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Reflection of Violent World Order in *Shalimar the Clown*

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Reflection of Violent World Order in *Shalimar the Clown*

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Approval Letter

This thesis submitted to the Central Department of English Tribhuvan University, by Yub Raj Paudyal, entitled “Reflection of Violent World Order in *Shalimar the Clown*” has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

Salman Rushdie's latest novel *Shalimar the Clown* (2005) is about the world badly shaken by terrorism and violence born of personal and communal animosity. The novel includes references ranging from the Second World War and the Nazi atrocity upon the French Jews to the rise of American military power and political interest in the world, to the destruction of the Himalayan state of Kashmir after the Indian independence of 1947 which gave birth to two nation states of India and Pakistan.

At the personal level, the novel is about love, vows and broken vows, revenge, hope and despair. The novelistic characters are portrayed in their nobility as well as meanness: Maximilian Ophuls, the flying Jew and French resistance hero, himself turns a predator and seduces Boonyi the dancer thereby devastating her life; Shalimar Noman the clown becomes a calculating and cold blooded murderer.

At the societal level, the peaceful and harmonious state of predominantly Muslim Kashmir is beset by religious violence. Many Kashmiris lose their life as the Pakistan-supported Muslim fanatics infiltrate Kashmir and wreck havoc upon the Hindu villagers, and the counter terrorist action of the Indian army in return do the same. Kashmir, the heaven of earth is finally devastated forever.

This parable is applicable to the plight of the modern world which is very similar to war torn Kashmir. *Shalimar the Clown* in this light can be read and interpreted as a precautionary tale about the predicament of humanity in this planet.

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1. Introduction

Salman Rushdie, himself a one-time victim of religious intolerance, depicts a world which is rich in violence and murder born of communal and religious hatred. His writings, as a result, inescapably evolve from and revolve around the issues of religion, fundamentalism, intolerance, and the needs to create a politically democratic and culturally hybrid and, multicultural world. In particular, his novel *Shalimar the Clown* (2005) is lavishly interspersed with details of religious tussles, communal hatred, and fundamentalist activities. References to the Nazi atrocities on the Jews during and previous to the World War II, terrorist onsets on Western metropolises, and the more-than-a-half -century-long Indo-Pak conflict in Kashmir make the novel an engaging reading of the plight of the present day world in its personal, political and cultural dimensions. *Shalimar the Clown* presents the picture of a turbulent world rife with fundamentalist attitudes and terrorist activities born thereof.

As it has been emblematic of Rushdie's writing to defy any sort of extremism and intolerance, the novel *Shalimar the Clown* too is concerned with depicting a world where individual and community lives are unsettled by intolerant and extremist elements. Intolerance of differences has always been at the heart of the heart of conflicts and violence in human history. The putative blame that the western world casts upon Islam as an intolerant, warlike religion may or may not be true, but given the prevalence of bloody borders Islam has with the rest, specially the west, and one is compelled to wonder whether the charge is not totally an unfounded one. Salman Rushdie, though Muslim by birth, stands apart as a vehement critic of the fundamentalism reportedly associated with Islam and so much objected to by the west. In *Shalimar the Clown* Rushdie once again turns to Islam and its fabled bigotry as exemplified in the character of Shalimar Noman who knives Maximillan Ophuls,

former American ambassador to India and now the head of US antiterrorist department. The clown who used to entertain people is forced to commit the crime of murder not at all on political or religious grounds but totally on very personal and emotional reasons that is the great lover and enticer of women had charmed and defiled Boonyi, the clown's wife.

Thus, portraying the fact that the murder was prompted more by the seductive activities by American ambassador rather than by the willful murderous instinct of the clown, Rushdie is making a far-reaching political suggestion. The desire of the west, of America particularly, to play with the destiny and sentiment of the eastern people is responsible in many instances in bringing about conflicts between the west and the east.

1.1 Political Dimension of Rushdie's Works:

As he argued in his essay the "Outside the Whale" which parodies George Orwell's essay "Inside the Whale", that the writers are at a continual conflict with the politicians who are given to present the public with a falsified version of history. Effectively, the writers cannot and should not remain aloof from the affairs of the world they dwell in. Orwell, on the contrary had surprisingly concluded that the writers are, metaphorically speaking, inside the whale. That is to say, they should not be directly involved in politics. True art, according to him, has nothing to do with politics and politicians and that "a writer does well to keep out of politics" (94). However, Rushdie radically disagrees with any such reclusive theories of which the very title speaks volume. There are no safe corners in the modern world, Rushdie writes with a tinge of humour:

We live in a world without hiding places; the missiles have made sure of that. However much we may wish to return to the womb, we cannot

be unborn. So we are left with a fairly straightforward choice. Either we agree to delude ourselves, to lose ourselves in the fantasy of the great fish, for which a second metaphor is that of Pangloss's garden; or we can do what all human beings do instinctively when they realize that that the womb has been lost for ever - that is, we can make the very devil of a racket where Orwell wished quietism, let there be rowdyism . (99)

Therefore, it is not surprising to find politics almost always drawn into Rushdian literature. This said it is also important to note that in "In Good Faith," another essay from the same collection, Rushdie speaks of the novelist's right to write as s/he pleases. "A book is a version of the world. If you do not like it, ignore it; or offer your own version" (412). The researcher is of the opinion that Rushdie always links poetics with politics.

There is a connection between the many antics Rushdie exhibits as regards his relationship with Islam, politics, and the west. Besides being a phenomenally gifted writer of fiction and criticism, Rushdie is also a political novelist, an early veteran of the current clash between Islam and the west. His special relation with Islam, the east and his residence in the western metropolis, has made him a public figure who is constantly sought after by the media to comment on the political development or the so-called terrorist crises. On a more artistic plane too, he is asked to comment on the elusive connections between the art of the novel and the art of the orator or demagogue, and the rhetoric of the western power houses.

It seems that Rushdie really believes novels have a social responsibility that they make many things happen. But he has to appear to be convinced of the distance between the art world and the real world, if only for the sake of his own freedom.

Otherwise, the intolerant forces and fundamentalist elements would take issues claiming his novels have blasphemed their faith. But this dual instance has created confusion both for his admirers and his detractors. His defensiveness of art as a free domain is a symptom of a confusion that mars his reputation as a critical writer and thinker.

Regardless of the proliferation of news reports, or even because of it, the novel has a role to play in enlarging our awareness of suffering and its causes. Specially, in providing a counterbalancing account of the activities of the political structures, Rushdian literature has a commendable status. Descriptions of violence and atrocity are one of Rushdie's strengths as a novelist. Few people in the west understood what Indira Gandhi's state of emergency was like until Rushdie brought it to life in *Midnight's Children* (1981); and in *Shame* (1983). The epithet attributed to litterateurs as seers is attested to by what Rushdie has written about the many possible ways terrorists of one kind or another threaten the world today. We do need novelists to imagine such things for us if we are to understand the consequences of terror and its violent repression by the state. Long before anyone thought novelists should change because nineteen young men hijacked aeroplanes and crashed them into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and a field in Pennsylvania, Rushdie was imagining what, in an essay in *Step Across This Line*, he calls "the unimaginable" (31). He has always been aware of terrorism and never shied away from incorporating it into a plot. The hijacking and suicidal destruction of an airliner is part of the comic set piece that launches *The Satanic Verses* (1988). In *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995), he blows up a Bombay version of the World Trade Center in order to bring poetic justice to the global capitalist and mob boss, Abraham Zogoiby:

Tower workers started spilling madly into the street. Sixty seconds later, however, the great atrium at the top of Cashondeliveri Tower burst like a firework in the sky and a rain of glass knives began to fall, stabbing the running workers through the neck, the back, the thigh, spearing their dreams, their loves, their hope. And after the glass knives, further monsoon rains. Many workers had been trapped in the tower by the blast. Lifts were inoperative, stairwells had collapsed, there were fires and clouds of ravenous black smoke. There were those who despaired, who exploded from the windows and tumbled to their deaths. (86)

With the exception of the Pachigam action, almost all the violence in this very violent novel comes to us as a *déjà vu*: his novels may not recount actual acts of violence, but they do give vivid accounts of violence that are not unlike the ones menacing the world today.

1.2 The Text: *Shalimar the Clown*:

In this gripping international tale of love and revenge, and the ancient and modern conflicts from which they spring, a murder looks at first like a political assassination, but turns out to be passionately personal. As depicted in the novel, the desire of the west to flirt with the conviction of the Muslim people on the one hand, and the tendency of the Muslims to take deadly offence and action at the slightest provocation on the other, has caused much trouble in the present day world.

As is the case in all Rushdie's fictions, the political conflicts with which he is primarily concerned are played out micro-cosmically in the lives of his central characters. In this instance, Western interest in Kashmir is ciphered by the European-born, Jewish-American Ambassador to Kashmir, Maximilian Ophuls, who in his

younger days fought in the resistance against the Nazis, but who latterly has become a secret negotiator for American interests around the globe. His involvement in Kashmir is registered through his impact upon the life of Boonyi, a dancer girl, whom he seduces, impregnates and abandons, and the eponymous Shalimar, her husband, who, embittered by the loss of his wife, becomes involved in guerrilla conflict. Having trained in Afghanistan using weapons that Ophuls has himself provided when the US was covertly arming Islamic terrorists after the Russian invasion in 1979, Shalimar becomes an assassin in Europe and the US, and finally murders Ophuls on the doorstep of his daughter's apartment block. The murder has its roots in Ophuls' seduction of Boonyi, and their subsequent relationship – during which he gluts her with goods and cosmetics before abandoning her out of hand when he loses interest in her—can clearly be read as an allegory of the west's relationship with the east, especially with Islam. In particular, this is the American stance with Islam. America's power seduces, its affections imprison, its commodities corrupt, and it abandons once it has taken what it wants. Boonyi is thus a product of America's love for the world, and when she speaks, she speaks in the voice of Kashmir. "I am your handiwork made flesh" (3), she tells Ophuls:

You took beauty and created hideousness [. . .] Look at me. I am the meaning of your deeds. I am the meaning of your so-called love, your destructive, selfish, wanton love. Look at me. Your love looks just like hatred [. . .] I was honest and you turned me into your lie. This is not me. This is not me. This is you. (3)

A moment later Rushdie removes the moral high-ground from Boonyi by having her revert to "another, older line of attack": "I should have known better than to lie with a Jew", she further says, "The Jews are our enemy and I should have

known” (205). Even this, however, is part of Rushdie’s argument, for here it becomes apparent that the very thing that Ophuls set out to prevent - that is, racial and religious hatred - has become part of what his machinations have created.

The novel has a wide ranging historical perspective and sense. By dwelling on the atrocities of fascism, Rushdie’s novel asserts the need to recognize the honourable, even utopian intentions behind the post-war allied efforts to impose a global consensus. Nazi atrocities, as Ophuls argues in conversation with the historian Gaston Zeller, demanded the creation of a new world order. Simultaneously, however, the novel also asserts the need to recognize that those initially honourable intentions have gone sour, or at least been kidnapped and corrupted by forces more pragmatic and cynical. Hence Max Ophuls, hero of the wartime resistance, whose parents have died in concentration camps, and who started his political career as an idealist and optimist, finds himself, at the height of the Cold War, defending the American idea of a free world by manipulating religious factionalism in unstable regions, and engaging in covert, strategic arms deals with the Taliban and al-Qaeda. Ambassador Max Ophuls, the narrator observes dryly, “these days were supporting terror activities while calling himself an ambassador for counterterrorism” (272).

The transformation of Ophuls from a liberator with unquestionable moral justification into an agent of a new imperial power which, in its turn, presides over the same kind of moral atrocity that he once fought against, is registered most uncomfortably, when he finds himself, suddenly, playing the same kind of role once played by those he despised. He undergoes a conflict himself: “But I’m not a Nazi, he thought. I’m the American ambassador, the guy in the white hat. I’m for God’s sake one of the Jews who lived. She swung her hips for him and he thought, and I’m also a married man. She swung her hips again and he ceased to think” (141).

Rushdie is not here claiming that American neo-Imperial activities are identical to the activities of the Nazis in the Second World War though an unsympathetic reading might seek to interpret this episode thus. More subtly, Rushdie is arguing that the US lacks the malignant and programmatic intent of the fascists, it nevertheless, in the name of self-interest, allows, even encourages, things to happen, that are not dissimilar to the things that the Nazis made happen by more direct means. It also tends to look the other way, to willfully forget what it does with its power, and so is surprised when it finds the rest of the world treating it in the way victims treat an oppressor. Whilst such indirection allows it to maintain the illusion that it is “the guy in the white hat”, Rushdie implies, the stance is clearly a hollow one, because the US, whether it likes it or not, is now sitting in the seat of power (205).

Shalimar the Clown may be one of Rushdie’s most carnivalesque of titles, but it is his least carnivalesque novel. It features a village full of circus performers and it uses the naming and renaming of characters to emphasize the liminality of identity—though more often than not, people fail to remake themselves by the names they select, and discover that names are made for them by circumstance. The novel also features its share of magic–realist whimsies: the man who can hear colours, the preacher who is made of iron, the giant marmot-like treasure-hunting ants, and the telepaths who can read each other’s minds. *Shalimar*, however, lacks the essential levity, the exuberant comedy, that is a crucial feature of the carnivalesque novel, and that has characterized many of Rushdie’s works to date. This is, no doubt, partly a result of Rushdie’s subject matter: genocidal massacres and the annihilation of a way of life. But Rushdie has treated bleak subject matter before, and has always found room for humour.

That said, if there is one redeeming element in Shalimar, it resides in the next generation, as was the case in *Midnight's Children*. Kashmir itself may have been annihilated, but the seduction of Kashmir by America has produced a bastard child – India Ophuls also known as Kashmira Noman—a hybrid being, who lives in America and who loves her American father, but who is also in the process of discovering who her father really is, what he has done, and who her mother was. Global politics may be such that old Kashmir no longer exists, Kashmira's story tells us, but globalization has also generated new combinations, new ethnicities, that exist in complex relationships with the power systems that have produced them, and in which the possibility of new forms of political equilibrium reside—neither fully sympathetic to the US, nor in the arms of absolutist militants.

Shalimar the Clown gives us a vivid, if not always realistic, picture of Kashmir. At first it appears as a kind of Cockaigne; Hindus and Muslims live in harmony, a tolerant tribalism ensures the marriage of the young lovers, Muslim Shalimar and beautiful Boonyi, the daughter of a Hindu pundit. When destructive, anti-social desires for sex, power and food arise, they are mediated by a ritual folk theatre and the elaborately managed banquets of "Thirty-Six-Courses-Minimum" (104). All this is undone by the twin forces of nationalism and religious fundamentalism. As usual in Rushdie's novels, these forces are not the enemies of enlightenment as much as they are the enemies of freedom, and that means they are the enemies of the natural. Having shown us the first Kashmir, Rushdie must also destroy it. And when he writes about the destruction of Shalimar's native village of Pachigam in a reprisal action by the Indian Army, the sloppiness that characterizes the rest of the novel disappears into contained, channelled prose:

Who lit that fire? Who burned that orchard? Who shot those brothers?
 Who laughed their whole lives long? Who killed the sarpanch? Who
 broke his hands? Who broke his arms? Who broke his ancient neck?
 Who shackled those men? Who made those men disappear? [. . .] Who
 smashed that house? Who smashed that house? Who smashed that
 house? (308)

The cause of all the troubles in the life of Shalimar and Boonyi is a Jew, one from the race which has been a perennial adversary of the Muslims. Max Ophuls is aristocratic, impeccably mannered, with a weakness for beautiful women, and he is also a former American ambassador to India who helped arm the Taliban; before that he was an economist and one of the architects of the Bretton Woods agreement, and before that, a member of the French Resistance.

1.3 Critics' Views on *Shalimar the Clown*:

It is really amazing that even within so short a period since its publication in 2005, *Shalimar the Clown* has received more critical acclaim than any other novels produced around the same period. Some of the pertinent and important criticisms on this novel are worthy to encompass in this research paper.

Critic, Jason Cawley accentuates on the cautionary theme of the novel that if the western power centers go on flirting with and hurting the sentiments of the people of the less fortunate part of the world, they will be jeopardized. To quote his words:

Shalimar the Clown is a powerful parable about the willing and unwilling subversion of multiculturalism. And for those readers who even in this post-September-eleventh continue to cling to American narcissism, the parable grows more urgently pointed: Ophuls and Boonyi conceive a daughter, who is taken away at birth and in due

time becomes a beautiful, troubled, privileged ignoramus in Los Angeles. About Shalimar the clown, her mother's husband, she doesn't have a clue. Is that her fault? Is it our fault that we never paid much attention to the rest of the world? But one day, without any warning, two planes smashed into the Twin Towers, and now (wake up and run!) Shalimar the clown has arrived in Los Angeles. (Cawley)

Ginny Dougary in his essay “The Incredible Lightness of Salman” defends the novel as an art work that is also a lamentation on the loss of a harmonious and peaceful world. He writes:

Shalimar the Clown is not a novel about terrorism. Rather, it is a story of trampled love and innocence, a central personal murder and institutionalized murder on a wider scale, which takes us from modern-day California, to wartime France, dropping off in England and always circling back – in some of the most direct and moving passages Rushdie has ever written – to the wilful destruction of the Eden which was Kashmir. (Dougary)

Thus, Cawley and Dougary emphasize the central concern of the novel, which is the threat by terrorism to world peace. The real life happenings today force every one of us to give a serious thought to this issue: none knows who is going to be blown and by whom and why and when and where and how.

Eric Spanberg, the chief book critic in *Christian Science Monitor* writes:

Evoking a novella by Gabriel Garcia Márquez or a movie by Quentin Tarantino or a tragedy, say, by Shakespeare, *Shalimar the Clown* is a chronicle of an assassination foretold. [. . .] Rushdie defies gravity and dispatches his characters on journeys leading up to the

assassination, leading away from the assassination, entertaining and dazzling, but all the while guiding us on an examination of this precarious high wire we find ourselves walking in the 21st century.

[. . .] Rushdie's greatest novel since *The Satanic Verses*. (Spanberg)

The New York Times book reviewer Michiko Kakutani focuses on Rushdie's politico-cultural determination. Rushdie, as she writes loses sight of the more important issue trying to shed light on politico-cultural issues:

Shalimar the Clown is hobbled by Mr. Rushdie's determination to graft huge political and cultural issues onto flimsy soap opera plot... a narrative strategy that not only overwhelms his characters' stories but also trivializes the larger issues the author is trying to address. [. . .]

(An) ambitious but ham-handed novel. (Kakutani)

John Freeman reads the novel in terms of its relevance since it focuses on the plight of Kashmir and also throws light upon the world we live in. To quote him:

When all is said and done, *Shalimar the Clown* [. . .] is a timely novel that tells us something about Kashmir, a distant valley that has been thrown into the limelight for the wrong reasons. It is also an important book about the world we all live and die in. (Freeman)

Critics Lee Siegel also underlines the novel for its true depiction of the state of affair of Kashmir and the world.

It circumnavigates the globe and the last half of the 20th century like a hyperactive satellite, but Salman Rushdie's rich and restless new novel, *Shalimar the Clown*, has an ominous stillness at its center. [The novel] is a grand tour of recent world history led by a honey-tongued polymath. It's also a passionate love letter to beleaguered Kashmir [. . .]

.] and, like Kashmir; it is a multifarious, patchwork world where realist characters and events live harmoniously among fantastical ones, ancient eastern fables alongside modern western logics. (Siegel)

Ron Charles of The Washington Post again focuses on the political relevance of the novel:

Shalimar the Clown seems to have allowed Rushdie the time and space to sublimate his terrors into a story of deep humanity and unsettling insight. [. . .] Yes, Rushdie has written an intensely political novel, infused with recent events, but its emotional scope reaches so far beyond our current crisis and its vision into the vagaries of the heart is so perceptive that one can imagine *Shalimar the Clown* being read long after this age of sacred terror has faded into history. (Charles)

Thus the critics and scholars studied above commend the novel for its successful blend of the political and violent with the comic and artistic. My own view is that Rushdie's novel is a sort of premonition about a world which is going to be a dangerous place to live in owing to the power arrogance of the western power centers and the retaliatory actions of the Islamic world through the unjustifiable means of violence. The problem lies not with Islam and Muslim people but with the forces that want to cash any strife for their own profit. And the instigator is the greatest stakeholder in the world politics that is the nation of America, as represented by Max Ophuls in the novel.

This thesis is divided into four chapters which will again be divided into sub topics. The first chapter states the hypothesis of the thesis and gives general background information on the writer, his works and the political significance of his writing. The second chapter is dedicated to surveying the critical tools which will be

used in studying the text. Particularly, a brief discussion about fundamentalism and its alleged affinity with Islam, the Western aggression on other cultures, especially Islam, and the resultant conflict will be discussed. The third chapter analyses the text *Shalimar the Clown* and shows that the novel is really about the problems created by the aggressive and retaliatory activities of human beings. The concluding chapter concludes the thesis with the assertion that the hypothesis was supported by the reading of the text and, therefore, was correct.

2. Analysis of Tools

2.1 Multiculturalism as an Antidote to Fundamentalism:

In a world rife with religious intolerance and sectarian politics, the only way to cope with this divisive force is to educate people about the inevitability of difference and its importance in making the world a mosaic of people and cultures. Rushdie, a Bombayte Muslim by birth who later was educated in the western metropolis, has freed himself from the parochialism, as he so proudly declares in the essay “The Location of Brazil”, about the shackles of nationalism and the manacles of patriotism. He goes so far as to suggest that for any would-be democrat migration or crossing the frontier should be made a compulsory training. These declarations make us clear that why there is so much public concern over Rushdian literature: he writes not only to entertain himself and others, nor only to express his private agonies; but also he writes to provoke people, to awaken them up from their lethargy regarding the happenings in the world.

This chapter deals with the issue of fundamentalism and its relation with Islam, multiculturalism, and Rushdie’s position as an exiled writer. For this purpose, references to conceptual tools such as postmodernism, postcolonialism, and hybridity also are included and discussed.

2.2 Rushdie’s Antifundamentalist Worldview:

Born and brought up in an Indian metropolis and educated in England, Rushdie had the benefit of a liberal family and social circle. As a result, he was able to free himself from all religious fears and practices and could speak blasphemously against Islam, the religion into which he was born. But this free world view has created trouble in his life; he is seen by the Muslims as a traitor who has reneged on Islam and has taken to hurting and humiliating its followers as if he were a paid agent

of western Christendom. Of course, none would have any problem with Rushdie's non-believer's stance in his writing. But the problem is that he writes about Islam in a way quite unacceptable and enraging to its followers. This issue has created a serious issue as to whether Rushdie has lost faith on any religion and has become an atheist, or he is merely exposing Islam to undue scrutiny since he already knows its tender points. Therefore, while talking about his liberal outlook one should not make the mistake of hailing his remarks on Islam as made by one who is unbiased, free and logical. Rushdie might be venting some of his personal and unjustifiable wrath, in the form of literature, against Islam. In this context let us cite what Asaf Hussain a scholar on Islam, and also an intelligent authority on Rushdie's problem with Islam, has to say. Here he is talking about the blatant way in which Rushdie depicts the honourable personages in Islam. Rushdie makes no attempt to disguise the names of [the] great personalities of Islam, yet he uses language of abuse that shows utter disrespect for them - on the same page the poet Baal calls them a "bunch of riff-raff", "goons" and "f**king clowns" (363). This is one of the many references made in the novel that causes hurt to Muslims. Figures that command deep respect in the hearts of Muslims, who are mentioned time and again in canonical Islamic texts, such as the books of Hadith (Such as the works of Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, Ibn Majah etc.), are ridiculed. Salman the Persian is later on depicted as a scribe recording the revelations of the Koran as they are dictated by the Prophet, yet he changes and adds to the revelations without the Prophet (peace be upon him) noticing. He therefore loses faith in Islam, and works against it. In a conversation with Baal he states that "the closer you are to the conjurer, the easier to spot the trick" (363), and that the verses of the Koran were "revelations of convenience" (365), the Prophet would lay down the law and the "angel would confirm afterwards" (366). Therefore "sodomy

and the missionary position were approved by the archangel, whereas the forbidden positions included all those in which the female was on top" (364). These latter comments are totally false and again attempt to ridicule the revelations, yet Rushdie includes them within the framework of his narrative - in his insinuations of sexual deviancy we can see the exact similarities between him and anti-Islamic writers of the past. The portrayal of Salman the Persian also deviates from fact, in reality Salman was not a scribe, and he stayed faithful to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to his death. A question therefore beckons; why does Rushdie choose to portray Salman the Persian in this way? It is believed the answer to this question is that Salman Rushdie uses Salman the Persian in a form of metafiction, a method he extensively uses in *Shame*, another of his novels. Salman the Persian becomes the voice of Salman Rushdie. The irony of the statement made by Mahound, "Your blasphemy, Salman, can't be forgiven. Did you think I wouldn't work it out? To set your words against the words of God" (374), has often been quoted, yet the statement also illustrates a serious point. Rushdie's narrative of the birth of a world religion does set itself up against the true version, and to me this statement demonstrates that Rushdie is well aware of the blasphemy of his text. Similarly, at another point of the novel it is stated that, "What finally finished Salman with Mahound: the question of the women; and of the Satanic verses" (366). Hussain concludes his commentary with the following observation:

To me, the Salman of this statement is not only Salman the Persian but also Salman Rushdie. Through the character Rushdie gives himself license to express the struggle with Islam he experienced - the faults he personally finds in it are voiced through Salman the Persian. We therefore find that much is said through the character Salman. (378)

As it is the right of Rushdie to offend, one could argue, it is the right of the believers to be offended by the blasphemy in his novels. What is the freedom to expression without the freedom to offend? Rushdie asks. But does one need to offend to express oneself? And why cannot Rushdie let Islam alone? Or, why does he not dare to write blasphemously about Christianity? These are some of the questions which compel one to doubt Rushdie's intention was entirely honest while he was writing about Islam, all the while knowing how troubling it would all be for the ones with faith on the prophet.

2.3 Islam, the Infidels, and Rushdie:

Islam, as Samuel P. Huntington writes, is a warrior faith as is Christianity. Both are assured of their status as the only true religion and believe without the least degree of compunction that it is their right to converse other into their sect since proselytizing is attested to by the words of God who has given the right to every believer to take care of the soul of the legion of the infidels who could be true followers if told the truth about the scheme of the Providence. As Samuel Huntington proposes "Islam is an absolutist faith", he lists out "militarism, indigestibility and proximity to non-Muslim groups" as the explanation for the conflict propensity ingrained in the Muslim world (264). May be this tenet has largely shaped the mentality of the followers of these religions to do their best to convert the lot of non-Muslims and non-Christians into the true faith. If we look at the confidence and assurance with which the two sects are converting people to them, we realize this must be the psychological factor. Otherwise, using violence in religious matter is not at all religious and moral in any event.

Particularly, Islam—may be owing to its embattled position as the religion of the now militarily weak portion of people who were once the conquistador of nearly

the entire world—has had recourse to violence in its dominated relation particularly to Christianity backed up by the power centers of the west, the militarily much powerful countries.

Islamic fundamentalism can be understood as a “diverse political and social movement in Muslim countries of North Africa, the Middle West, and South Asia” (Encarta), they have their goal to establish the national government based on the principles and values of Islam. Although these movements all seek to restore social justice based on Islamic law, they differ in the form of government they seek and in how strictly they believe the government should interpret the law of Muslim.

For many people in the west, the term Islamic fundamentalism evokes “images of hostage crises, embassies under siege, hijackings, and suicide bombers” (Encarta). But these images hardly present a comprehensive picture, for Islam as a way of life of over a billion inhabitants of the globe is not all about aggression, intolerance, and invasion; it is a whole-hearted submission to the will of god in good faith. The ranks of Islamic enthusiasts who are so indiscriminately labeled fundamentalists by the west include Muslims who provide much-needed services to the poor through Islamic schools, medical clinics, social welfare agencies, and other institutions. While some “Islamic militants try to reach their goals through violence, the majority of Islamic activists work through political parties within the electoral process” (Teverson). At the fringes are those like Saudi-born millionaire Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda network that engage in a global war of terrorism. And the interesting thing to note is that “they were raised, trained and strengthened by the western powers, specially by the USA to counter-balance the communist influence in Afghanistan and in other Muslim countries” (Encarta).

The reassertion of Islam and Islamic values in Muslim politics and society

over the past few decades is often referred to in the West as the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. However, the word “fundamentalism, which originated in Christianity” can be misleading when it is used to describe Islam or Muslim countries (Hornby 501). The conservative monarchy of Saudi Arabia, the radical socialist state of Libya, and clerically governed Iran have all been described as fundamentalist, but this description fails to take into account vast differences in their governments and policies. Political analysts prefer to use the expressions political Islam or Islamism when discussing Islam’s many-faceted roles in current social and political movements.

Like Judaism and Christianity, Islam originated in the Middle East. Adherents of all three religions are considered to be the children of Abraham. Muslims believe that God, whom they call Allah, sent his revelation first to Moses through the Hebrew scriptures, the Torah, then to Jesus through the New Testament of the Christian Bible, and finally to Muhammad through the Islamic scriptures, the Koran. Islam is based on the Koran and the example of the prophet Muhammad. “Islam’s involvement with politics dates back to its beginnings with the founding of a community-state by Muhammad in the 7th century AD” (Doren 19). Under the political leadership of Muhammad and his successors, known as caliphs, “Islam expanded from its point of origin in what is now Saudi Arabia into Islamic empires and cultures that extend across North Africa, through the Middle East, and into Asia and Europe. Today, Islam claims more than 1.2 billion followers, more than any religion except Christianity” (Encarta).

Islam has exercised considerable political and social influence throughout its history. Early rulers in the Middle East and elsewhere claimed legitimacy for their authority in the name of Islam, and Islamic teachings gave structure to almost every

facet of society. But these early Muslim states and empires were not theocratic — governments ruled by or subject to religious authority.

The causes of Islam's resurgence vary by country and region, but there are several common threads. Among these is a widespread feeling of failure and loss of self-esteem in many Muslim societies. Most Middle Eastern and North African countries achieved independence from colonial rule by the mid-20th century, but the expectations that accompanied independence were shattered by failed political systems and economies and the negative effects of modernization. Overcrowded cities with insufficient social support systems, high unemployment rates, government corruption, and a growing gap between rich and poor characterized many of the newly independent Muslim nations.

The Islamic revival has affected both the private and public lives of Muslims. Many Muslims have recommitted themselves to Islam's basic tenets by attending mosque, fasting, wearing Islamic dress, emphasizing family values, and abstaining from alcohol and gambling. Publicly, the revival has manifested itself in the form of Islamic banks, religious programming in the media, a proliferation of religious literature, and the emergence of new Islamic associations dedicated to political and social reform.

As Islamic symbols, slogans, ideology, and organizations became prominent fixtures in Muslim politics, Afghanistan, Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Pakistan, and other Muslim government leaders appealed to Islam in order to “enhance their legitimacy and authority and to mobilize popular support” (Encarta).

The most successful Islamic opposition movement culminated in the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979. Throughout the 1980s, Iran inspired antigovernment protests in Kuwait and Bahrain, and helped to create Islamic

militias, such as Lebanon's *Hezbollah* (Party of God) and Islamic *Jihad*, both of which were involved in “hijackings and hostage-takings” (Roth). These acts, combined with the different cases of assassination of non-Muslim leaders by religious extremists, contributed to the image of a monolithic radical Islamic fundamentalist threat to governments in the Muslim world and the west.

Distinguishing between moderate Islamic groups that remain participate within society and violent revolutionaries is critical. Many opponents of political Islam have charged that all Islamic movements are extremist groups that seek to “hijack democracy and manipulate the political system in order to gain power and impose their will” (Roth). Some experts argue that this type of reaction contributes to the radicalization of moderate Islamists.

A number of beliefs and assumptions lie at the heart of the Islamic political revival. The first of these is that the Muslim world is in a state of decline, and the cause of this decline is “departure from the straight path of Islam” (Roth). The cure, therefore, is a return to Islam in personal and public life, which will ensure the restoration of Islamic identity, values, and power. Moreover, “Islam is a total or comprehensive way of life as predetermined in the Koran, mirrored in the example of Muhammad and the first Muslim community-state organized by Muhammad at Medina” (Encarta). Thus, the renewal and revitalization of Muslim governments and societies require the restoration or reimplementation of Islamic law, which provides the blueprint for an Islamically guided and socially just state and society.

Although political Islam condemns the westernization and secularization of society, it does not condemn modernization such as science and technology are accepted, but the pace, direction, and extents of change are to be subordinated to Islamic belief and values in order to guard against the penetration of and excessive

dependence on western values.

While the majority of Islamic activists seek to work within the system and bring about change from within society, relatively small but significant radical extremist minority believes that “Muhammad is the messenger of God and has a mandate from God to carry out God’s will” (Doren 19). This extremist minority further believes that because the rulers in the Muslim world are authoritarian and anti-Islamic, violent change is necessary. They seek to topple governments, seize power, and impose their vision or interpretation of Islam upon society.

Thus, violence against such governments and their representatives as well as Western multinationals is regarded as legitimate self-defense.

Islamic radicals also believe that Islam is not simply an ideological alternative for Muslim societies but a theological and political imperative. Because it is God’s command, implementation must be immediate, not gradual, and the obligation to implement is incumbent on all true Muslims. Therefore, those who hesitate remain apolitical, or resist-individuals and governments are no longer to be regarded as Muslims. They are “atheists or unbelievers, enemies of God, against whom all true Muslims must wage holy war in the form of *jihad*” (Wikipedia).

At the beginning of the twenty first century, Islam remains a major presence and political force throughout the Muslim world. The question is not whether Islam has a place and role in society, but how best for it to assume that role. While some Muslims wish to pursue a more secular path, others call for a more visible role of Islam in public life. The majority of Islamic activists and movements function and participate within society. A distinct minority are radical extremists who attempt to destabilize or overthrow governments and commit acts of violence and terrorism within their countries. The primary concerns of Islamic movements are domestic or

national, although international issues also have shaped Muslim politics. Among the more influential issues have been the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict and Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem. In addition, countries such as "Iran, Libya, and Saudi Arabia have sought to extend their influence internationally by supporting government Islamization programs as well as Islamist movements elsewhere" (Encarta). Islam as a way of life, therefore, is nothing new in the world. What is problematic is its alleged intolerance of other religious people.

2.4 Islam and Global Terrorism:

The ubiquitous presence of conflict among people of different race and religion can be traced down to the fundamental human urge to be different from others. Difference confers identity and it requires power. To be able to know oneself and love oneself, one needs to know the others and hate them. This is the universal reason behind conflicts which do not have any apparent or significant *casus belli*.

Professor Samuel P. Huntington argues along this line:

In the post –cold war world, the most important distinctions among people are not ideological to answer the most basic question human can face: Who are we? And they are answering that question in the traditional way human beings .have answered it, by reference to the things that mean most to them people define themselves in terms of ancestry religion, language, history, values customs and institutions. We know who we are only when we know who we are not and often only when we know whom we are against. (21)

Now it has been a common place to ask the question whether the virtues of Islam are nothing or infinitesimal as compared to its abominable aspects. Some believe Islam is essentially hostile and intolerant of other religions and their

practitioners. Expressing his views on this, the Indian novelist Amitav Ghosh writes in his book entitled *The Koran and the Kafir* (Islam and The Infidels):

Clearly, Islam is essentially hostile to other religions. The situation created by the new wave of Islamic fundamentalism not only in Islamic countries but in non-Islamic lands as well, is a phenomenon that demands close vigilance. This can only be achieved by learning the nature of Islam. [. . .] If non-Islamic peoples must protect themselves from the onslaught of Islam, then they must pay more attention to what Islam really has in mind as far as the non-Moslems are concerned. (xv)

Ghosh's analysis holds water if we study him side by side the recent onslaught Islamic fundamentalist have inflicted to the non-Islamic world. The case in point is Osama bin Laden and his al-Quaeda group. A brief reference of the same is therefore presented here.

Bin Laden and others, who were previously CIA employees, with the best training, arms, facilities, and lots of cash for many years, announced the formation of an organization called "The Islamic World Front for the Struggle Against the Jews and the Crusaders" in February 1998. Among the members of this organization are the two Egyptian Muslim groups which were active in terrorism over the past decade. Later, Osama bin Laden announced the formation of an International Islamic Front for *Jihad* against America and Israel.

He said that the Muslims must wage holy war against their real enemies not only to get rid themselves up of unpopular regimes backed by the Americans and Israelis but also protect their faith. They urged Islamic governments to perform the duty of armed jihad – holy war- against the enemies of Islam.

Al-Quaeda is a network of many different fundamentalist organizations in diverse countries. The common factor in all these groups is the use of terrorism for the attainment of their political goals, and an agenda whose main priority is the overthrow of the heretic governments in their respective countries and the establishment of Islamic governments based on the rule of *Shariah*.

Attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, and bombings in railway stations in London, provided a grim reminder of Osama bin Laden's reputation as the godfather of global terrorism. The Arabian millionaire and his umbrella organization of international terrorist groups, al-Quaeda, were soon identified as the prime suspects in the attacks. Intelligence analysts have linked bin Laden and al-Quaeda to a series of attacks, many of them in his self-declared jihad against the United States.

American intelligence experts regard Osama bin Laden as a preeminent organizer and financier of international terrorism in the world today. Major founder of terrorist groups involved in the terrorist attacks in the different parts of the world. In 1998, he announced the creation of a transnational coalition of extremist groups known as 'The Islamic Front for Jihad against Jews and Crusaders'. After the September 11 attacks, the United States declared a war on terrorism to capture bin Laden, destroy al-Quaeda training bases in Afghanistan, and replace the Taliban with a government less friendly to terrorists.

Bin Laden and other Islamic extremists justify their use of violence with the claim that most Muslim and Western governments are corrupt oppressors that they themselves resort to violence and terrorism. These extremists use Islam to motivate their followers and rationalize their actions. However, they misinterpret and misapply Islamic beliefs. Claiming that Islam and the Muslim world are under siege, they call

for a *jihad*. Although *jihad* refers to the right and duty of Muslims to defend themselves, their community, and their religion from unjust attack, extremists use the concept to legitimate acts of violence and terrorism.

2.5 Multiculturalism in Rushdie's Works:

Celebration of hybridity, exposition of the dangers of an orthodox faith in one's religion, and a jeer at the complacency of the devout who put their faith on the almighty—these characterize Rushdian literature. Impurity or the loss of purity and roots does not seem to trouble Rushdie. As he playfully writes in the essay “Imaginary Homelands” being culturally borne across or translated one will lose something but one will get something too.

But his preoccupation with India, Pakistan—now his “imaginary homelands”—and Islam suggest otherwise: if he is really not much interested in these issues, why have they been so recurrent themes in his writings? Therefore, it is not necessary to believe in what Rushdie says regarding his opinion about culture, religion and homelands. But we can trust his claim that a liberal outlook is what the world needs most at present if it is to effectively fight the threat of fundamentalism and violence. The infamous September 11 bombing of the Twin Tower of America in 2001 has come as a warning to the inhabitants of the globe about the threat of fanaticism, in this case Islamic fanaticism. Surely, the only way out is to make the world populace rational people free from parochial nationalism and intolerant fundamentalism. This is what Rushdie writes to express one's freedom, to speak for the freedom of others to express themselves without the threat of being incriminated.

Celebration of impurity, partial knowledge, hybridity, bastardization and rootlessness characterize Rushdian literature. If the Islamic fanatics accept what Rushdie has proposed—that he be left alone with his freedom not to believe in any

religion, and not to bow down to any sort of tyranny whether it be human or divine—then the world could hopefully be rid of the menace of violence to be precipitated by religious intolerance.

How best to render the world a place where people would behave along the 'live and let live' principle? For Rushdie, one way is to make them familiar with the experience of migration, as he writes in his essay "Gunter Grass", collected in *Imaginary Homelands*, migration trains people in the virtue of tolerance: "To experience any form of migration is to get a lesson in the importance of tolerating other's points of view. One might almost say that migration ought to be essential training for all would be democrats" (280).

Apart from the theoretical claims Rushdie makes about his being non-aligned with any particular country, code, or creed, his novelistic characters too come from different religious backgrounds. And the ones to get gentle treatment at his hands are the characters who espouse similar ideas and beliefs as his own. For example, in the novel *The Satanic Verses*, Gabriel Farista, though doomed to death for his dilemmatic mentality regarding his faith in Islam and Christianity, is more humanely portrayed than is Salladin *Chamcha*—whose very name suggests his toady, servile mentality (*chamcha* in Hindi is equivalent to a 'bootlicker') but not without losing his freedom as a self-guided, self-trusting person.

Similarly, in his next novel *Shame* (1985), the character to be treated with fairness is the ludicrously obese Omar Khayaam Shakil. He is non-Muslim in every way: he was not baptized at his birth; he was born legs first, and was born out of wedlock.

In *Shalimar the Clown* (2005), Rushdie depicts the picture of chaotic scenario of Kashmir, Alsace, Los Angeles and New York. When Kashmir collapses into chaos,

one onlooker croaks, "We are no longer protagonists, only antagonists" (295). That bit of dialogue says much about *Shalimar the Clown*, Rushdie's new novel is the heavy-handed examination of a doomed love and doomed region. He is an early veteran of the current clash between Islam and the West, and it was as a public figure that he was asked to comment on the elusive connections between the art of the novel and latest war.

Rushdie's story begins from Los Angeles. Max Ophuls, an octogenarian and legendary American ambassador, dies in a pool of blood below his illegitimate daughter's apartment, victim of assassination at the hands of his Kashmiri Muslim driver. The large mode doesn't change much when the elderly Max's throat is cut on his daughter's doorstep, and the story switches into a long retrospective account of how and why this powerful man came to be assassinated by an ex-tightrope walking Kashmiri acrobat, possibly acting in the name of some Islamic terrorist organization. The scene may be Kashmir or France during the Second World War.

Everything else explains how Ophuls, his daughter India, and the assassin, Shalimar the Clown, converge in 1990s Los Angeles. Everything else consists; above all, of Kashmir. That is where the former US ambassador to India, Max Ophuls, first spies Boonyi Kaul, the young, hip-swiveling Hindu wife of a Muslim high-wire performer known as Shalimar the Clown. Ophuls, a serial adulterer, strikes a bargain with Boonyi, exchanging her body for material excess, a city apartment, and dance lessons.

All of which stokes a poisoned fury in Shalimar, sending him into the arms of nascent terrorists while vowing murderous revenge on the illicit lovers and their child. Then, as Rushdie draws his lens wider, he condemns the Islamic fundamentalists

fueled by Pakistani and Afghan and C.I.A. money and Allah knows what else, as well as the Indian Army on hand as ostensible protectors.

Shalimar the Clown is a tragic novel about the growth of a terrorist's mind in one of those rogue regions of the world. It was supposed to bring us the news about the fate of Kashmir, the origins of global Islamic terrorism and the resentments caused by the careless lust and greed of great powers. We find it so hard to grasp the motives for suicidal violence that any attempt to imagine them would be welcome. On the other hand, paradoxically, Hindus and Muslims live in harmony; a tolerant tribalism ensures the marriage of the young lovers, Muslim Shalimar and beautiful Boonyi, the daughter of a Hindu *pundit*, “we are all brothers and sisters here, there is no Hindu-Muslim issue. A love match is acceptable to both families and so a marriage there will be” (110) . Here the twin forces of nationalism and religious fundamentalism do not disturb the human sensibility and let the human being to be human not separately Hindu, Muslim, Jew, Christian and so on. As usual in Rushdie's novels, these forces are not the enemies of enlightenment and freedom.

Rushdie transforms his refusal to bow to the times into a capitulation to the voice of public opinion. Our larger culture exhibits a disturbingly split attitude to violence. And yet people still believe that there is something particularly awful about real violence. News organizations deem them too particular for photographs of real corpses or real torture, be it in Los Angeles, Kashmir, or Iraq. It is not irrational to say that the Western civilization which aestheticizes violence is the root cause for promoting and fertilizing the land for violence, the burning example for this is the al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and his involvement in American security agency. As a result, Islamic civilizations sanctify it. Rushdie writes himself in on the side of the aestheticizers. So, he himself is an iconoclastic writer who has a bounty of some

five hundred thousand dollars offered in February 1989 by Ayatollah Khomeini, the supremo of the Islamic Republic of Iran. His atheist position is, as Rushdie explains so painstakingly in *Imaginary Homelands*, misinterpreted as that of a convert or renegade.

The above observation is for the purpose of studying the novel *Shalimar the Clown* as a m elange of the diverse but interrelated issues in the world today. The question of Islam, its so-called intolerance and affiliation with global terrorism in its various manifestations, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, the freedom of an individual to write and speak as s/he pleases all the while knowing that the private is the public and the local is the global—all these issues will be elaborated with the textual concern of the novel. This thesis will be guided by this basic assumption that Rushdian literature is always notoriously debatable for its political dimension which renders it allusive and reflective of the world order today in its political and cultural dimensions. The next chapter points toward the specific textual excerpts which would lend credit to the theoretical modality laid out above. The concept of multiculturalism, threat of communalism and terrorism, and the need to rid the world of the dangers thereof are amply evidenced in the novel, as the analysis would expose the text to scrutiny.

3. Textual Analysis

3.1 Western Assault on Eastern Innocence:

Rushdie's novel *Shalimar the Clown* is a book written from the perspective of a person who is worried about the prevalence of communal and religious violence in the world, and that he proposes the doctrine of multiculturalism and tolerance as the remedy of these threats to world peace. For this purpose, this chapter is divided into sub-chapters, each explicating the various but finally interrelated issues of tolerance and harmony which is continually besotted by communalism and terrorism.

The rise of conflict between any two parties, whether it be at the individual or societal or national or civilizational level, is the confrontation and unwanted interference by one or the other party. When Europeans set sails for the trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific zones, they brought with them the seed of conflict with the local people of whatever place they settled on. Similarly, an extremely popular American ambassador for India, Maximilian Ophuls has to leave the host country in shame and disgrace: he had shown overmuch interest in things (or rather, strictly speaking, people) Indian. Now, that he is the ambassador of the most powerful country in the world, he can dismiss the warning of his conscience and indulges in fantasy of celebrating his adulthood with the killing of beautiful and dangerously ambitious wife of Shalimar Noman, better known as Shalimar the clown for his acrobatic feats on the tight rope. When Boonyi met Ophuls's eyes for the first time he was "applauding widely and looking piercingly at her" (133). This violent gesture from Shalimar forebodes the fatality awaiting their life. Here follows an excerpt that speaks volume about the mentality and trait of the ambassador who is going to court his eventual doom at the hands of the cuckolded husband.

When Boonyi Noman danced for him in the Dachigam hunting lodge in Kashmir he thought of those feathered dead-eyed show girl wreathed in Nazi cigar smoke, flaunting their gartered thighs. The clothes were different but recognized the same hard hunger in her stare, the readiness of the survival to suspend moral judgment in the presence of imagined opportunity. But I am not Nazi he thought. I'm the American Ambassador the guy in the white hat. I'm for the God's sake who lived. She swung her hips for him and he thought, And I'm also a married man. She swung her hips again and he ceased to think.

(141)

So, the hunter here was once himself a quarry for the Nazis. Now he enjoys the fruits of power and wealth. "He is brilliant young economist, lawyer and student of international relations, the master forger of the Resistance, the ace pilot, the Jewish survivor, the best selling author and the American ambassador in the house of power" (179). And he knowingly chooses to forget his past. The girl's ambition too precipitates the fatal attraction between the thoughtless dancer and the veteran war and women monger. This highhandedness on his part costs him his life after some two decades. The woman too dies a miserable death, having jilted her lover husband only to be jilted by the manipulator of policies and persons.

Surely, Shalimar, the master entertainer, the man who had never been capable of venting anger, would not have turned so violent a murderer had his private life been not tampered by an outsider. The clown's transmogrification into a militant and his retaliatory revenge is the result of interference by the American ambassador and his "idiotic choice" (161). Therefore, before we blame someone for being aggressive and murderous, we need to know why they become so. Let alone and undisturbed,

people generally do not have the motivation and cause to turn violent. On the broader perspective, what this thesis holds is that the rise of fundamentalist and aggressive elements within the Muslim world might have been provoked into existence by the western assault on Islam. When insulted, bullied and exploited, the only option save going on putting up with the same is to revolt, to organize sabotage and ambush. This is one of the issues the novelist has frequently raised throughout the novel for the consideration of all.

The ambassador does not fail to notice the carnal and mortal attractions that the teen-aged dancer holds for males. He would arrange a thanks giving party for the Pachigami performers who had entertained him on his visit to Kashmir. And with the help of his aide Edgar Wood, Max Ophuls “arranges a private meeting with Boonyi Kaul” (184), who has come to him with her entourage. Boonyi, the ever aspiring and recklessly ambitious dancer also thinks she finds a gateway to her dreamt for world in the form of Maximilian Ophuls the American ambassador. Therefore, they reach a pact soon enough. The ambassador would help her in climbing higher in her profession, in having access to the metropolitan centers in the world, and in return she would offer her very body to him. She tells him that he has access to her body whenever he wants: “My body will be yours to command and it will be my joy to obey” (192).

But she is ill-at-ease at the thought of having duped, actually cuckolded, lover husband Shalimar the Clown. Instinctively even so ambitious a girl as Boonyi can perceive what is morally and practically right and wrong in the long run. She thinks of her husband Shalimar the Clown and is horrified again by the ease with which she had abandoned him. It is really difficult to get away without guilty conscience sometimes

for having duped the people who put overmuch trust upon us. Boonyi too is nagged on by the same state of conscience.

When she left Pachigam none of her closest people guessed what she was doing, the dolts. [. . .] Letters haunted by the phantom of their murdered love. *I reach out to you and touch you without touching you as on the riverbank in the old days. I know you are following your dream but that dream will always bring you back to me. If the Amrikan is of assistance well and good. People always talk lies but I know your heart is true. I sit with folded hands and await your loving return...*

(sic) and tore the letters into smaller and smaller pieces. They were the letters that humiliated both their author and their recipient, letters that had no business existing. (195)

Her guilty conscience falls heavy upon her. But the catalyst who abets her ambition is Max Ophuls. His lust for her gives her the courage and the impudence to use her sexual charms for worldly advancement despite the fact that her unsuspecting husband in the village waits for her return home. The real culprit here is the ambassador whose irresistible magnetism of personal charm and international power easily attracts Boonyi and misleads her into believing that he has come to liberate her from her clown husband and backward village, she wants “a good place to live [. . .] and hear from his own lips that he will keep her safe” (192).

Max Ophuls is not unaware of the possible problems the woman might bring to him. The first would be the disgrace of having sired an issue from a local *nautch* (dancer) girl. Therefore as a precaution he has Boonyi take some contraceptive pills everyday in the presence of Edgar Wood his assistant. But Boonyi outwits them and “does not swallow the pills” (205). As a result, she gets pregnant and wants to see her

ravisher who has by now stopped visiting her. When he comes to see her, she vehemently pours out her dissatisfaction for her wronged state, her destroyed beauty and physique:

Look at me, she was saying. I am the meaning of your deeds. I am the meaning of your so-called love, your destructive, selfish, wanton love. Look at me. Your love looks jus like hatred. I never spoke of love, she was saying. I was honest and you have turned me onto your lie. This is not me. This is not me. This is you. (205)

Her accusation is justifiable: she had deserted her village and people in pursuit of some great achievement. But she has ended of as a mere concubine to the ambassador. She also makes it clear that though he has destroyed her life, her heart is not a whit tormented by his negligence of her—for she had never bestowed her heart upon him, had never made the mistake of calling him her love. She is the victim at the hand of the Jew who was a victim himself:

The wheel had turned. In this moment of his story he was not the victim. In this moment she, not he, had the right to claim kinship with the lost. I never spoke of love, she was saying. I kept my love for my husband though my body served you, Jew. Look what you have made of the body I gave you. But my heart is still my own. (205)

Ophuls's seduction of Boonyi proves costly for his political and diplomatic career. His assault on the native girl is seen as an assault on the honour and the sovereignty of the nation. It also is equated with the American invasion on Vietnam. Consequently, Ophuls loses his ambassadorship and America becomes an object of hate.

The Vietnam War was at its height and so was American unpopularity in Asia. Draft cards were burned in Central Park and Martin Luther King led a protest march to the United Nations and India in the goddamn American ambassador was apparently fucking the local peasantry. So war-torn America turned on Max as well, his alleged oppression of Boonyi becoming a sort of allegory of Vietnam. (206)

Allegory of Vietnam Boonyi became: destroyed, deserted and stripped of her dignity, she is dead for her villagers, her father and husband included. When she returns her village one chilly day, she knows through her childhood mate Zoon that she has been given up as dead. The morning she arrives there it has been snowing stormily. When the villagers first saw her, standing still at the bus stop with snow on her shoulders and snowdrifts pushing up against her legs, they thought they had seen a ghost. The sight of a dead woman who had somehow materialized at the edge of town with her bedroll and bag beside her brought the whole village out of doors, snow or no snow. Everyone was mesmerized by the sight of this stationary corpse that looked as if it had done nothing in the afterlife but eat. It looked like a snow-woman such as a child might build a snow-woman with the body of the deceased Boonyi inside it. Taking her to be the ghost, the villagers held themselves back from speaking to her. “Nobody spoke to the snow-woman. It could be bad luck to speak to ghost. But the whole village also knew that somebody would have to do some talking sooner or later, because Boonyi didn’t know she was dead” (222). But Zoon her true friend finally comes to her friend in need and reports how the villagers unanimously killed the jilt after what she did to shame her people. Now Boonyi cannot return her village, for she has been “mourned properly for forty days with all correct religious and social observances... [her] life has been ended. It’s official” (223).

The ostracizing crime Boonyi had committed was to shamelessly desert her fanatically loving husband to be the concubine of an aged man whom she wanted to use just as a means of opening a world of opportunities.

3.2 Western Perception of the East: Some Reflections:

As it has already been discussed in the earlier sections, the western discourse on Islam has done much in presenting a bloody picture of the same in the minds of those who do not have an in-depth knowledge of the western domination of the east. The westerners, it seems, take it as their obligation to know the orient and speak for it. But, interestingly enough, the easterners are not in a position - owing to historical factor of European colonialism - to comment and describe the occident and occidentals.

Max Ophuls's ambassadorship to India has authorized him to speak on Kashmir. Now having lived a relatively secluded life for years, the one time Resistance veteran is tempted to share his idea regarding the embattled paradise of Kashmir. A talk show host is more than ready and happy to take in the ex-diplomat for sharing his war exploits and what not. But Ophuls, contrary to the host's expectation speaks only on Kashmir, the place which is inextricably linked to his life. Here follows the characteristic mourning of a westerner for the devastation of a former heaven on earth:

'We who live in these luxury limbo, the privileged purgatories of the earth, have set aside thoughts of paradise,' Max was roaring into the camera in a series of high flown locutions, yet I tell you that I have seen it and walked by its fish-rich lakes. If thoughts of paradise do occur to us, we think of Adam's falls, of the expulsion of the Eden of the parents of humanity. However, I haven't come to speak of the fall

of man, but the collapse of paradise itself. In Kashmir it is paradise itself that is falling; heaven on earth is being transferred into a living hell. (28)

The occasion is the mounting threat on the existence of the whole of Kashmir and its inhabitants: the Indian and the Pakistani armies are at alert for any degree of action to protect the land which each of them claims belongs to them. It is easy here to see why Max is so much agitated at the fall of the heaven on earth: India, (originally named Kashmira by her mother, Boonyi Kaul—wife to Shalimar Noman), his only and illegitimate daughter, has Kashmiri parentage.

While talking about how the west has described and dominated the east, we come across the notion of orientalism which Edward William Said has discussed at some length in his book of the same title. The west has always treated the east as its surrogate, its inferior. As Rushdie also writes in *Imaginary Homelands*, orientalism “provided justification for the supremacist ideology of imperialism” and to justify the western occupation of the east, the myth of oriental simplicity, backwardness and savagery has been perpetuated (166). In the present context, the west has continued to disparage the east for having Islam as the major religion there. Islam, formerly condemned as a perverse religion, is now critiqued for being intolerant and aggressive to other system of faiths. This grand practice of describing and re-describing, this orientalist discourse, may be at work in a very subtle level even in the novel *Shalimar the Clown*. Salman Rushdie’s discontents with the mandatory and strictly binding teachings of Islam might have given birth to a deep rooted aversion inside him. In that case, it comes as no surprise that Rushdie leaves no chance to portray Islam in a very negative, debased way. May be Rushdie, the renegade on Islam, is yet another writer

who is adding more engaging literary commentaries to the repertoire of orientalist, in this case anti-Islamic discourse.

3.3 Infiltration of Global Terrorism:

One of the warnings enunciated in the novel *Shalimar the Clown* is that the world as a single entity is extremely vulnerable to vicious onslaughts of terrorism. Now no place or person is entirely safe from planned and massively worked out terrorist attacks. As a diplomat and a member of Nazi resistance movement during the World War, Max Ophuls knows no place is adequately fortified to be safe from bombs, explosions and gun shots. The following lines illustrate things to the same effect.

Like any other professional in this field, Max knew that there were no such things as complete security. The video tapes of the shooting of President Reagan were the illustrative tool that based demonstrated this. Here was the president moving from building to car. These were the position of the security details. All of the positions were ideals. [. . .] But the President had been shot. POTUS was down. The most powerful man in the world, surrounded by the planet's security elite, was not secured between the door of the secured building and the door of the armored car. Security was percentages. Nothing was ever one hundred percent. (39-40)

The rise of terrorism in Kashmir can be traced back to the division, on religious grounds, of India into two nation states of India and Pakistan. For some technical reason, the state of Kashmir was not annexed to India and Pakistan. The Muslim majority there led Pakistan to claim the cool land should be annexed to the Islamic republic, while Indian leaders were fully assured of their obligation to look

after the same. This issue has not been resolved yet, and has taken a heavy toll on the people there. Many Kashmiris want to remain a separate state, confirming their allegiance neither to Pakistan nor to India. The novel gives an account of the formation of such a nationalist organization which opposes Indian presence in Kashmir. Its motto is to maintain an “Azad Kashmir”, an independent, free Kashmir:

two nationalist leaders Amanullah Khan and Maqbool Butt, had formed an armed group called the Jammu and Kashmir National Liberation Front and had crossed the cease-fire line what they called Azad Kashmir into the Indian sector to launch a number of surprise raids on army positions and personnel. (230)

The Indian and Pakistani governments tried to settle the issue through the means of dialogues at the initiative of Maximilian Ophuls. He invents and circulates several acronyms finding that the two neighbors have a “common fondness for alphabet soup” (188), such as BALT for back-channel arms limitations talks, HAIP for hydro electric and irrigation projects, and TPC for Tashkent Peace Conference, to name only a few from the nauseating repertoire of such acronyms. The novelist sums up the failure of Indo-Pak peace efforts: “Euphoria over the Islamabad accords proved short lived” (188).

Shalimar, along with his two brothers, enlists the Jammu Kashmir National Liberation Front but he soon deserts that to join another organization which would help him in getting to the “last enemy” of his, Maximilian Ophuls (248). When he visits his mother at night after years, he tells her of his final mission: “That last enemy, the invisible in the invisible room in the foreign country far away: that’s the one I want to face, and if I have to work my way through all the others to get to him then that is what I’ll do” (248-9).

Shalimar's hate for his wife is extreme and so is his hatred for her seducer. He would do anything in the world to have his revenge without which he cannot have rest for a moment. His only mission in life is to murder Boonyi as soon as his father and her both die, and then to murder Max Ophuls. The following authorial comment explains how fanatic he has grown in his revenge motive:

Sooner or later he would find his way to the American ambassador as well and his honor would be avenged. What happened after that was unimportant. Honor ranked above everything else, above the sacred vows of matrimony, above the divine injunction against cold blooded murder, above decency, above culture, above life itself. (258)

The alchemy that Shalimar undergoes from a clown into a veteran murderer can be understood in terms of his broken heart at the infidelity of his young wife. What added fuel to his instinct was the advent of terrorism in Kashmir. May be without the companionship of the terrorists he would not have been able to follow the path of revenge and murder. Life, for him, is meaningless if his honor is at all attacked.

Pyarelal Kaul visits his daughter Boonyi at night on the top of the hill. One day Boonyi tells her father about what has been communicated to her by Shalimar Noman her husband who has been instructed by the iron mullah Maulana Bulbul Fakh. As she reports to her father, the mullah has been preaching the religion of violence and suppression:

The iron mullah says that the question of religion can only be answered be looking at the condition of the world. When the world is in disarray then God does not send a religion of love. At such time he sends a martial religion, he asks that we sing battle hymns and cross the

infidel.[...] Religion demands austerity and self-denial, says Bulbul Fakh. It has little time for the softness of pleasure or the weakness of love. (262)

The ubiquity of the preachers of violent religiosity has come as big hurdle in the way of people trying to instruct people on the path of peaceful and all-loving religion. No place is now safe enough and danger free. All human beings are interrelated and consequently as the novelist comments “Everyone’s story [is] a part of everyone else’s” (269). Shalimar the Clown at “forward camp 22” befriended to luminous little man who had fought with Afghans and al-Quaeda against the Soviet Union, who had accepted US arms and backing but loathe the United States because Americans soldiers had historically backed the settlement of Catholics in Mindanao against the wishes of local Muslims (269).

The Talib mullah who is in the same company that Shalimar has joined for achieving his very personal revenge goal sees through the youth’s pretension of being a true *jihadist*. The Afghan chides the actor for pretension and goes on delivering a harangue on what Islam does not tolerate. He rebukes the actor for taking on the path of entertainment. Dancing, singing and acting are deplorable and punishable in Islam. He is vehement on this point: “God spits on entertainment. I would also order the execution of the dentists, professors, sportsmen and whores. God spits on intellectualism and licentiousness and games. If you hold the rocket launcher like that it will break your shoulder. This is the way to do it” (272).

Then in the summer of 1987, the LeP (Lashkar-e-Pak) posters appeared in Shirmal. The tracts effectively tried to and finally intimidated the Kashmiri villagers into accepting the unnatural barrier between the Hindus and Muslims on the one hand, and men and women on the other. That the novelist mocks upon this demarcating and

communal decree ordained by the iron mullah led fanatic coterie: “Men and women were not to sit together and watch television together. That was a licentious and obscene practice. Hindus were not to sit among Muslims. And of course all women must instantly put on the veil” (277).

The mullah’s company comes to Shirmal at the Yambarzals’ seeking lodging and fooding for a night while Shalimar visits his parents grave at Pachigam. The very night the Indian army makes a clean finish raid upon the iron commandos and kills them to the man including the leader Maulana Bulbul Fakh. Shalimar knows about the raid and escapes away. Now he joins the Philippino group named Abu Sayaaf. This he does to have access to his final victim Maximilian Ophuls. Before crossing the border he is done with his wife who knows his activities through a curious method of telepathy. A channel of communication had been opened then, and though their love had died the channel was still functioning, held open now by a kind of anti-love, a force fuelled by strong emotions that were love’s dark opposites: her fear, his wrath, their belief that their story was not over, that they were each other’s destiny, and that they both knew how it would end.

She has been inviting him to come to her to settle the account and he has replied to her thus:

Come if you want I’m waiting. I no longer care.

He said: Everything I do prepares me for you and for him. Every blow I strike, strikes you or him. The people leading us up here are fighting for god or for Pakistan but I am killing because it is what I have become. I have become death.

He said: I’ll be there soon enough. (sic 298)

So, Shalimar has become death himself. The organizations he works for kill people for the sake of Islam. But he does so as to reach his pray the ex-ambassador. Terrorism has become for him the channel through which he would be able to accomplish his personal goals in the cloak of Islamic holy war, the so-called *jihad*.

3.4 Kashmir: An Example of Hindu-Muslim Amity:

Prior to the separation of Pakistan from India as a nation state, Hindus and Muslims lived a relatively peaceful life. Their custom and rituals were distinct but there was an underlying harmony between them. The Kashmiris, specially the Pachigamis, made it a point to demonstrate and maintain harmony among them. They are so free of communal prejudice that even the marriage between Shalimar Noman and Boonyi Kaul, a Muslim boy and a Hindu girl, is finally sanctioned by the both communities. The following reflection in the mind of Shalimar Noman shows that in Kashmir Hindus and Muslims are not antithetical to each other:

Now all his thoughts were coiling around this girl, Boonyi, to whom he planned to bring good luck for all the days of their lives. The words *Hindu* and *Muslim* (sic) had no place in their story, he told himself. In the valley these words were merely descriptions, not divisions. The frontiers between the words, their hard edges, had grown smudged and blurred. This was how things had to be. This was Kashmir. (57)

The marriage was possible largely owing to the bi-cultural (in modern terminology, multicultural) characteristics. The Hindus and Muslims there are settlers who have by now forgotten their ancestry except that their ancestors were Kashmiris. The communal line between the two has been blurred by hundreds of years of co-mingling and neighbouring. They both understand that the other side is very much like themselves. This is once again true of the village of Pachigam:

Pachigam was a mixture, with family's of pundit background, the Kauls, the Misris, and the baritone singer's long-nosed kin — Sharga being a local nickname for the nasally elongated even one family dancing Jews. So we have not only Kashmiriness to protect but Pachigaminess as well. We are all brothers and sisters here, said Abdullah. There is no Hindu Muslim issue. Two Kashmiri—two Pachigami—youngsters wish to marry, that's all. A love match is acceptable to both families and so a marriage there will be; both Hindu and Muslim custom will be observed. (110)

The Pachigamis are able to come to a compromise so as not to break off the love of their sons and daughters. They find a very practical and satisfactory way for both Hindus and Muslims: the rites and rituals of both sides would be duly observed. Nothing could be a more apt case of communal harmony and peace than this, one is forced to concede.

At the beginning, the Kashmiris tried to uphold their free status without using violent methods. But the terrorist elements soon got in and the whole liberation movement came to be designated as a terrorist and separatist one. In those days before the crazies got into the act the liberation front was reasonably popular and *azadi* was the universal cry. Freedom was what a tiny valley of no more than five million souls wanted most. Its inhabitant had come to the conclusion that they didn't much like India and didn't care for the sound of Pakistan. As the novel so characteristically records, free Kashmir is the dream of the Kashmiris: "So: Freedom!...Freedom to choose folly over greatness but to be nobody's fools. *Azadi!* Paradise wanted to be free" (253).

Had the fundamentalist Islamic elements supported by Pakistan not infiltrated Kashmir and had the Indian army too not crushed the innocent locals along with the invaders, the Kashmiris would have kept their state sound and harmonious. They prize freedom over the question of proving themselves Muslims or Hindus.

3.5 The Novel as a Plea against Terror and Violence

As Rushdie himself once said, terrorism is not a bad means for a good cause. The use of terror and violence cannot easily be justified. The writer holds similar views about this issue. “Freedom is not a tea party [...] Freedom is a war” (17). Max Ophuls at first thinks it every bit proper and justifiable to take recourse to violence to counter balance the violence inflicted by the Nazis upon the French people. But his perception gets changed immediately after his first bombing feat. Violence becomes revolting to him.

The explosion — the gigantic excitement of the moment of the power, followed almost immediately by the violent involuntary physical reaction, a parallel explosion of vomit — taught him two lessons he never forgot: that terrorism was thrilling, and that no matter how profoundly justified it’s cause, he personally could not get over the moral hurdles required to perform such acts on a regular basis. (162)

Human nature is and should be inclined toward the nobler motives of love compassion and understanding. Use of rational power and logical thinking is what differentiates human beings from other animals. But owing to some or other weakness in their character, human beings do not always follow the proper path. They more often than not fall into the ditch of greed, vanity and sadism. They want to kill or suppress others, forgetting that others too might turn aggressive in self-defense. This comes true in the character of political and administrative level too. The German

Nazis viciously tortured and inhumanely murdered millions of the Jews and non-Aryans during the World War. They invaded other nations and decreed barbarous rules upon the occupied territories. It was in this context that we need to understand Max's guerrilla style bombing attempt. His cause was noble. But even then he could not accept violence as the legitimate way of countering violence in the long way. Maybe, there was no option than to adopt a violent path to fight the Nazi atrocities. But Rushdie's essentially anti-terrorist, anti-violence attitude presents the character Max Ophuls as being unconditionally against any further violent effort.

The counter terrorist activist of action of the Indian army is no less responsible in inflicting death and devastation upon the Pachigamis. When the novelist comes to the point of describing the scene of destruction he no longer can maintain a detached position. He is too disturbed by the wreckage to perform the role of an objective or journalistic reporter. The following rather lengthy citation tells us much about the disturbed psyche of the novelist while at the same time presenting a gruesome picture of the violence perpetrated by the warring sides who are less concerned about the will and opinion of the Kashmiris but claim to be working for the villagers:

Who lit that fire? Who burned that orchard? Who shot those brothers who laughed their whole lives long? Who killed the sarpanch? Who broke his hands? Who broke his arms? Who broke his ancient neck? Who shackled those men? Who made those men disappear? Who shot those boys? Who shot those girls? Who smashed that house? Who smashed *that* house? Who smashed *that* house? Who killed that youth? Who clubbed that grandmother? Who knifed that aunt? Who broke that old man's nose? Who broke that young girl's heart? Who killed that lover? Who shot his lover? Who shot his fiancée? Who burned the

customs? Who broke the swords? Who burned the library? Who
 burned the saffron field? Who slaughtered the animals? Who burned
 the beehives? Who poisoned the paddies? Who killed the children?
 Who whipped the parents? Who raped that lazy-eyed woman? Who
 raped that gray haired lazy-eyed woman? Who raped that grey haired
 lazy-eyed woman as she screamed about snake vengeance? Who raped
 woman again? Who raped woman again? Who raped woman again?
 Who raped woman again? Who raped that dead woman again? (308)

The horror the novelist experiences is successfully transmitted to the sensitive
 readers. The predominance of interrogative sentences speaks volume about utterly
 shocked and nonplussed state of the villagers as well as that of the novelist. Terrorism
 is always unjustifiable and horrible to humanity whether it is at the personal or group
 or the national level.

Kashmira challenges Shalimar's murderous act and vows to avenge her
 parents' death. The vehemence with which she condemns her step father's way of life
 tainted with blood comes from her guts. And this is the gut feeling of the novelist
 himself whose very life was condemned to a continual threat for a decade though for a
 very different reason. He had a raised voice for the freedom to believe and not to
 believe, to lead the life the way one wanted to but without interfering or intimidating
 others. Rushdie expresses his deep grudge against the murderer Shalimar Noman and
 not against Shalimar the clown:

A woman, my mother, died for the time of living you, Kashmira wrote.

A man, my father, died for taking her in. you murdered two human
 beings because of your egotism, your amazing egotism that valued
 your honor more highly than their lives. You bathed your honor in

their blood but you did not wash it clean it's bloody now. You wanted to wipe them out but you failed, you killed nobody. Here I stand. I am my mother and my father I am Maximilian Ophuls and Boonyi Kaul. You achieved nothing that they are not dead not gone not forgotten. They live on in me. (379)

Kashmira's claim of having her parents metaphorically alive in her person is worthy of attention. Violence may wipe out some particular people and life but the fundamental human urge for life remains intact. One should and always would endorse life whatever the words and oddities against it may face them.

4. Conclusion

The novel *Shalimar the Clown* is one of the epitomic representations of the pandemic malaise of terrorism. The various references to terrorist activists in the novel drive the idea home to our mind that the world as we know and live in is in danger of an imminent collapse owing to the conflicts which have their origin in communal violence, personal grudge and rivalry, sexual failure and envy, plus the clash of the world super powers who are strong in military and economy.

The first reference to violence is the slitting of Max Ophuls the former ambassador of America to India and chief of counter terrorist department at present, at the doorsteps of his daughter's apartment in Los Angeles. This reference is apt and sufficient enough to set the murky ambience of terrorism that would be dealt with throughout the novel. As the title of this thesis proposes, the world order today is turbulent and violent. Whatever peace we have, that too is frail. Bombings, shootings and stabbings are frequently happening around the world. In such circumstances, an embattled novelist like Rushdie chooses to give an elaborate – almost epic one would say – treatment to violence.

The prevalence of violence is in no way limited to the recent resurgence of the so called Islamic fundamentalism. Intolerance of other ethnicities of races was not unknown in the past too. The novel provides a fairly comprehensive view of the Nazi crimes against humanity when they burnt, butchered and flayed the helpless Jews in Germany, Poland, France and Russia.

The particular treatment is given to the cleansing of the French Jews, for that is relevant to Maximilian Ophuls' past as a member of the oppressed community.

The novelistic preoccupation with devastation then takes us to Kashmir, India. A vignette of a paradisaal Kashmir is presented in the description of the two Kashmiri

villages of Pachigam and Shirmal. But this edenic Kashmir is soon devastated by the arrival of Islamic mullahs who preach nothing more than hatred towards the non Islam, the Hindus there. And, to add insult to injury, the ambassador, having first enjoyed his time with a married dancer, sends her back to her village. This infamy transforms the clown Shalimar into a deadly terrorist whose effort to avenge his duped and desecrated honour takes him all the way from Kashmir to Philippines to Africa to America.

By showing the ultimate death of Shalimar the clown who has become death himself, Rushdie strongly suggests the fate of violence. The perpetrator of it should face the butt end of violence. Death is the only outcome to the terms and the killer who might for a time being wallow in the illusion that they are the ambassador of death or even death itself. The path of violence is eventually a path of loss. There can never be a win-win or even win-lose situation. The only win-win path is the path of tolerance and co-existence, of love and existence, of forgiveness and understanding. Rushdie here is successful in conveying this message.

By reading the novel as an account of the world of the twenty first century marred by the omnipresent threat of terrorist attacks and bombings, my thesis, I hope, has successfully proved the relevance of the novel. It also has supported my hypothesis that the novel is a reflection of violent world order at present. For this purpose I have made a fairly detailed reference to terrorism, its alleged affiliation to Islam, and one of the most feared terrorist organization al-Qaeda.

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