

# Harnessing the Currents of Textual Fluidity

Salman Rushdie's Making of *East, West*

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## ABSTRACT

Ever since Ayatollah Khomeini sentenced Salman Rushdie to death in 1989 for, in essence, remaking the story of the Prophet Muhammad in *The Satanic Verses*, Rushdie has repeatedly explored in his works how bringing newness into the world and securing the right to freedom of expression both require challenging traditional assumptions about textual purity. This theme in Rushdie testifies to the real-world implications of current efforts in textual scholarship to represent texts not as authoritative repositories of sacrosanct wisdom but as, in John Bryant's word, "fluid" conveyors of ever-shifting intentions and meanings. This article focuses on Rushdie's deployment of textual fluidity in his shaping of his 1994 short story collection *East, West*. It analyzes selected examples of his revisions by comparing the texts of the volume's first six stories as they appear in *East, West* to their earlier published versions, and also by examining unpublished typescripts and proofs relating to *East, West* in the Salman Rushdie Papers at Emory University. By tracing the evolution of his stories through multiple versions and considering his revisions in light of his conception for *East, West* as a whole, we learn that Rushdie employs textual fluidity as both a multivalent literary motif and an empowering compositional strategy, often in ways that function together to expand the work's interpretive possibilities and yield a deeper understanding of the fluidities not only of language but also of concepts vital to identity for him and his characters, especially *East, West*, culture, and race.

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FOR MOST WRITERS, REVISION, ADAPTATION, AND THE EXISTENCE of works in multiple versions are simply facts of the creative process — more or less convenient depending on the writer's proclivities, perhaps, but fundamentally unremarkable. For Salman Rushdie, however, they can be matters of life and death. The *fatwa* issued by Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, on Valentine's Day 1989 charged that Rushdie and anyone involved in publishing *The Satanic Verses* had to die for, in essence, remak-

ing a story.<sup>1</sup> Rushdie loosely based several of the novel's dream sequences on episodes from the life of the Prophet Muhammad, and his reimagining of that narrative, which centers on a character called Mahound (a pejorative medieval name for Muhammad) and includes a scene in a brothel where the prostitutes have taken the names of Muhammad's wives, was viewed by many Muslims as a deliberate insult to their faith. Rushdie has since stated that he set out to offer a literary answer to the question, "How does newness enter the world?" (RUSHDIE 2012, 72), which the novel explores in relation to another story, this one about the Angel Gabriel's revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad. The phrase "satanic verses" refers to lines the Prophet recited that seemed to admit three pagan goddesses into an Islamic pantheon of deities, until Muhammad reversed himself and preserved the monotheism of Islam by declaring that "the Devil had appeared to him in the guise of the Archangel, and the verses he had been given were therefore not divine, but Satanic, and should be expunged from the Qur'an at once" (RUSHDIE 2012, 43). By invoking this story to illustrate how "newness enters the world", Rushdie suggests that innovation is rooted in the inherent vagaries of textual transmission, as well as in the human compulsion to counter those vagaries by revising narratives that fail to meet the needs of whoever claims authority over them. In response to Khomeini's *fatwa*, Rushdie only heightened his commitment to advocating that such authority should reside with *everyone*, in examples ranging from his depiction of a world where narratives literally flow from a cosmic wellspring in his 1990 children's novel *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* to his following statement on the lessons of the *fatwa* from his 2012 memoir *Joseph Anton*: "We should all be free to take the grand narratives to task, to argue with them, satirize them, and insist that they change to reflect the changing times. [ . . . ] In fact, one could say that our ability to re-tell and re-make the story of our culture was the best proof that our societies were indeed free" (360). One major ramification of this belief for Rushdie is that stories must be subject to what purists of aesthetic, theological, and political stripes alike all call "corruptions"—that is, textual alterations that Rushdie views as not only inevitable but potentially regenerative.

This theme in Rushdie that bringing newness into the world and securing the right to freedom of expression both require challenging traditional assumptions about textual purity testifies to the real-world implications of

1. Officially, Khomeini's *fatwa* accused Rushdie of creating an "*apostasian book* [ . . . ] compiled, printed and published against Islam, the Prophet and the Koran" (qtd. in GOONETILLEKE 2010, 106, italics in original).

current efforts in textual scholarship to represent texts not as authoritative repositories of sacrosanct wisdom but as, in John Bryant's word, "fluid" conveyors of ever-shifting intentions and meanings. In *The Fluid Text*, Bryant theorizes a concept he calls "textual fluidity" that encompasses many of the volatilities involved in the evolution and transmission of ideas through language and thus, I argue, corresponds with Rushdie's notion of the mechanisms that make novelty possible. Bryant defines a fluid text as "any literary work that exists in more than one version" where "the versions flow from one to another", and he stresses that "all works—because of the nature of texts and creativity—are fluid texts" (2002, 1). Since many readers and critics have resisted this truth, Bryant argues that highlighting textual fluidity should be an imperative for scholarly editors. "We cannot edit the fluidity away", he writes; "in fact, we are obliged to edit it into existence, to showcase it for readers, and to help readers pleasurably read it so that they are better equipped to comprehend its reality and to make of it what they will" (174). This exhortation, in Bryant's view, reflects the moral necessity of revealing how fluidity shapes not only literary works but also "ourselves, our lives, [and] our culture": "The fluid text crystallizes for us the fact of change, and no other factor in our lives contributes to so much fear, joy, and anxiety as change. If we can come more to grips with the fluidities of language and the writing process (elements so vital to our existence), it stands to reason that we can prepare ourselves for better understanding social change" (174). Bryant's argument provides a useful theoretical basis for understanding the dynamics of what I will describe, using his terminology, as "textual fluidity" in Rushdie. This article focuses on Rushdie's deployment of such fluidity in his shaping of his 1994 short story collection *East, West*. It analyzes selected examples of his revisions by comparing the texts of the volume's first six stories as they appear in *East, West* to their earlier published versions, and also by examining unpublished typescripts and proofs relating to *East, West* in the Salman Rushdie Papers at Emory University.<sup>2</sup> Since this archive opened in 2010, researchers have been able

2. Salman Rushdie Papers, 1947–2012, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library [MARBL], Emory University. All archival materials referenced in this article are from this collection and will be cited by box and folder numbers. Copyright © Salman Rushdie, used by permission of The Wylie Agency LLC. I wish to thank the MARBL staff for assisting me with these materials and providing me with the contact information to obtain permission to quote from them.

to study Rushdie's notes, drafts, proofs, emails, and other materials.<sup>3</sup> However, few scholars to date have drawn on the archive, and nobody to my knowledge has used it to study Rushdie's revision habits at length.<sup>4</sup> By tracing the evolution of his stories through multiple versions and considering his revisions in light of his conception for *East, West* as a whole, we learn that Rushdie employs textual fluidity as both a multivalent literary motif and an empowering compositional strategy, often in ways that function together to expand the work's interpretive possibilities and yield a deeper understanding of the fluidities not only of language but also of concepts

3. According to the abstract on the collection's EmoryFindingAids webpage, its contents consist of "writings, correspondence, photographs, audio-visual material, printed material, and [Rushdie's] personal computers" (accessed 10 August 2017, <https://findingaids.library.emory.edu/documents/rushdie1000/>). The majority of the collection's thirteen series are open to researchers, with some exceptions, i.e. all of "Series 4: Correspondence" and three additional subseries containing financial files, family papers, and family photographs are closed, as are selected portions of five other series or subseries. Of particular interest from a technological standpoint are the born-digital materials: four computers and one hard drive, which together contain the bulk of Rushdie's writings since 1992. So far, only one of these devices—Rushdie's first computer, a Macintosh Performa 5400—has been processed and made available to scholars, who can explore its contents in an "emulated environment" that approximates the look and feel of its original user interface at a workstation in the Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library's reading room.
4. Vijay Mishra is the scholar most familiar with the Salman Rushdie Papers, since he has read "the entire archive, print as well as digital, including the unpublished novels, variant texts, and everything available to a reader" (MISHRA 2014a, 1). He is also the only scholar I know of who has described and analyzed materials from the archive in published criticism. Among his studies are two articles that offer readings of complete early works by Rushdie that exist in near-fair copy states in the archive but have never been published (MISHRA 2012a and MISHRA 2017a), one article that uses the archive "to explore Rushdie's interest in a Qur'anic genesis of secrecy and its relationship to *The Satanic Verses*" (MISHRA 2016, 26), one article that offers a "narrative reconstruction" of all of Rushdie's references to Australia in the archive (MISHRA 2014a, 1), and one article that quotes a lengthy passage from the first draft of *Midnight's Children* to illustrate Rushdie's fascination with the power of numbers (MISHRA 2017b, 158). He also cites materials from the archive in MISHRA 2012b and MISHRA 2014b. However, he has not attempted to analyze Rushdie's textual revisions in detail by comparing differences in wording across multiple versions (both published and unpublished) of his works, as I aim to do here with the stories in *East, West*.

vital to identity for him and his characters, especially East, West, culture, and race.

*East, West* occupies a unique place in the Rushdie canon as his only collection of short fiction. As Rushdie explained in an interview shortly before the book came out, he does not publish many short stories because “they keep getting used up” in his capacious novels (CHAUHAN 2001, 234). However, in early 1994 while living in hiding because of the *fatwa* and struggling to finish another long novel, *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, he found himself hampered by what he describes in his memoir as “the longest [. . .] writing block of his life” (RUSHDIE 2012, 421, italics in original). His UK editor, Frances Coady, suggested that he compile “a wee book of stories to tide people over’ and that could be a way back” (RUSHDIE 2012, 422). This opportunity to craft what for him was a new kind of literary work by revitalizing a few of his old stories that had escaped being swallowed up by his novels provided the lifeline he needed. Surviving drafts of the title page and acknowledgments for *East, West* reveal that he initially envisioned the core of the book as consisting of six previously published stories, the two earliest of which, “Good Advice Is Rarer Than Rubies” and “The Free Radio”, he had written way back in 1977 and published in the “out of hours” magazine of his employer at the time, the advertising agency Ogilvy Benson & Mather Ltd, while the most recent story, “At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers”, had been written and published in 1992.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the volume was to include one new story, “The Courter”, and a short statement called “A Declaration of Independence” that he had recently written in his capacity as the first president of the International Parliament of Writers (Box 26, folder 6). However, immersing himself in revising the old stories and writing the new one unblocked his creative faculties, which soon superseded the political concerns of his “Declaration”. In the final typescript for *East, West* (Box 26, folders 8–9), the “Declaration” is gone, and the number of new stories has tripled from one to three. The resulting volume showcases literary “newness” more than Rushdie originally imagined and does so in service of a more balanced and compelling structure.

The final contents include nine stories, divided into three sections of three stories each—headed, “EAST”, “WEST”, and “EAST, WEST”—and two final pages of “Acknowledgments”. The “EAST” section contains the stories “Good Advice Is Rarer Than Rubies”, “The Free Radio”, and “The

5. See the early draft of Rushdie’s “Notes” for *East, West* in Box 26, folder 6, and also his handwritten list of publication venues for “The Free Radio” on the upper-right corner of page 1 of the typescript in Box 42, folder 7.

Prophet's Hair"; "WEST" contains "Yorick", "At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers", and "Christopher Columbus and Queen Isabella of Spain Consummate Their Relationship (*Santa Fé, AD 1492*)"; and "EAST, WEST" contains "The Harmony of the Spheres", "Chekov and Zulu", and "The Courter". The six stories in the first two sections are the ones that had appeared prior to *East, West*, while the three stories in the final section were written explicitly for the volume.<sup>6</sup> The "EAST" stories are set in Pakistan or India, the "WEST" stories in Europe, and the "EAST, WEST" stories bridge the regions. These headings prove more ironic than elucidating, however, since all of the stories, as Rudolf Beck (1998, 365) argues, work "to subvert conventional essentialist notions of East and West and, at the same time, to question whatever is set apart as sacred (and therefore inviolable) in both of these parts of the world". For instance, the first "EAST" story, "Good Advice Is Rarer Than Rubies", is set in Pakistan, but the plot revolves around the efforts of the heroine, Miss Rehana, to avoid traveling west to join her fiancé in England, thereby challenging the assumption that any bright young woman from the East would naturally desire the opportunities of the West. Also, the "WEST" depicted in the second section bears little resemblance to any Europe that actually exists or can be defined by its opposition to the East; we see this in "At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers", which takes place in a geographically unspecified post-apocalyptic future where "[e]xiles, displaced persons of all sorts, [and] even homeless tramps" (1994a, 90) have turned out to watch the bidding on Judy Garland's famous footwear from the 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz*, an experience the story satirizes as quasi-religious. In essence, then, Rushdie has created

6. For a nearly complete list of the pre-*East, West* appearances of the six previously published stories, see the Works Cited under RUSHDIE. Not listed there are the versions of "Good Advice Is Rarer Than Rubies" and "The Free Radio" published in the company magazine of Ogilvy Benson & Mather Ltd in the late 1970s. I have not been able to locate those versions; thus, while RUSHDIE 1987a and RUSHDIE 1982a are not technically the first published versions of those stories, I will treat them as such for the purposes of this study, as they were the stories' first mainstream professional appearances and also the first versions to reach a wide audience. I have listed RUSHDIE 1987b in the Works Cited for completeness, though it reprints the text of RUSHDIE 1981a, including the error of "seventh" for "eighth" noted in the next-to-last row of Plate 4 below. I have identified these pre-*East, West* versions with the aid of the archival materials cited in the previous note and also KUORTTI 1997 (which omits 1982b and 1991a, as well as the Ogilvy Benson & Mather's magazine versions of "Good Advice" and "The Free Radio").

a schema for the volume only to problematize it, signaling his project of dismantling fixed categories in favor of exploring various kinds of fluidity.<sup>7</sup> This project operates on the level of diction as well, through what Gillian Gane and Rebecca Walkowitz have separately identified as the motif of “mistakes” or “mix-ups”. Gane focuses on “The Courter”, the volume’s final story, which Rushdie based on memories of living in London in the early 1960s with his parents, sisters, and Indian nanny or “ayah” (named Mary in the story). Mary’s struggles with English pronunciation and her relationship with an Eastern European doorman whom the children call “Mixed-Up” because his name is full of “Communist consonants, all those z’s and c’s and w’s walled up together without vowels to give them breathing space” (1994a, 179) lead to numerous linguistic “errors” that actually capture deeper truths. Mary refers to an escalator that snares her sari as an “escaleater” (1994a, 186), for instance, and she calls the doorman “courter” instead of “porter” (1994a, 176), which unintentionally but accurately suggests his resemblance to a courtier of old. As a result, the narrator’s sister christens Mary “Jumble-Aya” (1994a, 181)—a “punning portmanteau name”, as Gane puts it, that underlines Mary’s affinity with Mixed-Up “not only romantically, but as akin in their confusion” since jambalaya is of course “a multi-ingredient creole dish akin to the *mélanges* and *hotch-potches* Rushdie values so highly” (52). Citing these examples and others, Gane argues that “[m]istakes and mispronunciations [. . .] not only dissipate and fracture meaning, but can generate a surplus of meaning, can even engender a new meaning and a new reality” (55). Walkowitz similarly focuses on Rushdie’s portmanteaus and “mistakes”; however, she stresses that their significance lies primarily in “criticizing the standards by which correctness is measured” because they call attention to the hidden ways in which *all* language is made out of mix-ups (144). She argues that “[t]he most important aspect of Rushdie’s mix-ups is their visibility” (139), since he “aims to represent the social and political conditions that make mix-ups hard to see” (148). While these interpretations are compelling individually, together they describe the full power of Rushdie’s method to reveal how the creation of newness, the resistance to hegemonic notions of correct

7. Rushdie’s comments on the significance of the volume’s title in a 1994 interview reinforce his theme that East and West continually flow together, in part through individuals like himself who exist somewhere in between: “I said to people when I started thinking of calling the stories *East, West* that the most important part of the title was the comma. Because it seems to me that I am that comma—or at least that I live in the comma” (REDER 2000, 163).

expression, and the acceptance of textual impurity are all fundamentally interdependent. Relating Gane's and Walkowitz's arguments to this study, I argue that Rushdie's mistakes, mix-ups, and portmanteaus celebrate the inherent fluidity of language—fluidity that too often goes unrecognized even though it is continually working to shape our reality.

In addition to making *East, West* a work *about* fluidity, Rushdie labored to make the work itself a highly fluid text by revising the six previously published stories for their appearance in a new context. His practice involved neither lengthening nor shortening the stories significantly but rather tinkering extensively with each one, using as his base texts the typescripts he had prepared for the stories' most recent prior publications.<sup>8</sup> Quantifying his revisions proves difficult because of their varied nature and because

8. These typescripts (TSs) survive in the archive for four of the six stories: "Good Advice" (dated 20 May 1987, Box 42, folder 13), "The Free Radio" (dated 11 October 1977, Box 42, folder 7), "Yorick" (dated 1 March 1982, Box 42, folder 25), and "At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers" (dated 12 November 1991, Box 41, folder 10). The archive also contains additional copies of these TSs, or TSs of different versions, for three of the stories: "Good Advice" (an original TS dated 19 August 1977 in Box 42, folder 11, and a copy of that same TS in Box 42, folder 12), "The Free Radio" (two TS copies dated 11 October 1977 that bear the original title, "All-India Radio", in Box 41, folder 9, plus one additional TS copy dated 11 October 1977 that shows "All-India Radio" crossed out and replaced by "The Free Radio" in Box 42, folder 8), and "Yorick" (two TS copies dated 1 March 1982, one incomplete in Box 42, folder 23, and one complete in Box 42, folder 24). Although no TSs survive in the archive for "The Prophet's Hair" or "Christopher Columbus and Queen Isabella of Spain", the evidence suggests that Rushdie either had TSs of those stories as well or perhaps used copies of previously printed versions as his base texts when he revised them for *East, West*. A partial early TS of the entire *East, West* volume indicates that he revised "Yorick" on "3/4/1994" (3 April 1994), so he must have had one or more of the surviving TSs for that story in his possession at that point (Box 26, folder 6). "Yorick" also seems to have been the first story he revised, since a note from his UK agent, Gillon Aitken, dated two days later ("5/4/94") and included in the folder with the TS for "At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers", indicates that Aitken enclosed copies of four stories (i.e. "At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers" plus three others), and also that Aitken's American counterpart, Andrew Wylie, would be faxing Rushdie a fifth story, "Good Advice" (Box 41, folder 10). Thus, Rushdie's agents sent him copies of five stories on 5 April or later, which, when added to the TS(s) he already had for "Yorick", accounts for all six stories. Rushdie used his Macintosh Performa 5400 to revise the stories, apparently re-keying them from the copies his agents sent and making changes as he went.



they often cluster together in ways that make it hard to determine what should count as a discrete revision. They range from the substitution of one word for another in an otherwise unrevised sentence to the thoroughgoing reworking of a sentence or passage to the deletion or addition of a word, phrase, sentence, or (rarely) entire paragraph.<sup>9</sup> However, in collating the *East, West* versions of the stories against the earlier versions, I have typically found between five and ten more or less distinct instances of revision per page of *East, West*.<sup>10</sup> Since the texts of the six stories run from pages 3 to 119 of the collection (half-titles included), this amounts to a total number of revision sites on the order of several hundred. It is the exception rather than the rule to encounter a sentence that Rushdie left completely unrevised. Bryant (2013, 209–210) distinguishes two types of revision that help to illuminate Rushdie’s method, which he calls “asymptotic” and “regenerative”. Based on the mathematical concept of a curve that approaches but never intersects with a line called an asymptote, the former “conceives of revision as bringing a text closer to an intended but unachievable wording. It tries to get the text as ‘right’ as possible”. A “regenerative” revision, in contrast, does not strive to realize an existing (if elusive and unknowable) intention but rather “generates unexpected thoughts out of the writer’s original” and thus provides “traces of [the writer’s] invention”. To illustrate the difference, consider the first sentence of the first story, “Good Advice Is Rarer Than Rubies”, which includes both an asymptotic and a regenerative revision that Rushdie made at different stages. In the first professional publication of the story, in *The New Yorker*, the sentence reads, “On the last Tuesday of the month, the dawn bus brought Miss Rehana to the

9. Given the limited scope of this study, I have noted substantive revisions only (i.e. revisions in wording) and not revisions to accidentals such as punctuation. I am aware of the limitations of this distinction, since changes in accidentals can significantly affect meaning; however, it is clear when comparing Rushdie’s typescripts with the published versions of his stories that he had less control over accidentals than substantives, and I am primarily interested in studying those aspects of his texts over which he had—or at least attempted to have—the most control.
10. The one exception is the story “Christopher Columbus and Queen Isabella of Spain Consummate Their Relationship (*Santa Fé, AD 1492*)”, which is lightly revised compared to the other stories, the *East, West* text containing fewer than five revision sites per page. Presumably this story required the least revision since it had, as Rushdie puts it in an early draft of his notes for *East, West*, “grown sideways out of the body” of *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, the novel he was writing concurrently as he assembled *East, West* (Box 26, folder 6).

gates of the British Embassy” (1987a, 26). The final author’s copy typescript for *East, West* shows that Rushdie initially revised this sentence to read, “On the last Tuesday of the month, the dawn bus brought Miss Rehana to the gates of the British Consulate” (Box 26, folder 8). The change from “Embassy” to “Consulate” is an asymptotic revision. Following Bryant’s definition, it “strives to get the text as ‘right’ as possible”, since Miss Rehana has come to see about getting a visa, and it would be the role of her nearest *consulate* to issue one (*embassies* typically deal with higher-level diplomatic matters). But Rushdie’s rethinking of the sentence did not end there. After reading all of the stories again in proof, he wrote a series of notes to himself to justify the possibility of using lines from Bob Dylan’s “I Shall Be Released” as an epigraph, and he noted with regard to Dylan’s line “I see my light come shining” that he was “suddenly struck by images of light” in several of the stories—images he had not put in as a deliberate pattern. As a result, he wrote that he wanted “to alter the first sentence of ‘Good advice’ to mention the fact that the dawn bus still has its headlights on . . .” (Box 26, folder 8). Although he did not end up using the Dylan epigraph, he *did* revise the first sentence of “Good Advice” again so that it reads in the published text of *East, West*, “On the last Tuesday of the month, the dawn bus, its headlamps still shining, brought Miss Rehana to the gates of the British Consulate” (1994a, 5). The addition of “its headlamps still shining” functions as a regenerative revision because it enacts the unexpected thought Rushdie had late in the creative process of introducing light as a unifying motif at the start of the volume and thereby exhibits “traces” of his writerly “invention”. Thus, while Rushdie uses asymptotic revision to make each individual story a more fluid text (something that happens automatically with the creation of each new version), he also uses regenerative revisions to create more fluidity between the stories within the context of *East, West* as a whole.

Rushdie made hundreds of asymptotic revisions to his stories, many of which involve changes to just a single word or short phrase. Such revisions apply to nearly every part of speech, from nouns to prepositions. Plate 1 illustrates this with three examples from each of the six stories (the wording of the first published version appears on the left and that of *East, West* on the right, with variant text printed in bold). No doubt a case could be made for the hermeneutical significance of each of these revisions. The description of Miss Rehana’s eyes as “bright” in the *East, West* version of “Good Advice Is Rarer Than Rubies” (row one), for instance, emphasizes the character’s intelligence in a way that “shiny” does not, and even the revision of “on” to “upon” in “The Prophet’s Hair” (row nine) adds to the antiquated

First Published Version	<i>East, West</i> (1994a)
Miss Rehana's eyes were large and black and <b>shiny</b> enough not to need the help of antinomy (1987a, 26)	Miss Rehana's eyes were large and black and <b>bright</b> enough not to need the help of antinomy (5)
There are women here with male <b>relatives</b> , all earning good wages (1987a, 26)	There are women here with male <b>family members</b> , all earning good wages (7)
She was a sparrow, he told her, and they were men with hooded eyes, like <b>eagles</b> (1987a, 27)	She was a sparrow, he told her, and they were men with hooded eyes, like <b>hawks</b> (9)
And at one <b>stage</b> I tried to save him from his fate (1982a, 227)	And at one <b>time</b> I tried to save him from his fate (19)
if boys ruin their lives let their <b>parents</b> worry (1982a, 228)	if boys ruin their lives let their <b>relations</b> worry (21)
I <b>scolded</b> him bitterly (1982a, 230)	I <b>reproved</b> him bitterly (26)
I should say that I am carrying no money, nor am I wearing any <b>jewels</b> ; <b>my</b> father has disowned me (1981a, 19)	I should say that I am carrying no money, nor am I wearing any <b>jewellery items</b> . <b>My</b> father has disowned me (37)
Struggling <b>wildly</b> against the newborn goblins of nostalgia (1981a, 19)	Struggling <b>hard</b> against the newborn goblins of nostalgia (40)
the young man fell back <b>on</b> his pillow and died (1981a, 20)	the young man fell back <b>upon</b> his pillow and died (55)
A noisome gale blows across the ancient vellum <b>at this point</b> (1982b, 72)	A noisome gale blows across the ancient vellum <b>hereabouts</b> (66)
count eight <b>crevices</b> through which a life may fall (1982b, 74)	count eight <b>chasms</b> through which a life may fall (69)
the young prince pours such a magical poison into Yorick's <b>ears that the fool starts seeing illusions</b> (1982b, 78)	the young prince pours such a magical poison into Yorick's <b>ear that the Fool falls into foolish Delusions</b> (78)
He does this with <b>no little</b> delicacy and taste (1992a, 248)	He does this with <b>great</b> delicacy and taste (89)
The women <b>wear</b> toreador jackets (1992a, 249)	The women <b>sport</b> toreador jackets (91)
Men and women of dubious <b>background are present—outlaws, untouchables</b> , outcasts (1992a, 249)	Men and women of dubious <b>character are present – untouchables</b> , outcasts (93)
with his lips a <b>millimetre</b> away from the great ring of her power (1991a, 80)	with his lips a <b>breath</b> away from the great ring of her power (107)
She is no stranger to <b>blandishments</b> (1991a, 82)	She is no stranger to <b>flatteries</b> (111)
The body of philosophical opinion which <b>avers</b> that life is absurd has never appealed to him (1991a, 82)	The body of philosophical opinion which <b>holds</b> that life is absurd has never appealed to him (112)

**Plate 1:** Representative examples of Rushdie's asymptotic revisions, three from each of the six stories that appeared prior to *East, West*. Variant text is printed in **bold**.

feel of a story that reads like a fable from the *1001 Nights*.<sup>11</sup> Other revisions show Rushdie's skill at sonic embellishment; the revision in "Yorick" of "the fool starts seeing illusions" to "the Fool falls into foolish Delusions" (row twelve) trades two alliterative "s" words for three alliterative "f" words, amplifies the "ool" sound in "fool" through repetition, and still preserves the "lusions" word ending that Rushdie apparently liked by revising "illusions" (no longer an appropriate object, with the Fool "fall[ing]" instead of "seeing") to "Delusions". A great many of Rushdie's revisions, however, are basically indifferent: e.g. "family members" for "relatives", "reproved" for "scolded", "chasms" for "crevices", etc. Moreover, while his revised wording can sometimes be more specific or evocative than the original ("sport" for "wear" or "breath" for "millimetre"), it can also be more generic ("holds" for "avers"). Given that Rushdie's asymptotic revisions have such varied effects, the most important thing that his rampant use of them reveals is his general compulsion to make his language *different*. Linguistic variety proves irresistible for him, whether it brings the text "closer to an intended but unachievable wording" or exists simply for its own sake. However, the sheer volume of his asymptotic revisions serves another purpose as well: it infuses his stories with additional currents of textual fluidity, increasing the likelihood of some of those currents carrying him in productive new directions. Put less abstractly, Rushdie recognizes that amassing enough small changes can lead to major regenerative effects.

We see how Rushdie's implementation of small changes on a compositional level helped him to discover and develop his point about their cumulative power on a thematic level by tracing the evolution of a key passage from the first story, "Good Advice Is Rarer Than Rubies". The story concerns a beautiful young woman named Miss Rehana who arrives by bus one morning outside a British consulate in Pakistan. There she encounters a conman named Muhammad Ali, whose usual *modus operandi* is to convince naïve women who seek visas that he has connections inside the consulate, and that, for a fee, he can ensure they get the papers they need. However, he is so enchanted by Miss Rehana that he foregoes his usual scam and offers her the one genuine British passport in his possession. He warns that, if she does not take it, the officials inside the consulate will force her to answer embarrassing personal questions to determine if her relationship with the fiancé she ostensibly wants to live with in England is genuine. After rejecting his offer, she emerges calmly from the consulate

11. I wish to thank Elspeth Healey for suggesting these interpretations.

later that day, leading Muhammad Ali (and the reader) to assume that she has obtained her visa, until she reveals in a twist that she will be staying in Pakistan after all. In the earliest extant version of the story, a typescript dated 19 August 1977, her explanation reads:

'I got all their questions wrong,' she told him, 'Now I will go back to Lahore and my job. I work in a great house. I am an ayah to three good boys. They would be sad to see me leave.' (Box 42, folder 12)

It is ambiguous here whether Miss Rehana deliberately answered the consulate men's questions wrong because she wanted to stay in Pakistan all along or failed in an honest effort to answer the questions correctly and has come to peace with her rationalization for why she is better off staying. For the story's appearance in *The New Yorker* ten years later, Rushdie lightly revised this explanation to read:

"I got all their questions wrong", she replied. "Distinguishing marks, bathroom décor, all. Now I will go back to Lahore and my job. I work in a great house, as ayah to three good boys. They would be sad to see me leave". (1987a, 28)

In this version, Rushdie's asymptotic revisions provide specific examples of the details Miss Rehana got "wrong", which allow us to infer what kinds of questions the consulate men asked her but do not clear up the ambiguity regarding her agency or motivation. That only happens in the final version of the passage in *East, West*:

'I got all their questions wrong,' she replied. 'Distinguishing marks I put on the wrong cheeks, bathroom decor I completely redecorated, all absolutely topsy-turvy, you see.'

'But what to do? How will you go?'

'Now I will go back to Lahore and my job. I work in a great house, as ayah to three good boys. They would have been sad to see me leave.'  
(1994a, 15)

This version makes it virtually indisputable that Miss Rehana wanted to stay in Pakistan all along, since she tells Muhammad Ali not simply that she got the bathroom décor "wrong" but that she "redecorated" it with "topsy-turvy" answers to the men's questions, her final "you see" stress-

ing this as a deliberate strategy.<sup>12</sup> One could argue that by making Miss Rehana's actions unambiguous, Rushdie diminishes the story's complexity; however, the revised passage now serves the more important purpose of setting up the larger theme in *East, West*, as identified by Walkowitz, that individuals can employ mix-ups to challenge "cultural axioms" such as "the East's desire for the West", as well as "assumptions about marriage, immigration, and gender" (146). More than that, the passage illustrates how textual fluidity defines our existence and how one can use that knowledge to set a particular course for oneself, since Miss Rehana preserves the life she wants by creating a new "version" of reality, comprised of many small "revisions" to the details the consulate men expect to hear. Reinforcing this idea is the fact that Rushdie's own small revisions to the passage for *The New Yorker* provided touchstones not present in the original typescript for his regenerative revision in *East, West*. His habit of "redecorating" his texts through asymptotic revision helped him arrive at the volume's major theme of the need to "redecorate" one's own textual reality in order to become empowered.

Not only did Rushdie's use of asymptotic revisions help him develop his theme about the power of small changes, but some of those revisions themselves challenge widely held notions of correctness. One of the major trends in his revisions is his replacement of forms of *said* and *told* with more descriptive verbs. These replacements occur mostly in dialogue tags, though we see them in other places, too. Rushdie made six of them in "Good Advice Is Rarer Than Rubies" when he revised the 1977 typescript for the story's 1987 appearance in *The New Yorker* (Plate 2). He then made seven more such replacements across the first three stories in *East, West* when he revised them for that collection (Plate 3). One could argue that the revised verbs add vividness or clarity, but they also flaunt a cardinal rule of "good writing" that anyone trained in English composition in Britain or the U.S. in the 1960s would surely have known. The second edition

12. One critic (SEN 2001) argues that even the *East, West* version of the story "makes it difficult to read agency into [Miss Rehana's] actions", but this argument is problematic since it ignores the redecorated bathroom passage and assumes that "the bitter smile she wears when she tells Muhammad Ali that her visa application was refused, suggests that she was not happy with the outcome or in control of the procedures that led to it" (129). In fact, her bitterness could just as easily reflect her frustration over Muhammad Ali's assumption that she would want to leave Pakistan for England like the other "Tuesday women" do (RUSHDIE 1994a, 5).

TS, August 19, 1977	<i>The New Yorker</i> (1987a)
‘Miss,’ he <b>said</b> (1)	“Miss,” he <b>began</b> (26)
‘I see,’ she <b>said</b> gravely (2)	“I see,” she <b>responded</b> gravely (26)
‘ <b>Certainly,</b> ’ he <b>said</b> , ‘All in order.’ (2)	“ <b>Tip-top,</b> ” he <b>pronounced finally</b> . “All in order.” (26)
‘Bradford, <u>England</u> ,’ he <b>said</b> mournfully (4)	“Bradford, <i>England</i> , he <b>corrected her</b> mournfully (27-28)
‘I got all their questions wrong,’ she <b>told him</b> (5)	“I got all their questions wrong,” she <b>replied</b> (28)
‘But this is tragedy,’ Muhammad Ali <b>said</b> (5)	“But this is tragedy!” Muhammad Ali <b>lamented</b> (28)

**Plate 2:** Rushdie’s first round of revisions of forms of *said* or *told* in “Good Advice Is Rarer Than Rubies” between the earliest typescript (Box 42, folder 12) and *The New Yorker* (1987a).

First Published Version	<i>East, West</i> (1994a)
Muhammad Ali <b>told</b> her (1987a, 26)	Muhammad Ali <b>urged</b> her (6)
Old fool, he <b>told</b> himself (1987a, 27)	<i>Old fool</i> , he <b>berated</b> himself (11)
Many times he <b>told</b> himself (1987a, 28)	Many times he <b>scolded</b> himself (13)
“Don’t worry,” he <b>said</b> (1982a, 1)	‘Don’t worry,’ he <b>replied</b> (25)
‘Go away, get away from me,’ I <b>told him</b> in despair (1982a, 1)	‘Go away, get away from me,’ I <b>cried out</b> in despair (26)
‘All I am willing to <b>say</b> to you, sir (1981a, 19)	‘All I am willing to <b>disclose</b> to you, sir (39)
it would be necessary, he <b>said</b> , for him to vanish (1981a, 20)	It would be necessary, he <b>whispered</b> , for him to vanish (56)

**Plate 3:** Rushdie’s revisions of forms of *said* or *told* between the first professionally published versions of his stories and *East, West* (1994a).

of Fowler’s august *Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, published in 1965 (the year Rushdie began studying at Kings College, Cambridge), states in an entry on the word *said* that “the ingenuity displayed by some writers in avoiding what they needlessly fear will bore their readers is superfluous” and quotes “a famous critic” disparaging a popular mid-twentieth-century novel for its “substitution for the simple “said” of other more pretentious verbs — so that the characters are always shrilling, barking, speculating, parrying, wailing, wheedling, or grunting whatever they have to say” (533).<sup>13</sup> Strunk and White’s similarly venerable *The Elements of Style* is even more unmerciful, declaring that writers who “load their attributives with explanatory verbs [. . .] have been told to do it by experts in the art of bad writing” (1959, 61). This sin has grown so venal in the eyes of many writers and editors that they have even invented a term for words that replace

13. The unnamed critic is Edmund Wilson, reviewing Lloyd C. Douglas’s novel *The Robe* in 1944.



“said”: “said-bookisms”).<sup>14</sup> Certainly the kinds of said-bookisms Rushdie uses would strike all but the most pedantic editor as inoffensive. Nevertheless, by repeatedly bringing them into his texts, Rushdie is violating a prescriptive rule of standardized English usage. Moreover, the fact that he so often writes “said” or “told” in the earliest versions of his stories suggests that he does not have an initial proclivity towards said-bookisms but rather systematically introduces them at later stages, indicating that he uses the revision process itself as a means of subverting hegemonic notions of correctness. Walkowitz’s argument that Rushdie is “criticizing the standards by which correctness is measured” (144) and suggesting that “it is more important to know which values correctness serves than to know which value is correct” (147) proves more accurate than she could have known, since it applies to the text of *East, West* not just on a thematic but on a compositional level. In effect, Rushdie uses revision to assert his right to be “wrong”.

That this practice affects the experience of actually reading Rushdie in print becomes clear when we see how *The Atlantic* revised his stories “The Free Radio” and “The Prophet’s Hair” in the opposite way, “correcting” several of his non-standard usages (see Plate 4; the wording of the first published version appears in the left column, the wording of *The Atlantic* in the middle, and the *East, West* wording on the right).<sup>15</sup> The fastidiousness of whoever edited the *Atlantic* texts was not entirely unhelpful; he or she

14. Several online sources credit the term “said-bookism” to the “Turkey City Lexicon”, a guide for science fiction writers that first appeared in 1988. It is defined as “[a]n artificial verb used to avoid the word ‘said’” on the website “Turkey City Lexicon – A Primer for SF Workshops”, Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers of America, accessed 10 August 2017, <https://www.sfw.org/2009/06/turkey-city-lexicon-a-primer-for-sf-workshops>.

15. I am inferring that where the texts in *The Atlantic* vary from the first published versions, Rushdie was not responsible for the changes. I make this claim because some of the changes are clearly matters of house styling (e.g. “Moslem” for “Muslim”, “Koran” for “Quran”), while others go against the trends we see elsewhere in his revisions (e.g. the revision of “told” to “said” in row three or the deletion of the Indian expression “*funtoosh*” in row seven). Moreover, *East, West* typically either reverts to the pre-*Atlantic* reading or introduces a new revision that appears to be a variation of that earlier reading. There are no records in the archive of Rushdie revising or even reading proofs for *The Atlantic*. It is possible that he did read and revise such proofs (now lost), and thus that he introduced (or at least sanctioned) the variants that exist only in the texts that appeared in *The Atlantic*, though in the absence of direct evidence this possibility seems to me unlikely.



First Published Version	<i>Atlantic</i> Version	<i>East, West</i> (1994a)
singing <b>some playback music from the</b> radio (1982a, 228)	singing <b>songs he'd heard on someone's</b> radio (1983, 75)	singing <b>some playback music from the</b> radio (20)
Showing us she <b>can</b> afford to ride in rickshaws, as if anyone <b>was</b> interested (1982a, 228)	Showing us she <b>could</b> afford to ride in rickshaws, as if anyone <b>were</b> interested (1983, 75)	Showing us she <b>can</b> afford to ride in rickshaws, as if anyone <b>was</b> interested (21)
'Come here and speak,' <b>I told her</b> (1982a, 229)	"Come here and speak," <b>I said</b> (1983, 76)	'Come here and speak,' <b>I told her</b> (23)
<b>because at this time Ramani</b> suddenly began (1982a, 230)	<b>because Ramani</b> suddenly began (1983, 76)	<b>because at this time Ramani</b> suddenly began (24)
a happiness <b>which</b> could not be explained simply (1982a, 230)	a happiness <b>that</b> could not be explained simply (1983, 76)	a happiness <b>which</b> could not be explained simply (25)
Ramani had gone voluntarily to subject himself to a humiliation <b>which</b> was being forced (1982a, 230)	Ramani had gone voluntarily to subject himself to a humiliation <b>that</b> was being forced (1983, 76)	Ramani had gone voluntarily to subject himself to a humiliation <b>which</b> was being forced (26)
the free radio scheme <b>had been funtoosh</b> for years (1982a, 231)	the free-radio scheme <b>had ended years ago</b> (1983, 76)	the free radio scheme <b>was a dead duck, long gone, long forgotten. It had been over – funtoosh! – for years</b> (26)
now <b>some playback music</b> (1982a, 231)	now <b>some music</b> (1983, 77)	now <b>some playback music</b> (27)
the old <b>Muslim</b> crook (1982a, 232)	the old <b>Moslem</b> crook (1983, 77)	the old <b>Muslim</b> crook (30)
I remember the expression <b>which came into</b> his face in the days just before he learned the truth about his radio, and the huge mad energy <b>which</b> he had poured into the act of conjuring reality (1982a, 233)	I remember the expression <b>that came into</b> his face in the days just before he learned the truth about his radio, and the huge, mad energy <b>that</b> he had poured into the act of conjuring reality (1983, 77)	I remember the expression <b>which came over</b> his face in the days just before he learned the truth about his radio, and the huge mad energy <b>which</b> he had poured into the act of conjuring reality (32)
the <b>family wished each other</b> a fulfilling day (1981a, 19)	the <b>family wished one another</b> a fulfilling day (1981b, 62)	the <b>family members wished one another</b> a fulfilling day (42)
<b>It was as though he was</b> on the point of bursting (1981a, 19)	<b>It was as though he were</b> on the point of bursting (1981b, 64)	<b>He seemed to be</b> on the point of bursting (45)
she would receive no more than the <b>seventh portion which</b> was her due under Islamic law (1981a, 19)	she would receive no more than the <b>eighth portion that</b> was her due under Islamic law (1981b, 64)	she would receive no more than the <b>eighth portion which</b> was her due under Islamic law (46)
the <b>Quran</b> (1981a, 20)	the <b>Koran</b> (1981b, 64)	the <b>Qur'an</b> (64)

**Plate 4:** Selected examples of alterations made to the *Atlantic* versions of “The Free Radio” (1983) and “The Prophet’s Hair” (1981b) following initial publication of the stories in *Firebird 1* (1982a) and *The London Review of Books* (1981a), respectively.

corrected one factual error by revising the portion of a husband's estate that his wife is due under Islamic law from a "seventh" to an "eighth" (next-to-last row). Rushdie apparently welcomed the change since he incorporated it into the version of the story that appeared in the 1989 luxury volume *Two Stories* (RUSHDIE 1989, 37) and retained it in *East, West*, though he may have caught and fixed the error independently.<sup>16</sup> But the *Atlantic* texts also differ from both the previous and subsequent versions in ways that appear more intrusive, particularly in matters of usage: e.g. revising "which" to "that" to introduce a restrictive clause on five occasions, revising "was" to "were" to indicate the subjunctive mood on two occasions, and revising "each other" to "one another" on one occasion. In one instance, the *Atlantic* deletes three words presumably deemed unnecessary: "because at this time Ramani suddenly began" becomes "because Ramani suddenly began". And, bolstering my case that Rushdie's said-bookisms challenge conventions of "proper" writing, the *Atlantic* even revises "told" to "said" in one of his dialogue tags (row three)—the most amusing change of all since we saw in Plates 2 and 3 that, as with "said", Rushdie often replaces "told" with *more* descriptive verbs, while *The Atlantic* treats "told" as *too* descriptive. Thus, anyone reading Rushdie in *The Atlantic* in the early 1980s would have encountered a writer more concerned with factual accuracy and the niceties of verbal prescriptivism than he appeared in other venues (or than he is in general). In the case of "The Free Radio" they would also have encountered a Rushdiean text stripped of Eastern expressions like "playback music" (rows one and eight) and "*funtoosh*" (row seven).

16. Although the "eighth" reading in *Two Stories* and *East, West* suggests that "seventh" was an unintended error, one cannot assume that Rushdie always wants such errors corrected, since he often includes factual errors on purpose and has sometimes accepted their presence even when he did not make them deliberately. In his essay "Errata: or, Unreliable Narration in *Midnight's Children*", he writes of one factual error that made it into the published version of *Midnight's Children* that he was originally "upset and tried to have it corrected" but that, on reconsideration, "its wrongness feels *right*". Moreover, he notes that there were times in writing that novel when he "went to some trouble to get things wrong": "Unintentional mistakes were, on being discovered, not expunged from the text but, rather, emphasized, given more prominence in the story" (RUSHDIE 1991c, 23, italics in original). Future editors of Rushdie will have to contend with this issue, much as editors of Joyce—one of Rushdie's greatest influences—must take care not to correct the intentional errors so vital to his works. For more on this phenomenon and how the editorial procedures of the Gabler critical and synoptic *Ulysses* are ideally suited to preserving Joyce's "volitional errors", see MAHAFFEY 1991.

First Published Version	<i>East, West</i> (1994a)
"I tell you I am <b>poor</b> (1987a, 26)	'I tell you I am a <b>poor potato</b> (7)
" <b>Be</b> a fool," Muhammad Ali shouted after her (1987a, 28)	' <b>So be</b> a fool,' Muhammad Ali shouted after her. 'What goes of my father's if you are?' (Meaning, what was it to him.) (12)
Miss Rehana <b>and happy</b> Muhammad Ali ate their pakoras sitting on the <b>front bumper</b> (1987a, 28)	Miss Rehana <b>and a happy</b> Muhammad Ali ate their pakoras sitting on the <b>bus's 'front mud-guard', that is, the bumper</b> (14)
the boy was an innocent, a real <b>goof</b> , you can't teach such people (1982a, 227)	the boy was an innocent, a real <b>donkey's child</b> , you can't teach such people (19)
'It is not so bad,' Ram said, ' <b>It does not stop lovemaking – forgive me, teacher sahib – or anything</b> (1982a, 230)	'It is not so bad,' Ram said, <b>meaning the nasbandi. 'It does not stop love-making or anything, excuse me, teacher sahib, for speaking of such a thing</b> (26)

**Plate 5:** Eastern words or idioms Rushdie introduced when revising “Good Advice Is Rarer Than Rubies” and “The Free Radio” for *East, West*.

Rushdie’s habit of peppering his texts with such expressions is essential to his project of blurring the boundaries between East and West; in his memoir he even uses a fluidity metaphor in describing the “real subject” of his writing as “the great matter of *how the world joined up*”, which includes “how the East flowed into the West and the West into the East” (RUSHDIE 2012, 68, italics in original). The absence of “playback music” and “*fun-toosh*” from the *Atlantic* text of “The Free Radio” is striking, then, since it works against this project of calling attention to the fluidity between East and West, and since several of Rushdie’s later revisions to his stories seek to reveal even *more* fluidity between the regions by including additional Eastern expressions and words (see Plate 5). Of particular interest in this category is how Rushdie not only adds an Eastern idiom or word (e.g. “*nasbandi*”, which means “vasectomy” in Hindi) but then translates it (or makes it intuitively translatable) for readers of British English. For instance, after Muhammad Ali in the *East, West* version of “Good Advice Is Rarer Than Rubies” shouts, “What goes of my father’s if you are?” to Miss Rehana, the text follows with the gloss “(Meaning, what was it to him.)”. And when Muhammad Ali and Miss Rehana eat their pakoras on the front exterior of the bus, the *East, West* version tells us they are sitting “on the bus’s ‘front mud-guard’, that is, the bumper”, giving first the Eastern term and then its British equivalent, whereas the *New Yorker* includes only the British term. The device of translation reinforces Rushdie’s theme of the fluidity of language and culture. Based on *The Atlantic*’s revision or removal of his *untranslated* Eastern words and idioms, however, I would speculate that experiences like Rushdie had with *The Atlantic* led him to include transla-

tions of such words and idioms in the revisions he made for *East, West* in order to preempt editorial interference. Regardless, those revisions once again show how Rushdie's commitment to textual fluidity in his writing process—piling up scores of subtle revisions to make the new versions of his stories meaningfully different—helped to enhance his theme of *East and West* as fluidly intertwined as well.

Most of my examples so far have come from stories in the “EAST” section of *East, West*, but I want to turn now to the “WEST” section and specifically to “Yorick” as the story where Rushdie celebrates textual fluidity most overtly. “Yorick” reimagines Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in the style of one of Rushdie's favorite novels, Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*. It thus extends the textual flow of both those works by revising the former through a pastiche of the latter. Its irreverent narrator claims to be a modern-day descendant of a historical Yorick on whom Shakespeare based his famous jester, by way of the parson named Yorick in *Tristram Shandy*. In Sterne's account, this parson possesses an ancient chronicle written on “strong vellum” ([1759–1767] 1997, 21) that traces his family's roots to the court of King Horwendillus, the historical figure on whom Shakespeare based his King Hamlet and whose real name is recorded in the Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus's *History of the Danes* but not in Shakespeare. This makes Rushdie's narrator a motley hybrid to say the least, a product of blurred distinctions between history and fiction, between Shakespeare and his sources, and between two major works of British literature that would seem to have little to do with each other. Such a fluid identity for his narrator underlines Rushdie's ridiculing of scholars who devote themselves to the study of textual transmission hoping to correct errors, eliminate ambiguities, or reconcile multiple versions to create a pure, definitive text. Indeed, while the narrator informs us that his own version of the Hamlet story comes from an account he has found on the same “strong vellum” as the Yorick family chronicle (1994a, 63, italics in original), he mocks the air of positivism surrounding traditional textual scholarship by noting that the document has come down to him “by processes too arcane to detain the eager reader” and by describing its saga as “a velluminous history! — which it's my present intent not merely to abbreviate, but, in addition, to explicate, annotate, hyphenate, palatinate, & permanganate—for it's a narrative that richly rewards the scholar who is competent to apply such sensitive technologies” (64). The word *velluminous* is a portmanteau, combining “vellum” (the material used to record the saga) and “voluminous” (a description of its linguistic content). As in the examples mentioned earlier of “escaleater” and “Jumble-Aya” from “The Courter”, Rushdie yokes two

seemingly unrelated words in a portmanteau to show how all language constantly and ineluctably “flows” together. Adding to the narrator’s affinity for textual fluidity is his runaway list of scholarly activities—“explicate, annotate, hyphenate, palatinate, & permanganate”—which lampoons the pedantic approaches of traditional textual scholarship while suggesting the need for an approach better attuned to the fluidity the list itself exemplifies, as it uses nothing more than rhyme to create a sense of “flow” from words that describe actual editorial procedures to ones that have no relation to editing at all.

The plot of “Yorick” is equally steeped in textual fluidity, as it draws not only on Shakespeare and Sterne but also on the twentieth-century Freudian notion of Hamlet as suffering from the Oedipus Complex. As a young boy, Prince Hamlet witnesses his drunken father having sex with his mother. When he attempts to rescue her from what he misconstrues as an attack, the king beats him. Seeking revenge, he hints to the jester Yorick that the king has been sleeping with Yorick’s wife, who, adding to the confusion, is named Ophelia but bears no relation to the woman Hamlet will one day drive mad. Yorick becomes the instrument of Hamlet’s revenge, murdering the king and then being executed by Claudius, who rules for many years before marrying the widowed Gertrude. On this point, the narrator says, “In this it’s true my history differs from Master CHACKPAW’s, and ruins at least one great soliloquy. I offer no defence, but this: that these matters are shrouded in antiquity, and there’s no certainty in them; so let the versions of the story co-exist, for there’s no need to choose” (1994a, 81). Rushdie introduced the reference to “Master CHACKPAW” when he revised the story for *East, West*. It first appears in his typescript for the volume (Box 26, folder 8), while the earliest extant version of the story, a typescript dated “1 March 1982”, reads simply “Master Shakespeare” (Box 42, folder 23), as do both of the published versions that predate *East, West* (1982b, 80; 1982c, 7). The late inclusion of so odd (and oddly specific) a word suggests that it holds special significance, but the reference has puzzled Rushdie scholars. Those who quote the passage where it appears have generally not commented on it (BAHRI 2007, 144; GUERRERO-STRACHAN and HIDALGO 2008, 77). The only attempted gloss I have found suggests that “[t]he term *Chackpaw* was no doubt inspired by the Wishbone show’s *Shakespaw*” (GANAPATHY-DORÉ 2009, 13), but this is impossible since the PBS children’s show *Wishbone* did not begin production until 1995, the year after *East, West* appeared.

I propose instead that, in keeping with Rushdie’s love of mixed-up language, the name “CHACKPAW” is another portmanteau, combining the

words *chickpea* and *jackdaw*. *Chickpea* fits in context when we recall it as the meaning of the Latin name Cicero. Harold Jenkins's edition of *Hamlet* for the *Arden Shakespeare* ([1982] 2000) lists Cicero as one of the likely sources for two of Hamlet's most famous soliloquies—the "To be or not to be" soliloquy, which may draw on Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* for its comparison of sleep to death (489), and the "How all occasions do inform against me" soliloquy that Hamlet speaks after observing Fortinbras's army, which owes a debt to Cicero's *De Officiis* (528)—as well as for the Player King's observations about fortune and friendship in the play within a play, *The Mouse-trap*, which come from Cicero's *De Amicitia* (300).<sup>17</sup> When the narrator of "Yorick" calls Shakespeare "Master CHACKPAW" right before joking that his own version of the story "ruins at least one great soliloquy", then, he is playfully reminding us that even Shakespeare based his most famous passages on works by other writers. To think of the narrator's story as "ruining" a Shakespearean soliloquy would be akin to thinking of a Shakespearean soliloquy as "ruining" Cicero. The OED defines the other part of the portmanteau, "jackdaw", as "one of the smallest of the crow family, which frequents old buildings, church towers, etc.; it is easily tamed and taught to imitate the sound of words, and is noted for its loquacity and thievish propensities".<sup>18</sup> In labeling Shakespeare a jackdaw, Rushdie may be echoing Robert Greene's famous 1592 attack on the young Bard as an "upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his 'Tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide' supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as

17. In a classic study likely behind Jenkins's note mentioning Cicero as a likely source for the "To be or not to be" soliloquy, T. W. Baldwin argues that "all the general ideas of Hamlet's speech can be, and have been, derived from the discussion of Cicero [in *Tusculan Disputations*]" (1944, ii: 606). Baldwin also argues that *Tusculan Disputations* is the book Hamlet is reading right before the famous soliloquy (606–07). Notably, Hamlet is only described as reading such a book in the so-called "bad quarto" of the play (Q1), believed to have been derived from an actor's memorial reconstruction that "corrupts" the comparatively "good" texts of the second quarto (Q2) and first folio (F). (For a full discussion of these different versions, see JENKINS [1982] 2000, 18–74.) While this may seem an obscure point, it fits with Rushdie's emphasis on how the story of Hamlet already existed in multiple versions before he adapted it, from Saxo Grammaticus to the three texts of the play attributed to Shakespeare himself. It may also explain why the name "CHACKPAW" (assuming that it refers to Shakespeare as an adapter of Cicero) appears just before the narrator implores the reader to "let the versions of the story co-exist, for there's no need to choose" (1994a, 81).

18. OED Online, s.v. "jackdaw, n.", accessed 10 August 2017.

the best of you, and, being an absolute *Johannes Factotum*, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country” (qtd. in BEVINGTON 1997, lv).<sup>19</sup> Rushdie may also be making a joke about Shakespeare’s “loquacity”, since the narrator of “Yorick” manages to cover in twenty pages what takes Shakespeare five long acts. I believe, however, that the most relevant characteristic of the jackdaw here is its “thievish propensities”. In that case, “CHACKPAW” as a portmanteau of *chickpea* and *jackdaw* literally means “Cicero thief”. Of course any pejorative connotation to *jackdaw* is ironic in this context, since the narrator is not criticizing Shakespeare for stealing but rather establishing a textual lineage in which he and Shakespeare are both inventive agents. Such a reminder that one of the greatest pieces of writing in English literature only exists because of Shakespeare’s own propensity for textual fluidity underscores the damage editors do when they try to erase that fluidity in establishing “authoritative” or “definitive” texts of his works.

Moreover, if my hypothesis is correct, then “CHACKPAW” constitutes a regenerative revision because it helped Rushdie develop a new idea he had for *East, West* not present in earlier versions of “Yorick”. Above all, the revision reflects how family names often become “corrupted” over time; the letters and sounds in “CHACKPAW” are close enough to those in “Shakespeare” to make the former a plausible verbal distortion of the latter (granting Rushdie some creative license for comic effect). The tendency of names to undergo such changes is discussed in the same passage from *Tristram Shandy* that describes the Yorick family history as preserved on “strong vellum”. Tristram expresses surprise that the name “Yorick” has not experienced any spelling changes over the centuries: “It had been exactly so spelt, without the least variation or transposition of a single letter, for I do not know how long; which is more than I would venture to say of one half of the best surnames in the kingdom; which, in a course of years, have generally undergone as many chops and changes as their owners” (21). In a pronouncement meant ironically by Sterne, Tristram laments this fluidity as “a villainous affair” that “will one day so blend and confound us all together, that no one shall be able to stand up and swear, ‘That his own great grand father was the man who did either this or that’” (21). Rushdie’s corruption of “Shakespeare” to “CHACKPAW”, however, clearly celebrates “blend[ing] and confound[ing]”, and not just by intimating that *Hamlet* steals from Cicero. The generic term *jackdaw* refers to a bird that lives mostly in the West; its range covers Europe and parts of Western Asia

19. My thanks to Christopher Morrow for this suggestion.



but extends only as far to the east as the northwestern corner of India.<sup>20</sup> The chickpea, in contrast, is primarily associated with the East; India is by far the world's largest producer of it. Thus, Rushdie's alteration of "Shakespeare" to "CHACKPAW" functions as a regenerative revision by bringing his theme of the fluidity between East and West into the story. Moreover, Rushdie amplified this theme in a subsequent revision to a sentence from the story's penultimate paragraph, which reads in both of the pre-*East, West* published versions, "But Yorick's child survives; is brought to England; and generations follow; ending (I'll now reveal) in this present humble AUTHOR" (1982b, 81; 1982c, 8). The reading of this sentence on the proofs for *East, West* (Box 26, folder 8) is substantively identical except that it omits "But", which means that Rushdie did not make any major changes to the sentence at the stage where he introduced "CHACKPAW". But after reading the story again in proof (and presumably being reminded of his prior change of "Shakespeare" to "CHACKPAW"), Rushdie revised the sentence once more to read, "Yorick's child survives, and leaves the scene of his family's tragedy; wanders the world, sowing his seed in far-off lands, from west to east and back again; and multicoloured generations follow, ending (I'll now reveal) in this present, humble AUTHOR" (1994a, 83).<sup>21</sup> Much as the revision of "Shakespeare" to "CHACKPAW" reflects how family names often get "mixed-up" over time, especially as people migrate and assimilate to new cultures, this revision reveals how the play *Hamlet* as a fluid text has produced its own virtual diaspora of "mixed-up" progeny. Thus, what began as a concern with *textual* fluidity for Rushdie expands to include racial and ethnic fluidity as well, since the "multicoloured" descendants of Shakespeare's Yorick consist not only of white Europeans like Sterne's parson Yorick but now also an Indian like Rushdie.

We have seen how Rushdie's revisions to "Yorick" and his other previously published stories document his creative deployment of textual fluidity, but I want to conclude by showing how his habit of emphasizing such fluidity through mix-ups and mistakes even helped him to turn a complication that arose with two of his new stories into a creative opportunity. The first example comes from "Chekov and Zulu", a story about two Indian

20. There is also an eastern variety called the Daurian jackdaw, but its range is limited to China, Mongolia, and eastern Siberia, making it unlikely that a native Bombayite like Rushdie would associate it with his experience of the East. See *The New World Encyclopedia Online*, s.v. "jackdaw", accessed 10 August 2017, <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Jackdaw>.

21. Evidence that Rushdie authorized this late revision can be found in a letter he prepared for the Dutch translators of *East, West* (Box 26, folder 15).



diplomats in England who have been friends since their schoolboy days, when they were nicknamed after the navigator and helmsman from the original *Star Trek* series. When Chekov explains to a woman at a dinner party how he and Zulu got the nicknames, she thinks of the song “Love and Marriage” made famous by Frank Sinatra in the mid-1950s. Here is the passage from the proofs of *East, West*, reflecting how Rushdie originally intended it to appear:

‘After a while we got a couple of cheap paperback novelisations [of *Star Trek* episodes] and passed them round as if they were naughty books like *Lady C* or some such. Lots of us tried the names on for size but only two of them stuck; probably because they seemed to go together, and the two of us got on pretty well, even though he was younger. A lovely boy. So just like Laurel and Hardy we were Chekov and Zulu.’

‘Love and marriage,’ said the woman.

‘Beg pardon?’

‘You know,’ she said. ‘Go together like a horse and carriage. I love old songs. La-la-la-something-brother, You can’t have one without the other.’

‘Yes, now I do recall,’ said Chekov. (Box 26, folder 11)

Rushdie frequently alludes to popular songs, so he likely included the lines from “Love and Marriage” when he drafted the story without giving it a second thought. However, a letter from his editor at Jonathan Cape, Pascal Cariss, reveals that as the publication deadline for *East, West* neared, Rushdie was compelled not to reproduce the actual lyrics.<sup>22</sup> He responded by replacing the last part of the passage (after “Beg pardon?”) with the following text:

‘You know,’ she said. ‘Go together like is it milk and porridge. Or a car and garage, that’s right. I love old songs. La-la-la-something-brother, you can’t have fun without I think it’s your mother.’

‘Yes, now I do recall,’ said Chekov. (1994a, 165)<sup>23</sup>

22. In this and the following example, it is unclear whether Rushdie was denied the right to reprint the lyrics outright; the letter alludes only to Rushdie’s revising of the stories to circumvent the permissions managers entirely (letter from Pascal Cariss to Salman Rushdie, 26 July 1994, Box 26, folder 12).

23. A copy of Rushdie’s fax of this revision to Pascal Cariss, dated 18 July 1994, is in the archive (Box 26, folder 11).

In the proofs version, the woman only slightly misremembers the lyrics to “Love and Marriage”, but in the revised version, she completely rewrites them. In essence, Rushdie responded to the permissions manager’s attempt to impede the “flow” of his writing by introducing even more fluidity into his text. The resulting passage bolsters the volume’s “mix-ups” motif once again and makes the scene a good deal funnier in the process.

A similar but more consequential example occurs in “The Courter”, a story filled with references to early-1960s chart-toppers that evoke the London of Rushdie’s teenage years. At one point the angst-filled Indian narrator finds solace in Sam Cooke’s 1963 soul hit “Another Saturday Night”. Here is the passage as it appears in the proofs:

On the radio, people were always singing about the joys of being sixteen years old. I wondered where they were, all those boys and girls of my age having the time of their lives. Were they driving around America in Studebaker convertibles? They certainly weren’t in my neighbourhood. *Another Saturday night and I don’t know nobody . . .* London, W8 was Sam Cooke country that summer.

*How I wish I had someone to talk to,  
I’m in an awful way.* (Box 26, folder 11, italics in original)

In this version, Rushdie essentially repeats his strategy from “Good Advice” of translating his own references by alluding to the Cooke song and then quoting from it to gloss the allusion. However, as with “Love and Marriage” in “Chekov and Zulu”, he had to revise the passage shortly before *East, West* went to press to get around a permissions manager’s obstructions. He instructed Cariss to replace the text from “*Another Saturday night and I don’t know nobody*” to the end with the following:

London, W8 was Sam Cooke country that summer. *Another Saturday night . . .* There might be a mop-top love-song stuck at Number One, but I was down with lonely Sam in the lower depths of the charts, how-I-wishing I had someone &c., and generally feeling in a pretty goddamn dreadful way. (Box 26, folder 11)<sup>24</sup>

24. I quote the text of this revision from Rushdie’s fax to his editor rather than from 1994a because the latter contains an error that Rushdie did not intend or welcome. While 1994a prints Rushdie’s revised text, it accidentally leaves the italicized lines from “Another Saturday Night” at the end of the passage rather than deleting them (1994a, 197). In his cover letter to Sally Riley (a colleague

Instead of reproducing complete lines from the Cooke song and setting them apart at the end of the passage, Rushdie now has his narrator incorporate fragments of those lines into his own words and riff on them. Thus, like Miss Rehana in “Good Advice”, Rushdie responded to a seemingly disempowering situation by using a mix-up to reassert his control. Ironically, the permissions manager may have done Rushdie a favor, since the revised passage now enhances the volume’s overriding theme and adds humor for readers who recognize Cooke’s “I’m in an awful way” in the narrator’s description of “feeling in a pretty goddamn dreadful way”. Moreover, as with the change to “Yorick” describing the jester’s “multicoloured” descendants, the revised passage uses textual fluidity to amplify the volume’s parallel interest in racial and cultural fluidity. The Indian narrator, who has spent much of the story wishing to assimilate into mainstream British culture, emphatically does *not* identify here with the “mop-top love-song[s]” which exemplified that culture in the early ’60s but with a song by the African-American Sam Cooke, a minority in his culture just as the narrator is in England. Fittingly, the narrator’s belief that he and Cooke share a similar experience of alienation (“I was down with lonely Sam in the lower depths of the charts”) extends the range of fluidity linking East and West not just from India to England but across the Atlantic to the United States and back again.

Textual fluidity may be inevitable, but Rushdie shows throughout *East, West* that we can only benefit from embracing its inevitability. He repeatedly turns fluidity to his advantage by exploring it as a literary theme while practicing it through his revisions, countering those who would limit his freedom of expression. Given its obvious value to him, one might expect *East, West* to highlight the fluidity of his six previously published stories by revealing all of their prior versions. The book does conclude with an “Acknowledgements” page which gestures in that direction:

Six of these stories have been published previously, although in somewhat different form. They first appeared in the following places:

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of his agent Gillon Aitken) for a series of notes to aid the Dutch translators of *East, West*, Rushdie mentions that Cape was embarrassed by the mistake and expresses his desire that it not appear in any translations (see the fax from Salman Rushdie to Sally Riley, 12 September 1994, Box 26, folder 15). In any event, the error was caught early enough that the passage appears correctly in the first American edition (1994b, 197).

‘Good Advice Is Rarer Than Rubies’ in the *New Yorker*; ‘The Free Radio’ in *Atlantic Monthly*; ‘The Prophet’s Hair’ in *London Review of Books*; ‘Yorick’ in *Encounter*; ‘At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers’ in *Granta*; and ‘Christopher Columbus and Queen Isabella of Spain’ in the *New Yorker*. (1994a, 215)

However, Rushdie does not disclose the full truth here. As the list of texts by Rushdie in my Works Cited makes clear, in all six cases the story either *first* appeared someplace other than the magazine Rushdie mentions or it appeared in multiple additional versions as well that Rushdie does not identify. He also omits dates of composition and publication, obscuring that he wrote four of the six stories in the late 1970s and early 1980s. To be fair, if he meant to keep this a secret, he left it an open secret, disclosing in a 1994 interview that “[t]he first stories in the book were produced at about the time he was also writing *Midnight’s Children*” (REDER 2000, 163). In response to pressure to produce meaningful work in defiance of the *fatwa*, however, he may have decided that he wanted most readers to perceive the volume’s material as newer than it was—an understandable impulse, but one that seems not to trust that the currents of textual fluidity would make the stories sufficiently “new” on their own (or, for that matter, with the aid of his revisions). I have been able to identify many of the previous versions because the archive includes two early drafts of what would become the “Acknowledgements” page, both of which provide more detail about the stories’ various appearances and, in a couple of cases, even anecdotes about their genesis (Box 26, folder 6 and Box 26, folder 14). In an uncharacteristic attempt to limit the visibility of textual fluidity in his works, Rushdie considered divulging information about many of the different versions of his stories in *East, West* but chose in the end not to do so. Whatever his reasons, his decision underlines how truly difficult it is to embrace textual fluidity in all ways or at all times. However, Rushdie effectively corrected this “mistake” with the opening of his archive in 2010. For the fluidity of *East, West* does not end with the volume’s publication in 1994; it continues through the archive, which “revises” Rushdie’s earlier obfuscation of the stories’ multiple versions and thereby stands as his ultimate act of commitment to ensuring the perpetual flow of his texts.

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