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**Freedom in Suffering & Freedom of Suffering**  
**---The Case of Japanese Translator of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses***  
**Hitoshi IGARASHI (1947-1991) in Memoriam**

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Let me take the case of Salman Rushdie and his controversial novel, *Satanic Verses* as the case contains relevant messages in terms of "freedom and suffering." After the publication of the novel, the author was accused of blasphemy against Islam and "sentenced to death" by the late Ayatullâh Khomeinî in 1989. This condemnation stirred up controversy between the opposing parties in a debate on the relationship between religion and literature. My task today is not to give a retrospective view of the "Satanic Affaire" to use the term by Malise Ruthven, but to evoke a Japanese who was involved, or more precisely voluntarily engaged himself in the frontal collision between Islamic indignation at what was thought to be a religious sacrilege and Western claim to universal freedom of expression. IGARASHI Hitoshi, the translator into Japanese of the *Satanic Verses*, was stabbed to death at the age of 44, on the Tsukuba University campus, 37 miles northeast of Tokyo, and his body was found near the staircase out of his office on the morning of July 12, 1991. 14 years have already passed since his killing, and the issue is almost completely forgotten. Yet the perpetrator is still at large, and the case remains lacking any clue to its solution.

My intention here is to shed a new light on the Rushdie affaire from a Japanese perspective. The investigation into the case of the assassinated Japanese translator would add another fundamental dimension to the problem of suffering which the frontal confrontation of religion and literature may engender at any moment. I would argue that the Japanese translator searched for a freedom in the suffering of a literary work and tried to legitimize the freedom to suffer as an essential aspect constituting the mystical conviction of the Islamic religious practice to which he passionately hoped to devote himself.

### 1. Individuality and Suffering

Let me begin by a brief introductory remark on the choice of the subject. I deliberately take up such individual names as Salman Rushdie or Igarashi Hitoshi. But why am I entitled to do so? We talk about these two individuals as if it were our privilege to manipulate their names. Yet we should ask at first: by what kind of legitimacy are we authorized or entitled to pick up these names? In the Japanese high-school history textbooks and study manuals, students are asked to learn no less than 6,000 individual names by heart (for "Japanese history" and "world history" respectively). Teachers take these individual names for granted and ask the students to memorize them as if it were a matter of course, without questioning why and how these names have been previously selected. These distinguished individuals listed in educational materials were selected over and above others who have been excluded and eliminated from the possibility of being remembered in a nation's collective (& compulsory) memory. Furthermore, it is also true that our common knowledge of literature or religion often depends on the sacrifice of the silenced voices of those who were erased from the list.

Any written history inevitably conceals unwritten histories and forecloses the latter from mortgage. Indeed the fact of exclusion and repression of the voiceless is erased from the given voices, contributing to efface any trace of elimination itself. Here lies a double operation. Firstly, history consists of producing, for better or worse, the fissure between what is described and what is not, or more precisely between what is authorized to survive and what is condemned to oblivion. Secondly, history veils the fissure itself as if such intentional elimination had not been conducted. While arbitrary choosing *de facto* some privileged individuals as memorable and worth being memorized, history pretends *de juri* that the elimination of the excluded was not arbitrary but justifiable. History (or an authorized version of a collective memory imposed upon a nation

through the educational system) is by nature an act of violence inasmuch as it pretends to be infallible and neutral in its deliberate exclusion of what is not necessarily worthless. If the arbitrary choosing is regarded as an act of violence, constituting a “crime,” any historical description is by definition a “criminal act.”

You are allowed to say anything, but you are not capable of saying everything. This logical limit shows our doomed incompleteness. The extent of our knowledge only gives evidence to our ignorance which spreads beyond the limit of our knowledge. Being a mortal creature, and lacking in omnipresence and deprived of omnipotence, we have to be satisfied with our limitedness. Limited in temporal existence, we are jailed in history and our original sin consists in our inevitable engagement to history. Still this imprisonment in history is not our misfortune but rather the honor and privilege of being human and our dignity as historical beings stems from the responsibility we assume in choosing –arbitrarily-- our own limited and incomplete history. To choose a name in this condition is no less “criminal” than to fail to choose it, insofar as it commits a violent act by arbitrarily privileging someone (Itô Hirobumi, considered a great Prime Minister in Japan, but from a Korean perspective a criminal) to the detriment of other possible names (An Chung-gun, Korean “national hero” baptized Thomas). Still, it is only at the cost of this “criminal” act of selection and through our arbitrary engagement in history that we can detect the fissure in history. Having said this, let me now “criminally” choose such proper nouns as Saluman Rushdie or Hitoshi Igarashi, so as to take my historical responsibility. As we shall see, the “criminality” of selection, as we have defined here, will turn out to be a key of the Rushdie affaire.

## 2 To know Salman Rushdie or not to Know

To declare proudly that “I know Salman Rushdie” is no more significant than to confess that “I don’t know who Salman Rushdie is.” You may have learnt many names by heart to prepare for entrance examinations and you may have forgotten them after having entered university. If you remember or forget, it does not matter, any more than the case of Rushdie. What’s the difference between these names and the name S.R. to us here? Still it is quite a different matter for us to be aware or unaware that there are places on earth, where to pretend to know Him and His *Satanic Verses* has serious ramifications. To declare that you know *The Satanic Verses* (i.e. to confess that you have read it through) may constitute a criminal act in certain societies. To know or not know this fact may not necessarily insignificant for your own life and death. Although the ban of the novel was removed officially in Iran, it would be of some interest to know that in the 90s, you might have been publicly criticized and accused of sacrilege in many Islamic countries, just for confessing to have read the novel. “Have you read it? Gash, you shouldn’t have read it” was a reaction I got, when I was in Tunisia in 1994. Apparently the person who reproached me had not read the novel. And how was it possible for him to pass such a categorical judgment of denial on a literary work he does not know, because he had refused to read it? Here, the choice of trying to know a story (if not history) and its story-teller was judged to be criminal. What was wrong, then, with Salman Rushdie’s fictional story?

A brief overview of the history (of the story) is in need here. *The Satanic Verses* (1988), by Salman Rushdie, a British national, born in Mumbai (1947-) was met by protests and auto-da-fe in Bolton (Dec.2 1988) and Bradford (Jan.14. 1989) and other cities in England by Islamic immigrants. Immediately after its publication, it was also banned in India for political concern over religious susceptibilities. Shortly before the forthcoming publication of the novel in the United States, due on Feb.15, a massive rioting mob tried to assault the U.S. embassy in Islamabad on Feb.11, which eventually resulted in the pronouncement of a *fatwa* by Âyattulâh Khomeinî (1901-90) on Feb.14. Though widely described in the West as “sentence to death,” the *fatwa* was in reality a legal ruling issued in response to a question. Yet it recommended “all zealous Muslims to execute quickly” those committed to the publication of the novel, which Âyattulâh found “insulting the faith.” After Khomeini’s edict, a 6 million dollars reward for Rushdie’s head was offered, because he was judged a “shameless renegade (*mortard*).” In London, the novelist and his wife Marianne Wiggins were immediately taken into protective custody.

Khomeini’s intervention shortly before the novel’s publication in the U.S. resulted in an immediate escalation of the crisis. 12 E.U. foreign ministers published a communiqué unanimously and unequivocally condemning the *fatwa* as an “incitement of murder” that violated “the most elementary principles that governs relations among sovereign states.” Western institutions, both public and private, appealed for the protection of human rights and freedom of expression. American Pen Club, in particular, accused Iran of “international terrorism” and most of the Western states, except for Canada, supported the publication of Rushdie’s novel.

These Western reactions were perceived from Teheran as the “signs of newly conspired Western total arrogance and sacrilege toward the Islam Republic of Iran” (Âyathullâh Montazeri, Feb.25, 1989).

While the Japanese press observed this frontal collision of incompatible values without explicitly taking position in the debate, the publication of the first volume of the Japanese translation of the *Satanic Verses* came to the agenda on Jan. 16, 1990. This provoked protest by the Islamic Association of Pakistanis in Japan on Jan.11, and Jeanni Palma, Italian promoter of the publication was publicly threatened and attacked at the Foreign Press Club conference at Yûrakuchô, in downtown Tokyo on Jan. 13. Faced with this situation, both the Japan’s Publishers Association and the Japan Pen Club refrained from positively supporting the publication, despite the request made by their Western headquarters. This lack of decision making suggests their unusual hesitation. At the death of Âyatullâh Khomeinî on June 3, 1990, Ali Hashemi Rafsanjani, then President of the Iranian Parliament, declared that the withdrawal of the *fatwa* was unconceivable. Still the emotional excitement seemed to have gradually been appeased and the controversy was thought to have lost its tension, when the assassination of Hitoshi Igarashi, Japanese translator of *The Satanic Verses* occurred on July 11, 1991.

### 3 The Revelation of the Rushdie Affair

Rushdie was condemned of religious sacrilege by many Muslim authorities and believers while he was regarded by many Western opinionates as a symbol of freedom in expression and his novel was identified with the final fortress of Western secular democracy (as opposed to theocracy). The American Pen Club was especially outspoken as it insisted upon the publication of the novel at any cost, as if by not doing so, democracy would otherwise be lost once and for all. The Western insistence on freedom of expression was, in turn, interpreted as malicious provocation and damage done to the Islamic belief.

Rushdie’s double identity accelerated the aggravation. From the Islamic *Um’ma* viewpoint, Rushdie as an ex-Moslem apostate or renegade could be legitimately “purged” by a *fatwa*, which could be enforced beyond the border of any nation-state. In contrast, the supporters of Western international law asserted that under its legal system, it found such a “purge” to be unacceptable violation of human rights. In the same token, Rushdie’s novel’s “evilness” (if it were “evil” at all) would not justify massive assassinations by Moslem fundamentalists, who believes in Khomeinî’s authority, but it is nonetheless true, that the freedom and relative safety Rushdie enjoyed in England caused many “innocent casualties” in India an Pakistan, even if they were victims of political abuse or manipulations. It would also be a short-cut argument to declare (as did many American news media) that Rushdie was total innocence by the fact the he was “sentenced to death” by Emâm Khomeinî, ruler of the “evil empire.” In turn, Khomeinî’s authority, as he searched for in the Iran Islamic revolution, did not permit him to keep silence in front of the riots provoked, or manipulated, in protest to, or under the pretext of, Rushdie’s novel. Furthermore, some Islamists saw that the Western freedom of expression was nothing but the result of the corruption and the degradation of its secular society as it had cast off sacredness. This in turn was countered by Western secular observers to conclude that the ideal of the holy Islam was no more than a religious fanaticism lacking in tolerance.

The real achievement of the Rushdie affaire, if not that of the Rushdie’s novel resides in its revelation of such contradictions of different layers inscribed in Rushdie’s own destiny in the so-called post-modern borderless world. There is indeed a deep-rooted vicious circle between restricting freedom by reason of religious sacrilege and encouraging sacrilege for the sake of freedom. Entangled in this dilemma, *The Satanic Verses* ceased to be a literary work and was reduced to an icon of propaganda for “freedom of expression,” as Teheran suspected with some relevance. The novel was no more than “empty symbols: symbols that at the same time are the prisoners of a Western liberal conscience and hostages to an Islamic fundamentalist orthodoxy,” as Homi Bhabha declared (*New Statesman*, March 1989). “Freedom of expression has become a fetish,” and Rushdie is brought “into the position of enforced martyrdom,” observed John Ezard (*Guardian*, March 7, 1989). Rushdie was “punished” precisely for his (un-fortunate) merit of revealing the incompatible confrontation of values which had remained concealed for so long. As an incarnation of border-crossing multiple identities, he was exposed (“irradiated” as he wrote in “Out of the Whale”) to the danger he revealed himself, a danger which had taken root in his own uprooted and alienated existence.

### 4 The Choice of Hitoshi Igarashi

What was then the intention of the Japanese translator who dared to put his nose into this intricate

case. According to the post-face to his translation, he was searching for taking a third alternative as an Islamic scholar, and locating himself between the frontal collision of Western and Islamic worldviews. “Isn’t it our task as Japanese to intervene into the affaire, when the Western and Islamic worlds find themselves in a deadlock, so as to clarify the points at issue and to “internationalize” the affaire?” If the “internationalization” of the Suez Canal was a bad case, the “internationalization” of this kind must be a good one.” The publication of a reliable Japanese translation would serve as a necessary touchstone to establish, as Igarashi believed with some megalomaniac assumption, “a mutual respect between Emâm Khomeinî and Mr. Rushdie, which would hopefully bring the deadlock to an end” (*Eureka*, Nov. 1989, p.148).

Contrary to the Western view, as well as in opposition to Islamic presumption, Igarashi’s intention did not reside in taking part in the Western political dogma of “freedom of expression.” On the contrary, Igarashi shared a fundamental disagreement with the *Declaration of Human Rights* in 1948 with Islamic thinkers and statesmen who criticized or refused to ratify it. While the *Declaration* states that “all human beings are born equal”, it must be modified to read that “all human beings *should* be born equal,” said Igarashi, given that human slavery and inequality still subsist on earth. Moreover, he added, it is arrogant, from the Islamic point of view, to declare such right without paying due respect to its source, God Almighty.

As far as I know, no other person in defense of Rushdie’s novel so openly criticized the Western Cause of human rights as Igarashi did. Yet, logically speaking, his criticism of the Western cause did not necessarily strengthen nor justify his defense of the novelist against Islamic accusations. Non the less, Igarashi tried to refute Islamic condemnation against Rushdie. In this respect, he seems to appear as the defender of the notion of modern Western literature which had established itself as the achieved liberation from the religious scripture. Yet Igarashi’s defense has its particularity, because it attempts at rehabilitating the novelist from the interior of an Islamic point of view. The only question is that the relevance of his philological judgment was paradoxically guaranteed by his lack of social competence in Islamic world, as he remained outsider of the believers’ *Um’ma* community.

Igarashi saw in the *Satanic Verses* not a malicious fictional parody of the *Qur’ân* (as the condemnation maintained), but a spiritual record of a frustrated exile. In his love and hatred –balanced between the home-land he rejected and the unfamiliar Old Empire where he is now confined—“Rushdie composed a sort of reversal of E.M. Foster’s *Passage to India*.” Not only a fiction, as Rushdie’s own defense reasons, but “his novel represents one of the dimensions of Islam and the novel finds its place at the extreme limit of the sphere of English Literature,” (*Islamic Radicalism*, 1990: 6,20,56).

Here Igarashi did not explicate the “Islamic dimension” in question. Yet his books like *Ecriture du mysticisme* (1989) provides us with the key. Being a student of Greek philosophy, Igarashi certainly had in mind the expulsion of poets from the republic by Plato. Likewise, it is a common destiny of prophets to be rejected from their home. Rushdie’s novel, beginning with the fall of “Gibril” from the airplane, metaphorically subscribes to the fall of the Arch-angel Gabriel, followed by the story of a soul in forced exile incarcerated in a corrupted Western city (London). Feti Benslama, Tunisian psychiatrist, detects here a parallel with the trials the Prophet Muhammad had to undergo during his *hejrae*. The writer, Abdelwahab Meddeb, also a Tunisian, for his part, also finds here a similarity with Suhurwardî’s *Imprisonment in the West* which he experienced in Kairouan and locates Saluman Rushdie at the extreme end of the lineage of Islamic mystics stemming from Bastâmî and Hallâjî.

In the same token, Igarashi seems to detect affinities between Salman Rushdie’s deracinated existence and a famous elegy by Rûmî, the *Song of the Reed*. The mystical poet listens to the reed singing the sorrows of its deracinated vagabondage. So long as it could stay on the reed field where it grew, it could not sing. To become a musical instrument, it must be cut and taken away. But the music it now plays is the song of the pain it experienced. The poet shares with the reed the sorrows of parting, the suffering of his existence. Every human being is nothing but a reed (Pascal), deracinated from its “ground.” Its “presence” bears witness to an “absence,” like a flute which has lost its beloved player. Although Igarashi never mentioned this elegy, in discussing Salman Rushdie, the resonance between the two seems undeniable. We can detect here Igarashi’s hidden sympathy to the suffering of the novelist, as an exiled expatriate writer.

##### 5. Intellectual Neg.-Entropy and Negative Capability

In translating *The Satanic Verses*, Igarashi confessed that “an intellectual should not think about the ultimate consequence of one’s work. I for my part, translated it as I thought that the work is valuable as a novel,” At first

glance, this seems arbitrary and irresponsible, but a deeper reading shows this statement to be, and should be recognized as, a clear manifest of the Japanese translator's personal conviction. And when framed within our initial question of intellectual responsibility, he was clearly ready to assume his responsibility through his "criminal" act of "choosing" Salman Rushdie.

"Under violently shaky circumstances, at the center of turmoil, a man exposing himself to harsh criticism, or even risking his own life, breaks through the crisis with intelligence. This responsibility makes of him a 'particular point,' in its geometrical sense of the word. The Islamic history and heritage is a complex composed of locus of these particular points" (Igarashi, 1989a: 278-79). Here is a passage from Igarashi's "Iranian Requiem." Igarashi is not referring to Salman Rushdie but he is addressing here his personal homage he thought he should pay to the memory of the late Âyatullâh Khomeinî. Igarashi also reminds us that the "charge (amâna)" in Arabic is derived from "belief" (imân). Igarashi did not conceal his sympathy to the Middle-Eastern "readiness" to one's destiny. "The final judgment being entrusted with God, a calm resignation, which is inseparable from resolution and readiness, shows a way of assuming one's own responsibility, where one's own perdition is previously calculated and input" (1991:164).

Recognizing in this attitude a mechanism of "intellectual neg-entropy," to use a physical metaphor as a student in natural science, Igarashi related it with a term coined by a famous English Romantic poet, John Keats. Indeed it was the "negative capability" or "a resolution of assuming negative matters and taking charge of it" according to Igarashi's reinterpretation, which seems to have prompted him to the translation of the apparently anti-Islamic and controversial novel. To accept the sufferings and to sustain the violent energy which the novel manifests---Such was the intellectual task Igarashi voluntarily assumed as an Islamic scholar, at the risk of becoming the victim of it. In this sense Igarashi was fully aware of his "crime" of arbitrarily choosing the name of Salman Rushdie and his *Satanic Verses* in token of his deliberate involvement in the affaire.

## 6. Literature and Crime

"One of the side effects of the mass media," Umberto Eco observed in relation with the Rushdie affaire, "is that they bring fiction to people who've never read a novel before, and who don't share in the fictional agreement, the suspension of disbelief." "There were probably," he added, "no more than 50.000 people in any country who belonged to the category of novel-readers" (*Observer*, Oct. 1, 1989). I am not quite sure of the statistics Umberto Eco mobilized without giving any evidence. And yet, as for the lack of familiarity with the terms of the "fictional agreement," Umberto Eco's observation seems to be fully confirmed. In secularized "modern" Western societies, a piece of literature cannot constitute any blasphemy or defamation to the honor of a person so far as the piece belongs to the category of a fiction. Still the Rushdie affair brought to the fore the fact that this "fictional agreement" was far from being acceptable for many Muslim populations. At the beginning of this essay, we have pointed out a potential "criminality" in the act of choosing arbitrarily a proper noun at the cost of others. The question now is to ask the reason why evoking proper nouns of *Qur'ân*, like "Aïsha" or "Mahound" was regarded as a literally criminal act in the case of Rushdie affaire.

In his remarkable essay, *La Fiction troublante: De l'origine en partage* (1994), Feti Benslama raises a fundamental question about the relationship between fiction and reality. The "fictional agreement," to use Umberto Eco's terminology, tolerates a fiction because it is nothing but a fiction. Despite its claim of privileging literature as an inviolable human right, this acceptance of literature as a fiction minimizes in reality the latent and "criminal" power inherent in literature. In fact, privileging literature as a symbol of freedom of expression reduces a piece of literature into a propaganda machine of a certain ideology for the purpose of dogmatic struggle. Defending literature from political and religious "abuse" amounts to an admission that literature is innocuous and harmless, thereby undermining its potential dimension.

To the contrary, those people, who, including the illiterate, had refused to read the novel, did provoke riots (even if the riots had been provoked by political manipulations). This fact reveals the formidable power which a fiction is capable of exercising on the social reality. In front of this plain reality, a question like whether Rushdie was criminal or not; or his novel blasphemous or harmless loses its validity. It is rather the categorical refusal of reading *The Satanic Verses*, and the anger it provoked among many believers that must be taken seriously. Feti Benslama recognizes in this formidable "real effect" (effet de réel) the truth that fiction is capable of endangering even the life of the author himself. Fiction here reveals itself as refusing to be segregated from outer realities and violates the protected belt of "fictional agreement." The fact that Rushdie's

novel could constitute a real “crime” testifies to the initial “criminality” of literature.

In modern era, however, literature seems to have lost its dangerous power of mobilizing people directly for political or religious action. At the cost of obtaining its freedom of expression, literature seems to have been confined in the realm of fiction, thereby losing its potential power of endangering the society as well as its author. To put it another way, it may be said that, literature was dwarfed and segregated from the realm of religion and confined in an artificial playground to harmlessly enjoy the previously given freedom. In exchange to the permission that you are allowed to write whatever you want so far as you respect the “fictional agreement,” you are now satisfied with a fictional “freedom” which is guaranteed only within the zone of literature. This separation of literature from religion is a definition of modernity in Western societies.

What was revealed, then, through the Rushdie affaire was not so much the shame of the Islam in its degradation as the corruption of Western societies. It is in a society, where literature can no longer constitute any scandal or crime, that the awful power originally possessed by the literature has been shamelessly overlooked and lost sight of. In this sense, the blasphemy Rushdie was blamed for, cannot be regarded as a disgrace Islam should be ashamed of, but rather, the “crime” he committed participates to the Islamic glory. It is to this that Rushdie is deeply inscribed.

## 7. Origin and Sacrilege

The origin of Islam is a kind of “origination” through which God’s utterance was transmitted to human beings. It was thanks to the arbitrary but merciful “choice” made by God of an Arab, named Muhammad that human beings could have access to the *Qur’ân*. The “criminality” of the God Almighty, who committed himself (limitless, by definition) in history (which is inevitably limited in time and space) theologically guarantees the sacred uniqueness of the Holy Scripture, dictated to the Prophet.

According to Benslama, the “criminality” of Salman Rushdie resides in the fact that by retracing the original prophecy in a negative image, *The Satanic Verses* induced people to awake their suspicion about the “fictitiousness” of the origin, and this was by definition a sacrilege. In this essay, we have chosen Igarashi. Igarashi chose Rushdie, and Rushdie had chosen Muhammad as a model of his fiction. But it was not Muhammad who chose God, for it was God who chose Muhammad as his beloved prophet. If Muhammad had “chosen” God, it would have been a supreme Crime of sacrilege, since the *Qur’ân* would then have lost its claim to sacred authority as the Holy Scripture. Here lies the ultimate fissure human beings are not allowed to overpass. And Rushdie’s “criminality” consisted of breaking the taboo by transgressing this impassable limit separating the human realm from that of God. The “criminality” of choosing, as we have defined it at the beginning, as an act of assuming deliberately inevitable arbitrariness now turns out to be directly touching upon the original “sin,” a notion lacking in Islam. According to Jewish tradition, it is committed by daring to nominate what “should not be named” by anyone, for it would reduce a limitless entity into limited existence, a “choice” strictly reserved to the God All-mighty. Is it not a desecration and profanation in etymological definition to reduce what is timeless and limitless into a limited being confined in a certain time and in a defined space? This sacrifice constitutes sacrilege. And the sacrilege demands sacrifice for compensation.

In a sense Hitoshi Igarashi was chosen by God as a privileged sacrifice for the compensation of the sacrilege made by the *Satanic Verses*. And it would underestimate our Japanese translator if we overlook the fact that Hitoshi Igarashi was fully conscious of the whole structure, i.e., the “criminality” of violating the sacredness of the prophecy as we have just outlined. Indeed *Structure of Prophecy* was the title of the book he was planning to write, when he was assassinated. Igarashi was saying: “Etymologically, criticism stems from *krînô*, an act of choosing. To choose the best at the risk of one’s own life and under one’s own responsibility was what Odysseus did before his long voyage. The criticism is a critical act in the crisis.”(1983:4; 1984:176). Evidently, to have chosen Salman Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses* in full awareness of the *Structure of Prophecy* in *Qur’ân* was a “critical act in crisis” for Igarashi and he claimed his own critical responsibility in his choosing of a “criminal novel”. Critical responsibility is the synonym of the “criminality” we defined.

“The history shows from the Ages of prophets and philosophers that the important task of the intellectuals was to perceive the crisis and give warning to it. To know the crisis seems to be one of the essential characteristics of knowledge. But history also shows in many cases, that such intellectuals risked and lost their lives because of their knowledge” (1984:4; 1991:158-8). His readiness of assuming responsibility was also a manifestation of his “negative capability.” Thus, Igarashi searched for a freedom in the suffering of a literary work and tried to legitimize the freedom of suffering as an essential aspect constituting the core of the

Islamic prophecy.

Guided by his own mystical conviction of Islamic religious practice to which he passionately hoped to devote himself, Hitoshi Igarashi chose Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*. In so doing, the Japanese translator seems to have occupied a legitimately "singular position" at the margin of the "geometric locus of the Islamic mystical thought," where the philosophers searched for the trace of divinity in their own sufferings as a proof of, and in token of, their separation from God. As the *Song of the Reed* sings:

"Every one who is left far from his Source  
Wishes back the time when he was united with IT."

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