

# DESIRING PRODUCTION: A CROSS-CULTURAL PATHOLOGY OF DESIRE IN SALMAN RUSHDIE'S "FURY" AND "THE GROUND BENEATH HER FEET"

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*Abstract:* The present essay through a close investigation of Salman Rushdie's *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999) and *Fury* (2002) looks into the challenges posed by global capitalism at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The resilience of civilizations, in particular their cultural vocabulary and ethnic compositions, is explored in the face of the homogenizing drive of capitalist enterprise. The encounters between various ethnicities and cultures create liminal spaces of exchange where social innovation plays a critical role in shaping cross-cultural dialogues. Exchange takes place in terms of cultural values. Using the cultural dialectics of desire as a navigational compass the essay seeks to understand civilization(s) as a set of complex encounters. The multiplicity of civilizing processes at play on the global plane are scanned through the critical lens of "desire", which is given a psycho-social orientation. The endless possibilities of neural networking opened up by globalization is born out of a legacy of conflict and interdependence. Two contrary trends emerge simultaneously; on the one hand there is an increasing tendency towards economic monopolization and Americanization and on the other hand there are decentralized and de-spatialized flows conducive to the growth of a hybrid cultural economy. Globalization at the turn of the century thus emerges as an economic and a cultural enterprise embracing plurality. The essay through the trope of desire explores the plural dynamics of globalization in the interaction, interdependence and contact between civilizations and cultures. It seeks to retrieve desire from the domain of market logistics and activate its ontological potential in terms of subjective empowerment and a critical aesthetics of change.

*Keywords:* desire, flow, ontology, globalization, capitalism.

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## INTRODUCTION

The present essay is a study in the cultural economy of desire<sup>1</sup>, its permutations and collaborations in the era of global capital. The global dissemination of capital puts at stake the question of agency. Capitalism as an economic enterprise on a global scale is made possible through a tapping into the mechanism of unconscious desire and programming it to subscribe to a culture of consumption. The revival of the agentic properties of desire is closely allied with an understanding of desire as production or “desiring production” (Deleuze 1984). Taking its cue from Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) the essay looks at the glitches in the operation of desire and how its affectual momentum is harnessed to contribute to the cause of capitalism. Through a close study of instances of neo-colonization in Salman Rushdie’s *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* and *Fury* the paper unveils how such practices endure through a neutralization of the agentic properties of desire and explores possible avenues of contestation through a revival of a positive aesthetics of desire. In a close reading of both the texts, through the conceptual apparatus of the philosophical works of Deleuze and Guattari, the essay looks into a possible unplugging of desire from a corporate ethos and its reinvention as an autonomous productive force with a potential to scramble all organized flows of capital which systematically disenfranchise the individual. This scrambling of pre-established codes as a modality of resistance is in tandem with the Deleuzian concept of desiring production. Such a reading will bring to the fore the contingency of power, the counter “actualization” or liquidation of hegemonic discourses and the dissolution of linear chronology into a pure momentum of multidirectional flows. As a point of departure from all choreographed flows of commodity and capital engineered by the dominant economy<sup>2</sup>, it explores the possible conditions of a cultural osmosis through mutual conditioning. In other words, rather than thinking in terms of linear flows which hold desire hostage and undermines its ontological potency<sup>3</sup>, the paper suggests a relay of flows through a revival of the autonomy of desire.

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## DESIRING PRODUCTION VIS A VIS DESIRE AS LACK

Deleuze unhinges the notion of desire from the concept of a Freudian/Lacanian lack. In Deleuzian philosophy desire is not mediated through an Oedipal lens of lack that has to be redressed through prosthetics. The Oedipal law of the father ceases to be the regulating mechanism of desire. We arrive at an understanding of desire that enables us to think of life in terms of flows which are multidirectional. Freed from the limitations of an Oedipalized vocabulary, desire becomes instrumental in the production of an autonomous unconscious. The individual is no longer cooped up within the inhibitive designs of a patriarchal symbolic order but connects with broader flows (both material and affectual) on a social scale. Desire thus transforms into something productive and conducive to change. The essay hinges on two variants of desire; desire as a patriarchal trope of acculturation which underpins the domestic space as a site of primary investment, and a revolutionary conception of desire which questions the norms of such an acculturation by cultivating an anti-Oedipal stance. Oedipalized desire as practiced in the domestic space, spills over into the arena of state politics which replicate the familial coordinates of power. The dynamics of capital circulation as a corporate venture working in alignment with statist designs, are in turn, injected with the limitations of an Oedipalized desire. In order to resuscitate the political agency of desire, its revolutionary momentum needs to be activated. Desire as an aesthetic agency of change overflows the coordinates of space and time. As a political agency of contestation, desire saturates the social field and liberates the subject from the stasis of reified structures of thought through a questioning of prevalent discursive avenues. As an agency of critical intervention, it mobilizes a breakdown of all choreographed flows of capital and proposes alternate paradigms of thought. The revolutionary and reactionary modalities of desire, as outlined above are however not exclusionary but intimately connected through an oscillation of the processual dynamics of globalization between production and anti-production.

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For Deleuze desire is both material and immanent; in other words, it can be calibrated in terms of a material graph that we associate with capital and the surface flow of goods that it fuels, but at the same time it is immanent and embedded onto a deeper ontology that triggers molecular transformations beyond the restricted dynamics of corporatized capital. The military apparatus that the State systematically maintains as part of its economy is underpinned by a capitalist configuration of desire with its strategic deregulation. As a mode of resistance to the state's systematic disenfranchisement of desire, Deleuze and Guattari propose the idea of desiring production, generating flows that slide across the disciplinary cordon of the state infrastructure and realize agency in terms of performativity. The unconsolidated traffic of freelance workers, immigrants, social riff raffs and agents of aesthetic change, comprise the scattered citizenry of nomadic flows of desire whose subtle infiltrations and random assemblages carry detonative implications for reified structures of knowledge that closely monitor desire and regulate its flows. Rushdie's *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* and *Fury* animate the tension between a corporate graph of desire plugged into the global economic circuit and a fluid currency of desire that destabilizes capitalist modes of representation.

Rushdie's novel *Fury* takes up the issue of capitalism as predation and a passive consumption of resources. The liberation struggle of the fictional Southern-Pacific nation of Lilliput-Blefuscu<sup>4</sup> forms the ideological crux of the novel. The indigene population of the island-nation single out Indo-Lily settlers and practices systematic economic marginalization by taking over their land and depriving them of property rights. The struggle which is initially localized, escalates beyond its immediate political context and takes on the lineaments of an ideological revolution through a concatenation of multifarious elements. The revolutionary affect overflows the confines of the island nation and affects the metropolitan core, mobilizing a strong wave of resistance against illegal appropriation. The protest along humanitarian lines finds an echo in the general disaffection with the inherent violence of capital wars and attracts a met-

ropolitan community of artists, intellectuals and human rights activists. The involvement of the protagonist, Malik Solanka, academician, philosopher and doll-maker, in the Filbistani Resistance Movement is triggered by his elemental “fury”, the eponymous affect that drives him into delirious fits of frenzy directed against the global giants of capital. Solanka’s uncoordinated and sporadic bursts of rage find a stable anchorage in the mass disaffection and consolidated “fury” of the oppressed people of Lilliput-Blefuscu. His desire however is ambivalent and multi-pronged, working in close complicity with capitalist machinations, which enable him to reap handsome royalties from his mechanic doll Little Brain, while nurturing a flagrant distrust of its latent motive to gag subjective resonances with a strident materialism sliding into degenerative excess. In a strategic reversal of the imperialism of multi-national corporations and digital merchandising, the costumes of Solanka’s fictional Puppet Kings are appropriated by the Filbistani Resistance Movement and galvanized by the Indo-Lilys to catapult their struggle to the media forefront.

*The Ground Beneath Her Feet* attempts to write a revisionary history of rock and roll, locating its epicenter in the juvenile talents of a precocious Parsee Indian boy named Ormus Cama. Cama’s visionary potential enables him to hear all songs much in advance, two years, eight months, twenty-eight days to be precise, before they are disseminated from an Occidental production unit which claims itself as the pioneer. Cama thus problematizes the stance of the West as the architect of rock and roll and posits a challenge to the hegemony of Elvis Presley, contesting the West’s ascendancy in carving out the musical empire of rock and roll. In Rushdie’s fictional reimagining of the origin of rock in Bombay, the West’s subsequent appropriation of rock and roll from Bombayites<sup>5</sup> and their claim of precedence becomes an instance of strategic disempowerment. The cultural appropriation of rock and roll and the exoticization of contemporary South Asian music as Asian Cool<sup>6</sup> translates into an instance of a lopsided transaction. The essay proposes an alternative history of cultural transactions with a relay of cause and



effect rather than a precession of cause in order to dissipate the binary conception of power promoted by cultural hegemonies. The marketization of the East and a refashioning of its economy as a veritable dumping zone of Western artefacts and cultural produce negates its role as a productive hub, relegating it to the peripheral zones of production. Production thus becomes synonymous with a Western entrepreneurial drive.

### “FURY”

In Rushdie’s novel *Fury* the protagonist Malik Solanka’s quest for anonymity and refuge from the burgeoning popularity of his mechanical doll Little-Brain and its televised dummy reflects a state of disaffection with globalization and its capitalist moorings. Solanka’s search for refuge is however continually thwarted and he finds himself scandalized by the surrounding opulence and the artificial texture of life; the machinations of a capitalist society that take his philosophical voice box Little Brain as hostage and repackages it as a consumer artefact. As he struggles to recover from the hangover of the media-frenzy that follows the runaway success of his animated philosophical series, he finds himself cordoned off by the material effrontery of a consumerist society. Wedged in between a tumultuous unfolding of events which he is unable to process, he finds himself caught in the grip of an impotent fury. As the contours of his identity become fuzzy Solanka recedes into a kind of non-productive stasis, overpowered by a sense of ennui. Plunged into a state of philosophical crisis; he becomes a mute spectator. The city’s transformation into a gigantic amusement park, tapping into the needs and drives of its citizenry only heightens his sense of bitterness. His acute sense of awareness of the strategic disempowerment of desire engineered by capitalist forces feeds his simmering fury. In the novel the blind alleys of desire fed by the city’s insatiable cravings for prosthetics lack a navigational compass and recede into black holes of stasis. Desire stripped of its ontological valency translates itself into a self-abnegating quest for material surrogates.

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In the novel Solanka's friend Jack Rhinehart ascribes his fury to the neo-imperialist designs of US Foreign Policy; Rhinehart elucidates "you can't not know how hard your friends try to avoid certain subjects in your company. U.S. policy in Central America, for example. U.S. policy in Southeast Asia. Actually, the U.S.A in general has been pretty much an off-limits topic for years" (Rushdie 2002a: 68). Rhinehart's explanation is however a gross simplification of Solanka's rage which has multiple roots and eludes all rational justification. Solanka's sporadic bursts of temper oscillate between an ineffectual rage occasioned by a depletion of agency, an impotent anger when confronted with a capitalist graph of desire and an elemental fury that inspires a latent vein of creativity trapped within a mesh of stringent regulations that hold the creative momentum of desire in leash. His awareness that fury may propel the individual to the finest heights of creative excellence or plunge him into the dark depths of torment underscores the twin processes of production and anti-production that inform the dynamics of globalization. Fury is variously defined in the novel as "Oedipal, political magical, brutal [...] Out of furia comes creation, inspiration, originality, passion, but also violence, pain, pure unafraid destruction, the giving and receiving of blows from which we never recover" (Rushdie 2002a: 31). Fury can thus be aligned with the productive agency of desiring production or sucked into a non-productive vacuum. Solanka's fury makes its emergence as a pathological condition uncontaminated by political events, where he is on the verge of contemplating murder, it then seeks refuge in Anti-Americanism and finally aligns itself with the collective fury of the Filbistani Resistance movement which kind of provides the synthetic glue where the diverse registers of Solanka's unconscious coalesce. The entire trajectory of his fury is imbued with emancipatory nuances where he seeks to retrieve desire from an Oedipalized domestic space curtailed by stringent familial values and its corroboration in the wider social arena in terms of capitalist relations of production. In the virtual domain of cyberspace Solanka's desire undergoes a process of sterilization when his fictional saga of the



Puppet Kings disentangles itself from a market economy and becomes functional in the productive economy of desire of the Filbistani Resistance Movement, mobilizing a liberated aesthetic space from within the straitjacket of a capitalist programming of desire. The vocabulary of resistance formulated by the Filbistani Resistance Movement revolutionizes the concept of liberation. It forges an unlikely coalition between the prosthetics of capitalist desire and desire as a revolutionary impulse actualizing itself through the assimilation of a multi componential fabric of atomistic particles which undercut the logistics of capital. Such an unveiling of the revolutionary production of desire through an instrumentalization of fury can be elucidated in terms of a machinic understanding of production which spans across the organic and the inorganic domains, roping in a host of micro-elements. Desiring production liberates the protagonist from the claustrophobia of an Oedipalized domestic space with its stabilizing co-ordinates of identity and releases him into the cosmic space. The body of the socius becomes the plane of immanence where diverse social registers seek residence and become conduits of the revolutionary potential of desire. Repression is rooted in the Oedipal nature of familial and social structures which recognizes a certain configuration of desire as legitimate, based on needs and drives. A dissociation from such a reductive perception of desire which promotes self-aggrandizement and seeks material compensation for a deep-rooted sense of alienation, necessitates an intervening state of delirium. It is through a breakdown of choreographed flows of desire that Solanka is able to engineer meaning out of the conflicting circumstances of his existence. The jolt or immobilization of production that Solanka experiences from time to time marks the pregnant moment, the stasis that precedes the breaking off of the flow into a new direction. Solanka's impotent fury which instigates him to sever his ties with the reified structures of the academia and the sedation of tranquil domesticity working in compliance with State capitalism, marks the moment of breakdown, a state of disengagement and a turning point. In an act of reversal, the capitalist navigation of flows is arrested through the erection of a shield<sup>7</sup>. Malik Solanka's deleterious



project of erasing history and clearing all back log to plunge into a state of anonymity, a fluid existence that lingers on the thresholds of an identitarian amnesia marks a process of cleansing and detoxification before the revival of an elemental fury capable of re-inscribing desire within a productive aesthetics. Solanka's quest to redefine the navigational compass of desire, finds fruition in the Filbistani Resistance Movement, actualized in conjunction with its fictive coordinates in the revolution of the Puppet Kings. This transposition of an incoherent fury onto a psycho-social plane marks a moment of liberation. Solanka's launch of the website containing the saga of the Puppet Kings under the franchise of the Internet marketing company called the Webspyders once again restores to him the mantle of authorship and he plunges into the creative pursuit of plotting a graphic revolution on a digital scale. The artificial life forms of Solanka's fictive world designated as the Puppet Kings waver between the moral and psychological dilemmas of sentient life forms and a state of mechanical servitude encrypted within them as chips of information and programmatic softwares. The cyborgs spin out of control of their maker Akasz Kronos and seek recognition in terms of equal status as the citizenry of Baburia through an act of mutiny. Solanka is sucked into this fictive universe and intrigued by the endless avenues it offers for a multiplication of its dimensions. As the story spirals out of proportion it seems to disregard all originary rituals and evolves as an organic monster always supplementing its backstory to facilitate its rhizomatic escalation into a mammoth saga. Past and present seem to evolve simultaneously mutually conditioning one another. Solanka encapsulates this feeling of having moved into a cosmic space free from the monotony of clock time. "This freedom from the clock, from the tyranny of what happened next, was exhilarating, allowing him to develop his ideas in parallel, without worrying about sequence or step by step causation. Links were electronic now, not narrative. Everything existed at once" (Rushdie 2002a: 187). The creative ebullience of Solanka's desire as long as it remains immune to the machinations of closely regulated flows of capital is able to exist in "a condition of perpetual revolution" (Rushdie 2002a: 191)

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and generates an affectual surge which spills across fictive coordinates and infects the domain of public affairs. The saga of the Puppet Kings is launched as a mode of reviving agency and as a desperate attempt to take hold of the reins of production. Its initial success as a capitalist ploy constantly churning out merchandise in the form of accessories, gears and video games undergoes a reversal of dynamics when the Puppet Kings are disinvested of their commercial connotations and their costumes and masks are stolen by the rebels spearheading the Filbistani Resistance Movement. Once again Solanka's puppets much like their predecessor Little Brain take on a life of their own, but unlike the commercial exploits of Little Brain confined within a capitalist circuit, the Puppet Kings seem to offer the possibility of a diversification of the register of commercial production. This unlikely conjunction of the grammar of commerce with the language of revolution again illustrates a Deleuzian scrambling of codes where capitalist undertones cannot be divorced from the text of revolution, questioning all easy binaries. The Puppet Kings accrue a certain affectual charge in the cybernetic domain, whose momentum is tapped by capitalist forces to inundate the market with Puppet King merchandise. By grafting the revolutionary credo of the Puppet Kings onto a commercial plane capitalism seeks to contain all seditious and refractory moorings of desire. But through a revisionist ploy and in defiance of capitalist designs, the costumes of the Puppet Kings are stolen, the catchphrase grafted on their attire is given a revolutionary sting and harnessed to the cause of revolution. This constant oscillation of desire between a corporatized social phenomenon and a revolutionary social aesthetics that subverts the tropes of capitalist economy in a revisionary feat, lacks a stable fulcrum and translates into a zone of flux, oscillating between production and anti-production.

#### “THE GROUND BENEATH HER FEET”

Stephen Morton in *Salman Rushdie Fictions of Postcolonial Modernity* (2008) talks about how a novel like *The Ground Beneath*

*Her Feet* (1999) undermines the assumption of the renowned South-Asian historian Partha Chatterjee (1997) that given the close alliance between modern knowledge and modern regimes of power, the Indian subcontinent will forever be the belated consumer of, Western artefacts and cultural trends. Based on Chatterjee's analysis of the dominant trends of production, the latent dynamics of desire in South and South-East Asia are always geared towards consumption. The discussion that follows closely questions all originary theories of knowledge as a repository of cultural values, studies their complicity in carving out territories of oppression and looks into a Deleuzian modality of apprehension and production of knowledge in close alliance with desire, as a mode of validating agency.

In Rushdie's *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* music as a conduit of cultural values is investigated as a cognitive enterprise with a potential to refashion the social unconscious. *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* apparently tries to reinvent the subcontinent as a productive hub of rock music prior to its advent in the West, precisely in the United States in the rock and roll histrionics of Elvis Presley. The novel proposes a relay of flows and a condition of cultural osmosis where subconscious registers play a dominant role in the transpiration of knowledge. Both Ormus and Vina cultivate an introspective engagement with the various slides of their broken lives which run as a parallel trajectory to their public profiles as celebrities. Ormus's spells of inwardness, which Rushdie describes as the much talked about "Camaobscura", creates a parallel universe, a dream labyrinth which translates into a fertile trajectory populated by creatures of his imagination. There is almost a sense of déjà vu when the male protagonist of the novel Ormus Cama finds a resonance between the mellifluous vowel sounds uttered by his ghostly twin brother Gayomart in a dream precisely two years, eight months and twenty-eight days before anyone and Elvis Presley's *Heartbreak Hotel* being played in a listening booth in Bombay. There is thus an erasure of a fixed originary point and a concrete geospatial domain of production. Production remains embedded



in the social unconscious inflected with traces of memory and guided by pre-figurations and flashbacks.

The title of the novel *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* proposes an unstable geophilosophy of existence where the intermittent tectonic upheavals that punctuate the novel's scrambled recitation of history further rupture the accretive nuances of stratified domains of established episteme<sup>8</sup>. Ormus Cama and Vina Apsara fashion a divergent musical trajectory that is able to steer clear of the pitfalls of mimicking the West or falling a victim to the commercial exoticization and branding of Asian music as exotic and mystical. By etching out a discrete musical space uncontaminated by Afro-American improvisations often used by bands of South Asian origin, Vina and Ormus vehemently resist a culture of sonic hybridization and a refashioning of sound as "cool"<sup>9</sup> and instead generate a creative momentum through an aleatory aesthetics of desire. Their band VTO, a pun on the Irish rock band U-2 although ensnared in the politics of commoditization and riding on the surge of mass adulation is able to fuel its music from a deeper source of angst that defies the petty designs of the industry and its commercial compulsions. The cosmetic embellishments and flashy riffs which lure the crowd reflect a culture of instantaneous consumption and hedonistic narcissism where the larger than life image of the celebrity generates a volatile euphoria.

There are bands that are hit machines, bands that earn the respect of the music crowd, bands that fill stadiums, bands that drip sex [...] And in the whole half-century long history of rock music there is a small number of bands, a number so small you could count to it without running out of fingers, who steal into your heart and become a part of how you see the world, how you tell and understand the truth even when you are old and deaf and foolish (Rushdie 1999: 157).

In contrast to the short life expectancy of most musical subcultures peddling sex and drugs, VTO's enduring appeal is not confined to youthful experimentation but touches a deeper vein of en-



gagement that could tap into the unconscious to generate a productive ontology. In spite of its popular appeal and the mass hysteria it inspires, the music is shaped by the deep-seated rifts and profound chasms that inform the lives of its performers who remain dissociated from the trappings of stardom. Vina's troubled childhood and fractured sense of belonging is echoed in her dislocated love for the diverse musical cultures of the subcontinent ranging from Northern sitar ragas to the Southern Carnatic melodies. Immersed for hours in the musical rendition of ghazals and the devotional music of the qawwals she finds herself adrift on the waves of sound that carries her to the limits of knowledge offering her tantalizing glimpses of a beyond. The music thus catapults her to an augmented state of perception and has an epiphanic quality. On the template of rock and roll music with its rhythmic eccentricities and collaborative synchronization of the bass and guitar, Ormus and Vina weave their philosophical speculations on life and on death. Their ability to forge a new vocabulary of the unconscious and articulate their interiority through a harnessing of prosthetic supplements retrieves rock and roll from a specific provenance or cultural milieu. VTO reinvents the genre of rock music by reconnecting with its philosophical moorings. Ormus and Vina cultivate a deep sense of irreverence towards American populist models and their music becomes a critique of the alienation at the heart of a consumerist society. They decry the establishment's imperialist policies in Vietnam and spearheads the rock and roll cult erroneously ascribed to Western pioneers. VTO deliberately steers clear of a cultural intermixing of registers by refusing to intersperse their lyrics with exotic blends of Eastern mysticism and trance, the buzzwords for capitalist packaging. Rather than reflecting a cosmetic preoccupation with formal acrobatics and surface embellishments, their music packs a punch by deliberately critiquing the West's anti-democratic agenda underneath the surface propaganda of a populist rock and roll culture and its widespread network of capital and resource scouring. For Rushdie rock is synonymous with revolution. It is the corporatization of rock "where the turnover of the leading megagroups exceeds that of small nation states" (Rushdie 2002b: 299)

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that he vehemently resists. As rock gradually takes on the lineaments of middle-aged complacency and declines into a sluggish performance, at uncontroversial events like presidential inaugurals its “oppositional origins, its anti-establishment heyday” (Rushdie 2002b: 300) is easily erased. It is “the sound of liberation” (Rushdie 2002b: 300) and unfettered expression that Rushdie is keen to revisit through Ormus and Vina’s musical itinerary and he ascribes to it “a higher and wilder virtue than good behavior” (Rushdie 2002b: 300). Both Ormus and Vina vehemently refuse to toe the line and forge a protean aesthetics of desire that slips into the lineaments of rock to break the circuit of corporatization.

The novel which delves into the visionary nature of art maps it in terms of delocalized flows of desire on a global scale. Its scattered locale of operation connects disparate points and proposes a creative synthesis of ideas that unfolds across Bombay and India, London and England, New York and America. The earth or the ground beneath our feet is the plane of consistency, whose fluid surface shapes an ontology of sense<sup>10</sup>. Instead of setting up bilateral transactions between the East and West the novel proposes a navigational departure and sets into motion a relay of exchanges and cultural transfusions that dissolve all originary myths. Characters like Vina, Ormus’s dead brother Gayomart and Ormus’s Western counterpart Elvis who uncannily resembles the character of Ormus living in the shadow of a dead twin become median nodes of transaction. They are our modalities of access to the social unconscious and its latent creative surge that refuses to be hemmed in and controlled by geo-political barriers. The strain of desire runs through a fluid magma of existence animating inert matter and acting as a catalyst which magnetizes disparate fragments of existence into a state of creative frission.

Arriving at a machinic understanding of production which unfolds both the affectual and material realms of operation, Deleuze and Guattari revolutionize the notion of global connectivity beyond the dominion of commerce. “Desiring production” straddles disparate registers of articulation and multiplies its dimensions



through a continual unfolding. The processual flow remains uninhibited and carries in its drift actions, passions, sensual pleasure, anxieties, pain which form assemblages of desire. Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of "a material psychiatry" (1984: 5) galvanized by the navigational momentum of desire (which endures as an underlying or immanent principle of existence) questions all homogenous compartmentalizations. Production translates into a formulation of random assemblages that cut across stratified discursive formulations<sup>11</sup>.

Ormus and Vina's cultural inroads across a diverse political topography seek to galvanize a pan-European and Pan-Asian social consciousness capable of neutralizing the toxic implications of narratives of cultural hegemony. Their music seeks to unveil the explosive nuances of a micro-politics of desire that revolutionizes subjectivity and retrieves it from the shortcomings of a neo-colonial taxonomy and an internalized sense of cultural myopia. Ormus's earthquake songs with their apocalyptic prophecies: "The earth begins to rock and roll, its music dooms your mortal soul, and there's nothing baby nothing you can do. Cause it's not up to, it's not up to it's not up to you" (Rushdie 1999: 390) announce the collapse of all boundaries, walls and restraining mechanisms and projects worlds in collision. Their prophetic visionary quality becomes a portent of the times to come.

Ormus his own youthful excess forgotten, a sensualist rendered simon-pure by a mighty promise of abstinence, a devotee of the flesh turned into a preacher of the spirit by his horror at the profligacy with which the New World squanders its privileges, now berates his admirers for their wantonness, for the licentious debauchery of their ways; and through the virtuous heights of his chastity he thunders about a generation mired in hedonism, lost in archipelagos of indulgence and desire (Rushdie 1999: 391).

Ormus's music much like Ormus himself enfolds a duality, combining the twin strands of production and anti-production; it juggles with the tropes of capitalist propaganda, soaks up the populist wave of adulation only to emerge at the other end as a vitriolic



critique of the wantonness of desire and the material saturation of a civilization lurching towards hedonistic excess.

Both the novels under analysis, *The Ground Beneath her Feet* and *Fury* critique the exclusionary policies of capital and their reification through discursive paradigms which seek to sedate us into a state of passive consumption. Through the mobilization of a “microscopic” dimension of desire Rushdie questions all molar configurations of desire predicated on lack and proposes a micro-politics of desire in terms of a positive aesthetics of production. Desiring-production which runs as an undercurrent of molar structures of production comprise of complex molecular flows that inform both individual and collective strands of social behavior. In *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* micropower resides in the revolutionary cult of rock music which carries the germ of revolution in terms of autonomizing production by dissociating it from a capitalist ethos. Ormus and Vina rewrite the history of rock music and unleash a nomadic counter-flow that erases the demarcations of the producer and the consumer. As the Western text of rock music comes undone, there is a rehashing of its constituent strands with uncanny parallels between the East and the West. The music no longer remains native to a specific geo-political domain but exceeds its individual proponents to transform into a potential carrier of the liberatory ethics of desire. In *Fury* which juxtaposes old world revolution and neo-colonial capitalist predation, conflating a virtual domain of larger than life characters and artificial life forms with the flesh and blood revolution of the Indo-Lillys similarly demonstrates a convergence of two incongruent worlds. For Deleuze and Guattari the operations of the molar structures of power cannot be delinked from micro-political effusions of desire as generative of political momentum. The micro-political dimension of power resides in desiring production whose energy is carefully regulated and contained within choreographed flows of capital. When the latent potential of desiring production escalates beyond a certain threshold of intensity and spills across the state’s domain of operations an organic transformation ensues. “Desiring production” be it through the revolutionary cult of rock music, or the political momentum of

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cyber-space sagas thus destabilizes the compliant consumer of cultural curios posing a critical challenge to a despotic world order of global capitalism.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Desire in the philosophical works of Deleuze and Guattari is not restricted to a psycho-sexual register and translates into a self-propelling force. As an autonomous agency, it is capable of regeneration. It is no longer conditioned by a Lacanian “lack” that has to be compensated in terms of the symbolic resources of an Oedipalized linguistic domain. It escapes the loop of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis where the law of the Father prevails. Such a breakthrough from the circuit of the normative order of patriarchy has close parallels with the free circulation of capital beyond the boundaries of the nation state in the post global era. Capital which is neutral in itself and acts as an exchange value becomes a potent metaphor of desire. At the same time capital is susceptible to an exclusionary politics, hatched by the inhibitive designs of a corporate game plan which subtly manipulates and regulates flows of desire.

<sup>2</sup> The dominant economy is no longer localized within a particular geopolitical configuration but is widely dispersed. Market structures can no longer be studied in isolation. George G. Djolov in *The Economics of Competition. The Race to Monopoly* writes “market structures do not exist as mutually exclusive of one another or in isolation. Integrally, they form part of the competitive process, and which market structure prevails at any point in time depends on the stage of rivalry to which the market or industry has progressed” (Djolov 2013: 1). The dominant economy thus needs to be gauged as a dynamic and de-spatialized phenomenon determined by capital agglomeration.

<sup>3</sup> Deleuze proposes a fluid ontology of sense which is accretive and dilatory. In *The Logic of Sense* Deleuze elaborates sense and its ontology as something not hemmed in by the limitations of a proposition or the state of affairs it represents. It is a dynamic and an emergent dimension of existence synonymous with the concept of becoming. Sense is not coterminous with a physical state of affairs and does not encode a static quality. An ontology of sense does not stand for “being” but aspires towards an “extra-being” (Deleuze 1990: 21) beyond a spatio-temporal configuration. This “aliquid” quality of existence is further elaborated later.

<sup>4</sup> This is a reference to the Southern Pacific island of Fiji and the Fiji coup of 2000 when the Fijian Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhury along with 50 cabinet Ministers and MPs was taken hostage by aggressors who claimed to represent the rights of indigenous Fijians and demanded the expulsion of Indo-Fijians. In an act of ethnic violence Indian owned shops were burned down at random and all civil rights of Indo Fijians were frozen. The political agendum of the coup was to restore control of economic resources in the hands of indigenous Fijians.

<sup>5</sup> The denizens of Bombay.

<sup>6</sup> Asian Cool is a miscegenation of musical styles, an adaptation of vernacular lyrics to pop beats. Such an intermixing of indigenous music and Western styles is often used as a marketing strategy. In *Stars to the State and Beyond: Globalization, Identity, and Asian Popular Music* Jennifer Milioto Matusse talks of popular music as “a dynamic portal” that allows



access to a vast range of cultural phenomena within Asia. Its transformative potential is underscored in the ways in which it informs conception of the self at the individual, communal, national and transnational level. The transnational and inter-ethnic resonances of Asian popular music are however often subsumed by a superficial mixing of sonic graphics, technically engineered to create a mongrel sound. Asian Cool as a repackaging of South Asian popular music translates into a capitalist marketing ploy that cashes in on brand value.

<sup>7</sup> The Deleuzian concept of the “body without organs” becomes synonymous with a state of inactivity, a staunch resistance against conformity. As a state of congealed flows, it becomes a defense mechanism against all paranoid organization of flows. At the same time, it is underpinned by a liberatory aesthetics. Kylie Message elaborates the concept in the *Deleuze Dictionary* and highlight its ambiguous positioning. “The BwO does not exist in opposition to the organism or notions of subjectivity, and it is never completely free of strategic exigencies of proper language, the State, family, or other institutions [...] the BwO exists within stratified fields of organization at the same time it offers an alternative mode of being or experience (becoming)” (Message 2005: 38). In *The Geology of Morals* the body without organs implies a condition of deterritorialization, “permeated by unformed, unstable matters, by flows in all directions, by free intensities and nomadic singularities, by mad or transitory particles” (Message 2005: 40).

<sup>8</sup> The concept of the strata/epistemic strata in Deleuzian philosophy is intricately wound up with the concepts of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. The strata become a mobile topology whose elements display various speeds and intensities. Whereas the core elements exhibit a strong coagulant character and exercise ties of cohesion, the peripheral micro-components of the stratified domain are marked by a plasticity of operation. There is thus a kind of double articulation within the same strata where molecular flows may take up errant trajectories while the molar striations give the impression of solidity.

<sup>9</sup> Anjali Roy in *Black Beats with a Punjabi Twist* discusses at length the “reinvention” of Punjabi folk music through a cross pollination of black sounds and indigenous folk rhythms, born out of the lived space of multicultural Britain. The essay examines how such instances of “sonic hybridization” cease to be mere commercial exploits and galvanize deep rooted transformation of social identities by creating a complex of class, ethnicity and race which cease to be mutually exclusive and engineers a progressive ethics of social intermixing. In *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* instances of sonic hybridization are commercially motivated and confined to the domain of a corporate ethos Ormus and Vina’s music only pays perfunctory homage to such sonic experimentation as a marketing strategy seeking to restore its ontological valency.

<sup>10</sup> “An ontology of essence is one of identity, traditional philosophy holding essence to be delineated by a substance’s fundamental attributes, which it retains over time and through its various forms and appearances and which thereby constitutes what it is. Being, as static essence, thus remains distinct from becoming, events and changing appearances [...] Deleuze’s sense is a synthetic concept. It constitutes and brings together domains that essentialist philosophies hold in opposition, such as the material and the conceptual, the particular and the universal, the external and the internal and so on”. Widder’s elucidation is based on Deleuze’s *The Logic of Sense* (Widder 2012: 22, 23). Instead of a bedrock of identitarian stability what Deleuze and Guattari propose is a state of continual flux, where the matrix of existence is rattled by a multitude of factors such as migration, art or even tectonic undercurrents compelling us to formulate probing questions regarding our existential status supported by the feeble prop of memory which tries to factor in chronology.

<sup>11</sup> “Everything is a machine. Celestial machines, the stars or rainbows in the sky, alpine machines—all of them connected to those of his body. The continual whirr of machines. He

thought that it must be a feeling of endless bliss to be in contact with the profound life of every form, to have a soul for rocks, metals, water and plants, to take into himself as a dream every element of nature, like flowers that breathe with the waxing and waning of the moon” (Deleuze, Guattari 1984: 2).

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