unfixed, and intangible dimension in the novel.

It is an anonymous, divine power that commands Gibreel to sing after the explosion of their airplane:

> 'Fly,' it commanded Gibreel. 'Sing.'
>
> Chamcha held on to Gibreel while the other began, slowly at first and then with increasing rapidity and force, to flap his arms. Harder and harder he flapped, and as he flapped a song burst out of him, and like the song of the spectre of Rekha Merchant it was sung in a language he did not know to a tune he never heard. Gibreel never repudiated the miracle; unlike Chamcha, who tried to reason it out of existence, he never stopped saying that the gazal had been celestial, that without the song the flapping would have been for nothing, and without the flapping it was a sure thing that they would have hit the waves like rocks . . . . Whereas instead they began to slow down. The more emphatically Gibreel flapped and sang, sang and flapped, the more pronounced the declaration, until finally the two of them were floating down to the Channel like scraps of paper in a breeze. (9)

Gibreel's voice saves the two heroes, enabling them to land safely on British shores. The voice is the source of magic, and it becomes associated with divine power, yet the nature of this miracle remains profoundly ambiguous: the reader can never be sure whether the voice is angelic or satanic, divine or mad. The only thing we can be certain of is that this most ephemeral and intangible entity is invested with the greatest possible significance in the novel.

Apart from evoking transcendental entities, voices in *The Satanic Verses* are also related to schizophrenic delusions. The very structure of the novel suggests that

3. All parenthesised references are to this edition: Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses* (London: Vintage, 1998).

we are dealing with a profoundly schizophrenic world: the text is literally split, since the even chapters take place in London, the metropolitan capital of the West, where the two migrants try to establish a new life, whereas the odd ones take the reader to the East, to the time of Muhammad in the seventh century, and that of Ayatollah Khomeini in the eighties. Furthermore, perhaps the entire novel can be read as the struggle of the two main characters, Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha: after migrating to England, Gibreel becomes the Archangel of Allah (or, perhaps, suffers from paranoid delusions) while Saladin is transformed into the devil (or, perhaps, becomes the allegorical figure of the despised migrant). The historical chapters are dreamed by Gibreel, suggesting that history is, just as James Joyce put it, a nightmare from which we are trying to awake. Or, perhaps, if we take an even more cynical position: a paranoid, though all the more seductive, delusion.

It is my contention that voices and sound effects do not appear in the text only in the context of religion and paranoid delusions, but that they speak about different aspects of nationhood as well: whereas *voices* exemplify what Homi K. Bhabha calls pedagogical national address, the *sound* effects evoke an alternative national unisonance in the text, which is akin to his concept of the performative nation. As Bhabha puts it: the people of a nation "must be thought in a double-time; the people are the historical 'objects' of a nationalist pedagogy, giving the discourse an authority that is based on the pre-given or constituted historical origin or event; the people are also the 'subjects' of a process of signification that must erase any prior or originary presence of the nation-people to demonstrate the prodigious, living principle of the people as that continual process by which the national life is redeemed and signified as a repeating and reproductive process."[4] It is this "prodigious, living principle of the people" (297) that appears in moments of national unisonance in the novel. I claim that the more intangible these moments are, the less controllable they become by pedagogical discourses, and the more they are able to survive in this novel. Their survival is assisted by the theatrical context that *The Satanic Verses* uses as a safety valve to protect these moments; unlike the miraculous yet naïve "noise" of the children in Rushdie's earlier novel, which is annihilated by Saleem's apocalyptic explosion at the end, as I argue in the last section of this paper, the theatrical nature of these sound effects enables them to survive in the postmodern text.

Apart from Bhabha's notion of the performative, I also rely on Mladen Dolar's, Stephen Connor's, and David Appelbaum's theories when I argue that voices, as opposed to sound effects, exemplify a didactic national address. Dolar, challenging

4. Homi K. Bhabha, "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation," in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990), 291–322, p. 297.

Derrida's claim of logocentrism, argues that the latter has not taken into account the fact that besides enacting the "metaphysics of presence," the voice also had another side in the metaphysical tradition, a dangerous, threatening, uncontrollable aspect, which, instead of carrying an "irreducible individuality," threatened to tempt and destroy the subject. This dangerous side of the voice is manifested in music, challenging the dominance of pure logos: "music, in particular the voice, shouldn't stray away from words, which endow it with sense; as soon as it departs from its textual anchorage, the voice becomes senseless and threatening, all the more so because of its seductive and subversive powers."[5] Stephen Connor also detects an ambivalence in the voice already in the texts of Christian theology. First, the voice appears in these texts of the "Fathers" as a "regenerative flame," a miraculous entity that "makes possible division without diminution (embodying the emanation of the Son from the Father as pure *logos*), and second, as a "ventriloquial utterance," a dirty, corporeal notion, caused by a demon that has taken up residence inside, and emanating from the genitals or anus.[6] For Appelbaum it is the cough that distorts the texture of the voice: "[t]he cough commonly makes its appearance as an interruption to the voicing process. It is not as pernicious as the stutter or stammer or chronic hiccup but nonetheless takes the attending audience with it. It distorts the text and texture of voice with the unexpectancy of the body."[7] In other words, these arguments suggest that there is a hidden, dangerous, subversive side of voice, which is opposed to the pure, authoritative Logos, and which is akin to my definition of sound.

There is hardly any consensus among critics as regards the genealogy of the novel's narrative voice(s). Roger Y. Clark, for instance, claims that the voice of a "traditionally evil Satan . . . with help from sources as diverse as Shakespeare, Attar and Bulgakov . . . invades the text sporadically, sometimes to comment on morality and politics, and sometimes to influence events so that evil prevails over good."[8] Alex Knönagel, on the other hand, considers this voice to be part of a religious genealogy, claiming that *The Satanic Verses* can be read as the inversion of the Qur'an: "In the novel as well as in the Qur'an, the narrator is omniscient and occasionally refers to himself as 'I' or 'We.' "[9] Others, such as Joel Kuortti, emphasize the plurality of the novel's narrative voices, pointing out that *The Satanic Verses* wages a war on totality, i.e., on the hegemony of imperial English.[10] Gayatri C. Spivak, on the other hand, argues that despite the plurality of voices in the novel, it has a "rather aggressive central theme: the post-colonial divided between two identities: migrant and national."[11]

The theme of migration, already suggested by the motto ("Satan, being thus confined to a *vagabond, wandering, unsettled* condition") is also often discussed by critics: Gillian Gane, for instance, reads *The Satanic Verses* as "a novel about a world in motion, about the postcolonial migrant condition, about the coming together of incompatible realities in the global city,"[12] similarly to Peter Kalliney, who notes that the novel uses "Chamcha's harrowing international journey to illustrate the tribulations and consequences of our increasingly mobile existence."[13] Most readings, however, deal with religious questions and the "Rushdie affair," analyzing various aspect of the controversy ranging from debates between fundamentalism

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5. Mladen Dolar, "The Object Voice," *Gaze and Voice as Love Objects*, ed. Slavoj Žižek and Renata Salecl (Durham: Duke UP, 1996), p. 17.

6. "This is the voice not as fire or light, but as what we have just heard Tatian refer to as 'disorderly matter'; the cacophony or shit-voice, which is also, in hysterical approximation, the vagitus itself, the terrifying cry of birth that is at once the voice as the rending of a presence from the maternal genitals, and the voice of the genitals as rending" (Connor, Steven, "The Ethics of the Voice," *Critical Ethics: Text, Theory and Responsibility*, ed. Dominic Rainsford and Tim Woods [London: Macmillan, 1999], 220–37. pp. 224–25).

7. Appelbaum, David. *Voice.* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), p. 3.

8. Roger Y. Clark, *Stranger Gods: Salman Rushdie's Other Worlds* (Montreal: McGill, 2001), p. 129.

9. Alex Knönagel, "*The Satanic Verses*: Narrative Structure and Islamic Doctrine," *The International Fiction Review* 18.2 (1991) 69–75, p. 70. Rushdie, however, claims that "the two books that were most influential on the shape this novel took do not include the Qur'an. One was William Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, the classic mediation on the interpretation of good and evil; the other *The Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov" (Salman Rushdie, "In Good Faith," in *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981–1991* [London: Penguin, 1992], p. 403).

10. Joel Kuortti, " 'Nomsense': Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*," *Textual Practice* 13.1 (1999) 137–146, p. 138.

11. Gayatri C. Spivak, "Reading *The Satanic Verses*," in *What is an Author?* Ed. Maurice Biriotti and Nicola Miller (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1993), 104–134, p. 107. For issues of narration see also Nicholas D. Rombes, "*The Satanic Verses* as a Cinematic Narrative," *Literature/Film Quarterly* 21.1 (1993) 47–53; and Janet Mason Ellerby, "Narrative Imperialism in *The Satanic Verses*," in *Multicultural Literatures Through Feminist/Poststructuralist Lenses*, ed. Barbara Frey Waxman (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993), 173–189.

12. Gillian Gane, "Migrancy, the Cosmopolitan Intellectual, and the Global City in *The Satanic Verses*," *Modern Fiction Studies* 48.1 (2002) 18–49, p. 18.

13. Peter Kalliney, "Globalization, Postcoloniality, and the Problem of Literary Studies," *Modern Fiction Studies* 48.1 (2002), 50–82, p. 51. See also Jaina C. Sanga, *Salman Rushdie's Postcolonial Metaphors: Migration, Translation, Hybridity, Blasphemy, and Globalization* (Wesport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2001); Peter Jones, "*The Satanic Verses* and the Politics of Identity," in *Reading Rushdie: Perspectives on the Fiction of Salman Rushdie*, ed. D. M. Fletcher (Amsterdam, Atlanta: Rodopi, 1994), 321–333; Vijay Mishra, "Postcolonial Differend: Diasporic Narratives of Salman Rushdie," *ARIEL* 26.3 (1995).

and secularism to commenting on the reaction of Canadian Muslims to the affair.[14] Some critics regard the novel as a "deeply Islamic book,"[15] others claim that it is a profoundly Western text, which challenges monolithic fundamentalism."[16] My paper also offers a secular reading of *The Satanic Verses*. In my view, as it is suggested by the questions of the satanic narrator who comments on Gibreel's and Saladin's "flight" in the very first chapter, the trope has secular implications:

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

Apart from referring to seduction, "tune" is also associated with popular culture, suggesting that the novel, besides parodying the Qu'ran, is in quest of a secular definition of good and evil. It evokes The Rolling Stones' hit song, "Sympathy for the Devil," which, similarly to the novel, portrays good and evil as inherently entangled, inseparable entities.[17] Englishness, depicted in terms of sound effects, also appears as a secular miracle in the novel; opposed to pedagogical voices, sounds evoke the indivisible story of England and its colonies, suggesting that *The Satanic Verses*, apart from rewriting the founding myth of Islam, can also be read as a peculiar national narrative.

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14. See, for instance, Amir Hussain, "Misunderstanding and Hurt: How Canadians Joined Worldwide Muslim Reactions to Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 70.1 (2002) 1–32; Daniel Pipes, *The Rushdie Affair: The Novel, the Ayatollah, and the West* (New York: Carol, 1990); Malise Ruthven, *A Satanic Affair: Salman Rushdie and the Wrath of Islam* (London: Hogarth, 1991); Lisa Appignanesi and Sara Maitland, *The Rushdie File* (London: Fourth Estate, 1989); Ziauddin Sardar, *Distorted Imagination: Lessons from the Rushdie Affair* (London: Grey Seal, 1990); Sara Suleri, "Contraband Histories: Salman Rushdie and the Embodiment of Blasphemy," in *Reading Rushdie: Perspectives on the Fiction of Salman Rushdie*, ed. D. M. Fletcher (Amsterdam, Atlanta: Rodopi, 1994), 221–236; and so on.

15. Suleri, p. 222.

16. As Suleri argues that "even though the writer may have been cast beyond the pale of retrievable life, his restoration inheres in the fact that he will always be read as a secular voice speaking against the impingement of a monolithic fundamentalism" (Suleri, p. 222).

17. "Just as every cop is a criminal / And all the sinners saints / As heads is tails / Just call me Lucifer / Cause I'm in need of some restraint."

The Sounds of Englishness

The Satanic Verses envisages a hybrid, continuously metamorphosing interaction between the "ghosts" of various nations as a model for any nation's existence: the plot begins with the flight of the main characters from India to England, yet the second chapter immediately takes the reader back to Mecca, and India also returns at the end of the novel. At one point, Gibreel defines London as a "Crusoe-city, marooned on the island of its past, and trying, with the help of a Man-Friday underclass, to keep up appearances" (439). Migrants appear as ghosts "haunting" England, reminding the English of their colonial past, on which their present is "marooned" (i.e., imprisoned, like Robinson in Defoe's novel). These haunting ghosts become integral to any national allegory that appears in this novel.

There are various other ghosts that haunt in *The Satanic Verses*. After the explosion of their plane, the two heroes find themselves in the garden of an ancient English lady called Rosa Diamond. She immediately becomes associated with the ghosts haunting the English nation:

> I know what a ghost is, the old woman affirmed silently. Her name was Rosa Diamond; she was eighty-eight years old; and she was squinting beakily through her salt-caked bedroom windows, watching the full moon's sea. And I know what it isn't, too, she nodded further, it isn't a scarification or a flapping sheet, so pooh and pish to all *that* bunkum. What's a ghost? Unfinished business, is what. (129)

William the Conqueror's ghost returns to haunt Rosa every night whenever the moon is full. She seems to have the magic ability to go back in time: "Nine hundred years! Nine centuries past, the Norman fleet had sailed right through this Englishwoman's home. On clear nights when the moon was full, she waited for its shining, revenant ghost" (129). The compulsive return of this vision, as a magic spectacle, produces a "solid and unchanging" notion of Englishness in the novel, momentarily restoring the otherwise fragmenting national allegories: "Repetition had become a comfort in her antiquity; the well-worn phrases, *unfinished business, grandstand view*, made her feel solid, unchanging, sempiternal, instead of the creature of cracks and absences she knew herself to be" (130).

Homi Bhabha comments on this episode in "DissemiNation," arguing that Rosa can be read as the allegorical figure of the English nation, or more precisely, of pedagogical Englishness:

> Gifted with phantom sight, Rosa Diamond, for whom repetition had become a comfort in her antiquity, represents the English *Heim* or homeland. . . . Constructed from the well-worn pedagogies and pedigrees of

> national unity – her vision of the Battle of Hastings is the anchor of her being – and, at the same time, patched and fractured in the incommensurable perplexity of the nation's living, Rosa Diamond's green and pleasant garden is the spot where Gibreel Farishta lands when he falls out from the belly of the Boeing over sodden, southern England.[18]

Bhabha reads Gibreel's figure as the living performative principle that disturbs the national pedagogy of Rosa, whose "returning gaze crosses out the synchronous history of England, the essential memories of William the Conqueror,"[19] as if he indeed became the "performative agent" set on the mission to subvert the English nation. According to Bhabha, it is this tension between Rosa's national pedagogy and the gesture of the migrant who proudly wears the clothes of Rosa's deceased husband, Sir Henry Diamond (thus tricking the police who are searching for illegal migrants, and who regard him as a respectable, old friend of Rosa) that writes the English nation in this novel. As he claims, Gibreel "mimics the collaborative colonial ideologies of patriotism and patriarchy, depriving those narratives of their imperial authority,"[20] and he becomes an "avenging migrant"[21] whose gesture shows that "the national memory is always the site of hybridity of histories and the displacement of narratives."[22]

Supporting his thesis, Bhabha endows Rosa and Gibreel with the role of embodying the pedagogical and the performative aspects of nationhood respectively. In my view, however, neither of these characters allegorizes these impulses so seamlessly; Bhabha attributes too much power to Gibreel, who is far from being an "avenging migrant," but rather becomes a helpless and paralysed medium through which different forces and impulses are enacted in the novel. Furthermore, Rosa's figure is also more complex and more dubious than Bhabha supposes; though she does indeed act as the allegorical figure of the English nation, providing a momentary vision of national unity, her allegory does not entirely function as a pedagogical construction. I argue that it is not Rosa's fragmenting allegorical figure that produces a "national unity" in this novel, and not even the *vision* of the Battle of Hastings, but that there are certain voices and sound effects involved in the recurring image of ghosts which are responsible for creating a momentary national unisonance.

But let us look at Gibreel's figure first. According to Bhabha, he becomes "the mote in the eye of history, its blind spot that will not let the nationalist gaze settle

18. Bhabha, "DissemiNation," p. 317.
19. Bhabha, "DissemiNation," p. 318.
20. Bhabha, "DissemiNation," p. 318.
21. Bhabha, "DissemiNation," p. 319.
22. Bhabha, "DissemiNation," p. 319.

centrally."[23] Perhaps Gibreel does disturb the "nationalist gaze" when he mimics Sir Henry Diamond, but Bhabha never really takes into consideration the fact that he actually becomes imprisoned by Rosa Diamond, and performs various roles for her in this episode simply because of *her* will. Besides making him impersonate Henry Diamond, Rosa endows the migrant with several other roles. Gibreel "lands" in England exactly at the time when she is having a vision of the Battle of Hastings, and this makes her identify Gibreel with William the Conqueror, fulfilling her obsessive desire: "She closed, once more, her reminiscent eyes. When she opened them, she saw. Down by the water's edge, no denying it, something beginning to move. What she said aloud in her excitement: 'I don't believe it!' – 'It isn't true!' – 'He's never *here*!' " (130). It is only after impersonating the "essentialist memories" of William the Conqueror, to use Bhabha's phrase, that Gibreel becomes Sir Henry Diamond, and after the short episode of tricking the police, Rosa soon finds another role for him: he becomes her Argentine lover, Martín de la Cruz. Rosa keeps Gibreel imprisoned by her tremendous will; her "stories [are] winding round him like a web" (146), and he constantly feels a pain in his navel, as if he was indeed trying to be reborn, or, more precisely, recreated by Rosa Diamond. Even though Gibreel attempts to conquer the city, setting out on his mission with a map, "London from A to Z," which already suggests that he desires to conquer England, his mission fails; he loses his lover as well as his sense of himself, and returns to India as a raging schizophrenic, only to commit suicide. In other words, both the roles he plays for Rosa and his unfulfilled mission suggest that he is anything but an "avenging migrant"; he might disturb the "nationalist gaze" in the novel, but he definitely does not become an empowered figure in the narrative.

As for Rosa's vision of Englishness, it is also more complex than Bhabha assumes. First, the fact that the ghost of the Conqueror *haunts* her garden suggests that the kind of nation (and history) she allegorizes is far from being a sacred, linear, and pedagogical entity. Englishness appears to be a repetitive, ambiguous process for her, an "unfinished business" (129). Furthermore, the very fact that the allegory is founded upon the moment of conquest, the intrusion of the alien, makes this a strange emblematic moment of nationhood. Therefore, Englishness is not constituted through a didactic national pedagogy, but rather, it appears as a constantly recurring traumatic experience.

The Conqueror's ghost seems to produce its own sound effects:

> When the full moon sets, the dark before the dawn, that's their moment. Billow of sail, flash of oars, and the Conqueror himself at the flagship's prow, sailing up the beach between the barnacled wooden breakwaters and

23. Bhabha, "DissemiNation," p. 318.

> a few inverted sculls. – O, I've seen things in my time, always had the gift, the phantom sight. – The Conqueror in his pointy metal-nosed hat, passing through her front door, gliding betwixt the cakestands and antimacassared sofas, like an echo resounding faintly through that house of remembrances and yearnings; then falling silent; *as the grave.*
> (130, emphasis in the original)

William the Conqueror appears as a "resounding echo" that disturbs Rosa's otherwise silent world, invited and desired ("I long for them sometimes" [130], says Rosa). What we are witnessing in this episode is the return of the moment when the English nation was "founded" nine hundred years ago, and this moment seems to be entangled with the sound, the echo. Ironically, it is the echo (i.e., repetition) that provides magic unisonance, keeping the otherwise fragmenting nation together. The text seems to be aware of the fact that the transcendental is based on some kind of erasure, yet it does not seem to mind; the original "utterance" is secondary in this scenario, just like the fact that the myth of Englishness is based on the *Norman* conquest.

The sound appears as an entity locked away, buried in a "treasure chest" which opens only for the moment of the Conqueror's return:

> Nine hundred years ago all this was under water, this portioned shore, this private beach, its shingle rising steeply towards the little row of flaky-paint villas with their peeling boathouses crammed full of deckchairs, empty picture frames, ancient tuckboxes stuffed with bundles of letters tied up in ribbons, mothballed silk-and-lace lingerie, the tearstained reading matter of once-young girls, lacrosse sticks, stamp albums, and all the buried treasure-chest of memories and lost time. (129)

The mansion containing the buried chests, which seems to be waiting for the Conqueror to "glide betwixt" "empty picture frames," acts as the storehouse of memory: when the Norman heroes return, the whole house becomes alive. Rosa's vision appears to be a momentary revelation, as if we cast a glance into what is hidden in those chests, which (literally) contain the buried past.

Furthermore, at the very beginning of *The Satanic Verses* we find a similar list: when Gibreel and Saladin's airplane explodes, signifying the explosion of their past lives, identities, and homelands, the narrator also enumerates the things that they lose in that moment:

> Above, behind, below them in the void there hung reclining seats, stereophonic headsets, drink trolleys, motion discomfort receptacles, disembarkation cards, duty-free video games, braided cups, blankets, oxygen masks. Also . . . mingling with the remnants of the plane, equally fragmented,

> equally absurd, there floated the debris of the soul, broken memories, sloughed-off selves, severed mothertongues, violated privacies, untranslatable jokes, extinguished futures, lost loves, the forgotten meaning of hollow, booming words, *land, belonging, home.*
> (4)

Just as in the case of Rosa's list, the concluding metaphors are the most significant ones: after the vertigo of video games and stereophonic headsets, the words in italics, "*land, belonging, home,*" signify that this enumeration is also concerned with nation(s). These are "booming words," recalling various other sound effects in the novel, similarly to the "resounding" echo of William the Conqueror in the previous episode, and suggesting that the text retains these magic, unisonant moments of nationhood, blown up in the vertigo of homelessness, in some secret, hidden "treasure-chest of . . . lost time" (129).

But let us return to Rosa Diamond's sounds. When she recounts the memories of the battle of Hastings, the third person narrative switches to first person, as if to allow the reader to get closer to Rosa's own voice:

> – Once as a girl on Battle Hill, *she* was fond of recounting, always in the same time-polished words, – once as a solitary child, *I* found myself, quite suddenly and with no sense of strangeness, in the middle of a war. Longbows, maces, pikes. The flaxen-Saxon boys, cut down in their sweet youth. Harold Arroweye and William with his mouth full of sand. Yes, always the gift, the phantom-sight. – The story of the day on which the child Rosa had seen a vision of the battle of Hastings had become, for the old woman, one of the landmarks of her being. . .
> (130, my emphases)

First the third person narrator addresses Rosa as a "she," but before he manages to finish the sentence, Rosa interrupts and speaks as an "I," reminiscing about her first vision of William the Conqueror. The narrative seems to reproduce her very experience, letting us closer and closer to the secret of the nation she is in search of: a first person voice intrudes into the text, but the narrative soon shifts back to third person, suggesting that the reader is only allowed a glimpse of these magic moments of national unisonance.

Images of nationhood, then, are more complex in the novel than Bhabha presumes: neither Rosa's pedagogical Englishness, nor Gibreel's performative intervention appear to be antagonistic categories. Bhabha attributes too much power to Gibreel when he claims that the migrant acts is the performative principle in the novel. The opposition of the pedagogical and the performative appears in *The Satanic Verses*, but not as the antagonism of India and England; rather, it should be sought around the thin dividing line that differentiates the tropes of sound and voice.

Satanic Voices, Ghostly Sounds

Though the Conqueror appears as a "resounding echo" for Rosa Diamond, she keeps Gibreel imprisoned by singing siren songs to him in her crystal clear *voice*. Gibreel fails to understand her songs; the only thing he knows is that they make him unable to leave her enchanting realm:

> 'Blasted English mame,' he told himself. 'Some type of extinct species. What the hell am I doing here?' But stayed, held by unseen chains. While she, at every opportunity, sang an old song, in Spanish, he couldn't understand a word. Some sorcery there? Some ancient Morgan Le Fay singing a young Merlin into her crystal cave? Gibreel headed for the door; Rosa piped up; he stopped in his tracks. (144)

Whereas the sound effects of the Norman Conquest haunt the text as hesitant signs of some kind of national unisonance, Rosa's voice acts as a tempting, irresistible, didactic principle of Englishness, which literally imprisons Gibreel. I think it is not her vision of the Norman Conquest that endows her with this allegorical role, as Bhabha argues, but the apparently unlimited power of her voice. Her allegorical role inspires the stories she tells to Gibreel, and leaves no room for his intervention at all. He attempts to question the ancient lady only once: when a "pair of fine new horns" appear on Saladin's head, Gibreel tries to call Rosa's attention to this extraordinary incident, yet she only tells him that "there was nothing new under the sun, she had seen things, the apparitions of men with horned helmets, in an ancient land like England there was no room for new stories, every blade of turf had already been walked over a hundred thousand times" (144). Rosa literally silences Gibreel, leaving no room for his stories and his voice; it is her *voice* that becomes the pedagogical principle of Englishness, which remains powerful despite the fact that her body is fragmenting, and she dies on her 89th birthday.

Her voice, similarly to the voice of Satan in the religious chapters, parades as Logos in *The Satanic Verses*. It functions as an entity that both possesses and hides "the truth," the way David Appelbaum presumes: "[the fact that] we avoid attending to the voice that is ours reveals a hiddenness surrounding voice. The hiddenness is double. The note of imperishable recognition is hidden from the being whose voice it is; *and*, we of voice lie hiding from sounding the truth ourselves."[24] Appelbaum, heavily influenced by Derrida, recognizes the ambivalence of voice, which results from the tension between its promise to articulate "the

24. Appelbaum, pp. ix–x.

truth," as the most intimate attribute of the person who speaks, and the inevitable distance it evokes in relation to that very person. The voice seems both to contain and to hide the "truth" about oneself, and, therefore, has a double-tongued nature, just like in Rushdie's novel. The doubleness of the voice is indicated by the fact that the clear, articulated Logos may be interrupted by inarticulate sound effects, such as the cough, which threaten its apparently "omnipotent power." He regards the cough as "raw sound, unperiodic vibration, or plain noise,"[25] which is more corporeal than the voice, and this corporeality makes it even more dangerous: "Even if suppressed the cough is never mental and cannot be truthful. The cough, therefore, is to be feared."[26] Furthermore, it even becomes a devilish entity in his reading: "The cough is devilish and chthonic. It interrupts God's sermon of phonetic abundance and the soul's self-reiteration."[27]

Though the sound appears as an interruption in *The Satanic Verses*, functioning as a subversive element, it never becomes a devilish and corporeal entity opposed to the crystal clear Voice. On the contrary, it is the Voice that is a "devilish" principle in the novel, and, despite the fact that it appears as a disembodied entity, it has corporeal effects: the voice captures Gibreel at Rosa Diamond's mansion, dragging him by the navel. Contrary to this emphatic corporeality, the sound seems to be almost *disembodied*: we encounter the resounding echo of the Conqueror's *ghost*, as if the only possibility for the sound to interrupt the omnipotent power of Voice consisted in retreating into an incorporeal dimension, which seems to be the last hiding space that the Voice is not entirely able to control. In my view, the body cannot really function as a site of resistance in Rushdie's texts; it seems to be too fragmented, too weak, and too overwhelmingly subdued by the omnipresent Voice to launch a challenge of its own. It is the sound that subverts the false plenitude and omnipotent power of the Voice in his novels.[28]

What is more, the sound does not simply challenge this omnipotence, but attempts to offer a plenitude of its own. For instance, when Saladin is walking on the streets of London, desiring to find the "secrets of Englishness," sound effects seem to take him closer to it:

> Of material things, he had given his love to this city, London, preferring it to the city of his birth or to any other; had been creeping up on it,

25. Apperlbaum, p. 3.
26. Appelbaum, p. 5.
27. Appelbaum, p. 6.
28. For the analysis of the trope in *Midnight's Children* see Ágnes Györke, "Postmodern Nations in Salman Rushdie's Fiction," *The AnaChronist* 15 (2010) 135–155.

> stealthily, with mounting excitement, freezing into a statue when it looked in his direction, dreaming of being the one to possess it and so, in a sense, *become* it, as when in the game of grandmother's footsteps the child who touches the one who's *it* . . . takes over that cherished identity; as, also, in the myth of the Golden Bough. London, its conglomerate nature mirroring his own, its reticence also his; its gargoyles, the ghastly footfalls in its streets of Roman feet, the honks of its departing migrant geese. (398, emphasis in the original)

The sounds of "Englishness," the footfalls, the sounds of Roman footsteps, and the honks of the departing geese, are the secrets that Saladin desires to possess. These lead him towards a desired unisonance, or promise of initiation, a plenitude that echoes Rosa Diamond's vision of the Norman Conquest. Whereas Rosa's *Voice* imprisoned Gibreel, the *sounds* that Saladin is in search of promise an alternative plenitude that evokes a more ambivalent and less controllable notion of Englishness than the version imposed upon Gibreel by Rosa's didactic Voice.

The opposition of sound and voice reappears in several other episodes as well. Saladin's boss, Hal Valance, for instance, one of the most authoritative characters in the novel, is known as a person with a "Deep Throat voice" (265). After miraculously surviving the explosion of the airplane, Saladin attempts to re-establish his earlier life, and calls his boss to arrange his future employment. Valance briefly congratulates him on being alive, after which he fires him, without much ado, for ethnic reasons: "A busy man, Hal Valance, creator of *The Aliens Show* and sole owner of the property, took exactly seventeen seconds to congratulate Chamcha on being alive before beginning to explain why this fact did not affect the show's decision to dispense with his services" (264). Valance is not simply a ruthless and authoritative Briton, possessor of the voice of success, but he also becomes associated with the nation in the novel: "He owned a Union Jack waistcoat and insisted on flying the flag over his agency and also above the door of his Highgate home" (266). Just like Rosa Diamond, he is an allegorical figure of Englishness, and, similarly to her, he has a secret dream which is slightly at odds with his authoritative voice. After the rather brief phone call, Saladin recalls how he met Valance in his residence a few years ago, and how the self-made man led him into a room, a secret space, suggesting that he too has a hidden, secret self:

> After lunch, a surprise. Valance led him into a room in which there stood two clavichords of great delicacy and lightness. 'I make 'em,' his host confessed. 'To relax.' . . . Hal Valance's talent as a cabinet-maker was undeniable, and somehow at odds with the rest of the man. 'My father was in the trade,' he admitted under Chamcha's probing, and Saladin understood that he had been granted a privileged glimpse into the only piece that remained of Valance's original self, the Harold that derived from history and blood and not from his own frenetic brain.
>
> When they left the secret chamber of the clavichords, the familiar Hal Valance instantly reappeared. (269)

Valance's secret chamber, the spatial metaphor of his hidden self, stores the musical instruments that the businessman makes in his free time. The chamber seems to be the storehouse of voices which are not to be heard (Valance fabricates the instruments, but he probably could not play them even if he wanted to), and, paradoxically, it is these "unheard melodies" that speak about his self, as opposed to the Deep Throat Voice of the businessman. Valance's secret chamber also calls Rosa's "buried treasure chests" (129) to mind; in both cases, sounds are locked in secret spaces that the reader, just like Saladin, might only encounter for split seconds. Therefore, contrary to Appelbaum's theory, in Rushdie's novel these sounds do not simply function as devilish and corporeal entities interrupting the crystal clear Voice, the Logos, the appropriator of "truth," but they seem to contain an alternative truth of their own, however momentary and hidden. Therefore, though less assertive and more ambivalent, they are akin to Homi Bhabha's notion of the performative, that "prodigious, living principle," "by which the national life is redeemed and signified as a repeating and reproductive process" (297).

Theatres of Survival

This "truth," however, does not bring back a hidden neo-Platonic ideal; *The Satanic Verses* puts its alternative "truths" into an ambiguous, theatrical context, which guarantees that they are able to survive in the postmodern text. In Rosa Diamond's case, for instance, the vision of William the Conqueror is described as a spectacle performed for the old lady, who always runs for her "opera glasses" (138) whenever something happens in her garden, watching the Norman fleet's return from the place that provides "grandstand view" (130). The reader feels that s/he is watching a performance through Rosa's eyes, as if those "essential" moments of English nationhood were nothing but spectacles performed on stage. The novel abounds in theatrical metaphors (spectacle, stage, studio, curtain, mimicry, etc.), and it is this literally performative context, to use Bhabha's term again, that enables the miraculous, quasi-Platonic sounds to survive. Unlike Rosa's didactic allegory, which falls apart, as if it were unable to bear the burden

of the incompatible stories the old lady is trying to tell, the performative vision of nationhood remains a viable option in *The Satanic Verses*.

The sounds (or more precisely, echoes) of Dickens's London also appear in the novel. When Saladin's colleague, Mimi Mamoulian, and her legendary lover, Billy Battuta, organise a party in London, the location of which is the "giant sound stage at the Shepperton film studios" (421), the performance is accompanied by the sound of footsteps. The guests "take pleasure in the huge re-creation of Dickensian London that stood within" (421): Dickens's characters appear, and the stage itself echoes the setting of his novels, recreating one of the most emblematic spaces of Englishness:

> But the guests are not disposed to grumble; the reborn city, even if rearranged, still takes the breath away; most particularly in that part of the immense studio through which the river winds, the river with its fogs and Gaffer Hexam's boat, the ebbing Thames flowing beneath two bridges, one of iron, one of stone. – Upon its cobbled banks the guests' gay footsteps fall; and there sound mournful, misty, footfalls of ominous note. (422)

The sound of footfalls fills this simulacrum of London: we hear no other voice apart from the guests' "gay" footfalls, producing "mournful," "misty" and "ominous" sounds. Furthermore, Dickens is not the only icon of Englishness that appears in this episode: the jealous Gibreel and the devilish Saladin perform the role of Shakespeare's Othello and Iago on this heavily allegorical stage. Gibreel appears with his beloved Allie, of whom he is terribly jealous, and Saladin, still angry with him for his behaviour at Rosa's place, and envious of his "ice queen," decides to take revenge on his old friend. It does not take long for Saladin to notice that Gibreel is suffering from paranoid jealousy, after which he takes up the role of Iago and starts to torment his "friend": "My Chamcha may be no Ancient of Venice, my Allie no smothered Desdemona, Farishta no match for the Moor, but they will, at least, be costumed in such explanations as my understanding will allow. – And so, now, Gibreel waves in greeting; Chamcha approaches; the curtain rises on a darkening stage" (425). That is, in "the sound stage at the Shepperton film studios" (421) we see the icons of Englishness performed in a theatrical way, just like on Rosa Diamond's porch: the studio acts as a closed microcosm, and the darkening stage, hidden by the curtain that rises only at the moment when Gibreel and Saladin identify with their Shakespearean roles, appears as a Chinese box, which promises to take us closer and closer to the secrets of Englishness, as if these hiding spaces protected the magic unisonance of sound effects.

At this point, it is necessary to return to Bhabha once more. Contrary to his argument, in my view, it is not Gibreel who challenges pedagogical Englishness in

the novel, but Saladin: whereas Gibreel becomes lost amidst Rosa's tales, never really succeeds in colonizing London, and commits suicide at the end, it is Saladin who survives. Saladin Chamcha (whose name echoes, besides the obvious reference to Kafka's Gregor *Samsa* and the Sultan Saladdin, that of *Salman* Rushdie as well as *Saleem* Sinai) is, unsurprisingly, an actor; before Hal Valance fires him, he works for Valance's TV programme *The Alien's Show*, where his task is to imitate voices and inarticulate noises: "If you wanted to know how your ketchup bottle should talk in its television commercial, if you were unsure as to the ideal voice for your packet of garlic-flavoured crisps, he was your very man. . . . On the radio he could convince an audience that he was Russian, Chinese, Sicilian, the President of the United States" (60). Due to this peculiar talent he becomes "the Man of a Thousand Voices and a Voice" (60), recalling the number of children in *Midnight's Children*, and suggesting that it is he who possesses some kind of magic in the novel, not Gibreel. Despite the fact that he is like a parrot, a mimic man, literally, it is Saladin who is able to act, to *use* his voice to challenge the pedagogical version of Englishness. With his colleague, Mimi Mamoulian, he "ruled the airwaves of Britain" (60), as if their voice enacted the cacophony of the British nation. Also, when Mimi jokingly suggests that the two of them should get married, she envisages their union in terms of nations: " 'We should get married sometimes, when you're free,' Mimi once suggested to him. 'You and me, we could be the United Nations' " (60). It is Saladin, impersonating the myriad accents that colonise Britain, who challenges official, pedagogical versions of Englishness in the novel.

In other words, in *The Satanic Verses*, as opposed to the larger-than-life national allegory of *Midnight's Children*, which inevitably falls apart at the end of the novel, we find less romantic but more viable options: the most "authentic" sounds of the English nation become theatrical, when Rosa Diamond watches the return of William the Conqueror through her opera glasses, or Saladin and Gibreel perform Shakespearean roles, and the most promising challenge of pedagogical Englishness comes from a compromising mimic man. When Saladin returns to India, and sets out on his new path leading towards the heart of his homeland as well as a renewed sense of self ("[i]t seemed that in spite of all his wrong-doing, weakness, guilt – in spite of his humanity – he was getting another chance" [547]), he is not going towards a more authentic community, but is simply *led* towards another option.

Yet despite his compromise, I argue that Saladin's mimicry is an empowering gesture in the novel; just as Bhabha claims, it becomes a menace simply by suggesting that essentialized versions of Englishness have never been complete. In Bhabha's words:

> It is from this area between mimicry and mockery, where the reforming, civilizing mission is threatened by the displacing gaze of its disciplinary double, that my instances of colonial imitation come. What they all share is a discursive process by which the excess or slippage produced by the *ambivalence* of mimicry (almost the same, *but not quite*) does not merely 'rupture' the discourse, but becomes transformed into an uncertainty which fixes the colonial subject as a 'partial' presence. By partial I mean both 'incomplete' and 'virtual'. It is as if the very emergence of the 'colonial' is dependent for its representation upon some strategic limitation or prohibition *within* the authoritative discourse itself. The success of colonial appropriation depends on a proliferation of inappropriate objects that ensure its strategic failure, so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace.[29]

For Bhabha, the ambivalence of mimicry empowers the migrant, paradoxically, to challenge pedagogical Englishness; the representation of the mimic man depends on the authoritative discourse, yet his act of mimicry also points to a limitation within this very same discourse, which reveals the subversive potential of his speech. The mimic, inarticulate voice of the Indian actor supplements pedagogical nationhood in the novel; his story completes the narrative of the Empire, suggesting that the cacophonic accents that colonise Britain reveal a dimension of Englishness which is not accessible to the English themselves, and which remains uncontrollable by official national pedagogies.

The fact that there are two apocalypses in the novel (one at the end of chapter seven and another at the end of chapter eight) underlines my contention that *The Satanic Verses* is the novel of survival. Rushdie often ends his novels with apocalyptic images (both *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* terminate in spectacular explosions[30]), which act as final judgements upon his fragmenting, overburdened narratives, yet it is only in *The Satanic Verses* that Saladin does not become the victim of these. At the end of chapter seven, for instance, Gibreel's revenge upon London is portrayed in apocalyptic terms: after walking in the city with his trumpet called Azraeel, the exterminating Angel, he imagines that it is God's wrath that set the city on fire, whereas, of course, there is a completely logical explanation (the fire is caused by "secret agents" with the aim of killing Saladin's wife, who possesses too much information about the secret dealings of the

29. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 86.

30. See Teresa Heffernan, "Apocalyptic Narratives: The Nation in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*," *Twentieth Century Literature* 46.4 (2000) 470–491.

Metropolitan Police).[31] Saladin almost dies in this fire; attempting to rescue his friends, he breaks into the burning Shaandar Café, and it is Gibreel who saves him:

> Gibreel lets fall his trumpet; stoops; frees Saladin from the prison of the fallen beam; and lifts him in his arms. . . . Gibreel Farishta begins softly to exhale, a long, continuous exhalation of extraordinary duration, and as his breath blows towards the door it slices through the smoke and fire like a knife; – and Saladin Chamcha, gasping and fainting, with a mule inside his chest, seems to see – but will ever afterward be unsure if it was truly so – the fire parting before them like the red sea it has become, and the smoke dividing also, like a curtain or a veil; – until there lies before them a clear pathway to the door. (468)

The miraculous gesture of parting the fire, recalling the parting of the Red Sea, immediately becomes associated with theatrical categories: it is seen as the parting of *a curtain or a veil*. By locating the gesture in the realm of magic the narrative ensures that it does not threaten the prosaic order of the world – the logic of the Metropolitan Police and Saladin's reasoning, for instance. (One of the inhabitants of the Café gives a perfectly rational explanation: " 'What has happened here in Brickhall tonight is a socio-political phenomenon. Let's not fall into the trap of some damn mysticism' " [467].) The episode shows that the path of survival is also the path of theatricality, and the fact that the compromising mimic man, Saladin, is rescued by Gibreel, the larger-than-life Archangel, implies that his survival is far from being a triumph in the novel.

Nevertheless, he stays alive. His theatrical mimicry, just as momentary revelations of national unisonance, reveals a secret, hidden, often unwelcome, yet nonetheless magic dimension of Englishness. The resounding echo of William the Conqueror, the gay footsteps of the guests in the Dickensian microcosm, or the ghastly footfalls of the "Roman feet" in London speak about intangible, yet hopeful moments of nationhood, which are not controllable by pedagogical discourses. Similarly, Saladin, relying on the means of mimicry to assert difference, holds a

31. Nevertheless, Gibreel thinks the flames are manifestations of a purifying fire, calling to mind the great fire of 1666, which put an end to the plague and provided a new life for the city's inhabitants. There are quite a few references to this fire in the text: the flames are described as " 'most horrid, malicious, bloody flames, not like the fine flame of an ordinary fire' " (464), and, as we learn from Brians's notes, the quotation is from Samuel Pepy's description of the fire of 1666; also, when Saladin enters the burning Shaandar Café, a "pestilential wind drives him back" (466); and finally, at the end of the chapter, Gibreel imagines that the fire has indeed been a "purifying fire" (467).

mirror up to official discourses of Englishness, and reveals that the authoritative version is not complete in itself. Less grandiose than Saleem's India in *Midnight's Children*, yet more viable, these ephemeral sounds of Englishness survive in the text due to the theatrical context of their utterance, suggesting that *The Satanic Verses*, the novel of migration, metamorphoses, and dislocation, can also be read as a peculiar national narrative.

Ayşe Naz Bulamur

Representations of Istanbul in A. S. Byatt's "The Djinn in the Nightingale's Eye"*

This paper explores how Istanbul fantasies in A. S. Byatt's "The Djinn in the Nightingale's Eye" (1994) function as a critique of British patriarchal constructions of femininity. In *Orientalism Postmodernism and Globalism*, Bryan Turner argues that "the Orient in Western imagination is often perceived as the fantastic, it is associated with sexual fantasies" (98). Due to the European invention of Istanbul as "Oriental," Byatt's fifty-year-old female protagonist, Gillian Perholt, creates her own fairy tale by miraculously releasing a djinn from a Turkish glass vase in late twentieth-century Istanbul. The British narratologist imagines Istanbul through its nineteenth-century representations that picture the city as a fairytale-like place with Oriental daemons and magical vases. Istanbul's association with sensuality, however, is problematized as Gillian realizes that her wish for eternal love will not come true with the djinn. In fact, Istanbul, the city that had been the metaphor for gender inequality due to women's segregated lives in the Ottoman harems, becomes a setting, in Byatt's novella, where British male standards of beauty and the ideals of happy-ever-after love in fairytales are critiqued.

In a novella that brings together realism and fairy tale, A. S. Byatt chooses Turkey, a neighbor of Iraq, as a setting where the romanticization of marriage as the symbol of eternal love is critiqued during the Gulf War in 1991. Byatt's first-person narrator tells the story of a fifty-year-old divorcée, Dr. Gillian Perholt, who, unlike the princesses in fairy tales, did not live happily ever after with her unfaithful husband. While she suggests a distant imaginary world with the fairy tale opening "once upon a time," the narrator also hints that Gillian's story takes place at the time when the United Nations, primarily the United States, were bombing Iraq for invading Kuwait:

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