

## **Empathy as Migration in *Joseph Anton: A Memoir* by Salman Rushdie**

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### **Abstract**

The present analysis of strategic narrative empathy in Rushdie's life narrative *Joseph Anton: A Memoir* (2012) is rooted in cultural narratology and complemented by the explanatory tools provided by the Girardian theory of violence as the outcome of a vicious circle set off by mimetic desire. René Girard's theory has been confirmed by the latest neuron system research findings. Bakhtinian dialogical hermeneutics linguistically frames the former accounts in terms of both successful empathic human communication and its failure when the right conditions for it are not met. The relevant textual and contextual aspects of Rushdie's life narrative—including the *fatwa* affair as thematized in *Joseph Anton*—are included in the present analysis with a view to explaining the causes for Rushdie's defense of *parrhesia*. *Parrhesia*, as defined by Foucault, explains Rushdie's central concerns after the *fatwa*, and the defense of free speech becomes a central empathic strategy deployed in Rushdie's memoir. *Joseph Anton*'s highly empathic textuality is shown to rely heavily on Rushdie's intertextual exploration of *The Moor's Last Sigh* in the memoir. Rushdie's life narrative adds empathetic momentum by means of a very apt use of this and other relevant intertextual allusions, especially to Ernest Hemingway's theory of literary truth.

### **Keywords**

life writing, empathy, narratology, identity, scapegoating, *parrhesia*, intertextuality, mondialisation, Salman Rushdie

Thus we clung to humanity, and refused to  
allow our captivity define us.

—Salman Rushdie  
*The Moor's Last Sigh*

## Introduction: Explaining Empathy

The present contribution aims to explain the dynamics of narrative empathy in Salman Rushdie's 2012 *Joseph Anton: A Memoir*,<sup>1</sup> a life narrative that strongly relies on authorial strategic empathy for its persuasive force. The assumption is that the narrative's empathic design stems from the implied author's awareness that he must overcome skepticism and hostility on the part of a number of readers and critics. Not only this, the author himself is acutely self-conscious about the way that intelligence sometimes has difficult relations with empathy, especially when the acts of writing/reading are so relevant to world politics as Rushdie's. That said, the present research does not aim to read *Joseph Anton* in specifically political terms, nor does it focus on the politics of its reception. It will attend to the relevant textual and contextual aspects of Rushdie's life narrative—including the *fatwa* affair as thematized in *Joseph Anton*—which will be included in our analysis with a view to explaining the empathic narrative anchorage of Rushdie's life experience as recounted in his memoir. *Joseph Anton*'s empathic (inter)textual design will be accessed through a transdisciplinary analytical frame that relies on narratological, cognitivist and phenomenological-hermeneutic theoretical concepts.

From a narratological vantage point, narrative empathy can be defined as “the sharing of feeling and perspective-taking induced by reading, viewing, hearing, or imagining narratives of another's situation and condition. Narrative empathy plays a role in the aesthetics of production when authors experience it” (Taylor et al. 361, 376-77; qtd in Keen “Empathy”). It is in the light of this narratological approach that I shall be focusing on the interplay between writerly and readerly empathy in Rushdie's *Joseph Anton*. For a specific formal definition of the types of strategic narrative empathy deployed in Rushdie's memoir, Keen's tripartite typology of strategic empathy seems most relevant (“Strategic Empathizing” n. pag.). *Joseph Anton* will be seen to deploy Keen's “bounded strategic empathy” when Rushdie addresses members of his in-group, older and present-day fiction writers of

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<sup>1</sup> *Joseph Anton: A Memoir*, from here onwards abbreviated as *Joseph Anton* or *JA* in references. Joseph Anton is the code name chosen by Rushdie during the years of the *fatwa* for security reasons. It is this factual-life code name that appears in the title of Rushdie's memoir as the memoirist's *récit* name, a device discussed later.

acknowledged importance in the—mainly Western but also Eastern—literary scene. “Ambassadorial strategic empathy” is deployed when Rushdie addresses members of more temporally, spatially, or culturally remote readerships in his memoir. For instance, his English language memoir directly and explicitly addresses English-speaking Western readers, regardless of their ethnicity or religion, but it also sends a message to the educated Eastern Muslim reader. His message repeats what the greatest artists and intellectuals in the world—from East and West, North and South—have said before while calling for the awareness of a deeply shared human condition and for sameness/empathy/understanding beyond any superficial differences (in gender, belief, nationality or education) that may bring separation and violence.<sup>2</sup> And finally, “broadcast strategic empathy” is deployed when Rushdie calls upon all, actual and potential readers, to experience emotional fusion with his point of view through the mediation of his empathic representation of an experience, his own, in metonymic terms generalizable to universal human experiences. This complex weave of strategies is summarized in *Joseph Anton* as follows: “As he struggled from country to country, hammering on the doors of the mighty and trying to find small moments of freedom in the clutches of this or that security force, he tried to find the words he needed to be not only an advocate of himself but also of what he stood for, or wanted to stand for from now on” (157). Thus Rushdie constructs his memoir in terms of his creative response as an author to an experience in which he played the role of a prominent scapegoat at an international level.<sup>3</sup> As Rushdie sees it, Ayatollah Khomeini’s 1989 *fatwa* was a form of sacrificial violence aimed at controlling his literary expression. Rushdie’s literary response to *fatwa* violence came out in the form of the fictional and non-fictional texts that he managed to produce while the *fatwa* lasted. My focus here falls especially on the empathic effect of the intertextual relation *Joseph Anton* establishes between *The Moor’s Last*

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<sup>2</sup> We must be aware of a certain double standard in *Joseph Anton*. While the authorial voice calls for empathy on the political level towards his public-private roles as an international writer and citizen of the world, the same voice points to past moments in the life of the memoirist when his private-familial relations were marked by what his readers might consider a lack of empathy towards his significant others, especially his first two wives. This is clearly represented in the narrative, which sounds a bit self-exculpatory, promoting empathy by anticipating the readers’ criticism at these points.

<sup>3</sup> The passage contains an intertextual allusion to a motif most prominent in *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, the allusion to Luther’s hammering his 95 protestant theses on the doors of Wittemberg’s castle church. The allusion reinforces *Joseph Anton*’s empathetic construction by drawing the Western readers’ (“ambassadorial”) empathy while calling their attention to the parallelism between Rushdie’s and Luther’s roles as protesters for general free access to the reading and interpretation of the sacred Books.

*Sigh* and the personal diary he wrote at the time to record his reactions to what was happening to him. These diary notes were the mnemonic source of *Joseph Anton*: his diary recorded his initially passive emotional reactions to his role as victim—a role reinforced by his seclusion for security reasons—but also, eventually, his affirmative action in writing *The Moor's Last Sigh*. Rushdie reminisces about the fact that writing this novel allowed him to free himself from the scapegoating role he had been led to accept in silence. The notes in this diary grew years later into *Joseph Anton*, a persuasive piece of empathic life writing narrated by Rushdie's authorial persona.

Rushdie's self-representational narrative addresses readers on the basis of a shared understanding of what Rushdie defines as an essential sameness of human need for empathy and free self-expression: "He would say it, if nobody else would. He wanted to speak, too, for the idea that liberty was everyone's heritage and not, as Samuel Huntington argued, a Western notion alien to the cultures of the East" (*JA* 357). Here, the author's specific form of address is a narratological device seeking author-reader ("broadcast") empathetic coalescence.<sup>4</sup> Rushdie's nuanced appeal to a universal readership stems from his belief in the existence of a shared human identity based on intersubjectivity that transcends cultural identity and relativism. *Joseph Anton* explicitly denounces cultural relativism. See, for instance: "As 'respect for Islam,' which was fear of Islamist violence cloaked in Tartuffe-like hypocrisy, gained legitimacy in the West, the cancer of cultural relativism had begun to eat away at the rich multicultures of the modern world, and down that slippery slope they might all slide toward the Slough of Despond, John Bunyan's swamp of despair" (357). Rushdie's allusion to a specifically Christian English literary narrative creates "bounded strategic empathy" by addressing the lovers of Early Modern English literature, while his selection of an example of religious literature also creates "ambassadorial strategic empathy" by addressing groups more distant from his own position, the readers and writers of Christian religious literature.

Intersubjectivity is the human bond anchoring the self and the other and granting their interdependence. The intersubjective bond saves the self and the other from becoming monadic entities and creates the grounds for interpretation beyond Babel. Moreover, "intersubjectivity" explains empathy from a hermeneutic philosophical perspective that complements that of other disciplines in the humanities. For instance, linguistics and literary criticism are heavily indebted to Mikhail Bakhtin

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<sup>4</sup> Acknowledging the other's point of view for what it is (a specifically positioned vantage point on one interpretative horizon) requires rational empathic coalescence. Whether this coalescence succeeds in eliciting the reader's sympathetic emotional response or not will depend on the reader and his/her circumstances, which affect interpretation by creating the *possibility* of diverse critical readings.

(*The Dialogic; Speech*) for his intersubjective definition of verbal communication.<sup>5</sup> As scholars have argued (Penas-Ibáñez, “Intertextual”; “Semiotic”; “Emergent”), just as for Bakhtin the text is always intertextual (“dialogic” and “heteroglot”)<sup>6</sup> for Juri Lotman culture is always to be understood as intercultural (hybrid) (*Universe*); and, for Maurice Merleau-Ponty (*Phenomenology*) or Paul Ricœur (“Phenomenology”) subjectivity is always intersubjective. It is only along these convergent philological-philosophical lines that the humanities have explained how human individuals and communities can successfully communicate among themselves and with others beyond their differences.

In the hard sciences the latest scientific research on mirror neurons and the biological roots of empathy conducted by Vittorio Gallese (“Intentional”) and Marco Iacoboni (*Mirroring*) has coalesced with philosophical phenomenology and hermeneutics on the issue of intersubjectivity, the interdependent sharing of experiential meaning between people and the immediacy of our perceptions of the mental states/intentions of other people. The bridging element between intersubjectivity and empathy is mirroring imitation according to Iacoboni (114). He explains the hermeneutic circle in terms of empathy as follows: “The role of mirror neurons in intersubjectivity, then, may be more accurately described as allowing interdependence. . . . The interdependence between self and other that mirror neurons allow shapes the social interaction between people, where the concrete encounter between self and other becomes the shared existential meaning that connects them deeply” (114; ellipsis added).

Iacoboni’s intersubjective/dialogical definition of meaning as shared interpreted meaning, explains human interaction and communication, mutual understanding and cooperation on the basis of the basic neuronal structure of the human brain that we all share. On the other hand, under specific circumstances and contexts, the same biological conditions that create cooperative imitation and empathy may also trigger imitative violence (268). The twofold way in which the neuronal mirror system may produce both altruistic empathic imitation and imitative violence requires an explanation that is not given in the biological model. Fortunately,

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<sup>5</sup> An utterance’s “actual meaning is understood against the background of other concrete utterances on the same theme” (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 281). “The word cannot be assigned to a single speaker. The author (speaker) has his own inalienable right to the word, but the listener also has his rights, and those whose voices are heard in the word before the author comes upon it also have their rights (after all there are no words that belong to no one)” (Bakhtin, *Speech* 121). Indeed, it was Bakhtin who conceived the text as being an intertextual, intersubjective, and intercultural utterance.

<sup>6</sup> “Intertextuality” is Kristeva’s coinage for Bakhtin’s Russian terminology (“Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman”).

the relation between imitation and violence has been tackled quite insightfully by René Girard (*Deceit; Violence; "rôle"*) from a hermeneutic-humanist position in accordance with Gallese and Iacoboni's neurobiological research findings about the imitative (mimetic) nature of human beings. Human desire to have what others have and behave like others is the product of human neuronal biology, and is taken for granted in Girardian theory.<sup>7</sup> But there is a difference between the models: while the neurobiological model stops with stating a need to redefine human freedom of will, which the model questions, Girard's model offers an explanation for the fact that not everyone behaves in the same way even if biologically built in the same way, thus avoiding determinism.

According to Girard, the intrinsic human drive to mirror/mime the other's desire drives first to admiration and emulation and then to fear, hatred and victimization of the other in what can be called a vicious hermeneutic circle. The circularity of mimetic desire acts as a deterministic force that guides behavior and interpretation in predictably dangerous ways unless deflected. For Girard, the way to make mimetic desire work in a creative, rather than destructive sacrificial way is by letting the neuronal drive towards imitating some other operate by deflecting attention from the human to the divine Other and desiring what this transcendent Will/God desires.<sup>8</sup> Girard argues that the perfect example of this short-circuiting of mimetic violence through symbolism was achieved in the Biblical religions, and more perfectly in Christianity. Empathy in the latter case would be charity. Framed as charity, empathy is the capacity to strengthen the intersubjective bond by means of altruistic love for the other. Altruism relies on the onset of a moral migration of the soul from the self-other binomial to a third object of desire, the divine.<sup>9</sup> This dynamics breaks the destructive structure of mirroring doubles through the inclusion of a third for contemplation within the mirror structure. This third is a Christ-like model, a perfected version of the human self and other to be used as the mirror for human self-refashioning and a better world. Girard's explanatory model applies to the human case generally, disregarding the fact that the particular individual under

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<sup>7</sup> In his 2007 lecture at the École Normale Supérieure, Paris, Girard explicitly acknowledged that mirror neuron research scientifically corroborates his observations about the ingrained tendency of imitative violence towards automatism.

<sup>8</sup> The traditional anthropological mechanism allowing the community to break the circle of imitative violence has been scapegoating (Girard, *Violence*).

<sup>9</sup> Significantly enough, in *Joseph Anton* (629) there is an explicit reference to *Step across This Line* (2002), the piece of non-fiction in which Rushdie articulated one of his most comprehensive statements on migration as a complex concept comprising "literal, moral and metaphorical frontier crossings" (*Step* 76). As we shall discuss later, thus conceptualized, migration can be considered Rushdie's core experience and an explanatory device in *JA* for his *fatwa* peripeteia.

discussion here, Salman Rushdie, has always insisted—both while in dialogue and in his writings—upon secular values rather than Christian ideology as part of what he inherited and wants to preserve from his Western education and *fatwa*-related sojourn in hiding.

From the transdisciplinary theoretical perspective presented in the present introduction, a life narrative like Rushdie's *Joseph Anton* can be considered a mirroring representational artifact (Girard, *Deceit*) revelatory of both the creative (empathetic) and the destructive (violent) types of mirror imitation taking place in Rushdie's life (as represented in his memoir) and in his fiction (as represented by *The Moor's Last Sigh*).<sup>10</sup>

A central motif in *Joseph Anton* will be migration understood as frontier crossing in all the "literal, moral and metaphorical" (*Step across This Line* 7) senses that may apply to the expression "frontier crossing." It is within this complex conceptualization of migration that the aesthetics of production in *Joseph Anton* merges with the book's ideological/ethical proposal. That is, *Joseph Anton*'s empathic textual design is focused on highlighting that migration as physical displacement must produce a perspectival positional shift (it is a shift towards *mondialisation* [Derrida, "Globalization"; Nancy, *Creation*])<sup>11</sup> that Rushdie's authorial persona's narrating voice will express in *Joseph Anton*, an ultimate form of migration from the old self into a new one. Thus read, *Joseph Anton* can be considered the non-fictional *Bildungsroman* of a subject bidding goodbye to the trauma caused by the *fatwa*, casting the clandestine part of his existence aside and surfacing in order to recover his writer's name and reputation in a renewed form. As we shall see, *Joseph Anton* narrates the healing effect that writing *TMLS* had for Rushdie and explicitly acknowledges the novel's relevance to the formation of both Rushdie and the memoir. The novel, Rushdie's lovesong to India expressed through Moor's voice, is thus intertextually associated with *Joseph Anton* as a central subtext. Its fictional goodbye to the tolerant multicultural Bombay of (Rushdie's and Moor's) childhood, which was being overtaken by Hindu fundamentalists obliging him to migrate to the West, provides the non-fictional memoir with empathic force. In spite of their modal

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<sup>10</sup> Abbreviated as *TMLS* from now onwards.

<sup>11</sup> Here I follow Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Nancy in their preference for the term "mondialisation" over "globalization," which are not synonyms but have two distinct meanings. Globalisation defines the present as an *agglomeration*, a meaningless conglomeration, a "land of exile" (Nancy 42), not a world at all, while "mondialisation" shows that *there* is a one and only world, a one place of existence for all and everyone, a Heideggerian *Dasein* and a space/time open for our making/creation of the world, a world that *is* sense and mystery.

differences, these narratives can be read as fictional/non-fictional and textual/subtextual counterpoints dealing,<sup>12</sup> firstly, with political interest passing as religious zeal: what Rushdie sees as the main cause for his (and Moor's) expulsion from their community, and, secondly, with the related issue of scapegoating and violence as inflicted on *parrhesia* or fearless speech or writing (Foucault, "Parrhesia"; *Hermeneutics*).<sup>13</sup> In these narratives, though in a different generic mode, the author encodes his radical experience and interpretation of the *fatwa* dangers in terms that accord with Girard's theory, explicitly telling it in *Joseph Anton* and showing it implicitly in *TMLS* thus creating a contrast between their differently empathic narrativities and amplifying *Joseph Anton*'s narrative empathic design through intertextual synergy.

### ***Joseph Anton: A Memoir: Its Intertextuality's Strategic Empathic Force***

Rushdie's memoir denounces the passive role he was cornered into playing as a victim of the *fatwa*. Rushdie's eventual rejection of this role was preceded by the awareness that he had to respond to irrational violence in a creative way. This, for him, entailed refashioning himself in terms of a *mondial parrhèsiastes*<sup>14</sup>—a writer who, according to Foucault (*Hermeneutics*), even at his life's risk, tells the truth by "[saying] what has to be said, what we want to say, what we think ought to be said because it is necessary, useful, and true" (366). As *Joseph Anton* explains, Rushdie succeeded in both while writing and publishing *TMLS* in 1995 and, simultaneously, by keeping updated the personal diary whose entries would become the source of his memoir years later. It is here that Rushdie reflects on the genesis of *TMLS* and its themes, foreshadowing their future recurrence in *Joseph Anton* and all his writing:

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<sup>12</sup> I use the musical term "counterpoint" in order to convey that the present reading of *JA* acknowledges the phenomenological independence of *JA* and *TMLS* as texts published separately, but also their intertextual interdependence: *JA* actually thematizes the process of composition of *TMLS* underlining the importance of the very act of Rushdie's writing it in adverse circumstances.

<sup>13</sup> *JA* frames the writing of *TMLS* as both a turning-point in his writing career and a foundational moment in the writer's life when Rushdie shed the traditional scapegoat role he had been forced to assume and started functioning in the classical role of the *parrhèsiastes*.

<sup>14</sup> Although by that time, Rushdie was already considered an international free-thinking secular author in the West, the *fatwa* violently brought attention to Rushdie's heterodox Indian Muslimness. For Rushdie this clash in perspectives meant he had to make his *mondialisation* (Derrida; Nancy) explicit and fashion himself unmistakably as an insider to world culture. *JA* manifests that this symbolic separation (another form of migration) from the truths of his childhood is what he literarily set to do in writing *TMLS*.

[*TMLS*] would be a big book . . . a book of journeys. . . . He had dealt, as well as he knew how to deal, with the worlds from which he had come. Now he needed to connect those worlds to the very different world in which he had made his life. He was beginning to see that this, rather than India or Pakistan or politics or magic realism, would be his real subject, the one he would worry away at for the rest of his life, the great matter of how the world joined up, not only how the East flowed into the West and the West into the East, but how the past shaped the present while the present changed our understanding of the past, and how the imagined world, the location of dreams, art, invention and, yes, belief, leaked across the frontier that separated it from the everyday, “real” place in which human beings mistakenly believed they lived. (*JA* 68-69; ellipses added)

Thus, *Joseph Anton* thematizes the writer’s awareness that both his fictional text and the non-fictional diary notes that gave birth to it, resulted from the same phenomenological process: first, exposure to external phenomena related to the 1989 *fatwa*; second, internalization in feeling, experiencing, an emotional response to it; third, selective intellectual response, recalling the elements in the *fatwa* that provoked the different emotions; and fourth, production of a selective literary representation, itself a political act, of what he had experienced. The literary creative process follows a phenomenological hermeneutic movement from the outside to the inside and to the outside again: the transmutation of external action into internal experience and then the transmutation of experience into a cognitive empathic external text addressing readers via two different textual narrativities: one explicitly “telling” that experience in a diary/memoir (a non-fictional narrator-mediated life-narrative) and the other, more emotionally implicitly “showing” that same experience through an iconic literary fictional representation.<sup>15</sup> The experiences “shown” iconically in *TMLS* and “told” about in *Joseph Anton* question John Farley’s theory that violence and conflict “are the direct result of concentration of wealth and power” or “exploitation and colonialism” (17-18). Even if this dominant view tackles certain types of social

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<sup>15</sup> The narratological labels “showing” and “telling” correspond to many and complex concepts. Different critics understand them in different complementary ways. I agree with Percy Lubbock (67-68), Norman Friedman (1169-70) and Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan (108) that explicitness is the defining trait of the “telling” mode while implicitness defines narrative “showing,” e.g., of a character’s features and dispositions as well as the themes, ideas or morals of the story.

conflict, it is an insufficient truth that fails to explain imitative violence as denounced/portrayed in Rushdie's non/fiction. Girard's theory of mimetic violence, though, can adequately account for it.

In *Joseph Anton*, Rushdie invites his reader to join him in an emotional journey to truth that unites them, author and reader, in the act of reading. His invitation to a sympathetic coalescence of points of view, the writer's and the reader's, is managed through a highly empathic narrating voice that informs its implied readers of all the minute details that composed the quotidian life of a writer obliged to stay home and write and disappear from the public eye.<sup>16</sup> Rushdie uses his persona as an "I/he-narrator" to explain his motives to his reader. At certain points in this life narrative in the third person there is a shift from third to first person narrator's voice that allows the narrative to move from sense into sensibility, from a third-person form of persuasive reasonability to a first-person form of heightened empathetic discursivity. The latter can be appreciated particularly well in the directly reported epistolary components of his memoir.

Rushdie's life narrative creates writer-reader empathy by means of a very wise bidirectional use of intertextuality—providing authorial "bounded strategic empathy." *Joseph Anton* makes intertextual reference to both Rushdie's own oeuvre and that of fellow writers whose names form part of the history of literature in the East and West. Not only does *Joseph Anton*'s narrating voice, now speaking/writing in the third person and alluding to Rushdie as a "he," explain the difficult circumstances in which the composition of the author's fiction and his diary took place, it also vouches for the truth of what is being told in the writing. The narrator of *Joseph Anton* fits the role of the *parrhêsiaistes* by telling the truth, which is a dangerous thing for him to do, and by passing criticism on somebody more powerful than him because he feels that it is his duty to tell the truth freely (Foucault, "Parrhesia"; *Hermeneutics*). In assuming this role Rushdie's narrator is also voicing the literary tenets on truth and its literary representation defended by one of the most authoritative figures in modern world literature, Ernest Hemingway. For instance, the text shows awareness of how

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<sup>16</sup> Roland Barthes ("The Reality") analyzes the notation of abundantly specified details in a narrative in terms of the rhetoric of the reality effect (*effet de réel*) both in history and modern fiction. For our present purposes, the reality effect in *JA* relies on a narrative sequence that is highly focused on the representation of the support Rushdie got from a group of friends in the profession and colleagues. Thus the reader is offered Rushdie's perspective on events most likely known through the negative lens of the press and propaganda. Of course, the reader might resist the intended effects. A discussion of the psychological motivations for the different literary treatment of personal and professional matters on the writer's part lies outside the scope of the present research. The same can be said about the response of the actual readers to the narrative empathic design and its intended effects.

strongly influenced by Hemingway was Rushdie's own position on truth, life and art, especially at the point in the narrative when Rushdie is shown to take the decision to go and live in the US as part of his next migration move.

Hemingway's name surfaces eight times in Rushdie's life narrative (62, 127, 342, 364, 395, 412, 429, and 596), never at random, always backing Rushdie's words strategically. It is an exemplary literary case of recourse to authority. His trace can be found repeatedly in *Joseph Anton*, beginning with the famous Hemingway motto from *Death in the Afternoon*: "Grace under pressure" (JA 95), which Rushdie quotes in reference to how he had to stick to that rule himself after the *fatwa* ban on his life threatened to affect his *parrhesia* as a writer. There is also a passing reference to *A Farewell to Arms* made in jocular spirit but calling attention to the perfection of a title that could have been ruined by a different stylistic choice of wording: "Imagine it being titled *A Farewell to Weapons*" (JA 364), Rushdie says. In *Joseph Anton*, the reader can also find Rushdie's allusion to "what Hemingway called his 'shit detector'" (422), that is, what Hemingway considered his most valuable capacity, his ability to detect and reject lies, the "bullshit" that people tell themselves when they fear truth (Penas-Ibáñez, "Hemingway's"; "Sad"; "Creative"). *Parrhesia* is, for Rushdie, the source of the predicament he finds himself in, so he relies on Hemingway's authority as a well-known and respected creator of public opinion. According to Hemingway, it is essential for the writer to always know and tell the truth in his fiction and non-fiction, no matter how inconvenient it may sound to the politically-correct reader.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, Rushdie's definition of literary truth as "the journey to the truth upon the waters of make-believe" (JA 630) is essentially indebted to Hemingway's theory of literary truth as a revelatory view of human life brought about by good "writing" that creates believable illusions.

At another point in his memoir, Rushdie recalls the "post-fatwa" psychological strain that hindered his writing and the positive effect Hemingway's example had on him in that respect: "[Rushdie] forced himself to sit there in his pajamas until he had begun his day's work. 'The art of writing,' Hemingway said, 'is the art of applying

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<sup>17</sup> I have observed in my research (Penas-Ibáñez, "Sad"; "A Creative") that, in *Death in the Afternoon* (1932), Hemingway used the Spanish bullfight as the perfect example of a politically incorrect, but truthful, textual performance that helps the spectator to learn the truth about human life and death in society. In Rushdie's case, this aspect of Hemingway's literary credo seems especially relevant since the arguments about freedom of expression associated with the Rushdie affair are still open and the question whether it is a writer's right to tell the truth even at the risk of causing offence is still unresolved, especially in circles that question either the right to or the existence of truth, or both.

the seat of the pants to the seat of the chair.’ *Sit down*, he ordered himself. *Don’t stand up*. And slowly, slowly, his old power returned” (*JA* 429; emphasis in original).

In addition to quotation and allusion, *Joseph Anton* mimicks Hemingway’s style, for instance, when Rushdie tells the end of his factual love story with his wife Elizabeth in a style and structure remindful of Hemingway’s fictional “A Very Short Story.” Rushdie starts this part of his life narrative by introducing the self-conscious clause—“At the end of a marriage there was no originality” (588), comparable in its causticity to Hemingway’s title, and then ends their story with a coda “Elizabeth and he did not remarry, nor did they become lovers again” (590), echoing Hemingway’s “[t]he major did not marry her in the Spring, or any other time,” also in “A Very Short Story.”

Moreover, Rushdie articulates his own view on autobiographical writing in terms of a metaphor, the Spanish bullfight, whose importance in Hemingway’s life and art cannot be obviated, when saying: “writers had always worked close to the bull, like matadors, had played complex games with autobiography, and yet their creations were more interesting than themselves” (596). Thus, Rushdie, like Hemingway, underlines the truth that lies behind the artificial constructedness of autobiography, a truth that is transmitted by an artifact whose narrating subject manages to be far more interesting and truthful than the human writer himself. In other words, this complex intersubjective maze of illusions/allusions is bound to create a special brand of empathy, “bounded strategic empathy,” between author and reader that can be superior in its persuasiveness to emotional sympathy of a more personal kind.

The very title of Rushdie’s memoir emphasizes the author’s playful association with early modern writers in the English literary tradition. Rather than using his family given name in the title, Rushdie replaces it with that of Joseph Anton. Beyond Rushdie’s practical motivation for using this made-up name in the past, there are literary reasons for his choice: condensation of expression and search for empathy. The invented name allows Rushdie to express the distance between who he is/was historically and who he must be to the reader of his life narrative. That is, to facilitate the sympathetic convergence of the authorial and the implied reader’s points of view, the identitarian position occupied by the subject officially named Salman Rushdie—which has been publicly constructed from the outside by the news and by gossip—is vacated to let Joseph Anton migrate into it. Joseph Anton is a symbolic identity constructed in private and from the inside of Rushdie’s vital/literary experience as a *mondial* writer/reader of World literature.<sup>18</sup> By Rushdie’s own confession, the

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<sup>18</sup> Beyond its intertextual weave of references, *JA* testifies to the complexity of the social relations Rushdie established during the post-*fatwa* period that he had to spend hiding in secret

eponymous name Joseph Anton signals to the memoirist being the literary godson, on one hand, of Anton Chekhov, “the master of loneliness and melancholy, of the beauty of an old world destroyed, like the trees in the cherry orchard, by the brutality of the new” (165), from whom he takes his chosen surname, and, on the other hand, of Joseph Conrad “the translingual creator of wanderers” (165). From them Rushdie borrows his self-appointed name. This new symbolic self-given literary identity can be readily shared, creating empathy between the author and his English-speaking readership, because it comes from a familiar place, the Western literary arena. Not only has Rushdie empathetically placed himself in the shoes of his readers and foreseen the likelihood of their adopting a prejudiced stance given the exceptional circumstances surrounding Rushdie’s life and literary career, he has also counteracted or preempted that likelihood by means of a set of strategic narrative empathic devices like this name change, among others. In symbolically associating his post-*fatwa* self with a Western identity label, Rushdie is indirectly signalling that his *mondialisée* literary cultural (af)iliation has taken precedence over national or religious affiliation.<sup>19</sup> Thus, Rushdie’s *Joseph Anton* exercises empathy while eliciting it from its educated English-speaking readers, disregarding their origin.

From Rushdie’s authorial point of view the concept of migration cannot be restricted to the crossing of a community’s geopolitical boundaries: “The act of migration . . . puts into crisis everything about the migrating individual or group, everything about identity and selfhood and culture and belief” (*JA* 72; ellipsis added). As we see, his intersubjective concept of migration includes the individual’s crossing of his/her self-identity boundaries to let himself/herself change and be changed by exposure to the other. This crisis *is* empathy and sets off a virtuous hermeneutic circle in which moving away from one’s own self-centered position in the world to cross into the world of the other, creates reciprocity, understanding, hybridity, and cooperation. And this is the crisis that Rushdie confesses to having experienced. As Rushdie remembers to have been told after the *fatwa*: “If you want to live . . . you will move” (*JA* 288; ellipsis added). He was told to move from his sheltered home to shelters that were not his and would not have felt like home to him had he not been met by the kindness of strangers who eventually became friends and friends who

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places. In Rushdie’s memoir, the list of Anglo-American, European, South-American, and Japanese writers and editors who helped and accompanied him at the risk of their lives by far exceeds, but does not exclude, that of other regions.

<sup>19</sup> The brotherhood of mankind, as Rushdie fearlessly defends it in *JA*, cannot be postulated either on the sharing of one nationhood or one religion but on the capacity to experience human unity within cultural diversity.

remained friends through the *fatwa* ordeal. Rushdie's memoir retrospectively acknowledges the prospective feeling of gratitude that already accompanied the memoirist throughout his seclusive years: "[i]f he ever lived to tell the tale . . . what a tale of loving friendship it would be. Without his friends he would have been locked up on an army base, incommunicado, forgotten, spiralling downward into madness; or else a homeless wanderer, waiting for the assassin's bullet to find him" (288; ellipsis added). It was in 2012 that the memoirist's prospective thoughts became true. He published the tale he had to tell about those friendships that kept him safe and sane.

Not only this. In *Joseph Anton*, Rushdie explicitly denounces the power of discourse and the media to create and destroy a reputation, whether personal or literary: "[I]n the great conflict that followed the notion that he was not a very nice man was to prove very damaging indeed" (113). The crisis Rushdie refers to is the so-called Rushdie affair, which exploded after his publication of *The Satanic Verses* in 1988. Until then, Rushdie had enjoyed a growing fame as the respected young Indian author who had won a Booker Prize in 1981 with *Midnight's Children*, a postmodernist tale about India and its multiple representations, in which Rushdie addressed the issue of authenticity. Rushdie's reminiscence of the feelings and questions that impulsed his writing of *Midnight's Children*, is as follows in *Joseph Anton*: "Was it possible to be—to become *good* at being—not rootless, but multiply rooted? . . . He needed to make an act of reclamation of the Indian identity he had lost, or felt he was in danger of losing" (54; ellipsis added) after "he took the westward road and ceased to be who he might have been if he had stayed at home" (28). Throughout this retelling in his memoir, Rushdie deploys "ambassadorial strategic empathy" and, in just reciprocity, reports that "India took the book [*Midnight's Children*] to its heart, claiming the author as its own just as he had hoped to reclaim the country" (67). In contrast, the passages in Rushdie's memoir about *The Satanic Verses* deal more specifically with cultural confrontations in Britain as well as in India. In these passages, Rushdie makes the point that his fictional representation of culture clash in the Muslim world had been less face-threatening to Muslim culture than the culture shock produced by the really scandalous Rushdie Affair. In his memoir, Rushdie summarises the core of the conflict as follows: "The wars of ideology and culture were moving to the center of the stage. And [*The Satanic Verses*], unfortunately for him, would become a battlefield" (110). The *fatwa* on the life of its author was issued in February 1989 in Iran by Ayatollah Khomeini. From then on *The Satanic Verses* stopped being considered "only a novel" (115) to become a blasphemous book "thin[ly] disguise[d] as a piece of literature" (122).

Rushdie's awareness of how easily discourse can manipulate and be manipulated prompts him to acknowledge the role that the "cacophony of other discourses, political, religious, sociological, postcolonial" (114) played in obliterating the discourse of literary criticism and the evaluation of his novel on artistic grounds. As he reports in *Joseph Anton*, the novel was banned in the Eastern countries where it should have made an editorial impact.<sup>20</sup> The *fatwa* against the author of *The Satanic Verses* would change the course of his life but, Rushdie insists, it would not change the truth-telling course of his writing, a statement that requires qualification. Although Rushdie published *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*—more than a mere children's book—in 1990 at the onset of his years of seclusion, it took him time and effort to finish *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995). *Joseph Anton* devotes its central pages to explaining the importance this publication had for the author: *TMLS* was proof that Rushdie could keep on telling the truth, writing a novel whose fictional design would encrypt the dangerous truth he wanted to tell about fundamentalist violence. That suffocating context is textually inscribed in *TMLS* and verbally recalled in *Joseph Anton*. *TMLS* is a complex double vision fictional narrative in which both the author, Rushdie, as well as his fictional authorial narrator, Moor, are similarly stigmatized. Moor, the rich son of a wealthy family, often makes mistakes, some of them fatal, because he is physically older than his age, intellectually younger and more innocent than he looks, and all the evil he does stems from his appetite for sex. But he is disgraced not for his sexual wrongs but for his wrong words, words ill spoken but not so evil as to deserve death. Still, they are words that are manipulated and used against him by his own father.

Beyond the trauma behind their personal story of exile, Rushdie, and his fictional counterpart, Moor, tell of a wider and deeper conflict patent/latent in the big stories of all time: sacrificial violence. Rushdie, in the historical world, and Moor in his world of fiction, are placed in the structural position of the scapegoat. In terms of Girard's theory, both Rushdie and Moor play the role of the archaic type of victim (in opposition to the modern sort).<sup>21</sup> In archaic religions the victim is guilty and deserves punishment as in the *fatwa*. In contrast, in the Christian model the victim is

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<sup>20</sup> Foucault has classified the procedures that limit the power and freedom of speech and discourse according to a tripartite system that differentiates between procedures for the exclusion of discourse and discourse users (centre/margins), procedures for controlling and delimiting discourse and discourse users, and procedures for determining the condition of use by the speaking subject (*L'Ordre du Discours*). Khomeini's attack on *The Satanic Verses*, and the *fatwa* on its author, encompasses all these procedures.

<sup>21</sup> Girard underlines that no blame is attached to the victim in the Christian model. Jesus Christ is innocent and makes the rest of humankind innocent.

innocent. Christ takes on himself humanity's sins, thus his sacrifice makes scapegoating and the *fatwa* redundant as well as obsolete.

*Joseph Anton* and *TMLS* reveal, the former explicitly and the other implicitly, the parallel hermeneutics derived from the Book: on the one hand, the retaliative hermeneutics where the *fatwa*-scapegoating makes sense (Old Testament), and on the other, the charitable hermeneutics where it is nonsensical to kill the scapegoat (New Testament). Quite obviously, *Joseph Anton* and *TMLS* choose Charity. Loving your neighbour starts with the empathic awareness that *errare humanum est*, that is, that humanity is frail and easily driven by imitative drives, therefore, the means to avoid social violence cannot be scapegoating and retaliation. Charity cancels vengeance to open up a dynamics of repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation. At the same time, for the order of charity to be operative on the private and social realms it is necessary to have a lay democratic system of laws that grant justice and freedom. This could be metaphorically called Moor's as well as Rushdie's *mondialisation*, which entails, according to Jacques Derrida's argument ("Globalization"), simultaneously the Europeanization (Westernization) of Rushdie's point of view, as well his awareness and deconstruction of Eurocentrism and his own identity. In this way Rushdie, despite any ambivalences over his personal hybrid Eastern/Western identity, seems to have opened out to that which exceeds any definition that seeks to encircle him within either Indianness or Muslimness. Like Rushdie in *Joseph Anton*, Moor also has two names in *TMLS*: his Muslim/Eastern name (Moor Zogoiby) to go with a Christian/Western heart, but also vice versa, a Christian/Western name (Portuguese Moraes) to go with his Muslim/Eastern heart. Rushdie/Moor, like Rushdie/Anton is a living paradox:

*I am like the Catholicised Córdoba mosque, I [Moor] experimented. A piece of Eastern architecture with a Baroque cathedral stuck in the middle of it. That sounded wrong too. I was a nobody from nowhere, like no-one, belonging to nothing. That sounded better. That felt true. All my ties had loosened. I had reached an anti-Jerusalem: not a home, but an away. A place that did not bind, but dissolved. (TMLS 388; emphasis in original)*

Moor's self-reflective awareness "of what was and may be no longer" (4) is also a new existential position, a new beginning that negates the passive comforts of the old home and affirms the need to survive and grow into somebody else somewhere else. *TMLS*'s fictional exploration of interpersonal and intercultural

violence exposes/shows the ideology that makes fights over the control of land resources and people, that is, conflicts of interest within and between Nation states, pass for religious difference, *Joseph Anton* non-fictionally and explicitly denounces/tells how often political propaganda is given the form of religious persuasion. From this counterpunctual intertextual vantage point, both the fictional Moor/Rushdie and the non-fictional Joseph Anton/Rushdie express their awareness that they have been used as scapegoats in order to divert public attention from the social and political issues at stake. Though propaganda may have constructed them as victims of religious wrath for their scandalous lack of religious orthodoxy, they are, in fact, scandalous only as far as they become inconvenient models of modern hybrid ways of being Indo-Muslim (Rushdie's case) or Indo-Christian (Moor's case) in a *mondialisé* twenty-first century.

### ***Joseph Anton's Strategic Empathic Use of Narrative Third vs. First Person Point of View***

Rushdie is especially careful in *Joseph Anton* to explicitly explain himself and his circumstances in 2012. This was something he could only do implicitly in *TMLS* while he was lying low in his years of seclusion. Thus, perhaps in order to avoid being considered sentimental or too friendly a critic of his own acts and motives, in *Joseph Anton*, Rushdie takes the fundamental step to frame his memoir as a life narrative in the third person, with some shifts into the first. Knowing that his life narrative might have been more "standardly" narrated in the first person (Penas-Ibáñez), we may ask if the narrative was written in the first person to begin with, only to be later remodulated into a third person for strategical empathic reasons,<sup>22</sup> reserving the first person for specific places in the text that speak of a carefully crafted narrative design.

There are traces in *Joseph Anton* that this may well have been the case since we are told that Rushdie kept a journal where he made annotations in the first person, as is the standard case with diaries. *Joseph Anton* is essentially a third-person narrative whose occasional shiftings to the first person require an explanation. Within this explanation it is significant that the author has chosen a he-narrator to take the reader up the empathic path. By turning the expected autobiographical I-narrative into a non-

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<sup>22</sup> Robert Scholes' detailed analysis of Hemingway's "A Very Short Story" explains why a writer might manipulate a first person narrative into a third person narrative: to give his tale the appearance of objectivity and hide the narrator's empathic conflation with the character's point of view through focalization (*Semiotics*).

standard third person life narrative, the writer manages to give his tale the appearance of objectivity and allows the possibility for his he-narrator to sympathize/identify at several points in the narrative with the implied author's perspective, without awkwardness. Had Rushdie used an I-narrator pervasively, the identification might have seemed to the readers either excessively self-congratulatory or self-deprecating. None of these effects would have been desirable, because, had the trigger of readers' empathy been excessive, it could only have caused their alienation rather than empathy. It is for that reason that the moments in *Joseph Anton* when the narrative turns into the first person require explanation. These are relevant cases that can be classified into different types. The first type includes those cases when the third person shifts to the first one at the point in *Joseph Anton* when Rushdie reports directly from his journal as we see, for instance, when we read: "I'm gagged and imprisoned," he wrote in his journal, "I can't even speak. I want to kick a football in a park with my son." Ordinary, banal life: my impossible dream" (170). A second type of shift occurs when a remembered conversation is directly reported in *Joseph Anton*; in this case, the *I* becomes a *you* and an *I* again: for instance when his son Zafar, or his friends at the time talked to Rushdie, face to face or on the phone, asking him, "Dad . . . why don't you write books I can read?" Then his answer would come, "Good question. . . . Just let me finish this book I'm working on now, and then I'll write a book for you." "Deal?" (7; ellipses added). In the former and latter cases there are reporting textual clues, mainly quotation marks, to visualize the shift in discourse perspective for the reader. A third type of shift to the first person is found in the several cases that epistolary matter is directly reported in *Joseph Anton*. In this case, the reader is given the additional clue of a shift into italics in the textual layout of the relevant passages.<sup>23</sup> For instance, the letters to Chief Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits and to Bernie Grant, MP (185-87) that Rushdie composed (only in his head) to send to *The Sunday Telegraph*, are in italics, as are his letter to Anonymous Profile Writer (204-05) or to God (282), Religion (214-315) or the Reader (316), among a few others. These letters were not factually written and sent at the time—they are Rushdie's fictional compositions, a bunch of letters that, having never been written, are now rhetorically reconstructed in written form in *Joseph Anton*, as if they had existed. This rhetoric device involves a conflation of times, by providing the readers with Rushdie's 2012 arguments against his 1990s tormentors' "[b]igotry, prejudice and violence" (187). The reason why Rushdie's imaginary letters are reported in the first

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<sup>23</sup> This technical device in *JA* has been famously used by Hemingway in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" to let the reader differentiate between fictionality and metafictionality: the parts of the text representing the fiction within the fiction appear in italics.

person is that they reflect the memoirist's 2012 awareness of what was right or wrong in his past actions.

The same reason serves to explain why the only real letter in *Joseph Anton* that Rushdie actually wrote is not directly reported but commented on in the third person. The memoirist in *Joseph Anton* knows that there was this exceptional factual letter he actually wrote in 1990, but now, in 2012, he also knows it was a tremendous error for him to have written and sent it, although he did not know it at the time. In this actual letter Rushdie had acknowledged himself a Muslim in response to the *fatwa*'s escalating violence. *Joseph Anton* makes it clear to the reader that writing the letter was traumatic. This letter could have been reported directly in the first person as the others, but Rushdie treats it differently, he mentions the letter without directly reporting it in *Joseph Anton*. An account of its contents and its context is given through a third person-narrative that summarises the powerful effect of that writing act, at the end of part four in *Joseph Anton*: "Until this moment he had been accused of a crime against the beliefs of others. Now he accused himself, and found himself guilty, of having committed a crime against himself" (276). This statement conflates both the memoirist's hard-won 2012 perspective and Rushdie's 1990 perspective. But conflation blurs the distance between two distant experiential moments only discursively. As a matter of fact the reader can see the device for what it is and what it implies: the existence of two Rushdies, the younger and the older, wiser Rushdie. The device of conflation paradoxically highlights the change in Rushdie's life priorities but also calls attention to the shifts in narrative voice and perspective deployed in *Joseph Anton*. The pervading use of a conflation third person narrative in *Joseph Anton* is a distancing device consciously used by Rushdie in order to signal his detachment from his 1988 and 1990s (less wise) self.

This moment is recorded in *Joseph Anton* as an epiphany in Rushdie's life. From then onward, his emphasis will be on the writer's need to affirm himself in the *parrhêsia* role, by writing and speaking out for truth and beauty, as they should be allowed to happen factually in life and its literary representations: "the patinas of habituation and self-deception were roughly torn away and what became visible was not the surreal beauty of the world, but its beastly monstrosity. It would be his task, in the years that followed, to rediscover, as Beauty did, the beauty in the beast" (104-05).

## Concluding Remarks: *Joseph Anton* on Truth and Beauty

Declaring himself “a man without religion” (194) in *Joseph Anton*, Rushdie makes up his mind to “never again feign religiosity” (314), to be true to his own self and to persevere in writing truthfully about humanity and the universal values like Beauty that, he understands, are not relative to one’s culture but pertain to every human being by right (315). Rushdie is aware that, among those values, two are essential to him both as a human being and a writer, though he has been temporally deprived of them by the post-*fatwa* ban on his work: the right to tell the truth outspokenly and the right to give truth artistic expression by reproducing it in all its beauty: “beauty struck chords deep within the human heart, beauty opened doors in the spirit. Beauty mattered because beauty was joy and joy was the reason he did what he did, his joy in words and in using them to tell tales, to create worlds, to sing. And beauty, for now, was being treated as a luxury he should do without; as a luxury; as a lie. Ugliness was truth” (328).

*Joseph Anton* acknowledges that part of Rushdie’s quest for beauty and truth that had gone into his writing *TMLS*, in which he invested all his personal and artistic worth as well as his affection for the Muslim culture of India (354). It had been a brave step for Rushdie to take at a moment when, as he says in *Joseph Anton*: “It was Islam that had changed, not people like himself, it was Islam that had become phobic of a very wide range of ideas, behaviors, and things. . . . Representational art was evil” (345; ellipsis added). From this moment onwards in his life narrative, Rushdie’s stance changes: he stops being defensive and becomes active in denouncing the dangers of fanaticism and theocratic fascism, as he calls it (352). Simultaneously, Rushdie seeks “broadcast strategic narrative empathy”: “He was fighting his fellow writers’ fight as well as his own” (348) to write and think in an atmosphere of freedom. Rushdie opens up his case to the world and makes the point that conceptualizing his case as “Rushdie’s individual affair” was a mistake the Western powers had made. As a matter of fact, as Rushdie says, “The storytelling animal must be free to tell his tales” (360). His phrasing—alluding to Jonathan Gottschall’s *The Storytelling Animal* (2012)—locates all human beings within one and the same biologically based human culture that makes us into storytellers. For Rushdie, this shared biology that provides all human beings with the capacity to tell stories proves the unity of one human culture from which all subcultural diversity stems (315). For that reason, free access to this universal storytelling productive and receptive capacity should be conceptualized as everyone’s right, not just as Rushdie’s right. For the same reason,

asking politicians to defend and grant Rushdie's right to free expression was asking them to defend a universal human right rather than one particular man's life.

After four years of British Government protection, Prime Minister John Major agreed to an official meeting with Rushdie on May 11, 1993. A summary of the contents of the interview can be found in a long passage in italics narrated in first person (376-78) by Rushdie/Anton. This protracted interview led to the first official condemnation of the *fatwa* by the British government. But there was a negative aspect to this success: Rushdie was starting to spend more time on his lobbying against the *fatwa* than on his literary work. The awareness of that fact frightened him and we can tell this from the way he narrates his sudden recognition of the new threat to him as a writer—literary blockage, a worse threat than that posed by the *fatwa*. We read in *Joseph Anton*: “Was he actually helping to turn himself into nothing more than the flattened, two-dimensional caricature at the heart of the ‘Rushdie Affair’ and abdicating his claim to art? He had gone from *Salman* to *Rushdie* to *Joseph Anton* and now, perhaps, he was making a nobody of himself. He was a lobbyist lobbying for an empty space that no longer contained a man” (398). This is Rushdie's 2012 perspective on his old self who, at the time, felt himself to be dissolving/migrating from someone who was Salman to his friends into, to begin with, Rushdie the author, into “Satan Rushdie” (5) for those who blamed the *fatwa* on him thinking he deserved it; and then into Joseph Anton: his code name for secret protection communications (415), his pseudonym for signing *The Satanic Verses*' contract as if he were an American Publisher; and finally into a blank space or a question mark signalling his fear of becoming a non-entity as a writer. In 2012 this name, Joseph Anton, is recycled positively as an eponym filled with the significance of the classic literary authors the name is constructed from. *Joseph Anton* retrospectively tells the reader that Rushdie managed to overcome emptiness by managing to finish *TMLS*, a fractured novel by a fractured writer lacking deep concentration for a while (429). The traces of this void are apparent in the novel's texture, a discontinuity especially noticeable by the end of part 1, “A House Divided,” in *TMLS*. From this point on, the novel ceases to be a novel of Bombay and childhood experiences and instead becomes a novel of Mumbai, “a darker, more corrupt, more violent place . . . using adulthood's more jaundiced gaze” (432). The result is a postcolonial, postmodern, post-*fatwa* piece of writing where Rushdie reclaims his Indian heritage and his place in world literature (442) for himself. At about the time of its publication in 1995, Rushdie “became certain, . . . that when the day came, it would be America that would make it easiest for him to reclaim his freedom” as well (462; ellipsis added).

The US was becoming synonymous with a place of freedom for Rushdie, a place where he spent summers with his third wife to be, Elizabeth West, and later with their newly born son. We learn about this private side of Rushdie's life away from British official protection through a few passages in *Joseph Anton* that come as direct quotations from his journal. Reporting in the first person plural, his impressions on family life, for instance, he quotes directly: “‘What a good job *we* are making of destroying the great happiness *we* have been given,’ he wrote in his journal” (513; emphasis added). The couple got married in 1997 after seven years of togetherness but, by now, the marriage was unhappy. In January 1998, home-based security was discontinued, and after that summer Iranian officials made it clear that they would not support the *fatwa*. But three more years would go by before security was relaxed. By then Rushdie would want desperately to move to the States, even if it meant for him to separate from his family.

To explain himself and elicit his readers' empathy, Rushdie starts reminiscing about some hard facts he learnt in childhood: “Love, in his family, had usually not been enough” (569). His parents and siblings loved him and vice versa but they led separate secret lives. Now he sees himself repeating the same pattern with the women in his life. While he was aware that the mothers of his two sons had loved him, he could not help distancing himself from them. August 1999, Rushdie met his fourth wife, the beautiful Indian actress Padma Lakshmi. In retrospect he sees that she was his “millenarian illusion” (576), a beautiful lie he told himself out of his desire for experiencing truth. This was the woman whom he misrepresented at the time as a link between his Indian past and his American future but who would break his heart eight years later as he had broken his former wives' hearts before.

At this point in the narrative, Rushdie's memoirs include a metafictional ironic obituary note stating that “Mr. Joseph Anton, International publisher of American origin, passed away unmourned on the day that Salman Rushdie, novelist of Indian origin surfaced from his long underground years and took up part-time residence in Pembridge Mews, Notting Hill” (610). Salman Rushdie's other part-time residence was in West Hollywood, Los Angeles, and he commuted between places and loves: London/Elizabeth and the US/Padma. By the end of his memoir, the reader knows that Rushdie has three different homes and identities where he feels rooted: one home in India, inherited from his father, one in London where he can meet his sons and one in America where he can meet his need for creative freedom. It is a difficult, transgressive but paradoxically balanced position that allowed him “to live again in the universe of once upon a time, of *kan na kan*, it was so and it was not so, and to make the journey to the truth upon the waters of make-believe” (630). By the end of

*Joseph Anton: A Memoir* there remains no anxiety regarding the multiple rootedness of Rushdie's life and narratives, only certain regret at mistakes made. Migration is Rushdie's metaphor for the literary journey to truth the writer invites his readers to. Narrative empathy keeps them close to his design of fictional illusions and non-fictional writings that tell them the truth.

In *Joseph Anton* Rushdie tells the tale of the teller's journey to the West as embodied by Britain, first, and then by the US. The teller's physical migration from East to West entails an emotional migration, an empathy with the West, a permeability not only to Western values but also to Western ways of writing. In his Journey to America, as narrated in *Joseph Anton*, Rushdie is accompanied by a pleiad of contemporary Western writers that he alludes to as his colleagues, some of them friendly, some of them hostile to him, some of them lesser figures, some of them great writers. Among the latter we saw Rushdie appeal to Ernest Hemingway, the great American writer and theorizer of literary truth. By appealing to the iconic American writer of modernity, and paraphrasing his theory of literary truth and grace under pressure, Rushdie is siding with all the humanist values Hemingway represents: modernity, antifascism, freedom, search for truth, and great literature, which Rushdie represents as follows:

Great Literature went to the edges of the known and pushed the boundaries of language, form, and possibility to make the world feel larger, wider, than before. Yet this was an age in which men and women were being pushed toward ever-narrower definitions of themselves, encouraged to call themselves just one thing. Serb or Croat or Israeli or Palestinian or Hindu or Muslim or Christian or Baha'i or Jew, and the narrower their identities became, the greater was the likelihood of conflict between them. Literature's view of human nature encouraged understanding, sympathy, and identification with people not like oneself. (*JA* 628)

It would perhaps be fair to name empathy as part of the list of conditions for peace that great literature promotes in Rushdie's account. As he says, understanding, sympathy, and identification with people not like oneself through empathy, free us from the circularity of mimetic violence and conflict, and open up human agency to Truth and Beauty, even if this is the beauty in the Beast.

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Salman Rushdie recalls his life and 11 years in hiding after the leader of Iran issued a fatwa against him. Not long after the proclamation of this fatwa, the British police who had been protecting Rushdie told him that he needed an alias, not only for receiving payments and writing checks without being identified but also for the benefit of his protectors, who needed to get used to it, to call him by it at all times, when they were with him and when they weren't, so they didn't accidentally let his real name slip . . . and blow his cover. After some thought Rushdie wrote down, side by side, the first names of Conrad and Chekhov, and there it was, his name for the next eleven years: Joseph Anton. Salman Rushdie's *Joseph Anton: A Memoir* is an engaging account of Rushdie's life in the aftermath of the fatwa issued against him in 1989 (in effect, the Ayatollah Khomeini sentenced him to death for blasphemy against the Prophet for his novel, *The Satanic Verses*). As a literature major at college, I followed the news of the fatwa (but I wasn't the only one as evidenced by the *Seinfeld* episode). Joseph Anton was the alias Rushdie used, a combination of the first names of two of his favorite writers: Joseph Conrad and Anton Chekhov. Written in the third person, Rushdie describes life under police protection, relationships with family and friends and ways he attempted both to write and stay engaged in the bigger fight against censorship.