

# Roaming, Wandering, Deviation and Error

*Dialogues Between Paradise Lost  
and the Novels of Salman Rushdie*

*Mayra Helena Alves Olalquiaga*

# Resumo de Roaming, Wandering, Deviation and Error: Dialogues Between Paradise Lost and the Novels of Salman Rushdie

This book proposes a reading of John Milton's epic *Paradise Lost* in relation to four novels by the contemporary novelist Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, *Fury* and *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*.

In such a reading, terms such as influence and inheritance will, inevitably, come up. Rather than bypass them, the book refines such terms in order to meet some of the challenges posed by contemporary critical theory in the field of comparative studies.

In this more nuanced comparative reading of these texts, which looks beyond a linear paradigm, Jacques Derrida's term *destinerrance* is taken up as a means for thinking how the work of this successor (Rushdie) dialogues with Milton, conferring on the epic an elusive kind of afterlife.

*Destinerrance* will be taken here to signal an ongoing process of re-signification of texts that does away with the notions of adhesion or similarity to an original, central point. In the case of Milton and his successor, the fictional work of Salman Rushdie will be seen as constituting sites in which collaboration and contestation in relation to the epic are simultaneously and continually staged.

Rushdie can, then, be seen to interweave Miltonic images of Eden, of the fall and a Satanic discourse of transgression to write territories and characters constituted in the crossings of domains of difference, territories in which colonial past and contemporary cultural formations and power structures are continually questioned and negotiated.

In this way, his work enacts a re-signifying of Milton's text, mediating, in these deviations, the way it reaches us today.

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