

Dana Bădulescu. *Rushdie's Cross-Pollinations*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022. 130. ISBN 978-1-5275-7720-6.

Rushdie's Cross-Pollinations is a collection of eight critical articles published in different academic journals between 2006 and 2014, with specific updates for the current edition, where Dana Bădulescu seeks to explore prominent British Indian migrant writer Salman Rushdie's fiction as an example of the contemporary global novel. This highly relevant investigation employs the literary theories of postcolonialism, postmodernism, and transculturalism in a comprehensive analysis unravelling Rushdie's multi-layered, postcolonial and postmodernist narrative strategies and modes. The author incorporates a variety of critical angles into her research and traces his distinctive, cross-border voice in today's polyphonic, globalized world marked by increased mobility. Bădulescu borrows the phrase "cross-pollination" from Rushdie himself to refer to the hybrid nature of his stories, whose content and form, the products of multifarious cultural, literary, and linguistic influences, defy the rigidity and fixedness of all sorts of borders between places, cultures, times, and even identities, rendering them fluid instead. Moreover, she views Rushdie's self-definition as a "translated man" (a multi-lingual, multi-cultural citizen of the world) from different perspectives and demonstrates how this particular cultural and linguistic position affords both the writer and his characters a sense of seemingly unlimited spatial and temporal freedom to travel across time and space. Thus, just like borders, language, history, and culture are rendered unstable and liquid.

Bădulescu's arguments revolve around Zygmunt Bauman's theory of liquefaction as one of the primary models of critical thinking determining today's modernity, which she intertwines with other theorists' and authors' ideas to arrive at her approach to Rushdie's novels as defined by transculturalism and transnationalism: the works of writers like Rushdie, she maintains, are marked by their condition as "translated men" (quintessentially "men"?) who, under the influence of a lacking or repressed sense of origin, perceive their existence as unattached, hence defined by cultural and linguistic diversity. Furthermore, Bădulescu argues that Rushdie's "translated" cultural position results in a narrative style, generally termed "magic realism" (mixing of relatively factual reality with fantasy, dream, or myth), which invites approaches from postmodern and postcolonial angles. However, the scope of his stories' concerns is so broad that they can well be considered as belonging in the realm of literary globalism.

The coherent structural organization of this critical undertaking leads the reader on a journey through Rushdie's "cross-pollinated gardens" (xvi), starting from the first chapter, "Rushdie's Sorcery with Language," which investigates the writer's exceptional linguistic strategies and his use of the English language as a means for transculturation, similar to translation. He forges an "un-English English" (his definition), in other words, a hybrid language "[d]rawing on . . . cultural diversity, and on old traditions and new modes" (18). On a related note, the second chapter focuses on the influence of James Joyce, as a writer in exile, particularly the "internationalism" (21) and "transculturation" (30) of his fiction, which are also found in Rushdie's novels. The two writers, Bădulescu argues, are united by their "desire . . . to transcend and even transgress charted spaces in flights of the imagination" (21).

The journey's trajectory reaches the moment when the large-scale political, religious, and cultural repercussions following the publication of *The Satanic Verses* and the subsequent *fatwa* issued by the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran on 14 February 1989, widely labelled the "Rushdie Affair," stirred a range of far-reaching problems. All this is discussed in chapter three.

The next chapter "traces a whole counter-tradition of the culture-building Eros from Schiller's ideas . . . , through the Pre-Raphaelites' eroticism and . . . *fin de siècle* aestheticized homoeroticism, to reach the aestheticism of Rushdie's novels" (xvii). The aesthetic balance achieved through sublimating sexuality into Eros is Rushdie's response and solution to the individual and social crisis in today's dehumanizing world.

Bădulescu regards archetypal acts of transgression, such as liquefying frontiers, self-translation, and border crossing, as central to Rushdie's writing. In chapter five, she taps into the groundbreaking theory of "liquid" modernity by Zygmunt Bauman and combines it with ideas developed by Homi Bhabha and Arjun Appadurai to view Rushdie's transnational and transcultural poetics from novel perspectives.

"Rushdie's Postmodern Twist" investigates how the writer extols hybridity and migration from the perspective of a "translated" sensitivity determined by a postcolonial, postmodernist context and a modernist legacy. Rushdie creates fictitious worlds that are first and foremost linguistic constructs, and his metafictional strategies reflect his own hybrid, metamorphic culture.

In chapter seven, Bădulescu takes her cue from Bakhtin's theories of carnival, the dialogic imagination, polyphony, and heteroglossia and focuses on "the carnivalesque blend of body and the space outside it" (xviii) in several of Rushdie's novels.

The final chapter tackles *The Ground Beneath Her Feet, Fury* and *Quichotte*, from the perspective of "the global novel disenchanted with postcolonialism and embracing a cosmopolitan world shaped by migration, media, and technology" (xviii).

Another substantial merit of the publication is Petya Tsoneva's valuable contribution in the Foreword, which sheds further light on Bădulescu's insightful reading of Rushdie's fiction.

Rushdie's Cross-Pollinations is a multifaceted analysis of a remarkable migrant writer's modes and strategies for the literary presentation of today's growing global mobility. Bădulescu's comprehensive investigation utilizes an extensive critical repertoire to map the route of Rushdie's characters' constant border-crossings and his own cultural relocations and to elucidate the forms this movement takes in his *oeuvre*. Considering him to be "the prototype of today's migrancy, hybridity, transnationalism, and transculturalism" (105), Bădulescu casts fresh light on the interstitial cultural and linguistic position of Salman Rushdie, a self-proclaimed "translated man" and a citizen of the world.

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