

ARTICLE

The Rushdie Affair and the Politics of Multicultural Britain

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Abstract

It is more than thirty years since Ayatollah Khomeini, the supreme leader of Iran, issued a *fatwa* (religious decree) calling for the execution of the British-Indian novelist Salman Rushdie, whose third novel, *The Satanic Verses*, was published in 1988. But the 'Rushdie Affair' has yet to be subject to a sustained analysis by historians. Journalists and political scientists continue to focus on the *fatwa*, despite the fact the protests against the novel in Britain – where *The Satanic Verses* is primarily set – predated Khomeini's decree by two months. This article fills this lacuna by shifting attention onto the emergence of the campaign against *The Satanic Verses* in Britain and in Bradford especially, where a copy of Rushdie's 'blasphemous' novel was infamously burnt by Muslim protestors. It shows how an earlier set of campaigns fought in Bradford by Muslim activists paved the way for the city to become a key site of protest against both Rushdie and his novel. The protests that greeted *The Satanic Verses* were shaped by the contradictory nature of Britain's emergence as a multicultural society, I argue, and the political complexities thrown up by the hybridized milieu Rushdie had sought to use his fiction to evoke.

It is more than thirty years since Ayatollah Khomeini, the supreme leader of Iran, issued a *fatwa* or religious decree calling for the execution of the British-Indian novelist Salman Rushdie, whose third novel, *The Satanic Verses* (TSV), was published in September 1988. Like his previous novels, including the Booker award-winning *Midnight's Children* (1981), TSV is concerned with the changing nature of post-colonial identities in the Indian subcontinent.¹ But Rushdie shifted his focus onto how these identities could be refashioned

¹ Rushdie regarded the three books as an effective trilogy. See Jenni Ramone, 'Salman Rushdie and diasporic identities', in Florian Stadler, ed., *Salman Rushdie in context* (Cambridge, 2023), pp. 193–204.

among those formerly colonial subjects who, like him, had made homes for themselves in the one-time imperial metropole. The novel is also about a loss of religious faith. Drawing on elements of Rushdie's own biography, including his upbringing in a culturally Muslim household in newly independent India, it parodied key episodes in the history of the role played by the Prophet Mohammed in the establishment of Islam. It was this element of the book that prompted Khomeini, in a broadcast on Radio Tehran in February 1989, to declare that *TSV* had been 'published in opposition to Islam, the Prophet and the Koran [sic].' As a result, Khomeini announced, he was sentencing Rushdie and his publishers to death.²

Throughout the 1980s, Rushdie was a vocal critic of both the British government and the police for what he saw as their failure to seriously address the problem of racism – a problem that was so acute, Rushdie argued in 1982, that it represented a crisis 'of the society's entire sense of itself.'³ In the days after Khomeini's *fatwa*, however, Rushdie became reliant on the British state for the provision of twenty-four-hour protection by police officers, a situation that would persist in different forms for almost ten years.⁴ This is one of the many ironies at the heart of what became known as the Rushdie Affair. *TSV* received mixed reviews from critics, for instance, some of whom argued the novel was a *folie de grandeur* and loquacious to the point of unreadability.⁵ Yet, as a result of the publicity Khomeini's *fatwa* gave the book, *TSV* sold over a million hardback copies.⁶ Meanwhile, throughout the 1980s, Britain's South Asian communities were victims of a spate of racist street violence often orchestrated by the far right.⁷ Yet, unlike Rushdie, this population did not always receive the police protection they required.⁸ But for Rushdie, the biggest irony was the apparent disconnect between his initial hope that *TSV* be read as a 'love song' to what he understood as the 'migrant condition' in Britain, and the way the book was received among some of those same immigrant communities whose experiences Rushdie was seeking to evoke.⁹ 'The saddest irony of all', Rushdie wrote following the decision of a group of British Muslim protestors to publicly burn a copy of his book in Bradford in West Yorkshire in January 1989, was that 'after working for five years to give voice and fictional flesh to the immigrant culture of which I am myself

² Khomeini, in Robin Lustig, Martin Bailey, Simon De Bruxelles, and Ian Mather, 'War of the world', *Observer*, 19 Feb. 1989, p. 15.

³ Salman Rushdie, 'The new empire within Britain', 1982, in Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary homelands: essays and criticism, 1981–1991* (London, 2010), p. 129.

⁴ Salman Rushdie, *Joseph Anton* (London, 2013), pp. 139–40; Kenan Malik, *From fatwa to jihad: the Rushdie Affair and its legacy* (London, 2009), pp. 9–10.

⁵ Angela Carter, review, *Guardian*, 23 Sept. 1988, www.theguardian.com/books/1988/sep/23/fiction.angelacarter (10 Jan. 2023); Hermione Lee, 'Falling towards England', *Observer*, 25 Sept. 1988, p. 43; Martin Cropper, 'Babyish jingles', *Daily Telegraph*, 24 Sept. 1988, p. 42.

⁶ Malise Ruthven, *A satanic affair: Salman Rushdie and the rage of Islam* (London, 1990), p. 12.

⁷ Anon., 'An unremitting campaign of hate', *Times*, 18 Nov. 1981, p. 4.

⁸ Talal Asad, 'Ethnography, literature and politics: some readings and uses of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*', *Cultural Anthropology*, 5 (1990), pp. 239–69, at p. 258.

⁹ Salman Rushdie, 'In good faith', 1990, in Rushdie, *Imaginary homelands*, p. 394.

a member, I should see my book burned, largely unread, by the people it's about'.¹⁰

The Rushdie Affair is often read through the prism of the *fatwa*. Yet, the British protests predated Khomeini's decree by over two months. The enduring emphasis on the *fatwa* is partly explained by the immense toll it placed on Rushdie's day-to-day life and personal relationships, including his relationship with his son, who was just nine years old when the *fatwa* was declared.¹¹ It is also because of the geopolitical fallout from the *fatwa*. This included rioting in Bombay, Rushdie's place of birth, the severing of diplomatic ties between Iran and the UK, and what was interpreted as an attempt by Khomeini to reassert his literalist interpretation of Islam both in post-revolutionary Iran and the wider Muslim world.¹² The impression that was created was that of a 'mullah with a long arm', as Rushdie put it, who was 'reaching out across the world to squeeze the life out of him'.¹³ The threat that continued to be posed by the *fatwa* was crystallized in the early 1990s when attempts were made on the lives of TSV's Italian translator and Norwegian publisher; in July 1991, the novel's Japanese translator, Hitoshi Igarashi, was stabbed to death.¹⁴ Yet, polls suggested that the majority of British Muslims opposed the *fatwa*, not least because most were Sunni Muslims who rejected the idea that imams had the authority to make such interventions.¹⁵ This is not to imply that there was not significant opposition to what Rushdie had written among British Muslims, as the Bradford book burning shows. But it is to argue that the ongoing focus on the *fatwa* has meant that, as the political theorist Bhikhu Parekh put it, 'no one asked why [the protest] took place in Bradford or what special factors led up to it'.¹⁶ This is in no small part as a result of the fact that the Rushdie Affair has yet to be subject to a sustained analysis by historians, with existing accounts dominated by literary critics, journalists, and social scientists.¹⁷ In what follows, then, I hone in on the pre-*fatwa* story in

¹⁰ Salman Rushdie, 'Choice between light and dark', *Observer*, 22 Jan. 1989, p. 11.

¹¹ Rushdie, *Joseph Anton*, p. 147.

¹² Nikki R. Keddie, Introduction, in Nikki R. Keddie and Eric Hooglund, eds., *The Iranian Revolution and the Islamic Republic* (New York, NY, 1986), p. 10; Michael Axworthy, *Revolutionary Iran: a history of the Islamic Republic* (London, 2014), p. 293; Malik, *From fatwa to jihad*, p. 17.

¹³ Rushdie, *Joseph Anton*, p. 96.

¹⁴ Carmel Bedford, *1,000 days of censorship: fiction, fact and the fatwa* (London, 1991), pp. 56–7; Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Books Library, Emory University, Atlanta, GA, Salman Rushdie papers (hereafter SRP), 153/6; anon., 'Translator knifed', *Times*, 4 July 1991, p. 12; anon., 'Rushdie publisher shot', *Times*, 12 Oct. 1993, p. 1.

¹⁵ Iqbal Wahab, 'Furore focuses Muslim attention on solidarity', *Independent*, 23 Feb. 1989, in Lisa Appignanesi and Sara Maitland, eds., *The Rushdie file* (London, 1989), p. 128; Shoaib Qureshi and Javed Khan, *The politics of Satanic Verses: unmasking Western attitudes* (Leicester, 1989), p. 9. One poll suggested 90 per cent of Bradford Muslims opposed the *fatwa*. See Philip Lewis, *Islamic Britain: religion, politics and identity among British Muslims* (London, 2002), p. 170.

¹⁶ Bhikhu Parekh, 1989, in Appignanesi and Maitland, eds., *The Rushdie file*, p. 150.

¹⁷ E.g. Ruthven, *A satanic affair*; Richard Webster, *A brief history of blasphemy: liberalism, censorship and 'The Satanic Verses'* (Southwold, 1990); Timothy Brennan, *Salman Rushdie and the Third World: myths of the nation* (Basingstoke, 1989); Bhikhu Parekh, 'The Rushdie Affair and the British press: some salutary lessons', in Commission for Racial Equality, ed., *Free speech: report of a seminar*

Britain, and show how an earlier set of campaigns fought in Bradford by Muslim activists – which were in many ways a product of Britain’s often-contradictory status as a multicultural society – paved the way for the city to become a key site of protest against both Rushdie and his novel.

The genesis of the Rushdie Affair is in part another example of what historians now stress as the centrality of diasporic ties to Britain’s post-colonial emergence as a multicultural society.¹⁸ There were protests against TSV in India and Pakistan in October and November 1988, and British Muslims were alerted to what was identified as the book’s offensive passages by the publicity this generated across the *Umma* (global community of Muslim believers).¹⁹ Rushdie’s own biography is itself testament to the lived experience of diaspora and what the cultural theorist Homi Bhabha emphasized as the ‘liminality’ and ‘hybridity’ of the migrant experience.²⁰ Rushdie was born into a well-heeled Indian family in June 1947, the eve of independence and partition.²¹ Like many post-colonial immigrants, he moved to Britain in 1961, the year before the first, highly racialized controls were introduced to curtail black and Asian immigration from Britain’s former colonies. However, Rushdie’s perspective was also unusual in several important ways, not least in his family wealth that saw his parents pay for him to attend boarding school in Britain. He was at more than once removed from the ethnic diversity that accelerated in Britain’s cities during the second half of the twentieth century. In Bradford, for instance, the local South Asian, predominately Muslim population mostly came from rural villages in Mirpur, Attock, and the Sylhet region of what is now Bangladesh.²² In the mid-1960s, the average weekly wage in Mirpur was the equivalent of thirty-seven pence, and the majority of immigrants from such regions arrived in Britain with little or no English.²³ The introduction of immigration controls in 1962 actually contributed to a substantial increase in South Asian immigration, as the predominately male migrants already in

organised by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Policy Studies Institute (London, 1990), pp. 59–68; Tariq Modood, *Not easy being British: colour, culture and citizenship* (Stoke-on-Trent, 1992); Lewis, *Islamic Britain*; Malik, *From fatwa to jihad*; Claire Chambers, *Britain through Muslim eyes: literary representations, 1780–1988* (Basingstoke, 2015); Asha Rogers, *State sponsored literature: Britain and cultural diversity after 1945* (Oxford, 2020). The few historians that have considered the Rushdie Affair have largely done so from a comparative perspective. See Rita Chin, *The crisis of multiculturalism in Europe: a history* (Princeton, NJ, 2017), pp. 178–88; Elizabeth Buettner, *Europe after empire: decolonization, society, and culture* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 367–70.

¹⁸ E.g. Jordanna Bailkin, *The afterlife of empire* (Berkeley, CA, 2012); Kennetta Hammond Perry, *London is the place for me: black Britons, citizenship and the politics of race* (New York, NY, 2015); Kieran Connell, *Black Handsworth: race in 1980s Britain* (Oakland, CA, 2019); Rob Waters, *Thinking black: Britain, 1964–1985* (Oakland, CA, 2019).

¹⁹ Qureshi and Khan, *The politics of Satanic Verses*, p. 41; Lewis, *Islamic Britain*, p. 144.

²⁰ Homi K. Bhabha, *The location of culture* (London, 2004; orig. edn 1994), pp. 224–5.

²¹ Rushdie, *Joseph Anton*, p. 23; Stephen Morton, *Salman Rushdie: fictions of postcolonial modernity* (Basingstoke, 2008), p. 24.

²² Aziz Al-Azmeh, *Islams and modernities* (London, 1996), p. 3; Ruthven, *A satanic affair*, p. 69.

²³ Humayun Ansari, *The infidel within: Muslims in Britain since 1800* (London, 2009), p. 152; Olivier Esteves, *The ‘desegregation’ of English schools: bussing, race and urban space, 1960s–80s* (Manchester, 2018), pp. 73–5.

Britain sent for family members in an effort to 'beat the ban'.²⁴ The Pakistani population of Bradford grew from 3,376 in 1961 to 12,250 a decade later, with the number of Pakistani women in the city increasing over the same period from 81 to 3,160.²⁵ By the mid-1980s, the South Asian population of Bradford was approaching 60,000 people.²⁶ In this context, the heightened importance placed on family life helped stimulate increased religious organization, with the number of mosques in Bradford mushrooming from one in 1959 to more than thirty-five by 1989.²⁷

In Bradford, many of these mosques contributed to the campaign against TSV, a process marshalled by the Bradford Council for Mosques (CFM), an umbrella organization that had been established with financial assistance from the local council in 1981.²⁸ This development shows how the Rushdie Affair should also be understood as being the product of a particular moment in the politics of multicultural Britain, and of a shift in emphasis that emerged – particularly at local level – with respect to the management of Britain's ethnic minority population.

In 1965, the first legislation that outlawed racism in places of 'public resort' was passed in the shape of the Labour government's Race Relations Act.²⁹ The Act – which was the first of its kind in Europe – also made the incitement of racial hatred a crime.³⁰ Religious discrimination was excluded from the Act, however, and at this time race relations was primarily conceptualized as a binary issue that concerned the relationship between 'white' and 'coloured' individuals.³¹ For Sam Selvon, the Trinidad-born writer whose novels about the immigrant experience in London preceded TSV, in the 1960s 'as long as you were not white you were black, and it did not matter if you came from Calcutta or Port of Spain'.³²

²⁴ Lewis, *Islamic Britain*, p. 17; Clair Wills, *Lovers and strangers: an immigrant history of post-war Britain* (London, 2017), p. 235; Simon Gunn, 'The rise and fall of British urban modernism: planning Bradford, circa 1945–1970', *Journal of British Studies*, 49 (2010), pp. 849–69, at p. 865.

²⁵ Lewis, *Islamic Britain*, pp. 54–5.

²⁶ David James, *Bradford* (Halifax, 1990), p. 177.

²⁷ Philip Lewis, 'Being Muslim and being British: the dynamics of Islamic reconstruction in Bradford', in Roger Ballard, ed., *Desh Pardesh: the South Asian presence in Britain* (London, 1994), p. 69; Gita Sahgal, 'Fundamentalism and the multi-culturalist fallacy', in Southall Black Sisters, eds., *Against the grain: a celebration of survival and struggle* (London, 1990), p. 23.

²⁸ Helen Carr, 'Muslims and the state education system: England c. 1965–1997' (Ph.D. thesis, Birkbeck, 2018), pp. 184–5; Malik, *From fatwa to jihad*, p. 75; Lewis, *Islamic Britain*, p. 146.

²⁹ The Race Relations Act, the Public General Acts (1965), part 2, chapter 73, 1615, 8 Nov. 1965. See also Christopher Hilliard, 'Words that disturb the state: hate speech and the lessons of fascism in Britain, 1930s–1960s', *Journal of Modern History*, 88 (2016), pp. 764–96, at pp. 786–7.

³⁰ Chin, *The crisis of multiculturalism*, p. 90.

³¹ Gavin Schaffer, 'Legislating against hatred: meaning and motive in Section Six of the Race Relations Act of 1965', *Twentieth Century British History*, 25 (2014), pp. 251–75, at pp. 254–5; Ambalavaner Sivanandan, *A different hunger: writings on black resistance* (London, 1982), p. 114.

³² Sam Selvon, 1979, 'Three into one can't go', in Kenneth Ramchand and Susheila Nasta, eds., *Foreday morning: selected prose 1946–86* (London, 1989), p. 217. Selvon's novels about the immigrant experience in London are *The lonely Londoners* (1956), *The housing lark* (1965), *Moses ascending* (1975) and *Moses migrating* (1983).

By the early 1980s, however, a different atmosphere had emerged, influenced by North American ideas of ‘cultural pluralism’ and ‘multiculturalism’.³³ The 1976 Race Relations Act went further than any previous attempt at addressing racism in Britain.³⁴ It outlawed indirect as well as direct discrimination in a range of areas, and demanded that local authorities take proactive steps towards the promotion of ‘good relations...between persons of different racial groups’.³⁵ What this meant in practice became apparent over the subsequent decade.³⁶ Councils like Bradford and the Greater London Council began allocating funding to organizations seen as well placed to bring about better race relations.³⁷ And this increasingly included groups that identified primarily on religious rather than on racial terms.³⁸ Some commentators, including Rushdie, positioned the increased focus on religion as a neocolonial attempt by the British state to divide a hitherto united black movement.³⁹ But in Bradford, this was a more dynamic process than such analyses suggest. As I show in the latter part of this article, Bradford council was often pushed into action by Muslim activists, who throughout the 1980s successfully developed a form of street politics which would come to define the campaign against TSV. The ongoing fallout from the Rushdie Affair continues to be tied to the politics of free speech.⁴⁰ Yet, focusing on the origins of the protests against TSV in Britain underscores how this was inseparable from a democratic process whereby the assertive presence of ethnically diverse populations forced the state to develop modes of governance that attempted to respond to the implications of what we might think of as ‘actually existing’ multiculturalism in Britain’s major cities, and increasingly in its provincial conurbations.⁴¹ The protests against TSV, I argue, thus encapsulated the political complexities

³³ Chin, *The crisis of multiculturalism*, pp. 11–16; Buettner, *Europe after empire*, pp. 322–414. See also Steven Vertovec and Susanne Wessendorf, eds., *The multiculturalism backlash: European discourses, policies and practices* (Abingdon, 2010); Tariq Modood, *Multiculturalism* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 3.

³⁴ Geoffrey Bindman, ‘When will Europe act against racism?’, *New Law Journal* (1996), pp. 170–1.

³⁵ Harry Goulbourne, *Race relations in Britain since 1945* (Basingstoke, 1998), pp. 102–13.

³⁶ John Solomos, ‘From equal opportunity to anti-racism: racial inequality and the limits of reform’, *Policy Paper in Ethnic Relations*, 17 (1989), pp. 1–21.

³⁷ See Stephen Brooke, ‘Space, emotions and the everyday: the affective ecology of 1980s London’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 28 (2017), pp. 110–42; Daisy Payling, *Socialist republic: remaking the British left in Sheffield* (Manchester, 2023), pp. 26–55.

³⁸ Tariq Modood, *Multicultural politics: racism, ethnicity and Muslims in Britain* (Edinburgh, 2005), p. 104.

³⁹ Rushdie’s hostility to multiculturalism was articulated in his essay ‘The new empire within Britain’, broadcast on Channel 4 in December 1982. See also Ambalavaner Sivanandan, ‘Challenging racism’, 1983, in Ambalavaner Sivanandan, *Communities of resistance* (London, 1990), p. 66; Hazel Carby, ‘Schooling in Babylon’, in Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, eds., *The empire strikes back: race and racism in 70s Britain* (London, 1982), pp. 194–5; Barry Troyna and Jenny Williams, *Racism, education and the state* (London, 1986), p. 24. See also Malik, *From fatwa to jihad*, pp. 58–71; Arun Kundnani, *The end of tolerance: Britain in the 21st century* (London, 2007), p. 44; Anandi Ramamurthy, *Black star: Britain’s Asian youth movements* (London, 2013), p. 69.

⁴⁰ Sarah Lyall, ‘Writers gather to read Salman Rushdie and support free speech’, *New York Times*, 20 Aug. 2022, www.nytimes.com/2022/08/20/books/salman-rushdie-pen.html (21 Sept. 2023).

⁴¹ Ralph Grillo, ‘An excess of alterity? Debating difference in a multicultural society’, in Steven Vertovec, ed., *Anthropology of migration and multiculturalism* (London, 2010), pp. 19–38.

thrown up by the hybridized milieu that Rushdie had initially hoped his novel would celebrate.

Rushdie characterized *TSV* as a celebration of ‘hybridity, impurity, intermingling, [and] the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, [and] songs’.⁴² He had toyed with the idea of calling the novel *Rivers of Blood*, in reference to the Conservative MP Enoch Powell’s incendiary speech on immigration in April 1968.⁴³ Rushdie’s aim, according to the notes he made when writing *TSV*, was to focus on movement: what it felt like ‘being now this now that...a man holding a spar of driftwood, losing things like a man with holes in his pockets’.⁴⁴ For Bhabha, the final version of the novel was best read through an anti-essentialist lens that stressed ‘the migrant culture of “in between”’, and the ‘ambivalent process of splitting and hybridity’ that migration necessarily entails.⁴⁵ This was achieved through the kaleidoscopic range of influences contained within the novel, from Indian film, science fiction, and the diverse street vernacular of Bombay to Latin American magic realism, TV shows, and, most controversially, satirical reinterpretations of the Quran.⁴⁶ It was an approach typical of the fashion in the 1980s for the ‘cultural grammars of postmodernism’, though it also echoed the ‘creolized’ attempts to fictionalize the migrant experience in Britain produced by West Indian writers like Selvon and George Lamming.⁴⁷ As Stuart Hall has argued, this body of work was in many respects a project to rewrite the English novel, ‘to turn a colonial inheritance inside out’ by writing books that ‘reverberate with other stories and histories’.⁴⁸ In *TSV*, the theme of hybridity is embodied by the novel’s coprotagonists, Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta, who miraculously land on Hastings beach after the plane they had been travelling on from India explodes in midair.⁴⁹

Chamcha and Farishta are opposites of one another and representative of ‘two different ideas of migrant identity’.⁵⁰ Chamcha is a Bombay-born voice-over actor who, like Rushdie, was enrolled by his father at an English public

⁴² Rushdie, ‘In good faith’, p. 394.

⁴³ Salman Rushdie, *Rivers of blood, notes and fragments*, SRP, 45/6. On Powell, see Camilla Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the making of postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge, 2013), and Paul Corthorn, *Enoch Powell: politics and ideas in modern Britain* (Oxford, 2019).

⁴⁴ Salman Rushdie, *The parting of the seas, notes and fragments*, SRP, 44/25.

⁴⁵ Bhabha, *The location of culture*, p. 224.

⁴⁶ John McLeod, *Postcolonial London: rewriting the metropolis* (London, 2004), p. 147; Shailja Schama, ‘Salman Rushdie: the ambivalence of migrancy’, *Twentieth Century Literature*, 47 (2001), pp. 596–618, at p. 605; Bhabha, *The location of culture*, p. x.

⁴⁷ Susheila Nasta, *Home truths: fictions of the South Asian diaspora in Britain* (Basingstoke, 2002), pp. 145–60.

⁴⁸ Stuart Hall (with Bill Schwarz), *Familiar stranger: a life between two islands* (London, 2017), p. 137.

⁴⁹ Morton, *Salman Rushdie*, p. 70.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

school in 1961.⁵¹ He has anglicized his name from Salahuddin Chamchawala, wears a bowler hat and pinstriped suit and attempts to erase all traces of his Indian accent in an effort to be ‘a good and proper Englishman’, the opposite of what the novel’s narrator dismisses as the ‘riff-raff from villages in Sylhet’.⁵² On his dramatic return to Britain after a holiday in Bombay, however, Chamcha undergoes a transformation into a kind of ‘devil-goat’, replete with horns, hooves, and bad breath.⁵³ Chamcha not only becomes a grotesque embodiment of the racist understanding that black and Asian immigrants were fundamentally incompatible with British cultural norms. His transformation also forces him to reckon with the realities faced by those immigrant communities who never enjoyed the same socio-economic advantages.⁵⁴

Farishta, meanwhile, boards the same plane as Chamcha, having decided to abandon an acting career to migrate to Britain. Upon his descent from the plane, Gibreel Farishta – which translates from Urdu as the Angel Gabriel, a figure revered in Islam for having brought the Quran from God to the Prophet Mohammed – develops a halo and sets about attempting to ‘tropicalize’ British culture through an assertive embrace of his own Indian identity, something symbolized by Farishta’s celebration of Bollywood cinema.⁵⁵ Whereas Chamcha is ‘imperially hungover’ and admires ‘Britishness’ in spite of the discrimination he has faced, Farishta is scornful of it, even if he himself is changed by his encounters in Britain as the novel progresses.⁵⁶ Farishta arrives on Hastings beach like William the Conqueror, quotes the anti-colonial theory of Frantz Fanon and plays a leading role in Rushdie’s fictionalized depiction of the 1981 Brixton riots.⁵⁷ Whereas Chamcha is ‘seeking to be transformed into the foreignness he admires’, Farishta is ‘intent on some reverse colonization’ as a ‘belated postcolonial’ whose disruptive presence, Bhabha suggests, ‘margin-alizes and singularizes the totality of the national culture’.⁵⁸

The respective positions taken up by Chamcha and Farishta are never entirely successful in their own right; in Rushdie’s telling, neither offers a complete answer to the immigrant’s dilemma.⁵⁹ And it was Rushdie’s attempt at interrogating the psychic consequences of what he positions as the irresolvable tension at the heart of the diasporic inheritance that contributed to what would become the most controversial sections of the novel.⁶⁰ Part of

⁵¹ Gillian Gane, ‘Migrancy, the cosmopolitan intellectual, and the global city in *The Satanic Verses*’, *Modern Fiction Studies*, 48 (2002), pp. 18–49, at p. 33.

⁵² Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses* (London, 1998; orig. edn 1988), pp. 43, 159.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 140–1.

⁵⁴ Andrew Teverson, *Salman Rushdie* (Manchester, 2007), pp. 147–8; Brennan, *Salman Rushdie and the Third World*, p. 156. See also Chris Waters, ‘“Dark strangers” in our midst: discourses of race and nation in Britain, 1947–1963’, *Journal of British Studies*, 36 (1997), pp. 207–38.

⁵⁵ Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*, pp. 133, 354, 440; Ruthven, *A satanic affair*, p. 16; Gane, ‘Migrancy’, p. 30; Vijay Mishra, *Salman Rushdie and the genesis of secrecy* (London, 2019), pp. 147–74.

⁵⁶ Schama, ‘Salman Rushdie’, p. 607.

⁵⁷ Teverson, *Salman Rushdie*, p. 150.

⁵⁸ Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*, pp. 353, 426; Teverson, *Salman Rushdie*, p. 150; Bhabha, *The location of culture*, p. 168.

⁵⁹ Teverson, *Salman Rushdie*, p. 151.

⁶⁰ McLeod, *Postcolonial London*, p. 157; Nasta, *Home truths*, p. 155.

the reason Farishta decides to leave Bombay for Britain is the sudden loss of his Islamic faith. Early on in the novel, drawing on Rushdie's own experience of eating pork for the first time in Britain, where the 'failure of the Almighty to strike him dead' confirmed his creeping atheism, Rushdie has Farishta eat bacon so quickly that it hangs from the corners of his mouth.⁶¹ Farishta implores Allah to respond with a divine sign before concluding that, 'with pigs falling out of his face', he was 'talking to *thin air*'.⁶² Following Farishta's arrival in Britain, however, it becomes obvious that he is in the midst of a psychological breakdown that leads him to believe that he is actually the Archangel Gabriel.⁶³ As the novel progresses, Rushdie dramatizes Farishta's psychotic episodes through a series of dream sequences that parody key episodes in the history of Islam and the Quran itself – including the contentious 'Satanic Verses' incident in the Quran's fifty-third chapter.⁶⁴ Part two of the novel plays with the story of the Prophet Mohammed's attempts at establishing Islam in Mecca in the seventh century. Rushdie substitutes Mecca for 'Jahilia' (the pre-Islamic era or 'period of ignorance'), a fictional city composed of sand, and Muhammad for 'Mahound', a historically derogatory term that was used to depict Mohammed as a false prophet.⁶⁵ In the novel, and drawing on Western scholarship of the history of Islam that has since been criticized for rehearsing Orientalist caricatures, Rushdie depicts the 'businessman-turned-prophet' Mahound as being willing to enter into a deal with the authorities of Jahilia.⁶⁶ If Mahound agrees to endorse the divinity of three pagan goddesses alongside Allah, Islam will officially be recognized and Mahound will be permitted to join the Jahilia ruling council. In the Quran itself, the Prophet Mohammed is seemingly delivered the revelation about the possible divinity of the three goddesses by the Archangel Gabriel, but realizes that key passages had in fact been 'put upon [his] tongue' by Satan.⁶⁷ The verses were satanic rather than divine because any acknowledgement of the three goddesses meant 'reducing God to their level' and an abandonment of Islamic monotheism.⁶⁸ The Prophet Mohammed is subsequently delivered a new, holy revelation to replace it.⁶⁹ Farishta's fever dream about Jahilia in *TSV*, therefore, was Rushdie's attempt to imagine why Mohammed initially accepted the first, 'false' revelation.⁷⁰

⁶¹ Rushdie, *Joseph Anton*, p. 32; Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*, pp. 29–30.

⁶² Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*, p. 30.

⁶³ McLeod, *Postcolonial London*, p. 152; Ruthven, *A satanic affair*, p. 16.

⁶⁴ Teverson, *Salman Rushdie*, p. 154.

⁶⁵ Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*, p. 272; Brennan, *Salman Rushdie and the Third World*, p. 146; Ruthven, *A satanic affair*, p. 25; Webster, *A brief history of blasphemy*, p. 38; Chin, *The crisis of multiculturalism*, p. 179.

⁶⁶ Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*, pp. 95–106; Morton, *Salman Rushdie*, p. 62. Rushdie was reliant on W. Montgomery Watt's interpretation of the Satanic Verse incident in *Muhammad at Mecca* (Oxford, 1953). For a critique, see Zafar Alo Qureshi, *Prophet Muhammad and his Western critics* (Lahore, 1992).

⁶⁷ Abd al-Malik Ibn Hisham, *The life of Muhammad: a translation of Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah* (Karachi, 1967), p. 166.

⁶⁸ W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca* (Oxford, 1960), p. 105; Rushdie, *Joseph Anton*, pp. 41–5.

⁶⁹ Teverson, *Salman Rushdie*, p. 154.

⁷⁰ Rushdie, *Joseph Anton*, p. 44.

The passage was controversial not only because it offered a reading of the Prophet that implied he was open to political bargaining to further his agenda. It also called into question the act of Islamic revelation itself, and positioned this as something that was 'at best, sincere but delusional and, at worst, self serving and cynical'.⁷¹ There are other parts of the novel that would prove to be equally controversial. In one passage, a character bemoans the rules that Mahound had come to demand adherence to, rules about which hand to use when cleaning one's behind, how much to eat and sleep, and which sexual positions to adopt.⁷² Through Farishta's dreams, Rushdie depicts a brothel in Jahilia called *Hijab*, the Arabic word for 'cover' and the name of the headscarf worn by some Muslim women. The brothel is staffed by women who increase their earnings by taking the names of the Prophet Mohammed's twelve wives; the most popular sex worker in the brothel, the fifteen-year-old Ayesha, entertains clients by assuming the name and persona of Mohammed's favourite wife.⁷³

Such iconoclasm illustrates a critical tension at the heart of Rushdie's literary project.⁷⁴ In the context of the protests against TSV in Britain and Khomeini's *fatwa*, Rushdie often sought to highlight the book's attempts at exploring the immigrant psyche while at the same time aligning himself with this habitus by emphasizing his own status as an Indian-born writer in Britain.⁷⁵ In February 1990, for example, Rushdie declared that 'if *The Satanic Verses* is anything, it is a migrant's eye view of the world. It is written from the very experience of uprooting, disjuncture [and] metamorphosis...that is the migrant condition.'⁷⁶ Statements like these downplayed Rushdie's detachment from the economic realities and social experiences in Britain's ethnically diverse inner cities. Rushdie was initially educated at the Cathedral and John Connon School in Bombay, for example, which had been established in 1922 to educate the children of British colonial administrators.⁷⁷ Rushdie's father, a barrister-cum-businessman with inherited wealth from Rushdie's grandfather (a leather-and-cloth magnate), regarded himself as being one rung below India's 'super-rich' elite.⁷⁸ In 1961, Rushdie was sent by his parents to board at Rugby School in Warwickshire, one of the most expensive public schools in the world.⁷⁹ In October 1965, Rushdie followed in his father's footsteps to

⁷¹ Teverson, *Salman Rushdie*, p. 154.

⁷² Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*, pp. 363–4.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 376–81; Ruthven, *A satanic affair*, pp. 18, 25.

⁷⁴ Teverson, *Salman Rushdie*, p. 155; Ruthven, *A satanic affair*, p. 26.

⁷⁵ Revathi Krishnaswamy, 'Mythologies of migrancy: postcolonialism, postmodernism and the politics of (dis)location', *ariel*, 26 (1995), pp. 125–46, at p. 133.

⁷⁶ Rushdie, 'In good faith', p. 394.

⁷⁷ Ian Hamilton, 'The first life of Salman Rushdie', *New Yorker*, 25 Dec. 1995 – 1 Jan. 1996, pp. 90–3; Susan Dewey, 'Imperial designs, post-colonial replications: class and power at Cathedral and John Connon School in Bombay', *Ethnography and Education*, 1 (2006), pp. 215–29, at p. 216.

⁷⁸ Hamilton, 'The first life', p. 90; Nilufer E. Bharucha, 'Salman Rushdie's upwardly mobile, globally migrating middle classes', in Stadler, ed., *Salman Rushdie in context*, p. 230.

⁷⁹ Rushdie, *Joseph Anton*, p. 20; Hamilton, 'The first life', p. 90; Robert Eaglestone and Martin McQuillan, 'Chronology of Salman Rushdie's life', in Robert Eaglestone and Martin McQuillan, eds., *Salman Rushdie: contemporary critical perspectives* (London, 2013), p. xv; Teverson, *Salman Rushdie*, p. 72.

read history at King's College, Cambridge, and the ease with which he fitted into this environment did not always endear him to peers. 'A lot of us were grammar school lads', a contemporary of Rushdie's remembered, and however much Rushdie 'tried subsequently to present himself as the outsider, we actually felt alienated from him by education'.⁸⁰ Upon graduating from Cambridge, following a stint working in Karachi for Pakistan's television service, in 1969 Rushdie settled in London, found employment as an advertising copywriter, and began work on what would become his first, generally overlooked, published novel, *Grimus* (1975).⁸¹

This is not to argue, as one commentator suggested following the publication of *TSV*, that Rushdie was able to sidestep British racism because of his expensive education, 'pale skin', and 'impeccable English voice'.⁸² While at Rugby, for instance, Rushdie caught one of his classmates scrawling 'Wogs Go Home' on a wall, and Rushdie believed his status as a 'coloured immigrant' meant that he was considered 'below even working-class status'.⁸³ But it is to argue that Rushdie had little first-hand experience with the discrimination in areas such as housing and policing that he would subsequently attempt to evoke in *TSV*.⁸⁴ His secular perspective also put him at odds with the increased role that organized religion played in the lives of immigrants from the Indian subcontinent. Rushdie's brand of secularism stressed that 'everything is worth discussing...There are no subjects which are off limits and that includes God'.⁸⁵ He positioned a loss of religious faith as one possible outcome of what he saw as the syncretism of the immigrant sensibility.⁸⁶ But as I show in the remainder of this article, it was this element of Rushdie's work that led to large-scale protests among a British Muslim community who were experiencing the same dilemmas that, in *TSV*, Rushdie set out to portray.⁸⁷

II

On 5 October 1988, India became the first country to formally ban *TSV*.⁸⁸ This was largely as a result of pressure applied by a number of Muslim opposition MPs to the Indian prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi.⁸⁹ The Janata MP Syed Shahabuddin described the novel as 'a deliberate insult to Islam and the

⁸⁰ Anonymous, in Hamilton, 'The first life', p. 97.

⁸¹ Morton, *Salman Rushdie*, p. 6; Eaglestone and McQuillan, 'Chronology', p. xv; Hamilton, 'The first life', p. 97.

⁸² Anon., 'The marked man', *Sunday Times*, 19 Feb. 1989, in Appignanesi and Maitland, eds., *The Rushdie file*, p. 2.

⁸³ Rushdie, *Joseph Anton*, p. 29; Teverson, *Salman Rushdie*, pp. 74–5; Hamilton, 'The first life', p. 94.

⁸⁴ Rogers, *State sponsored literature*, p. 113; Rehana Ahmed, *Writing British Muslims: religion, class and multiculturalism* (Manchester, 2015), pp. 67–87.

⁸⁵ Quoted in Shrabani Basu, 'Of Satan, Archangels and Prophets', in Appignanesi and Maitland, eds., *The Rushdie file*, p. 41.

⁸⁶ Rushdie, 'Choice between light and dark', p. 11.

⁸⁷ Ruthven, *A satanic affair*, p. 28.

⁸⁸ Rushdie, *Joseph Anton*, p. 116.

⁸⁹ Yunus Samad, 'Book burning and race relations: political mobilisation of Bradford Muslims', *New Community*, 18 (1992), pp. 507–19, at p. 510.

holy prophet and an intentional device to outrage religious feelings'.⁹⁰ Ironically – given how quickly the debate around *TSV* became enmeshed in Orientalist notions of a struggle between the 'civilised standards' of the West and those whose values, as the former Labour MP Robert Kilroy-Silk put it following the Iranian *fatwa*, were 'fashioned in less civilised times and places' – the architecture used by the Indian government to ban the book was Article 295A of India's penal code. This had first been introduced by the British Raj to criminalize the deliberate 'outraging' of 'religious feelings'.⁹¹

Within days of the Indian ban, British Muslims mobilized against the novel. On 9 October, Dr Zaki Badawi, chairman of the Imams and Mosques Council of Great Britain, which had been established in London in 1983, described *TSV* as an 'outrageous attack' that 'mocks our religion', and wrote to 300 mosques across Britain to alert them to the issue.⁹² A protest group was quickly established with involvement from Sher Azam, who for most of the 1980s had been president of the Bradford CFM.⁹³ In a circular issued on 28 October, the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs described *TSV* as a 'blasphemous and filthily abusive novel' that was 'the most offensive...book ever written by any hostile enemy of Islam'.⁹⁴ At the end of October, the Islamic current affairs magazine *Impact International*, which had been established by the Pakistani scientist Hashir Faruqi in 1971 and had over 20,000 subscribers, ran a feature on *TSV* and a front page that depicted Rushdie as a horned Satan.⁹⁵ The feature declared British Muslims to be 'shocked and outraged beyond any describable measure by the enormity of this outrage'. It described Rushdie as 'a self-hating Anglo-Indian' who was 'totally alienated from his culture', and appealed to his publishers, Viking-Penguin, to withdraw and pulp the book, to make an unqualified apology to Muslims, and to pay damages equal to the profits that had been made from sales of the novel.⁹⁶ The editorial concluded by advising readers to pursue these demands only using 'civilised' and 'legitimate'

⁹⁰ In David Devadas, 'Protests follow after government succumbs to pressure to ban Salman Rushdie's latest novel', *India Today*, 31 Oct. 1988, www.indiatoday.in/magazine/special-report/story/19881031-protests-follow-after-govt-succumbs-to-pressure-to-ban-salman-rushdie-latest-novel-797855-1988-10-30 (18 June 2023).

⁹¹ Robert Kilroy-Silk, 'Defending ethnic majorities', *Times*, 17 Feb. 1989, p. 14; Neeti Nair, 'Beyond the "communal" 1920s: the problem of intention, legislative pragmatism, and the making of Section 295A of the Indian Penal Code', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 50 (2013), pp. 317–40, at p. 334; Samad, 'Book burning and race relations', p. 511.

⁹² In Christopher Elliot, 'Call for British Rushdie boycott', *Sunday Telegraph*, 9 Oct. 1988, p. 3; Lewis, *Islamic Britain*, pp. 25, 116, 123.

⁹³ Malik, *From fatwa to jihad*, p. 74; Lewis, *Islamic Britain*, p. 161.

⁹⁴ Letter from Mughram Al-Ghamdi, UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs to unnamed recipients, 28 Oct. 1988, in Appignanesi and Maitland, eds., *The Rushdie file*, pp. 58–60.

⁹⁵ Jamal Sharif, 'Hashir Faruqi obituary', *Guardian*, 14 Mar. 2022, www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/14/hashir-faruqi-obituary (7 Aug. 2023); Ahmed Deedat, *Can you stomach the best of Rushdie?* (Birmingham, c. 1989), West Yorkshire archives, Bradford, bishop of Bradford papers (hereafter BBP), 64D94/1/15/1.

⁹⁶ M. H. Faruqi, 'Publishing sacrilege is not acceptable', *Impact International*, 28 Oct. – 10 Nov. 1988, pp. 12–14.

means. Rushdie should be left 'all to himself and to his charmed circle of "literary critics"'.⁹⁷

It is worth pausing here to register the provincial dimension of the protests that followed in Britain in late 1988, which were not only far removed from London literary circles but also from what sociologists would come to conceptualize as the 'superdiversity' of the capital, the 'immigrant London' referred to by Rushdie in *TSV* as 'Brickhall' (an amalgamation of the ethnically diverse districts of Brixton, Brick Lane, and Southall).⁹⁸ In mid-November, for example, the president of the Pakistan Welfare Association of Peterborough – which had a Muslim community comprising some 6,000 people, approximately 6 per cent of the city's total population – accused Rushdie of being a 'crackpot' and argued that for the sake of 'community relations' *TSV* should be withdrawn from shops.⁹⁹ This was followed by calls for a ban on the book in Huddersfield, Leicester, and at a protest outside Bolton Town Hall on 2 December, which was attended by as many as 7,000 people, the first public burning of the novel.¹⁰⁰ However, perhaps because of its location in a town with poor connections to London, even the Bolton book burning was ignored by all but the local press.¹⁰¹ For Liaquat Hussein, who in 1991 succeeded Sher Azam as president of Bradford CFM, it was this lack of coverage that led to a shift in emphasis to Bradford, which not only had the second largest concentration of Muslims in the country but also an umbrella organization that – unlike in Birmingham, the city with the largest concentration of Muslims – was not divided along sectarian lines.¹⁰² This time, with the help of a London-based solicitor, the national media were informed in advance of the protest.¹⁰³ Although the ensuing rally was much smaller than in Bolton, with an estimated crowd of 1,000 people, the resulting photographs of Hussein and Sayed Abdul Quddus, the joint secretary of the Bradford CFM, overseeing the burning of *TSV* on 14 January 1989 outside police headquarters in Bradford city centre, made headlines globally.¹⁰⁴

At the rally, people carried banners with slogans including 'Ban *The Satanic Verses*', 'Rushdie Eat Your Words' and, on a banner carried by a group of boys,

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Rogers, *State sponsored literature*, p. 119; Steven Vertovec, 'Super-diversity and its implications', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30 (2007), pp. 1024–54.

⁹⁹ Anon., 'Muslims want novel banned', *Peterborough Standard*, 17 Nov. 1988, p. 14; Sarah Margaret Vivian Smalley, 'Islamic nurture in the West: approaches to parenting amongst second generation Pakistanis and Khojas in Peterborough' (Ph.D. thesis, Leeds, 2002), p. 78.

¹⁰⁰ Anon., 'Muslims in call for book ban', *Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, 9 Dec. 1988, p. 14; anon., 'Book blasphemy, say Muslims', *Leicester Mercury*, 5 Dec. 1988, p. 9; Robin Lustig, 'Salman Rushdie and a war of the word', *Guardian*, 19 Feb. 1989, www.theguardian.com/uk/1989/feb/19/race.world (7 Apr. 2023); Malik, *From fatwa to jihad*, p. 4.

¹⁰¹ Alan Wright, '7,000 in "insult" protest', *Bolton Evening News*, 3 Dec. 1988, p. 1.

¹⁰² Ruthven, *A satanic affair*, p. 103; Lewis, *Islamic Britain*, p. 24.

¹⁰³ Parekh, 'The Rushdie Affair', p. 62.

¹⁰⁴ E.g. Steven Teale, 'Fury as book is set ablaze', *Telegraph & Argus*, 14 Jan. 1989, p. 1; Hahzir Teimourian, 'Believers will view killing of writer as their religious duty', *Times*, 15 Feb. 1989, p. 2; Sheila Rule, 'For Muslims in north England, anger and passion', *New York Times*, 19 Feb. 1989, p. 18.

'Rushdie Stinks'.¹⁰⁵ There was a tension between the aims of the organizers and the way the protest was often interpreted by the British media. In a press release distributed in advance of the protests, the CFM pitched its argument in a way that would not have been entirely out of place in the debates leading up to the decision to outlaw the incitement of racial hatred in Britain in 1965, which had their roots in post-war concerns about the enduring dangers of antisemitism.¹⁰⁶ The CFM declared that it was committed to freedom of speech but argued that, given Britain's emergence as a 'multi-racial society', there was a requisite responsibility on authors to ensure that their words would not cause offence 'to any faith'.¹⁰⁷ During the protests, Mohammed Ajeeb, the former chair of the Bradford Community Relations Council, Bradford's first Muslim mayor, and a sitting Labour councillor, told his audience that while the protest was 'an indication of the extreme anger which the Muslim community feels about the book' he was nevertheless pleased that it was 'taking place in a peaceful manner because Islam is peace'.¹⁰⁸

In the aftermath of the protests, however, the press coverage centred on what was understood to be the cultural violence of the book burning, with the Bradford protestors likened to a quasi-fascistic crowd of 'intellectual hooligans'.¹⁰⁹ Bhikhu Parekh, who a decade later would chair a government inquiry into 'the future of multi-ethnic Britain', sought to puncture this hyperbole by positioning the Bradford protest as primarily 'an act of impatience' rather than intolerance, and one that was born out of the misguided belief that the book burning stunt would stimulate a reasoned conversation about British Muslim grievances.¹¹⁰ Even if it is perhaps questionable that, as some activists claimed, the Bradford protestors were unaware of the connotations of book burning in Europe, it was Rushdie himself who did much to anchor the ensuing debate in polarized terms.¹¹¹ In an op-ed a week after the Bradford protests, Rushdie returned to *TSV* to offer his own reading both of his novel and the issues posed by the protests against it.¹¹² 'Inside my novel', Rushdie wrote, 'characters seek to become fully human by facing up to the great facts of love, death and (with or without God) the life of the soul. Outside it, the forces of inhumanity are on the march.' Inside the novel, Rushdie continued, quoting a character from the book, "'battle lines" between secularism and religion, "the light versus the dark", are drawn up.

¹⁰⁵ Teale, 'Fury as book is set ablaze', 1; Rushdie, *Joseph Anton*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁶ Hilliard, 'Words that disturb the state', pp. 786–90.

¹⁰⁷ CFM press release, 10 Jan. 1989, BBP, 64D94/1/15/1.

¹⁰⁸ Teale, 'Fury as book is set ablaze', p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ Lewis, *Islamic Britain*, p. 158; editorial, 'Dangers of a Muslim campaign', *Independent*, 16 Jan. 1989, in Appignanesi and Maitland, eds., *The Rushdie file*, pp. 67–8; editorial, 'Execution threat is a disgrace', *Telegraph & Argus*, 15 Feb. 1989, n.p., Bradford local studies library, Rushdie Affair press cuttings (hereafter BLSLR).

¹¹⁰ Parekh, 'The Rushdie Affair', p. 62; Bhikhu Parekh, *The future of multi-ethnic Britain* (London, 2000).

¹¹¹ Qureshi and Khan, *The politics of Satanic Verses*, p. i.

¹¹² Asad, 'Ethnography, literature and politics', p. 242.

'Now that battle has spread to Britain', Rushdie concluded, 'I can only hope it will not be lost by default. It is time for us to choose.'¹¹³

As the literary critic Claire Chambers has pointed out, the polarized nature of this framing belied the syncretism that both critics and Rushdie himself had elsewhere positioned as being defining elements of *TSV*.¹¹⁴ Indeed, the novel's diversity of form, and Rushdie's commitment to the incorporation of a heterogeneous range of influences, meant that it was always likely that different readers would have particularly varied responses to the book depending on their own socio-cultural moorings.¹¹⁵ If the book was, as Rushdie put it, 'a migrant's eye view of the world' written by a member of Britain's 'immigrant culture', his interpretation of the contrasting responses to the novel privileged specific readings of it, and reduced responses by other members of Britain's 'immigrant culture' to the status of 'inhumanity'. This was in spite of the fact that many non-immigrant Western readers – including readers at his publishers, Viking-Penguin – would likely have had only a limited understanding of the book's central references, not least its attempt to satirize key elements in the history of Islam.¹¹⁶ Most importantly, while Rushdie's response to the Bradford book burning largely set the tone for the subsequent debate about *TSV* in Britain, it left little room for an understanding of the distinctive political arenas from which the UK protests against the novel emerged.¹¹⁷ It is to the Bradford political arena that I now turn.

III

In Bradford, there was a dialogue between the city council and Muslim activists stretching back at least to the 1960s, when groups including the Bradford Muslim Welfare Society attempted to find ways of alleviating the alienation faced by many Muslim immigrants in the city.¹¹⁸ Subsequently, as the number of Muslim children of school age grew, education became a critical focus. The Muslim Parents Association (MPA), for example, was formed in the early 1970s in response to plans to reduce the number of single-sex schools in the city, which would have impacted those Muslim parents who objected to the mixing of the sexes after puberty.¹¹⁹ The founder of the Association – Riaz Shahid, a Pakistani immigrant who arrived in Britain in 1958 – established the group when his daughter was unable to secure a place at a single-sex school.¹²⁰

¹¹³ Rushdie, 'Choice between light and dark', p. 11.

¹¹⁴ Claire Chambers, *Making sense of contemporary British Muslim novels* (Basingstoke, 2019), p. xiv.

¹¹⁵ Asad, 'Ethnography, literature and politics', p. 248.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Schama, 'Salman Rushdie', p. 598.

¹¹⁸ Lewis, *Islamic Britain*, p. 58; Carr, 'Muslims and the state education system', p. 151; Radhika Anita Natarajan, 'Organizing community: Commonwealth citizens and social activism in Britain, 1948–1982' (Ph.D. thesis, UC Berkeley, CA, 2013), p. 177.

¹¹⁹ Ansari, *The infidel within*, p. 315.

¹²⁰ Carr, 'Muslims and the state education system', pp. 155, 187; Lewis, *Islamic Britain*, p. 69; Mark Halstead, *Education, justice and cultural diversity: an examination of the Honeyford affair, 1984–85* (Barcombe, 1988), pp. 34, 44, 233.

Some of the group's demands were extreme. In 1973, for instance, the Association wrote to the then education secretary, Margaret Thatcher, arguing that Muslim parents should be permitted to keep their daughters at home after the age of twelve.¹²¹ Yet, there were elements of the group's platform that would be incorporated into the council's education policies within years.¹²² For example, the Association played a key role in opposing the council's controversial policy of 'bussing' South Asian children to schools across the city in an attempt to ensure that any given school did not have an Asian presence above 33 per cent.¹²³ Bussing was abolished in Bradford in 1980, the year before the local council began to implement a broader set of 'multicultural' reforms that included the part funding of the CFM and, in education, the provision of halal meat for Muslim schoolchildren.¹²⁴ The MPA had lobbied for the latter as early as 1974 as part of what Shahid heralded as 'the age of the multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-religious school'.¹²⁵

The city council's educational reforms were set out in the early 1980s and envisaged as a way of preparing young people for 'life in a multicultural society', developing the 'strengths of cultural diversity' and responding 'sensitively' to the particular needs of 'minority groups'.¹²⁶ Bradford city council now decreed that every minority group had 'the equal right to maintain its own identity, culture, language and customs'.¹²⁷ The centrepiece provision of halal meat in schools began as a trial in September 1983 with the ambition within two years of an extension to any school with more than ten Muslim pupils. The reforms also decreed that schools were now obliged to set aside a space for Muslim prayer, provide information about schooling in parents' home language, and act with 'goodwill' in order to accommodate 'cultural sensitivities' around PE classes, swimming, and drama.¹²⁸

The nature of the council's response to the provisions of the 1976 Race Relations Act, and the clause that required local authorities to actively promote 'good race relations', was partly conditioned by the inner-city rioting that took place in Bristol, Birmingham, London, and elsewhere in the early 1980s in response to widespread unemployment, economic deprivation, and

¹²¹ Carr, 'Muslims and the state education system', p. 190.

¹²² Anon., 'Bradford Muslims 5-point plea on children's schools', *Times*, 7 Jan. 1974, p. 3. See also anon., 'Muslims in shock snub', *Telegraph & Argus*, 15 June 1983, West Yorkshire archives, Bradford, race relations in Bradford, papers and reports (hereafter WAY), WYB644/2/7.

¹²³ Carr, 'Muslims and the state education system', pp. 166–70; Esteves, *The 'desegregation' of English schools*, pp. 71–92. When the policy was first introduced in 1964, the limit was set at 10 per cent.

¹²⁴ Anon., 'Metro scraps "bussing" of schoolchildren', *Telegraph & Argus*, 23 Jan. 1980, n.p., WYA, WYB644/2/2; Local Administrative Memorandum, Schools 13+ and 13- division, no 2/82, 1, WYA, WYB644/2/8.

¹²⁵ Carr, 'Muslims and the state education system', p. 194; MPA to Richard Knight, 23 Sept. 1974, WYA, WYB644/2/7; Riaz Shahid, to P. M. Marston, 14 Sept. 1981, WYA, WYB644/2/7.

¹²⁶ Local Administrative Memorandum.

¹²⁷ Halstead, *Education, justice and cultural diversity*, p. 49.

¹²⁸ Local Administrative Memorandum; Bradford Metropolitan Community Relations Council, *15th annual report* (15 Apr. 1981–31 Mar. 1982), 1, WYA, WYB644/1/1/1. See also Halstead, *Education, justice and cultural diversity*, pp. 42–6; Lewis, *Islamic Britain*, p. 148.

a virtual breakdown in the relationship between the police and black youth.¹²⁹ The potential for racial violence arriving on the streets of Bradford was crystallized in summer 1981 by the high-profile case of the 'Bradford Twelve', brought about just days before the disorder in Liverpool by the arrest of twelve young Asian men in Bradford.¹³⁰ The men had been found in possession of thirty-eight petrol bombs that had been made in preparation for an anticipated attack on Bradford's Asian population by the far right. The ultimately successful campaign to defend the twelve once they were charged with conspiracy to endanger life and property was marshalled by the secular United Black Youth League, among other organizations.¹³¹ Yet, it was the MPA that provided an additional dynamic to the council's decision to implement its multicultural educational reforms. By the early 1980s, the Association was lobbying the council to approve the establishment of voluntary-aided Muslim schools. This was in theory an arrangement made possible by the 1944 Education Act, which allowed for independent faith schools to be funded by the Local Education Authority on the understanding that the school in question would meet a proportion of maintenance costs and subject themselves to local authority monitoring.¹³² It was a situation that led to the growth of both Catholic and Jewish voluntary-aided schools in Britain.¹³³ In Bradford, however, the prospect of Muslim schools in this vein was regarded by one official as an eventuality that would lead to the 'de facto destruction' of Britain's 'common education system'.¹³⁴ For one commentator, halal meat had been 'thrown to the Muslim lions' in Bradford as part of a calculation that, without such a concession, the MPA agenda on schools would become difficult to resist.¹³⁵ However, the council's reforms did not go unopposed. Indeed, the opposition that emerged to them as the 1980s wore on set in process a dialectic whereby Muslim groups felt obliged to defend the reforms they had partly helped to bring about. It is these campaigns in defence of the city council's multicultural agenda that prepared the ground, in terms of tactics and ethos, for the protests against TSV at the end of the decade.

The halal method of slaughtering meat had been legalized in Britain with the passing of the 1933 Slaughter of Animals Act, which required animals to be stunned before being killed but allowed for exceptions to this on religious

¹²⁹ Bradford Metropolitan Council, Multi-Cultural Education Review Body, 'Future policy for the education of children of Asian origin' (Dec. 1979), 1, WYA, WYB644/2/8. See also Simon Peplow, *Race and riots in Thatcher's Britain* (Manchester, 2019).

¹³⁰ Ramamurthy, *Black star*, p. 126.

¹³¹ Interview with Junior Rashid, Bradford Industrial Museum, Bradford heritage recording unit papers (hereafter BHRU), C005; Ramamurthy, *Black star*, pp. 131–4.

¹³² Michael Barber, *The making of the 1944 Education Act* (London, 1994), p. 47; Nasar Meer, *Citizenship, identity and the politics of multiculturalism: the rise of Muslim consciousness* (Basingstoke, 2010), p. 129; Carr, 'Muslims and the state education system', p. 206.

¹³³ Meer, *Citizenship, identity and the politics of multiculturalism*, p. 19.

¹³⁴ In David Selbourne, 'The culture clash in Bradford', *New Society*, 26 Apr. 1984, p. 136; Bradford Local Authority, 'Muslim aided schools', 9 May 1983, WYA, WYB644/2/7; H. H. Barrick, to R. Shahid, 31 Oct. 1983, WYA, WYB644/2/7; John Salmon, 'A boring farce in bad taste', *Telegraph & Argus*, 5 July 1983, p. 6.

¹³⁵ Selbourne, 'The culture clash', p. 136; Lewis, *Islamic Britain*, p. 148.

grounds. In practice, local authorities in areas with significant Muslim populations had actually implemented allowances for halal slaughtering prior to this.¹³⁶ Before 1983, however, halal meat had never been provided by Bradford city council.¹³⁷ Opposition to the new scheme largely came from animal rights campaigners.¹³⁸ But there were allegations that – like the later campaign against halal meat in France, in which the film star Bridget Bardot played a leading role as part of her opposition to what she saw as the ‘Islamization’ of France – the respectability provided by the animal rights campaign was being used by commentators as cover for more pointed criticisms of the Muslim population.¹³⁹

For Mohammed Ajeeb’s predecessor as Bradford lord mayor, Norman Free, the issue was clear-cut: ‘when in Rome’, he declared, ‘one should do as the Romans do’.¹⁴⁰ In February 1984, the city council promised a full debate on the issue, at which point Muslim activists in Bradford mobilized. The CFM circulated a document among its constituents informing them of what was understood to be at stake, and delivered a 7,000-name petition to the council urging the implementation of the original plans for halal meat in schools.¹⁴¹ The organization made it clear that were the city council to fail to deliver on halal meat, the CFM might be willing to support the campaign for separate Muslim schools.¹⁴² Most significantly, the CFM also embraced the kind of high-profile protests that would subsequently come to define the campaign against TSV. On 6 March 1984, the day of the city council debate over halal meat, it asked all Muslim parents in Bradford to withdraw their children from school in protest at the prospect of the halal reforms being withdrawn.¹⁴³ Two-thirds of Bradford’s 15,000 Muslim pupils were estimated to have missed school, and many attended the demonstration that had been organized by the CFM outside Bradford City Hall – adjacent to the spot at which TSV would be burnt in January 1989.¹⁴⁴ In the end, the council voted by a margin of fifty-nine to fifteen to continue the rollout of halal meat in certain Bradford schools.¹⁴⁵

Within months, however, another controversy over the council’s multicultural reforms emerged in Bradford. This time, it concerned the public pronouncements of Ray Honeyford, the white headmaster of Drummond Middle

¹³⁶ Carr, ‘Muslims and the state education system’, p. 195; Laura Tabili, *Global migrants, local culture: natives and newcomers in provincial England, 1841–1939* (Basingstoke, 2011), p. 129.

¹³⁷ Halstead, *Education, justice and cultural diversity*, p. 46.

¹³⁸ Anon., ‘Thousands in “keep halal meat” demo’, *Telegraph & Argus*, 6 Mar. 1984, n.p., WYA, WYB644/2/2.

¹³⁹ Anonymous city council employee, BHRU, C0139; David Gledhill, ‘Anti-halal stand is criticised’, *Telegraph & Argus*, 9 Mar. 1984, n.p., WYA, WYB644/2/2; Lewis, *Islamic Britain*, p. 149. See also Buettner, *Europe after empire*, p. 347.

¹⁴⁰ Anon., ‘Thousands in “keep halal meat” demo’.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.; Carr, ‘Muslims and the state education system’, p. 196.

¹⁴² Anon., ‘Asians call for school action’, *Telegraph & Argus*, 19 May 1983, n.p., WYA, WYB644/2/7; Lewis, *Islamic Britain*, p. 148.

¹⁴³ Anon., ‘“Stay off school” call to Muslims’, *Telegraph & Argus*, 20 Feb. 1984, n.p., WYA, WYB644/2/2.

¹⁴⁴ Lewis, *Islamic Britain*, p. 149.

¹⁴⁵ Halstead, *Education, justice and cultural diversity*, p. 46; Lewis, *Islamic Britain*, p. 149.

School in the Manningham district, where the South Asian, largely Muslim, student body had increased from 50 per cent of all pupils in 1980 to 95 per cent in 1985.¹⁴⁶ As the city council's reforms were being implemented, Honeyford authored a series of journalistic pieces that called into question the ethos and practice of multiculturalism. He argued that the multicultural approach was misguided in that it downplayed the fact that 'strangers in our midst' had their own responsibility for the 'adjustments involved in settling in a new country'.¹⁴⁷ He argued that the multicultural approach and the focus on teaching a critical view of British imperialism was rooted in what he characterized as a misguided 'imperial guilt'.¹⁴⁸ Honeyford declared that it was ironic that the same people supposedly pushing the multicultural agenda – 'black intellectuals of aggressive disposition', those with the 'hysterical political temperament of the Indian subcontinent' – enjoyed in Britain rights and privileges that, Honeyford argued, were 'unheard of' in their countries of origin. What multicultural education meant in practice, Honeyford suggested, referencing Bradford city council's directive that Muslim parents should be allowed to withdraw their daughters from physical education and other classes, was the establishment of a 'purdah mentality in schools'. Honeyford was outraged that the city council, as part of its broader package of multicultural reforms, had given parents the ability to withdraw their children from school for trips abroad – particularly in light of the fact most children were taken to Pakistan, a country Honeyford characterized as being 'backward', 'intolerant', and religiously 'barbaric'.¹⁴⁹

The ensuing campaign against Honeyford lasted over eighteen months and utilized many of the same tactics that had proven effective in the halal meat debate.¹⁵⁰ In May 1984, a 500-name petition was delivered to the council calling for Honeyford to be sacked, and a picket line was established at the school gates.¹⁵¹ In March 1985, up to 250 pupils were withdrawn from Drummond for a week, and sent by their parents to an 'alternative school' at the nearby Pakistani Welfare Centre.¹⁵² In October 1985, and backed by the CFM, the campaign organized a 'day of action'. Parents of children at Drummond were urged not to send their children to school and instead to assemble at the picket line before marching on Bradford City Hall. Fewer than one in five pupils attended Drummond that day, and the parents of more than 4,000 Muslim pupils across

¹⁴⁶ Directorate of Educational Services, *Drummond Middle School advisors inspection* (Bradford, 1984), 5; Ray Honeyford, 'Multi-ethnic intolerance', *Salisbury Review*, 4 (1983), pp. 12–13.

¹⁴⁷ Ray Honeyford, 'Multiracial myths?', *Times Educational Supplement*, 19 Nov. 1982, pp. 20–1.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Ray Honeyford, 'Education and race – an alternative view', *Salisbury Review*, 6 (1984), pp. 30–2; Ray Honeyford, 'When East is West', *Times Educational Supplement*, 2 Sept. 1983, p. 19; Halstead, *Education, justice and cultural diversity*, p. 29.

¹⁵⁰ Jenny Woodward, 'Racism in Bradford', *Times Educational Supplement*, 4 May 1984, p. 20; Drummond Parents Action Committee (DPAC) newsletter, no. 1 (1984), p. 1; Olivia Foster-Carter, 'The Honeyford affair: political and policy implications', in Barry Troyna, ed., *Racial inequality in education* (London, 1989), p. 51.

¹⁵¹ Halstead, *Education, justice and cultural diversity*, p. 250.

¹⁵² Anon., 'Rebels set up own school', *Telegraph & Argus*, 4 Mar. 1985, n.p., WYA, WYB644/2.

Bradford also withdrew their children from school.¹⁵³ The CFM called on the city council to resolve the dispute in a matter of days. Were this not to happen, it stressed, 'then we shall be left with no option but to ask our Muslim community...to pursue all possible and peaceful means of action to ensure the removal of Mr Honeyford'.¹⁵⁴ Finally, following a series of legal disputes, in December 1985 Honeyford was persuaded to accept an early retirement package and was removed from his position as headteacher.¹⁵⁵

What was significant about the Honeyford campaign, in particular, was that the CFM and other activists were able to use the city council's commitment to multiculturalism as a rationale for their argument that it was untenable for a man with Honeyford's views to continue leading a school like Drummond. 'Multi-cultural education' was positioned as an 'essential component of...children's education' because it gave 'equal importance and respect to cultures other than "British"'. Not only did Honeyford's views go against the council's multicultural ethos, it was argued, they also 'grossly insulted parents'.¹⁵⁶ The educational reforms that Bradford city council implemented in the early 1980s were at least partly the result of long-standing demands made by Muslim campaigners. The council's embrace of multiculturalism in turn emboldened Muslim activists, and gave them a language through which their demands could be articulated. During the protests against Honeyford, for instance, the CFM openly questioned whether the city council was 'seriously concerned about implementing its own multi-cultural policies'. In October 1985, just four years on from its establishment with local authority funding, the CFM declared that it had lost confidence in the city council.¹⁵⁷

Given its earlier effectiveness, it should not be surprising that the language of multiculturalism would also be deployed in the protests against TSV. 'British society has become secular but it has also become multi-cultural...with separate groups following their own cultures and religions', the authors of one pamphlet argued in 1989. It was not viable, the authors continued, to 'talk of "multi-culturalism" and insult other cultures and religions in the same breath'.¹⁵⁸ For one Bradford protestor, this was especially the case when religion had become 'as much a part of [British Muslims'] essential self-definition as race or gender'.¹⁵⁹ It is in this sense that those opposing the Rushdie protestors from the left, who often attended demonstrations urging Muslims to 'fight racism, not Rushdie', underestimated how multiculturalism provided a counterpoint to a legalistic and political climate still dominated by conceptions of race.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵³ Peter Davenport, 'Empty desks and protestors greet headmaster in race dispute', *Times*, 17 Sept. 1985, p. 1.

¹⁵⁴ CFM statement, 13 Oct. 1985, WYA, WYB644/2.

¹⁵⁵ Anon., 'Honeyford to go for £71,000', *Telegraph & Argus*, 14 Dec. 1985, p. 1.

¹⁵⁶ DPAC newsletter, p. 1; Dervla Murphy, *Tales from two cities: travels of another sort* (London, 1987), pp. 114–15.

¹⁵⁷ CFM statement, 17 Sept. 1985; CFM statement, 13 Oct. 1985, WYA, WYB644/2.

¹⁵⁸ Qureshi and Khan, *The politics of Satanic Verses*, p. 3.

¹⁵⁹ Shabbir Akhtar, *Be careful with Muhammad! The Salman Rushdie Affair* (London, 1989), p. 58.

¹⁶⁰ Modood, *Multicultural politics*, p. 103.

What made the opposition to *TSV* different to earlier campaigns in Bradford was that the Rushdie Affair did not have a direct connection to the city council's multicultural reforms; there was no concession to defend, and no pressure point that could be exploited. Muslim parents in Bradford were never asked by the CFM to withdraw their children from school in protest against *TSV*. Indeed, given the absence of a clear connection between Rushdie's novel and the education Muslim children were receiving in Bradford, it is unlikely that, had such an appeal been made, it would have received the support it did during the halal and Honeyford campaigns. Yet, all three campaigns were products of a recognition that Muslim immigrants had moved from the status of temporary sojourners in Britain to that of permanent settlers. For the CFM's Sher Azam, it was important to recognize that there was a new generation emerging in Britain. This generation, he argued, 'they're speaking English, their culture is British, and they are Muslims'. For Azam, this signified that Muslim immigrants had 'decided to stay'.¹⁶¹ In Azam's words, there are echoes of the vision of multicultural Britain embodied by the character of Farishta in *TSV*, who as the novel progresses sets out to undermine monolithic interpretations of British culture. However polarized the debate became, the author and his protestors were in a sense each seeking to lay claim both to the experience of 'uprooting, disjuncture [and] metamorphosis' that Rushdie saw as characterizing the immigrant sensibility and the diverse cultures of diaspora that were continuing to drive the ongoing emergence of multicultural Britain.¹⁶²

IV

The decision by the CFM to burn *TSV* damaged the group's credibility and political capital. This was heightened following the public pronouncements of some CFM members in support of Khomeini's *fatwa*. Sayed Abdul Quddus, for example, was forced to resign his CFM position when he warned Rushdie that if he ever set foot in Bradford, the novelist would be 'signing his own death warrant'.¹⁶³ But this, too, obscured the extent to which, away from the emotionally charged act of book burning, the campaign against *TSV* in Bradford was largely rooted in the traditional forms of democratic politics that had proven to be effective in the earlier campaigns around halal meat and Ray Honeyford – petitions to elected bodies, letter-writing campaigns, slogans, pamphleting, and mass rallies.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, it did not go unnoticed that just months before the burning of Rushdie's novel campaigners including the MP for Islington North and future leader of the Labour party, Jeremy Corbyn, publicly burnt a copy of the Conservative government's new immigration rules

¹⁶¹ Azam, in Ruthven, *A satanic affair*, p. 82.

¹⁶² Rushdie, 'In good faith', p. 394; Stuart Hall, 'Conclusion', in Barnor Hesse, ed., *Un/settled multiculturalisms: diasporas, entanglements, transruptions* (London, 2000), pp. 209–10.

¹⁶³ Ian Smith, 'Bradford Muslims echo death threat', *Times*, 15 Feb. 1989, p. 2; anon., 'He must die, city Muslim leaders say', *Telegraph & Argus*, 15 Feb. 1989, n.p.; anon., 'Book blaze Muslim quits group', *Telegraph & Argus*, 29 July 1989, n.p., BLSLR.

¹⁶⁴ Asad, 'Ethnography, literature and politics', p. 258; Ansari, *The infidel within*, 235; Chin, *The crisis of multiculturalism*, p. 182.

without any comparable outcry.¹⁶⁵ Even in the aftermath of the furore caused by the *fatwa*, Muslim groups continued their campaign against TSV largely using conventional forms of democratic protest. In Stoke-on-Trent, for example, petitions were delivered to the city's MP and lord mayor, and taxi drivers at nine local firms went on strike.¹⁶⁶ In May 1989, 20,000 Muslims from across the country took part in a largely peaceful demonstration in London's Hyde Park and, over the ensuing two years, there were legal appeals to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, the High Court and the European Court of Human Rights to attempt to extend Britain's blasphemy laws so that they protected Islam and other minority religions, alongside the Church of England.¹⁶⁷

While these appeals were always likely to be unsuccessful, particularly as support coalesced around the idea of abolishing Britain's blasphemy laws altogether, there was evidence in the broader political ether that demonstrated how, away from the Iranian *fatwa*, the British campaign against TSV was not entirely outside the broad parameters of the political mainstream. As early as 1979, for example, the former head of the Law Commission (and future chair of the government inquiry into the 1981 Brixton riots) Lord Scarman used the language of multiculturalism to lend his support to the idea of extending the blasphemy law. 'In an increasingly plural society', he declared, 'it is necessary not only to respect the differing religious beliefs... but also to protect them from scurrility, ridicule and contempt.'¹⁶⁸ A decade later, at the height of the Rushdie Affair, a number of Labour MPs supported the proposed extension to the blasphemy law on similar grounds.¹⁶⁹ By this point, however, the term 'multiculturalism' was becoming inseparable from heightened anxieties around British Muslims and the notion that Islam was inherently incompatible with supposed Western cultural values and moral standards.¹⁷⁰ '1989 was the moment when Islamophobia became crystallized in Britain', as one commentator put it; the Rushdie Affair was the critical turning point for Islam's emergence as the primary target for Britain's 'New Right'.¹⁷¹ In the political arena, there were few voices willing to champion

¹⁶⁵ Parekh, 'The Rushdie Affair', p. 63; Rogers, *State sponsored literature*, p. 152.

¹⁶⁶ *Evening Sentinel*, 11 Feb. 1989, p. 3; Qureshi and Khan, *The politics of Satanic Verses*, 12; Rogers, *State sponsored literature*, pp. 139–46.

¹⁶⁷ Christopher Hilliard, *A matter of obscenity: the politics of censorship in modern England* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford, 2021), p. 218; Ruthven, *A satanic affair*, p. 1; Rogers, *State sponsored literature*, pp. 139–50; Ismail Adam Patel, *The Muslim problem: from the British empire to Islamophobia* (Cham, 2021), p. 189.

¹⁶⁸ Lord Scarman, in Malik, *From fatwa to jihad*, p. 159.

¹⁶⁹ Max Madden, letter to the editor, *Times*, 3 Feb. 1989, p. 17; anon., 'MP speaks on Rushdie book', *Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, 24 Jan. 1989, p. 9.

¹⁷⁰ Paul Gilroy, 'The Black Atlantic as a counterculture of modernity', in Kwesi Owusu, ed., *Black British culture and society: a text reader* (London, 2000), p. 446; Tariq Modood, 'Multiculturalism after 7/7: a scapegoat or a hope for the future?', *RUSI*, 153 (2008), pp. 14–17, at p. 17; Meer, *Citizenship, identity and the politics of multiculturalism*, p. 20; Rogers, *State sponsored literature*, p. 160.

¹⁷¹ Chambers, *Making sense of contemporary British Muslim novels*, p. xxi. See also Modood, *Not easy being British*, p. 70; Gilroy, *There ain't no black in the Union Jack: race and racism in contemporary Britain* (London, 1987), pp. 228–9; Schofield, *Enoch Powell*, p. 344.

the syncretic milieu which was becoming a feature of everyday life in Britain's cities, and which Salman Rushdie had attempted to eulogize in *TSV*. It is a final irony, then, that within three years of Rushdie finally being able to forego police protection in September 1998, the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York City meant the political landscape would become dominated by the so-called 'war on terrorism', notions of a fundamental disconnect between the values of Islam and the Western world and the idea, as Rushdie himself suggested in the days after the Bradford book burning, that what was at stake was the outcome of a clash between "the light versus the dark".¹⁷²

Acknowledgements. Thank you to Paul Corthorn, Richard English, Ashok Malhotra, and Saima Nasar for their engagement with earlier versions of this article. Thanks, too, to the incredibly generous feedback I was fortunate to receive from the article's two anonymous peer reviewers.

Funding statement. Much of the underpinning research for this article was made possible because of a British Academy Small Research Grant (SRG2223\230682).

¹⁷² Foreign and Commonwealth Office, statements on 24 Sept. 1998 by Robin Cook MP, UK foreign secretary, and Dr Kamal Kharazi, minister for foreign affairs, Islamic Republic of Iran, New York, SRP, 156/7; International Committee for the Defence of Salman Rushdie and His Publishers press release, 19 Oct. 1998, SRP, 156/23; Samuel P. Huntington, *The clash of civilisations and the remaking of the world order* (New York, NY, 1996).

Cite this article: Connell K (2024). The Rushdie Affair and the Politics of Multicultural Britain. *The Historical Journal* 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X24000244>