[16] Fanon, *op.cit.*, p154-5.

[17] Diana Ross' star vehicle 'Mahogany' (1975) and Eddie Murphy's box-office hit 'Trading Places' (1983) are examples which spring to mind.

[18] This is not referred to in the film but Cathy Tyson's 'mixed race' parentage is mentioned in articles in the *Morning Star* (5 September 1986) and *City Limits* (4-11 September 1986).

[19] Gilman, *op.cit.*, p25.

[20] The complexities of Black people and their positioning as members of cinema audiences are only just beginning to be explored. Of particular relevance to 'Mona Lisa' is Jane Gaines' article 'White Privilege and Looking: Race and Gender in Feminist Film Theory', in *Screen*, Vol.29, No.4, Autumn 1988, pp12-27.

[21] Gilman, *op.cit.*, p20.

[22] See, for example, *Today* (7 September 1986), *Sunday Express* (7 September 1989), *The Guardian* (28 August 1986).

[23] Graham Fuller, in conversation with Neil Jordan and David Leland, *The Guardian* (28 August 1986).

[24] Gaines, *op.cit.*

(For Ben, who would have understood.)

Rutherford, Jonathan. 1990. The Third Space. Interview with Homi Bhabha. In: Ders. (Hg): Identity: Community, Culture, Difference. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 207-221.

The Third Space

Interview with Homi Bhabha

Homi Bhabha lectures in English and Literary Theory at Sussex University. His writing on colonialism, race, identity and difference have been an important influence on debates in cultural politics. His own essays will be collected into a single volume, *The Location of Culture*, and he is editor of another collection of essays, *Nation and Narration* (both published by Routledge).

Homi Bhabha has played a central role in articulating a response from black intellectuals in Britain to the publication of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. His statement, which emerged from the group 'Black Voices', in *New Statesman & Society* (3 March 1989) argues for a position that refutes both fundamentalism and its liberal response. In the statement he poses the question: 'So where do we turn, we who see the limits of liberalism and fear the absolutist demands of fundamentalism?' The following interview attempts to provide some kind of theoretical chart for that journey.

Jonathan: In your essay 'Commitment to Theory'[1] you analyse the processes of cultural change and transformation. Central to this analysis is your distinction between cultural diversity and cultural difference, and alongside your emphasis on difference are the notions of translation and hybridity. Could you say something about these terms you use?

Homi Bhabha: The attempt to conceive of cultural difference as opposed to cultural diversity comes from an awareness that right through the liberal tradition, particularly in philosophical relativism and in forms of anthropology, the idea that cultures are diverse and that in some sense the diversity of cultures is a good and positive thing and ought to be encouraged, has been known for a long time. It is a commonplace of plural, democratic societies to say that they can encourage and accommodate cultural diversity.

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

Following from this, you begin to see the way in which the endorsement of cultural diversity becomes a bedrock of multicultural education policy in this country. There are two problems with it: one is the very obvious one, that although there is always an entertainment and encouragement of cultural diversity, there is always also a corresponding containment of it. A transparent norm is constituted, a norm given by the host society or dominant culture, which says that 'these other cultures are fine, but we must be able to locate them within our own grid'. This is what I mean by a *creation* of cultural diversity and a *containment* of cultural difference.

The second problem is, as we know very well, that in societies where multiculturalism is encouraged racism is still rampant in various forms. This is because the universalism that paradoxically permits diversity masks ethnocentric norms, values and interests.

The changing nature of what we understand as the 'national population' is ever more visibly constructed from a range of different sorts of interests, different kinds of cultural histories, different post-colonial lineages, different sexual orientations. The whole nature of the public sphere is changing so that we really do need the notion of a politics which is based on unequal, uneven, multiple and *potentially antagonistic*, political identities. This must not be confused with some form of autonomous, individualist pluralism (and the corresponding notion of cultural diversity); what is at issue is a historical moment in which these multiple identities do actually articulate in challenging ways, either positively or negatively, either in progressive or regressive ways, often conflictually, sometimes even *incommensurably* – not some flowering of individual talents and capacities. Multiculturalism represented an attempt both to respond to and to control the dynamic process of the articulation of cultural difference, administering a *consensus* based on a norm that propagates cultural diversity.

My purpose in talking about cultural difference rather than cultural diversity is to acknowledge that this kind of liberal relativist perspective is inadequate in itself and doesn't generally recognise the universalist and normative stance from which it constructs its cultural and political judgements. With the concept of difference, which has its theoretical history in post-structuralist thinking, psychoanalysis (where difference is very resonant), post-Althusserian Marxism, and the exemplary work of Fanon, what I was attempting to do was to begin to see how the notion of the West itself, or Western culture, its liberalism and relativism – these very potent mythologies of 'progress' – also contain a cutting edge, a limit. With the notion of cultural difference, I try to place myself in that position of liminality, in that productive space of the construction of culture as difference, in the spirit of alterity or otherness.

The difference of cultures cannot be something that can be accommodated within a universalist framework. Different cultures, the difference between cultural practices, the difference in the construction of cultures within different groups, very often set up among and between themselves an *incommensurability*. However rational you are, or 'rationalist' you are (because rationalism is an ideology, not just a way of being sensible), it is actually very difficult, even impossible and counterproductive, to try and fit together different forms of culture and to pretend that they can easily coexist. The assumption that at some level all forms of cultural diversity may be understood on the basis of a particular universal concept, whether it be 'human being', 'class' or 'race', can be both very dangerous and very limiting in trying to understand the ways in which cultural practices construct their own systems of meaning and social organisation.

Relativism and universalism both have their radical forms, which can be more attractive, but even these are basically part of the same process. At this point I'd like to introduce the notion of 'cultural translation' (and my use of the word is informed by the very original observations of Walter Benjamin on the task of translation and on the task of the translator[2]) to suggest that all forms of culture are in some way related to each other, because culture is a signifying or symbolic activity. The articulation of cultures is possible not because of the familiarity or similarity of *contents*, but because all cultures are symbol-forming and subject-constituting, interpellative practices.

We are very resistant to thinking how the act of signification, the act of producing the icons and symbols, the myths and metaphors through which we live culture, must always – by virtue of the fact that they *are* forms of representation – have within them a kind of self-alienating limit. Meaning is constructed across the bar of difference and separation between the signifier and the signified. So it follows that no culture is full unto itself, no culture is plainly plenitudinous, not only because there are other cultures which contradict its authority, but also because its own symbol-forming activity, its own interpellation in the process of representation, language, signification and meaning-making, always underscores the claim to an originary, holistic, organic identity. By translation I first of all mean a process by which, in order to objectify cultural meaning, there always has to be a process of alienation and of secondariness *in relation to itself*. In that sense there is no 'in itself' and 'for itself' within cultures because they are always subject to intrinsic forms of translation. This theory of culture is close to a theory of language, as part of a process of translations – using that word as before, not in a strict linguistic sense of translation as in a 'book translated from French into English', but as a motif or trope as Benjamin suggests for the activity of displacement within the linguistic sign.

Developing that notion, translation is also a way of imitating, but in a mischevious, displacing sense – imitating an original in such a way that the priority of the original is not reinforced but by the very fact that it *can* be simulated, copied, transferred, transformed, made into a simulacrum and so on: the 'original' is never finished or complete in itself. The 'originary' is always open to translation so that it can never be said to have a totalised prior moment of being or meaning – an essence. What this really means is that cultures are only constituted in relation to that otherness internal to their own symbol-forming activity which makes them decentred structures – through that displacement or liminality opens up the possibility of

articulating *different*, even incommensurable cultural practices and priorities.

Now the notion of hybridity comes from the two prior descriptions I've given of the genealogy of difference and the idea of translation, because if, as I was saying, the act of cultural translation (both as representation and as reproduction) denies the essentialism of a prior given original or originary culture, then we see that all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity. But for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom.

Jonathan: I can see how this enables us to elude a politics of polarity and a cultural binarism, but would you call this 'third space' an identity as such?

Homi Bhabha: No, not so much identity as identification (in the psychoanalytic sense). I try to talk about hybridity through a psychoanalytic analogy, so that identification is a process of identifying with and through another object, an object of otherness, at which point the agency of identification – the subject – is itself always ambivalent, because of the intervention of that otherness. But the importance of hybridity is that it bears the traces of those feelings and practices which inform it, just like a translation, so that hybridity puts together the traces of certain other meanings or discourses. It does not give them the authority of being prior in the sense of being original: they are prior only in the sense of being anterior. The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation. A good example would be the form of hybridity that *The Satanic Verses*[3] represents, where clearly a number of controversies around the origin, the authorship and indeed the authority of the Koran, have been drawn upon in the book.

Within the discourses of theological disputation, what appears in

Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* has all been said and discussed before (about the interpolations in the Koran, the status of those interpolations, the 'Satanic Verses' as illicit intervention and so on). What is interesting is how, using another kind of language of representation – call it the 'migrant metaphor', call it the postmodern novel or what you will – and giving a context of other forms of allegorisation, the metropolitanism of the modern city, contemporary sexuality etc, the knowledges and disputes about the status of the Koran become quite different things in *The Satanic Verses*. Through that transformation, through that form of cultural translation, their values and effects (political, social, cultural) become entirely incommensurable with the traditions of theological or historical interpretation which formed the received culture of Koranic reading and writing.

To think of migration as metaphor suggests that the very language of the novel, its form and rhetoric, must be open to meanings that are ambivalent, doubling and dissembling. Metaphor produces hybrid realities by yoking together unlikely traditions of thought. *The Satanic Verses* is, in this sense, structured around the metaphor of migrancy. The importance of thinking migration as *literary metaphor* leads us back to the great social offence of the novel (the way it has been read and interpreted, literally, as a Satanic challenge to the authority of Islam), but also permits us to see how it is the *form* of the novel has been profoundly misunderstood and has proved to be politically explosive – precisely because the novel is about metaphor.

Jonathan: Before we talk about *The Satanic Verses*, I'd like to return the distinction you make between identity and identification. Could you expand on this?

Homi Bhabha: I felt that the possibility of producing a culture which both articulates difference and lives with it could only be established on the basis of a non-sovereign notion of self. It seemed to me that the way in which left politics deals with that is simply by replacing the essentialism of the self, the autonomous identity, with an essentialist cultural and political identity -'class' most often. So that the 'individualist' subjectivity of the self is decentred if you like,

but only by substituting some other foundational category, such as class. Through the class matrix, other forms of cultural difference have been normalised and homogenised. As we know, class-based politics in this country, however impeccable its socialist or Marxist credentials, has disavowed to a large extent questions and priorities based on race and gender. The fragmentation of identity is often celebrated as a kind of pure anarchic liberalism or voluntarism, but I prefer to see it as a recognition of the importance of the alienation of the self in the construction of forms of solidarity.

It is only by losing the sovereignty of the self that you can gain the freedom of a politics that is open to the non-assimilationist claims of cultural difference. The crucial feature of this new awareness is that it doesn't need to totalise in order to legitimate political action or cultural practice. That is the real issue.

Having said that, there is also always that other mode where a totalisation becomes the basis of any legitimate political or social consciousness, and when that happens then you lose that all-important *articulating world* (and I use the word specifically) of difference.

Jonathan: I want to return to the Rushdie affair in which that kind of totalisation has occurred: far from two counterposing terms being hybridised and transformed into a third, there is that incommensurability – the sense of two camps, immoveable and locked in a seemingly irreconcilable conflict. Could you comment on this?

Homi Bhabha: As far as the Rushdie case goes, you're quite right to note that at one level what we see is a very intractable, obstinate sort of fixity of difference being established. But you see, just at a practical level, that's not entirely so. At a surface level there is for instance the liberal viewpoint which proposes the right to write, the right to speak, the right to express your beliefs as central to secular society. There has been the firm assertion of those 'fundamentals', but in all quarters which matter there has also been a slow modification of that position. This modification has been to dilute it with comments on the unreadability of the book. I think all this is very interesting: 'of course we have the right to write, but that doesn't mean we like what is written; in fact the more we say we don't like it, the more we both in one or another subtle way send signals to the Iranians that we're dissociating ourselves from it and send signals to our own liberal alter egos that we are such fine people because we are even going to support what we don't like.' Within that liberal wing of the controversy then, there is a very interesting sort of fail-safe strategy which is more complex than saying 'we stick to our liberal values'. In terms of the 'fundamentalist' position (as it is simplistically and wrongly called), you are quite right – even according to the latest opinion poll, 38 per cent of British Muslims think that the death penalty is the correct one for Salman Rushdie.[4] But I think the case has also illustrated how within the Shi'ite sect (which is too easily and too often read as 'fundamentalist') there are a number of other positions. Now it is true that those positions are not dominant at the moment but it has raised – and this is where I think I would make a claim, a practical claim, for a kind of hybridisation which exists no matter whether you keep on asserting the purity of your own doctrines – it has raised more graphically than before the notion of religious law versus secular law, and the presence of a kind of conflictual enunciative moment or enunciative aperture through which, whether you like it or not, your 'fundamentalist' credo is going to have to pass. So it's actually raised a lot of questions about the espousal of contemporary fundamental belief and the world in which 'fundamentalism' has to exist now. It is worth mentioning at this point that Ziauddin Sardar has recently argued in *The Listener* (25 January 1990) that the *fatwah* ['death sentence'] emerges out of that body of classical juridical opinion known as *figh*, which is devoid of the ethical teachings of the Koran 'and many of the laws derived from it are irrelevant for modern *Muslim* societies'.

None of this has directly affected the material situation, but if we try to look at it with a little hindsight, or if we advance our positions a few years and then look back, we'll see how that even within the apparently intractable 'fundamentalist' position, a number of incommensurabilities has emerged (not at the level of theological interpretation, but at the level of effectivity – how these ideas can effected upon a social context and what the social context of these ideas is). So in a rather startling sense, whereas 'fundamentalism' has been so easily relegated to some archaic past, we now begin to see

how it is a player in contention in a very modern political game and in fact how many contemporary political moments both make a space for it and limit it. The effective historical context of *The Satanic Verses* conflict is British Bradford, not Shi'ite Iran.

Jonathan: You are arguing then that the problem of modernity has been its inability to deal with archaic cultural forms that it sees as being opposed to itself. What concerns me about all forms of essentialism, and its more conservative cousin – fundamentalism – is that they deny difference and erase their practices of discrimination and domination. Could you comment on this theme? I suppose, for me, the Rushdie affair has brought this up most of all, but so also has the rise of Christian fundamentalism.

Homi Bhabha: Can I just clarify that what to me is problematic about the understanding of the 'fundamentalist' position in the Rushdie case is that it is *represented* as archaic, almost medieval. It may sound very strange to us, it may sound absolutely absurd to some people, but the point is that the demands over *The Satanic Verses* are being made *now*, out of a particular political state that is functioning very much in our time, if not in an immediately recognisable intellectual space. Besides this, many of the Muslims making the demands are not a million miles away, they are not part of another kind of social and cultural world, another society – they happen to live in Bradford. I think that we wilfully misunderstand the issue by relegating them to some distant past from which their voices seem to be emerging in a completely untimely, despotic cry for blood.

Jonathan: In that case, the question of modernity raises a real problem for the left which has always tried to align itself with an idea of progress, linked to that tradition of Western philosophical liberalism which you described and criticised before.

Homi Bhabha: *Exactly, it has to keep asserting how modern and how rational it is, and has assumed moreover that these things were identical.* But as a critique of the left and its enthusiastic espousal of forms of rationalism and modernity, I think that the question to ask is about the left not being able to cope with certain forms of uncertainty and unfixity in the construction of political identity and its programmatic, policy implications.

Jonathan: But the espousal of essentialism, the insistence that one possesses the truth, demands the fixity of cultural identity. How do your notions of hybridity and difference cope with making alliances with constituencies whose values are, for want of a better word, fundamentalist?

Homi Bhabha: I think very easily, because the notion of hybridity (as I make clear in the piece 'Commitment to Theory' to which you referred earlier) is about the fact that in any particular political struggle, new sites are always being opened up, and if you keep referring those new sites to old principles, then you are not actually able to participate in them fully and productively and creatively. As Nelson Mandela said only the other day, even if there is a war on you must negotiate – negotiation is what politics is all about. And we do negotiate even when we don't know we are negotiating: we are always negotiating in any situation of political opposition or antagonism. Subversion is negotiation; transgression is negotiation; negotiation is not just some kind of compromise or 'selling out' which people too easily understand it to be. Similarly we need to reformulate what we mean by 'reformism': all forms of political activity, especially progressive or radical activity, involve reformations and reformulations. With some historical hindsight we may call it 'revolution', those critical moments, but what is actually happening if you slow them up are very fast reforms and reformulations. So I think that political negotiation is a very important issue, and hybridity is precisely about the fact that when a new situation, a new alliance formulates itself, it may demand that you should translate your principles, rethink them, extend them. On the Left there's too much of a timid traditionalism – always trying to read a new situation in terms of some pre-given model or paradigm, which is a reactionary reflex, a conservative 'mindset'.

Jonathan: My earlier question about alliances with fundamentalist constituencies had in mind the topical and attractive idea of a red/green alliance. It seems to me that there is a powerful element within the contemporary explosion of green consciousness that represents a search for fundamental values, for the idea of the sacred – the sanctity of mother earth, the turn away from culture to nature as the font of knowledge.

Homi Bhabha: Now in terms of something like Green politics, I think the situation is very complex, because the great spur to Green politics, however it's coming out now, has been the nuclear threat which was given an eerie prophetic prefiguring in Chernobyl. I think we have not fully assessed the psychological and indeed political effects of something like Chernobyl. With an earthquake you can feel that it's part nature, part culture, whereas with Chernobyl it's entirely culture, entirely science, entirely of our planning and our making. (Not that the disaster is of our planning, but in terms of general perspectives.) The fact that both Chernobyl and Bhopal – those monumental environmental tragedies – are accidents, makes the Green argument even more compelling; we need to look at the history of those accidents. The extent to which Green politics emerges out of such a history and such a critique of rationality and scientific progress is a very good thing. If, as Green politicians are prepared to say, Green politics is not compatible with a capitalist view of social development, to that extent too it's a very good antidote to another prevalent ideology (that Patrick Wright has written about[5]) which informs the English notion of self, and the whole notion of an Arcadian past. You have it in literature with F.R. Leavis; you even have it crawling round the edges of E.P. Thompson sometimes; and you certainly have it in Enoch Powell, where the English countryside becomes inextricably entwined with the Empire, an idea of organic community and so on. It's a very good antidote, because Green politics takes the language of that kind of Arcadianism and turns it against itself. A properly constructed socialist Green Party would naturally provide a critique of the claims of modern, technological-industrial, capitalist development which is ruining the planet; but it would also deconstruct the obfuscatory, nostalgic Arcadianism of the Conservatives.

Jonathan: We've talked about the significance of Green politics and new cultural and religious forces in this country as a challenge to modernity. I'd like to refer to your comment that the founding moment of modernity was the moment of colonialism. In a *Marxism Today* interview[5] you said 'the colonial moment is the history of the West'. Can you elaborate on this remark?

Homi Bhabha: I think we need to draw attention to the fact that the advent of Western modernity, located as it generally is in the 18th and 19th centuries, was the moment when certain master narratives of the state, the citizen, cultural value, art, science, *the novel*, when these major cultural discourses and identities came to define the 'Enlightenment' of Western society and the critical rationality of Western personhood. The time at which these things were happening was the same time at which the West was producing another history of itself through its colonial possessions and relations. That ideological tension, visible in the history of the West as a despotic power, at the very moment of the birth of democracy and modernity, has not been adequately written in a contradictory and contrapuntal discourse of tradition. Unable to resolve that contradiction perhaps, the history of the West as a despotic power, a colonial power, has not been adequately written side by side with its claims to democracy and solidarity. The material legacy of this repressed history is inscribed in the return of post-colonial peoples to the metropolis. Their very presence there changes the politics of the metropolis, its cultural ideologies and its intellectual traditions, because they – as a people who have been recipients of a colonial cultural experience – displace some of the great metropolitan narratives of progress and law and order, and question the authority and authenticity of those narratives. The other point I'm trying to make is not only that the history of colonialism is the history of the West but also that the history of colonialism is a *counter-history* to the normative, traditional history of the West.

The migrant metaphor I discussed before suggests, by analogy, that the Western, metropolitan histories of progress and *civitas* cannot be conceived without evoking the savage colonial antecedents of the ideals of civility and the mythology of 'civilisation'. By implication, it also suggests that the language of rights and obligations, so central to the modern discourse of

citizenship, must be questioned on the basis of the anomalous and discriminatory legal and cultural status assigned to migrant and refugee populations who find themselves, inevitably, on the other side of the law.

In other words, the postcolonial perspective forces us to rethink the profound limitations of a consensual and collusive 'liberal' sense of community. It insists – through the migrant metaphor – that cultural and political identity is constructed through a process of othering. The time for 'assimilating' minorities to holistic and organic notions of cultural value has passed – the very language of cultural community needs to be rethought from a postcolonial perspective. A comparison which is 'closer to home' would be the profound shift in the language of sexuality and self effected by feminism in the 1970s, and by the gay community in the 1980s.

Western 'civility' claims, in a world-historical sense, to have superceded all this, maintaining that the perceived cultural values of 'fundamentalism' form part of a past history which is understood, known and located through the aegis and frameworks of Western rationalism and historicism. But the critique mounted by Green politics, and the challenge of radical Islam, flatly contradict that claim – albeit in very different ways.

'Fundamentalist' demands may sound archaic but they are put today as part of a cultural and political system that is fully contemporary. One has to take responsibility for precisely that type of cultural incommensurability and antagonism that my notion of cultural difference attempts to develop.

Jonathan: I'd like to complete this interview with reference to politics, specifically to the role of intellectuals. Can you expand on the comment you made about the place and time of the 'committed intellectual'?

Homi Bhabha: Well, that comment was made in a piece where I was trying to say that committed intellectuals have a dual responsibility.[6] They have a responsibility to intervene in particular struggles, in particular situations of political negotiation, but that is not to say that there is a way of intervening by actually changing the 'object' of knowledge itself, by reformulating the concept of society within which certain demands are made; and I was suggesting that there were therefore two possible forms of activity. I was also attacking a sense that people felt that unless theoretical ideas immediately translated into political action, then they were in some way valueless. Of course the word to focus on here is 'immediately', because very often people say 'well, how does this cash out?'. You articulate a particular theoretical position, the next question will be 'in that case, how do you explain the miners' strike?' or 'how would you explain agitation on London Transport?'. Now I don't believe that this should be a test of the political relevance of a theoretical position, because it may be perfectly possible to suggest two coexistent kinds of activity in which the redefining of larger political concepts is crucial.

Jonathan: This is an intervention in that third space ...

Homi Bhabha: Yes, it's also an intervention in that third space. I mean, for instance, if you just begin to see what's happening in Eastern Europe today – that's a very good example: people are having to redefine not only elements of socialist policy, but also wider questions about the whole nature of this society which is in a process of transition from a communist-state, second-world, iron-curtain frame of being. Socialism in both the East and the West is having to come to terms with the fact that people cannot now be addressed as colossal, undifferentiated collectivities of class, race, gender or nation. The concept of a people is not 'given', as an essential, class-determined, unitary, homogeneous part of society *prior to a politics*; 'the people' are there as a process of political articulation and political negotiation across a whole range of contradictory social sites. 'The people' always exist as a multiple form of identification, waiting to be created and constructed.

This sort of politics, articulating minority constituencies across disjunctive, differential social positions, does not produce that kind of vanguardist 'lead from the front' attitude. If you have this notion of 'the people' as being constructed (through cultural difference and hybridity as I've suggested above), then you avoid that very simplistic polarity between the ruler and the ruled: any monolithic description of authoritative power (such as 'Thatcherism'), based on

that kind of binarism, is not going to be a very accurate reflection of what is actually happening in the world. If instead you have a model which emphasises the ambivalent nature of that relationship, which understands political subjectivity as a multi-dimensional, conflictual form of identification, then Thatcherism is the name for a number of articulated constituencies – from working-class and petit-bourgeois formations right up to the expected Tory hierarchies and the commercial/industrial world. You also begin to see how this 'general will', this consensual bloc could be *disarticulated*. What we see is not only political rationality at work, but the 'political unconscious', the symbolic representation of a Great Britain which might in fact be, after a decade of Conservative government, a rather Little country, a modest economic enterprise in Big trouble.

Notes

[1] In *New Formations*, 'Identities' issue, No.5, Summer 1988, Routledge London.
[2] Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, Fontana, London 1982.
[3] Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*, Viking Penguin, London 1988.
[4] Patrick Wright, *On Living in an Old Country: the National Past in Contemporary Britain*, Verso, London 1985.
[5] Discussion with Bhikhu Parekh, in *Marxism Today*, June 1989.
[6] In *New Formations*, *op.cit.*

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