and is eager for liberation and thus she accepts the ambassador’s offer of change “in search of a future” (367).

The novel starts with the description of Los Angeles, it is a city of rootless people, mostly immigrants, who live in a sort of midpoint. They don’t belong to any one place; they are immigrants who have a lot of identity and belong to two or more countries at times. For example OlgaVolgo, Kashmira’s neighbour says:

today I live neither in this world nor the last, neither in America nor in Astrakhan. Also I would add neither in this world nor the next. A woman like me, she lives some place in between. Between the memories and the daily stuff. Between yesterday and tomorrow, in the country of lost happiness and peace, the place of mislaid calm. (9)

Rushdie’s characters live in a situation of not belonging; they easily change their identities and affiliations according the author’s wish.

Rushdie finally confirms that “there was no India. There was only Kashmira and Shalimar the clown” (398). Through this deadly confrontation between Kashmira and Shalimar the clown, Rushdie declares the rebirth and deterritorialized Kashmir. In other words, Kashmira’s killing of Shalimar reflects the destroying present Kashmir and rebirth of the peaceful Kashmir.

Rushdie’s novels represent a new life and a new beginning with the dissolution of all divisions and segments. The multicultural and hybrid world is welcomed on the horizon that has no place for any kind of divisions or borders

Chapter-III

History and Fantasy in the Postmodern Era
Rushdie’s use of fable, fairy tale, fantasy or the allegorical mode for the projection of political satire is a complicated old art and it involves a capacity to create a secondary world of fantasy with an inner loyalty, which must correspond to some aspects of reality in the actual or primary world. Besides the image-making or storytelling gift, Rushdie has an argument and an over-riding idea that he wishes to convey through the technique of magic realism.

The magic realist novels of the western writers move away from the world of real; they are set in an unreal world which shows the boundary of fantasy and realism separately, whereas Rushdie’s magic realist mode of hybridity writing is different from the other western writers: he blends magic and reality in a single mode. Bill Buford in “Swallowing the World Whole” says “Rushdie makes a special world, as if, in his determined linguistic frenzy, he inflates, like a balloon a globe that does not match the one we occupy but actually seems to stand as an alternative to it” (21).

Rushdie’s magic realistic novels differ from the earlier fiction of Indian English Writing. A magical realism text is a postmodern text, where the older forms of fiction are broken, such as the unities of time, place and action are unstable, the narrative changes a lot between the first and third person; ordinary ideas of fictional realism are destroyed and natural law becomes unnatural or supernatural. As a postmodern novel, the writer has power to replace reality according to his wish; he can change the date, time and events whenever he likes. It may be religious or metaphysical but the novel contains a hidden meaning, arcane utterance (secret meaning) and always contributes some important
explanation for arriving at a goal or conclusion, but to identify the conclusion is very difficult.

As a postmodern text *Midnight’s Children* focuses on the post-independent India with its socio-political upheavals, religious bigotry, racial hatred and violence and finally the excesses of Indira Gandhi’s Emergency Rule. It is a novel which is at once experimental, interrogative, confessional and irrationally subjective. It is an autobiographical novel with a touch of socio-historical events and the book’s narrative manner deliberately brings out the clear chronological outlines of history. According to Rushdie, history is a lie and it might be twisted into any form. This idea is pictured, Saleem “is cutting history to suit himself” (9). Saleem commits many errors regarding the Indian History; he cannot be trusted as an authentic narrator. Some of his facts are wrong and mistaken deliberately, although it is real. The collection and the interpretation of facts in history may be created to promote certain interests to the listener. History may be representative and it may hide the facts; what appears to be fact is really a story.

The magic realistic technique of Rushdie is a strategy to overcome the limitations of historical descriptions. There is a strange mixture of the probable and improbable in the novel, the natural and the supernatural are mixed together through the stories of Saleem and Padma. At the same time Rushdie as a satirist is very clear of the facts and events he wanted to say, which is paradoxical to the previous one. He knows exactly what he is doing in narrating his story; he comments on the Emergency rule of Indira Gandhi’s five year plan:

I shall risk giving an alternative explanation, a theory developed in the abstract privacy of my clocktower … because during my frequent
psychic travels, I discovered something rather odd; during the first
nine years after Independence, a similar pigmentation disorder
(whose first recorded victim may well have been the Rani of Cooch
Naheen ) afflicted large numbers of the nation’s business
community... their fortunes thriving thanks to the first Five Year Plan,
which had concentrated on building up commerce…businessmen who
had become … very pale indeed! It seems that the gargantuan (even
heroic) efforts involved in taking over from the British and becoming
masters of their cheeks… in which case, perhaps my father was late
victim of widespread though generally unremarked phenomenon. The
businessmen of India were turning white. (247-48)

The fairy tale beginning, “once upon a time” is a contradiction to the later
lines of curious tension between the willingness and unwillingness in the
confessional mode of storytelling. The narrator frequently speaks of an urgent need
to tell things as they really are in despite of the problems which stand in the way of
openness. For instance, Saleem says, “I must describe, as nearly as possible in
spite of this filmy curtain of ambiguities; what actually happened” (113). In
another place he says, “I am afraid of what must be told next, but the revelation
will not be denied. (278)” and he also states even, “I am trying to stop being
mystifying (338)”.

In Rushdie’s Midnight’s Children the boundary between real and unreal is
often confusing to the reader as well as the narrator himself. In a vast country like
India, with an immense variety of life-experiences and with constant mingling of
“great” and “little” traditions that have their own visions of reality, facts often get
fictionalized, truth often seems incredible. *Midnight’s Children* has the features of magic realism through the mixing and combination of the reality and fantasy. Rushdie makes an attempt to understand and interpret the multi-layered and complex reality of the socio-political life of the Indian subcontinent in *Midnight’s Children*.

Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* illustrates a different use of magic realism. The traditional magic realism brings out the political promise of a text where magic is associated with traditional mythical writing whereas Rushdie’s mythical writing brings out a historical creation of new world. Rushdie’s magic realism is both magic and realistic, they co-exist simultaneously and they function as a hybrid to project the multilayered perspective of truth and history of India. The narration of Saleem’s birth and his grandfather story merges the history and fantasy. For example Emergency declared by India Gandhi, Amritsar Massacre and letter from the Prime Minister Nehru are events from history, they are blended with fictional life of Saleem’s grandfather, Shiva and Saleem’s personal life. As Brat Singh Satya in “Wiebe, Paul Scott and Salman Rushdie: Historians Distanced from History” states: “Fiction as history at its best is turning events into history just as it is turning the historical material into art” (146).

*Midnight’s Children* narrates the experiences of three generations of Saleem Sinai’s family. Family living in Srinagar, Amritsar and Agra is the story of Saleem’s grandfather, Bombay is the story about Saleem and Shiva and the finally migrating to Karachi is the story about the narrator Saleem. Saleem who narrates his story from the pickle factory says, one day the world may taste the pickle of history. From the starting of his birth he says about the political history of the
country that “I came…at the precise instant of India’s arrival at independence” and the other children of the time reflected the history of India. Trivedi Harish in “Post-Colonial Hybridity: Midnight’s Children” says:

A radically different way of looking at the correlation between history and fiction is the post-structuralist one, according to which nothing exists naturally or objectively but everything is ‘constructed’ through and in language. Thus, neither history nor fiction is simply ‘given’; rather, both are ‘narratives’ with their own procedure of selection, omissions and biases, according to the ‘subject-position’ of the person who narrates them. (408)

Writing history as autobiography is one way of linking the individual component of society with the collective stream of history. The autobiographical material is shifted to suit the requirements of the story and its unity. Saleem sitting up at night in the pickle factory telling his story to his mistress Padmavathi, possesses a surprising talent of the supernatural power of entering other people’s minds. Saleem pours his multi-dimensional story into the pickle jars to preserve his story like the pickle preserved through the pickling process for posterity. Padma serves as his artistic conscience that pulls him up in his narration whenever he stays away.

The magical element of Saleem’s telepathy was discovered at the age of ten, when his huge and sensitive nose allowed him to telepathically connect with all other thousand children in illusionary meeting called “Midnight Children’s Conference” (MCC). He hopes that the combined and organized use of these
powers might help rebuild the nation, as the children belong to various regions, classes, religions and castes.

Saleem has the gift of entering into the world of illusion and thoughts of the realities came out in his minds had been liked in his narration. For example, he can fly into the heads of film stars and cricketers and learns the truth behind the film fare gossip about the dance of Vyiyantimale. He occupies the mind of a congress party worker, bribing a village school teacher to boast himself in the part of Gandhi and Nehru in the upcoming election movement. In his illusionary world Saleem becomes the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, looks after the country, but he is aware of the problem and plights, misfortunes and rootlessness. In spite of the feeling of alienation and constant fear of disintegration, he tries to keep his attachment with history. He blends the death of his grandfather with Prime Minister Nehru who fell ill and recovered his health.

The narrative technique of Rushdie reveals the postmodern theory that history can be changed according to the author’s wish therefore Saleem’s narration of history is myth-making. Indira Gandhi, attempt to attain the sacredness inspired by mythical figures, she is described as “Mother India.” Saleem mentions her political success as “the celebrations of Indira Gandhi’s New Congress Party, which had won a landslide victory – 350 out of a possible 515 seats in the Lok Sabha – in another recent election” (494). The key to her success partially lies in the name Gandhi, which is the surname of Mahatma Gandhi. But, Indira Gandhi does not have any relation to Mahatma Gandhi; the Gandhi in her name represents her husband Feroze Gandhi who has no connection with politics:
Mrs. Indira Gandhi was born in November 1917 to Kamala and Jawaharlal Nehru. Her middle name was Priyadarshini. She was not related to ‘Mahatma’ M.K. Gandhi; her surname was legacy of her marriage, in 1942, to one. Feroze Gandhi, who became known as ‘the nation’s son-in-law’. (588)

The fairy tale image of the Widow is introduced as a witch terrifying image, overpowerful and fascinating character. The use of colour in the novel resembles the witch image of traditional mythical stories:

No colours except green and black the walls are green the sky is black (there is no roof) the stars are green the Widow is green but her hair is black as block. The Widow sits on a high high chair is green the seat black the Widow’s hair has a centre-parting it is green on the left and on the right black. (288)

The same idea has been repeated later:

The pattern: green and black. Her glasses, green, her shoes were black as black… In newspaper articles this women has been called ‘a gorgeous girl with big, rolling hips… She had run a jewellary boutique before she took up social work… during the Emergency she was semi officially, in charge of sterilization’… She was the Widow’s Hand. (611)

The colours acquire a symbolic dimension in the portrayal of her character. The first combination of colour is related to her public life where the white colour stands for the image created by the media and black is for the hidden events from the eyes of the public. The green colour stands for fertility and black one for
infertility. The significance for the black colour increases her importance in the novel. The duality of Widow’s image is well reflected in the image of Indira Gandhi. The green colour is the political success in front of the media, but the hidden secret is the surname of her party. She tricks the voting public to believe that she is a direct successor of Mahatma Gandhi’s politics, but her real political connection is hidden behind the famous name Jawaharlal Nehru the Prime Minister of India.

Saleem portrays Indira Gandhi as Mother Goddess through the character Widow’s Hand. The Widow explains that “people of India… ‘worship our Lady like a god. Indians are only capable of worshipping one God’” (611). She describes Bombay to be her place of living just like Saleem:

But I was brought up in Bombay, where Shiva Vishnu Ganesh Ahuramazda Allah and countless others had their flocks… ‘What about the pantheon,’ ‘I argued ‘the three hundred and thirty million gods of Hinduism alone? And Islam, and Bodhisttvas…?’ And now the answer: ‘Oh yes! My God, millions of gods, you are right! But all manifestations of the same OM. (612)

The above quote describes various gods and multiple religions that are followed in Bombay, yet they are blended into one god OM. “You are Muslim: you know what is OM?” (612). The hybridity of mixing various religions into one and the other idea is that even though there are so many leaders, the people of India believed in Indira Gandhi to be a god. Saleem continues his idea of Widow’s Hand:

What I learned from the Widow’s Hand is that those who would be gods fear no one so much as other potential deities; and that, that and
that only, is why we, the magical children of midnight, were hated feared destroyed by the widow, who was not only Prime Minister of India but also aspired to be Devi, the Mother-Goddess in her most terrible aspect, possessor of the Shakti of the Gods, a multi-limbed divinity with a centre-parting and schizophrenic hair… . (612)

Saleem dislikes the power of Indira Gandhi for destroying the nature of India in order to make it a modern western country. He says Indira Gandhi cannot stop the flow of history by locking the midnight’s children in the Widows Hostel. The midnight’s children are unable to protect themselves, as the Widow’s Hand uses a trick to beat every one of them. Saleem says that midnights children were “people whose hold on reality was absolute” (399) that they were so powerful in the service of their arts and such powerful personality has been destroyed by the Widow in order to strengthen her position. She locked the children in the Widows Hostel which is a place of pain and sorrow thereby the future of children with hope was destroyed:

This place is a home for bereaved women now, they, understanding that their true lives ended with the death of their husbands, but no longer permitted to seek the release of sati, come to the holy city to pass their worthless days in heartfelt ululations. (605)

By locking the children in the Widow’s Hostel, the Widow seeks an alternative source of power. The children of night’s as Saleem says, “the other potential deities” had their magic gift of power to create a parallel magic, space of dialogue and potential action that she perceives as serious threat for her construction of a
mythical power. The Widow wants to strengthen her grip on history by evoking images of myth.

Rushdie’s mythology writing comprises a different sources of religious, cultural and media that blends the reality and fantasy in their distinguish way. John Clement Ball in “Pessoptimisro: Satire and the Menippean Groteque in Rushdie’s Midnight’s Children” comments on Rushdie’s positive idea of Nehru and its dislike of Emergency:

As his controlling image of the leak proves life-enchantingly dialogue in principle but damagingly hostile to dialogue in practice, and as Menippean energies are overwhelmed by satire, so Rushdie celebrate the Nehruvian vision with which independent India was ‘born’ – as a secular, pluralistic democracy-but scourges the historical assaults on the vision that culminate in virtual “death” during Indira Gandhi’s Emergency. (239)

The character of each midnight children is different but they have a common thing that is been linked by Rushdie. Saleem has the ability to read the minds of other people as he is one of the existences of the midnight children. Out of 1001 midnight’s children, three of them prove to be outstanding. Shiva, born like Saleem “on the stroke of midnight” had been “given the gifts of war”; Saleem has the greatest talent to look into the hearts and minds of men. As having been expelled from a children’s gang he decides to set up his own “a gang which was spread over the length and breadth of the country and whose headquarters were behind my eyebrows” called “Midnight Children’s Conference, my very own M.C.C” (287). And third Parvati- the- witch, the most powerful of the female
midnight children, next to Saleem and Shiva “born a mere seven seconds after midnight on August 15th [and] had been given the powers of the adopt the illuminates, the genuine gifts of conjuration sorcery… (200), these three children are closely linked to each other.

Pier Paolo Piciucco in “The (HI) story of Padma’s 1001 Different Faces” says about Rushdie’s use of allegory in his works:

I usually resist the idea of allegory. In India there is too much of it, allegory is a kind of disease. People try to decode everything, every story or text allegorically and although clearly there are elements that you could call allegorical in Midnight’s Children and Shame… (115)

The character of Shiva, who is a member of Midnight Children’s Conference, founded by the young Saleem, is the chief contender of Saleem. Whenever Saleem communicates with other children “into a kind of forum in which they could talk to one another through me” (227), it is Shiva who closes it “off from me any part of his thoughts he chose to keep to himself” (226). He symbolizes the beast power.

Shiva is a magical child who is Saleem’s equal and opposite. He is the most powerful and independent character of officers agency, unlike Padma, a main character in the part of the core story. He is the second main character of the Midnight’s Children Conference and is gifted with a wonderful strength that originates from his powerful knees:

These techniques which are also attitudes of mind, I have lifted-or-perhaps observed from the most formidable of the midnight children, my rival, my fellow-changeling, the supposed son of Wee Willie Winkle: Shiva-of-the-Knees. (303)
He transforms from an ordinary Bombay slum kid into a powerful gangster and finally becomes a military officer during the period of Emergency. Brought up as a poor child by Wee Willie Winkie in the Street of Bombay, he has a deep hatred against Saleem. Thereby, Shiva who has the power to eliminate the member from MCC under the task of the Widow eliminates first Saleem from the MCC. Shiva’s class war attitude links his politics with the ruthlessness of the Emergency. Shiva’s challenge to Saleem’s abstract idealism is fully displayed in their first meeting of the Midnights Children’s Conference. Saleem has to be head and others are helpers of the MCC in the process of constructing the “imagined community” of the nation. Shiva’s thirst for power quickly calculates the power of Saleem and finds out that they should be “the joint bosses” of this gang (263) who dislikes it. Saleem consistently argues against Shiva’s anti-idealism in outlining what the national tasks for the children of midnight should be:

Something more like a, you know, sort of loose federation of equals, all points of view given free expression [...] we must be here for a _purpose_, don’t you think? I mean, there has to be a _reason_ you must agree? So...we should try and work out what it is and then you knew, sort of dedicate our lives to... (263)

But Shiva, with a slur similar to Padma’s “city kid” but much more critical, counters:

Rich Kid [...] you don’t know one damn thing! [...] what thing in the whole sister-sleeping world got reason year? For what reason you're rich and I’m poor? [...] Man, I' tell you-you got to get what you can, do what you can with it, and then you got to die. That’s reason, rich boy. (263)
Saleem is an optimist looking for reason, hope and meaning and Shiva is a pessimist, driven from poverty and as the knowledge of inequality that made him reject the idea of a rational world. He seeks a chance at power to eliminate Saleem whenever Saleem comes out with the letter of the Prime Minister; Shiva interrupts frequently in a powerful and dominant voice and stops him. Shiva tries to have Saleem under his thumb, just as Padma originally appears to be the boss of Saleem as a narrator.

The hybrid concept between Saleem and Shiva has the problematic subject of the notions descent and origin of the narratives that overlap with history and truth. The class basis is exposed in their character, Shiva is diametrically opposed to Saleem not because he as anti-nationalist but because he is anti-idealistic; he does not trust in political and religious aspect; he trusts in himself; he is a revolutionary person. Shiva the name of the god of destruction in Hindu mythology constantly disrupts and critiques Saleem’s nationalist plans throughout the novel, as a subaltern British officer, connected to the real world of poverty and fights for survival. Shiva’s criticism of Saleem and the legacy of 1947, emerging from his marginalization are portrayed as being quite legitimate. Shiva can only engender a critique; he cannot form any alternative basis for understanding the nation.

After being imprisoned by Shiva, with his expanded powers of policing under the Emergency and after undergoing the “sperectomy,” “the draining out of hope,” Saleem feels the old pull of optimism but realizes there is no escape:

Yes, here is optimism, like a disease: one day [Indira Gandhi will] have to let us out and then, and, wait and see, maybe we should form, I don’t know, a new political party, yes the midnight’s part.
…children something is being born here, in this dark time of our capacity; let Widows do their worst; unity is invincibility! Children: we’ve won! … Too painful, optimism growing like a rose in a dung-heap: it hurts me to recall it. (610)

Saleem realizes the falsity of rewriting the defeat as victory and embraces the failure of his vision, the failure of India and the failure of storytelling: “gone forever […] the originally – one – thousand – and – one marvellous promises of a numinous midnight. … Who are you? Broken promises, made to be broken” (614). The Emergency declared by Widow’s Hand had broken the midnight’s children conference in the leadership of Shiva. Saleem states:

What I learned from the Widows Hand is that those who would be gods fear no one so much as other potential deities and that, that and that only, is why we, the magical children of midnight, were hated feared destroyed by the Widow, who was not only Prime Minister of India but also aspire to be Devi, the Mother-goddess in her most terrible aspect possessor of the shakti of the gods, a multi-limbed divinity with a centre-parting and schizophrenic hair… (612)

As a postmodern text Midnight’s Children distinguishes “real” and “true”. Saleem indicates that truth is an indefinable something beyond reality:

True, for me, was from my earliest days something hidden inside the stories Mary Pereira to me: … True was a thing concealed just over the horizon towards which the fishermen’s finger pointed in the picture on my wall, while the young Raleigh listened to his tales. (90)
Childhood stories and art capture the truth which reality (adult) fakes. Superstitious Padma-Mother of time is true because she trusts the reality which lies on the fringe of Saleem’s incredible narration. *Midnight’s Children* is the active unfolding of tales and stories by a talented narrator Saleem, whose writing is all-absorbing; he needs another figure to significantly take care of him. He therefore created Padma a “nurse and cook” whose nature and function appear ambivalent. She is not the real author of the stories but it is through Padma the novel links narrative process to the elite-centred politics of class.

Padma is situated in narrative present temporally. Padma listens and comments on Saleem’s story as he narrates, controls its form and content as a real author as well as she cooks, treats his broken body and completes her household tasks as a househelp. Saleem is repeatedly forced to cut away from his narration because of Padma’s “loud” interruptions; his delay, digressions and confusion in narration frustrated Padma. She asks the basic questions of “Who?” “What?” and “Why?” to Saleem in order to understand the historical story accurately. Padma becomes a counter narrative and counter aesthetic to Saleem, she challenges him, orders him to get on with the path, asks him to summarize and force him to tell the story according to her convenience and shops him whenever she has work. Padma, the second critique, is more powerful than Saleem. Saleem allows himself to be corrected by Padma in order to reveal the superiority of his narrative methodology. Saleem introduces Padma at the beginning of the second chapter of the novel:

> Padma – our plump Padma – is sulking magnificently. She can’t read and […] dislikes other people knowing anything that she doesn’t.
> Padma: Strong, jolly, a consolation for my last day. But definitely a bitch-in-the-manager. (20)
Padma’s “sulkging” at Saleem’s refusal to eat while he is writing is portrayed to be a childish response, rooted in illiteracy. Her specific gestures convey the image of “the angry South Asian Women.” Saleem feels sympathetic to Padma, considering the daily working conditions:

She stirs a bubbling vat all day for a living; something hot and vinegary has steamed her up tonight. Thick of waist, somewhat hairy of forearm, she flounces, gesticulates, exits. Poor Padma. Things are always getting her goat perhaps even her name: understandably enough, since her mother told her, when she was very small, that she had been named after the fuse goddess, whose most common appellation amongst village folks is “the one who possess Durg. (20)

Besides some degree of pity for Padma’s daily hard work, she is superior at this juncture by occupation, appearance and origins. She is viewed from a distance, as a curious creature conveying an unusual physicality and earthiness. Padma is gendered by her labour, in way that is sometimes complicated but always sexist. Saleem states: “I must go to bed. Padma is waiting; and I need a little warmth” that her brief parting from him is to be viewed as an exceptional case and due to her hot temper and that she is totally dedicated to her man, represents that they are husband and wife.

Padma’s place in the novel soon becomes more complicated and the next step in her character is the development of her role as a narrator. She undergoes a significant change towards the end of the novel. The entry of Padma into the role of reader and critic opens up new relations between the new Padma and Saleem. Padma begins to contest Saleem’s authority as a storyteller; she angrily reacts to
Saleem’s portrayal of her and she breaks out of the mold of “poor Padma.” She angers Saleem not that he makes fun of her with the name, but that the “city boy” thinks that her name could be a source of frustration of her. “In my village there is no shame for being the Dung Goddess,” Padma exclaims, “write at once that you are wrong completely” (29).

Padma gives a greater credibility to Saleem’s original binary opposition of urban complexity and rural simplicity. Saleem’s voice functions true to the English speaker but his representation of dung with critical eye, to recycle is apparent that he is an implied author of simplicity: “Dung, that fertilizers and causes the crops to grow! Dung, which is patted into thin chapatti-like cakes when still fresh and moist, and is sold to village builders, who use it to secure and strengthen the wall of Kachcha buildings made of mud!” (29)

Padma’s importance breaks with an acceleration of the plot and apparently fulfills her wishes, “[b]owing to the ineluctable Padma - pressure of what - happened – nextism” (38). Whether she is praised or mocked, Padma is explicitly constructed as an illiterate, simple-minded, rural character whose “power” lies in her down-home anti-intellectualism. Saleem encourages Padma to be sceptical of narrative power and reliability: “Padma: if you’re a little uncertain of my reliability, well, a little uncertainty is no bad thing cocksure men do terrible deeds. Women, too” (254). But he ultimately reveals in his narrative mastery: “call it education, or class-origins … . By my show of erudition and by the purity of my accents, I shamed them into feeling unworthy of judging me” (254).

Sudha Shastri in “Tamas and Midnight’s Children from the Historical to the Postmodernist” comments with two points:
From one point of view, the journey from historical to postmodernist is an unfolding, a blossoming of potential, despite the seeming gulf between them. In that case, this is a movement in completion; and the second, equally plausible perspective, the journey from realist—historical to postmodern—historical is an unoriginal, uninventive call the more indicting a term, considering that postmodernism prides itself on inventive techniques) imitating of the western journey. (123)

Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* ends with an optimistic note of changing India. His son Aadam Sinai, actually born for Shiva and Parvati is a born survivor who might change this country to be a better one. Saleem says that Aadam Sinai “will have to be a magician to cope with the world I’m leaving him” (641). He will have to find new gods and spirits, other charms and spells, in short form a new India. May be he is already equipped to do so because the first word he utters is “Abracadabra: which is not an Indian word at all” (642). After comic visions the novel comes to a heavy end where Saleem concludes “a thousand and one children have died because it is the privilege and the curse of midnight’s children to be both masters and victims of their times... to be unable to live or to die in peace” (647).

Rushdie’s use of fantasy, magic, realism, history, autobiography and political allegory brings out the plurality and his love towards the nation. Micheal Reder in “Rewriting History and Identity: The Reinvention of Myth, Epic and Allegory on Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*” states: “History, like making chutney, involves both preserving and combining a finite number of ingredients from an almost indefinite number of choices. It also involves the altering of form, changing yet preserving” (242). Thus Rushdie’s revision and addition in the novel are perfectly acceptable in the postmodern type of historical discourse.
Rushdie’s merging of historical fact and literary fiction in *Shame* strengthens his premises as a writer of fairy tale. As the postmodernist writer, he writes about the central idea of the vanishing of reality with the mixing of literary genres. Re–imaging and re–writing the nation’s history in his narration is the central theme in this novel. As a political satire in the analysis of society, the novel plays a vital role. In their critical portrait, Pakistan politicians promptly came forward to ban *Shame* in Pakistan. *Shame* reveals Rushdie’s maturity as a writer and his unnamed narrator is the reflection of himself, who controls the narrative with remarkable self–confidence. *Shame* is all about the life of men and women and their social and political history of Pakistan. Rushdie’s repression about Pakistan’s shame is revealed as: “O shame, shame, poppy shame” (16) but he is too polished as a citizen to scream therefore his narrator persona actually does it.

Rushdie’s personal angry feeling is expressed through his narrator, it is true that he had suffered to the agony of losing his mother country twice; once at India by the political surrounding and a second time in Pakistan to escape completely to cover or hide into the shameful environment. His political exposes Zia Ulhaq’s Pakistan “a sort of modern fairy tale” (70), so it is clear that the “I” is the expressive output of Rushdie’s feelings as the author narrator. Rushdie’s narrator explains at length the form of his story that it is not certainly a realistic story. The narrator says:

> The country in this story it not Pakistan, There are two countries, real and fictional, occupying the same place. My story, my fictional country exit, like myself, at a slight angle to reality. I have found this off – centring to be necessary; but its value is of course, open to debate. My view is that I am not writing only about Pakistan. (29)
The uncertainty between real and imaginary; author and narrator, merging from one another is a kind of fiction. It is easy to see that the narrator is almost Rushdie, as well as there are many characters in the novel who are recognized by the great names in the politics of Pakistan. According to Rushdie the shame of the politics created the country an untenable:

the famous moth – eaten partition that chopped up the old country
and handed As – Lah a few insect – nibbled slices of it some dusty western acres and jungly eastern swamps that the ungodly were happy to do without. (A1 – Lah’s new country: two chunks of land a thousand miles apart. A country so improbable that could almost exist). (61)

This provides the theme that exposes the dark political history of Pakistan. Rushdie puts his truth against the “politician” version and makes it a fabulous tale and cleverly gives a lie to the original truth. Rushdie’s strategy is to clear up the boundaries between fiction and truth, story and history. His fabulous village “Peccavistan” brings out a sense of inequity and purity and its conquest is fused together with fictions and truth. The novel brings out the reality existing in the socio – political life of Pakistan:

… the issue of Time Magazine (or was it Newsweek) which never got into the country because it carried an article about President Ayub Khan’s alleged Swiss back account; or about the bandits on the trunk roads who are condemned for doing, as private enterprise, what the government does as public policy; … or about the extra hangings – the first for twenty years – that were ordered purely to legitimize the
execution of Mr. Zulfikas Ali Bhutto; or about why Bhutto’s hangman has vanished into the air … or about smuggling, the boom in heroin exports, military dictators, venal civilians, corrupt civil servants, bought judges, newspapers of whose stories the only thing that can confidently be said is that they are lies. (70)

Rushdie’s word “realistic” is ironically referred to in the text in order to bring out the actual political and social situation of Pakistan. The narrator offers the list of things that a realistic novel would include and the above paragraph is a good example that gives a clear reference to the events and political figures involved in reality. As a postmodern text it exposes the unreliable nature of language and magic realistic perseverance along with the details of the real instants.

Rushdie’s obvious correspondence between the fictional world of the novel and the actual situation of Pakistan makes it clear that the magic realistic nature of the text does not imply the political and social concerns in Pakistan. The text counters the claim that magic realism turns away from contemporary issues. The referential value of magic realism is asserted stylistically through the narrator’s self – reflexive incursions and thematically through the character of Sufiya Zinobia. The fabulist style of the novel is systematically deconstructed, even though the narrator calls the novel “a modern fairy tale,” it presents reality. He tries to make the historical context to be far - off, but he however relates the tale to the historical events:

All this happened in the fourteen century. I’m using the Hegiran calendar, naturally: don’t imagine that stories of this type always take
place long long ago. Time cannot be homogenized as easily as milk, and in those parts, until quite recently, the thirteen- hundreds were still in full swing. (13)

Rushdie wanted to denote the life of his country and the deconstruction of the country’s quality that entrenches the novel in twentieth century reality. It is a remark with reference to magic realism achieved through postmodernism.

Rushdie presents an “anti – history” for the portrayal of reality; his characters represent the real names from history. For example, Haroun named after the great Caliph son; Babar Shakil named after the founder of the Mughul dynasty in India is an immoral person; Rani Harappa named after Rani Humayun, Queen of Humayun and Babar is the father of Akbar. Bilquis’s father Mahmoud ironically recalls Mahmud of Ghazni (971–1030) known as the “sword of Islam,” one of the earliest Muslim conquerors of India. And finally Omar Knayyam Shakil, the peripheral hero with great poet’s name, his last name Shakil means “well-formed,” “comely” and “handsome,” is gross in his softness and intemperate in his habits and personifies shamelessness in the novel.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto gets the persona name of Alexander the Great. Iskander Harappa as represented before Alexander, the pre historic Harappan civilization. Both allegorically Bhutto - Iskander and Haq - Raza are ugly pictures of their great names of their real - life counter parts. Rushdie intervenes in his narration by making comments and giving real life examples in order to create the voice of the fictional world. The real example from his life is portrayed in the novel is his sister living in Karachi and his Pakistani friends who visited him in England. Rushdie’s first person narrative portrays the relevance between magic and fiction and it is
obvious that he is the first person narrator, who explains how he created his real characters into fictional characters in the novel.

Rushdie as an immigrant tries to bring out the authenticity of shame that the women face in the country through his magic realism. For example he writes about Bilquis and her shame as a representation of all women: “would not be talking about Bilquis and the wind” (65) and his repression that he does not stay there for more than six months: “ever lived there (Pakistan) for more than six months” (66).

Rushdie points out the violence and various diseases that the country faces in a form of magic realism:

Lurid affairs, featuring divorces, bankruptcies, droughts, cheating friends, child mortality, diseases of the breast, men cut down in their prime, failed hopes, lost beauty, women who grew obscenely fat, smuggling deals, opium – taking poets, pining virgins, curses, typhoid, bandits, homosexuality, sterility, frigidity, rape, the high price of food, gamblers, drunks, murders, suicides and God. (76)

The novel portrays the women with shame, primarily directed to the opposition of shame and shamelessness. For Rukmini Bhaya Nair put in “Text and Pretext: History as Gossip in Rushdie’s Novels” says that Shame narrative is “shaped as gossip” and is “creatively empowered to reclaim the metaphor of an elite history” (995).

Rushdie points out that it is not a book about Pakistan, but it is certainly a feminist novel even though women occupy a large part of the story. As a postmodern text, it is a retelling of history rather than a creative literary novel. In order to make it a fairy tale, he uses myth to control history over presenting reality.
He brings out the reality of women throughout the text. Rushdie’s narrator recognizes the importance of telling them:

> I hope it goes without saying that not all women are crushed by any system, no matter how oppressive. It is commonly and, I believe, accurately said to Pakistan that her women are much more impressive than her men ... their chains nevertheless are no fictions. They exist. And they are getting heavier. If you hold down one thing you hold down the adjoining. In the end, though, it all blows up in your face. (181)

In Bilquis’s story, Rushdie acquires the sacredness of truth of history: “Her story altered, at first, in the retellings, but finally it settled down, and after that nobody, neither teller nor listener, would tolerate any deviation from the hallowed sacred text” (76). Raza Hyder’s remarks to Bilquis after her “initiation” marks of story into history, “The recounting of histories is for us a rite of blood” (77).

Bilquis is nicknamed by the street rogue as the Rani of Khasi. Bilquis is left totally destitute. Bilquis running from the burning fires of partition with a shawl to cover her modesty finds refuge in the arms of Raza Hyder, who subsequently marries her. She loses everything, expects her duppatta, the traditional Islamic emblem of women’s modesty and enters the Red Fort. Women entering Red Fort where Muslims were given refuge from the massacres during the partition is highly postmodernist used by Rushdie. At the Red Fort she encounters Raza and the conquest is on both sides, Raza her husband treats Bilquis well. During these days of their courtship, he brings her fine clothes; Bilquis accepts the fine clothes gifted by Raza even though she is aware that these have been removed from the dead
bodies of victims of the massacres. The narrator considers Raza treatment of Bilquis more humane.

Rushdie recognizes the strength of women; therefore his women characters are strong and individualistic. They take over whatever space they have, even if it is as narrow as the single bed on which Sufiya Zinobia sleeps, it is theirs and woe to the one who dares encroach on their personal space. He says:

I had thought, before I began, that what I had on my hands was an almost excessively masculine tale, a saga of sexual rivalry, ambition, power, patronage, betrayal, death, revenge. But the women seem to have taken over; they marched in form the peripheries of the story to demand their inclusion of their own tragedies, histories and comedies… It occurs to me that he women knew precisely what they were up to – that their stories explain, and even subsume, the men’s. (173)

Rushdie’s claims that by creating strong female characters and weaker male characters, he is not empowering feminine, he is re-asserting the fears of the patriarchal ruling class and promoting the myths. Ashutosh Banerjee in “A Critical Study of *Shame*” states about Rushdie’s postmodern “unbelonging” characteristic in his work:

Rushdie’s deliberate exploration of liminality blurs normal categories, dismantles conventional definitions and boundaries of nation – ness and belonging, deconstructs simple divisions of the masculine and feminine and thematizes subjectivity as enigma. (75)

Rushdie’s creation of Sufiya Zinobia and her relationship with the narrator is a representation of stereotypical fear of the patriarchal society. Sufiya is a
product of fantasy; she has considerable qualities of shame. Rushdie personifies in her the shame of Pakistan. Sufiya seems to have grown out of the corpse of the murdered girl in England. Caught between two cultures, she becomes a sacrificial scapegoat in punishment of the guilty parents for being a female child. Through the deformity of Sufiya, Rushdie creates an oppressive world that becomes really grotesque. He dwells the triggers of violence with Sufiya by shaping her as a badly slow down girl from a politically powerful family. Rushdie explains her horror to be the evil “shame”: “Let me voice my suspicion: the brain – fever that made Sufiya Zenobia preternaturally receptive to all sorts of thing that float around in the ether enabled her to absorb, like sponge, a host of unfelt feeling” (122).

Rushdie’s portrays all the evil feelings collected inside Sufiya Zinobia and that turns her into a monster, frustrated, violent automation and a murderer, first of chickens and later worse. They turn her into the victim of a disease that eats away at her own immune system; the first outburst of her violence is a demoniac soaking of necks of Pinkie Aurangzeb’s two hundred and eighteen turkeys. The second outburst is an attempted wringing of the necks of Naveed’s husband, Talvar. There are subsequent instances of violence which she becomes responsible. Later she becomes the wife of an immunologist Omar Khayyam Shakil, who finds in her the ultimate metaphor for political and social contamination, that her body emerge all the crimes and violence of her society.

Sufiya Zinobia is another example of “unbelonging” and comes at the centre of magic realism that provides a critical outlook on the patriarchal system by which she is confronted from the day of her birth. Sufiya is associated with magic realism the moment she is born to the disappointed parents. Raza Hyder her father
and future president of the country, refuses and argues that the newborn is a son and not a daughter, whereas “the body blushes at birth” to be a “shamed” (90). The role of magic realism in the character of Sufiya goes beyond this incidental unnatural blushing. Aijaz Ahmad in “Rushdie’s Shame: Postmodernism, Migrancy and Representation of Women” however is doubtful of the implications of magic realism:

The governing metaphor … -- the Beast emerging from inside the Beauty, while the Beauty herself is anything but beautiful in any conventional sense -- is again superbly within the tradition of the Grotesque, and the political idea which is inscribed within this metaphor a women’s inherent right to be not a doll but a fighter -- is equally powerful. One’s sense of unease comes, however, from the irrational and spurious powering which Sufiya’s violences accumulate and from what she herself becomes (a destroyer of men, fields, animals, a four-legged beast). (147)

Rushdie brings the idea of postmodernism which is being made of shame and reflecting shame back to itself. He says, “There is no place for monsters in civilized society. If such creatures roam the earth they do so out on its aftermost rim, consigned to peripheries by conventions of disbelief ...” (199). The narrator seems to think that if Sufiya who is shame is alienated in Pakistan, what remains then is only shamelessness: “what’s the opposite of Shame? What’s left when “Sharam” is subtracted? That’s obvious shamelessness. (39)”.

Sufiya’s transformation is a fantastic element in the form of magic realistic technique used to reveal reality. Sufiya is the only female character who does find
expression for her frustration and being unable to explore and express her femininity, she blushes out in fury. As a problematic character, she magically becomes the fury of all the shame surrounding her. She is not responsible for her shamefulness, but the creation of the myth of shame around her is responsible.

When the two – months old Sufiya contracts a fever, her mother immediately assumes or creates the worst scenario for the outcome of her child that the narrator explains:

Bilquis rendering hair and sari with equal passion was heard to utter a mysterious sentence: It’s a judgment. ‘She cried beside her daughter’s bed. Despairing of military and civilian doctors she turned to a local Hakim who prepared an expensive liquid distilled from cactus roots, ivory dust and parrot feathers, which saved the girl’s life but which (as the medicine man had warned) had the effect of slowing her down for the rest of her years, because the unfortunate side – effect of a potion so filled with elements of longevity was to retard the progress of time inside the body of anyone to whom it was given. (100)

Sufiya is born as a symbol of shame to her parents as well as a symbol of violent action of the Pakistani society. She provides unity among the disjointed and extensive narratives of the text. She blushes not merely for her embodiment of resistance, female resistance, a resistance movement by the oppressed in the regimented Islamic society but also for the representation of Pakistan’s ruling class. Sufiya is the embodiment of shame and Shakil her official husband is for shamelessness.
Sufiya can be compared to the wounded race of Islamic girl blushing at the indignities loaded on them by their own people. She turns out to be wild, the beast because of her people. She represents the neo-colonial state of Pakistan by her lack of mental development and emotional instability. Sufiya’s blushes begin at her birth for the simple reason that her mother expected to be a boy, it is a shame which harasses all her days on earth. Shame is destined to be a specifically female attribute. Generations of women are fated to suffer from a sense of female inadequacy which is constructed by patriarchy.

Thus, the creation of Sufiya, the “hapless devourer of men” has become something entirely different. Her role is completely contradictory. She is the symbol for shame but simultaneously she is the symbol for a reality. Shame is a product of historical myth according to the narrator:

I mean emotions that should have been felt but were not – such as regret for a crime, embarrassment, propriety, shame? Imagine shame as a liquid, let’s say a sweet fizzy tooth – rotting drink, stored in a vending machine. Push the right button and a cup plops down under a pissing stream of fluid. How to push the bottom? Nothing to it. Tell a lie, sleep with a white boy, get born the wrong sex… the button pusher does not drink what was ordered; and the fluid of shame spills, spreading in the frothy lake across the floor. (125)

Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* remains stuck in the patriarchy and that most of the women in the text are only cooks or suckles whereas in *Shame* the portraits of women are drawn more sympathetically than the portraits of male (husbands). Rushdie’s representation of women occupies the major portion of all
the narratives in the book. Rushdie himself has drawn attention to the state of women in comparison with Islam, through the narrator. There is no representation of male figures among the oppressed section of Pakistan society such as workers, peasants, militants or patriotic intellectuals. It is by analyzing the author’s representation of women’s contradictions and contrast that exists between the ruler and the ruled in Pakistani society. Rushdie reduces female activism as motions of shame without gender identity. Shame does provide a fascinating component as “Shamelessness, shame the roots of violence” (118). The quotation becomes an ultimate theory in *Shame*, concluding the relationship between men’s shamelessness and women’s shame. *Shame* promotes female activism towards gender equality in Pakistan through the interpretation of Sufiya’s violence against male oppressors.

Rushdie relates women and shame as much as he relates to men and shamelessness. The lack of women’s gender identity goes unresolved; *Shame* certainly provides a sight of a female activism in violence to face women’s oppression. As Lotta Standberg in “Images of Gender and the Negotiation of Agency in Salman Rushdie’s *Shame*” argues, “Shameless behaviour causes shame when acted upon women, but dishonour when acted upon men. Furthermore, shamelessness can only be defined when pitted against it result” (146).

As the postmodernist text Sufiya’s anger is an example, which is in an exaggeration of Rushdie; however a person is angry, they cannot become a beast. In the same way the character Naveed had more than 27 children which is impossible. In Islamic culture, several pregnancies are usually a reason to rejoice because they mean fertility is the blessing of God. The narrator uses a basic
Postmodernism functions with magic realism in disapproving social and political practices depicted in *Shame*. The narrator’s reappearance of the trope of migrancy and his uncertain position as one who has discovered the country only “in slices” (69) actually feed into the magic realist or postmodern concern of his narrative. The narrator ironically refers to shame being all, but it is a realist novel: “Realism can break a writer’s heart and claims that with this non–referential novel, nobody need get upset, or take anything I say too seriously. No drastic action need be taken either…what a relief” (70). In his criticism, Rushdie firmly establishes the existing lives of Pakistan in this novel.

Rushdie’s *The Moor’s Last Sigh* is novel about modern India that brings out the city of Bombay in reality. The setting of the novel is the present day Bombay dominated by fundamentalism, underworld nexus and showy cine stars. Moreas Zogoiby the protagonist of the novel flees a destructive Bombay of gang wars, bombings and communal violence. Corruption, political exploitation and religious discourse are the central themes of the novel. Rushdie covers the corrupt structure of corporate capitalism and power of Bombay in this novel.

As a postmodern mock epic, the novel records the rise and fall of the four – generations’ enthusiasm of Zogoiby’s family. The change in Bombay’s name as Mumbai brings out the power of the ruling party in the city. Bombay was named in 1995 by the British rulers that came from the Portuguese “bom bahia”, “good harbour,” which was the original name of the local goddess. The name was changed by a nationalist of the state from colonial rule and Bombay’s was transformed into an Indian rather than a British.
Rushdie’s connection of love and hatred towards Bombay is the central idea of the novel. His narrator feels that the “super epic motion picture of a city” has two sides. One is the “improper Bombay” that has many headed cosmopolites of diverse cultures which Moreas Zogoiby has a deeply love towards the “inexhaustible city” of excess. The other one the new Bombay of religious and nationalistic obsession, is the city of “senseless” bombings and the egoistic pessimism. There was the successful Indian nationalist who struggled for independence of India led by Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi, whereas the contemporary Hindu nationalist movement has rejected many of the Nehruvian principles. Rushdie’s heartfelt message of *The Moor’s Last Sigh* is to defend the richness and multiplicity of the first Bombay against the assaults of the second, against the imposition of Hindu language, art and gods as “authentic” and Indian culture against fundamentalist Hindu tradition.

Jawaharlal Nehru and his supports in the congress party supported a varied and tolerant secular state, where as the Hindu nationalist are aggressive towards minority religious such as the non–Hindus. Nehru imagined Indian history to be a palimpsest of successful intercultural relations that the new nation would constitutionally extend and promise. Nehru attended Oxford and was in many ways a supporter of westernization, in the same way Gandhi was skilful at fusing the conflicting symbols of the nation for the strengthen nationalism. Although he launched his political movement from the city of Ahmadabad, he was educated at abroad just as Nehru but he crafted his political identity as an opposition to western modernization where as the Hindu nationalist largely rejects western cultural imports. The independence movement was based on a philosophy of non-violence
whereas the contemporary Hindu nationalist willing uses violence to achieve their ends. Bombay appears as a microcosm of India in the rhetoric of both groups of nationalist. Sujata Petal’s in “Preface Sujata Petal and Alice Thorner” demonstrates:

Contemporary relevance of making the city stand in for the state by its very existence as well as by its content, but Bombay’s status as a mini – India is order and more vexed than the title of Patel and Thorner’s book may imply to a Western reader. After independence, Nehru made Bombay the focus for congress’s First Five Year Plan of economic development, and looked at the city as a model for India’s future economic growth and urbanization. (ix - xii)

Contemporary Hindu nationalists consider the recovery of Mumbai from colonial Bombay as a success of their projects throughout the country. For some Indians, Bombay is a metaphor for India in its history as multi – ethnic, multi – religious society while for others, history is exactly what the real Mumbai that to overcome by turning to the culture of the surrounding state of Maharashtra. The focus of multi-perspectives supported by the magic realistic elements of the text prepared the narrator to expose the direction of reality that gave rise to the violence during the eighties and early nineties in Bombay.

Magic realism in the novel is used as an aesthetic element to bring out the lust for power that damages the unity of the modern India. Moreas goes on to discover the direction and power struggles of his own family and he also witnesses the “War” among the different class of Bombay. Laura Moss in ““Inscribing the
Palimpsest: Politics of Hybridity in The Moor’s Last Sigh” argues, that Moraes in the evidence of Rushdie’s attempt to distance his writing from magic realism:

In this mock – epic the protagonist request his own deflation…

Rushdie’s self parody is firmly entrenched as he indicated that extraordinariness is not always the site of strength. Such a mockery of difference also adds to Rushdie’s underlying critique of the proponents of magic realism who envision the form to be politically imbricate as he himself did. (223)

Rushdie is closer to reality and gives a clear reference to the miserable condition of post-independent Bombay.

The post-independent Bombay is represented through his characters.

Abraham Zogoiby’s “Siodi” company and his talcum powder business are used as mere cover – ups for his underground and more profitable dealing in narcotics, arms and even in the Khazana Bank International (KBI) secret scheme that developed the “so – called Islamic bomb” (341). Moraes sadly relates that his father was even involved in human trafficking acquiring isolated temple girls for a Mogambo – like Muslim Mafiosi. Moraes is not sure whether his father is responsible for Aurora’s death, but the narration of Rushdie makes it clear that Abraham is responsible for the destruction of the city of Bombay.

Fielding and Abraham are merciless enemies; they magnify the results of each other’s action. Abraham is caught up in tragedy, apparently brought about by Fielding. Abraham presides over an Axis “Zogoiby Da Gama Axis,” which generates his vast fortune. Calling the Zogoiby Da Gama holdings an “Axis” suggests that Abraham’s methods and priorities are not so different from
Fielding’s. Abraham borrows and distributes the European culture. Fielding the novel’s secondary villain is clearly identifiable as the Shiv Sena leader Bal Thackerary – a satirical move which stirred outraged among Sena activists in Bombay.

Rushdie makes a difference between Raman Fielding and his model. Fielding’s group is not called the Shiv Sena but “Mumbai’s Axis”, a name which Fielding arrives after several alternatives:

In his bizarre conception of cricket as a Fundamentally communalist game, essentially Hindu but with its Hindu-ness constantly under threat from the country’s other, treacherous communities, lay the origins of his political philosophy, and of ‘Mumbai’s Axis’ itself.

There was even a moment when Raman Fielding considered naming his new political movement after a great Hindu cricketer – Ranji’s Army, Mankad’s Martinets – but in the end he went for the goddess – a.k.a. Mumbai – Ai, Mumbadevi, Mumbabai – thus uniting regional and religious nationalism in his potent, explosive new group. (231)

The “Mumbai Axis” announced its intention to march to the exhibition and launch a protest against the deliberate show of “a pornographic representation of sexual assault by a Muslim ‘Sportsman’ on an innocent Hindu maiden” (232).

Fielding was to lead the march and address the crowd, violence was expected, so police were present. Aurora saved the situation by bribing Fielding, and Moreas records that though the march was called off Aurora had removed it. In his magical realistic style, he shares his sorrow at the development: “A principal had been eroded; a pebble bounced down a will plink, plank” (233).
Fielding’s group parallels the Sena by showing the western roots of its nationalist rhetoric. The choice of the name “Mumbai Axis” is significant both in what it adds and what it omits and replacing Shivaji’s Mumbai has become the central focus of the movement. Rushdie at irregular intervals undercuts the most successful element of the group’s fundamental structure such as turning the real Shiv Sena’s shaka system into an Axis philosophically based on cricket. Fielding’s obsession with the “Hindu” game of cricket suggests that Hindu nationalism is arbitrary in its appropriation, clamming alien cultural artifacts as its own and the Hindu nationalist fails to realize that they themselves are the products of a hybrid society.

The two Axis of Raman Fielding and Abraham Zogoiby are rivals in the beginning, but towards the end of the novel their similarities make them partners in the destruction of the old Bombay – a Bombay which Fielding disdains because it is too cosmopolitan and which Abraham disdains because it is not cosmopolitan enough. Abraham’s destruction of the old city begins with building; he wants to create a new Bombay, an international Bombay of steel sky scrapers, at the top of which he lives in a greenhouse garden. Abraham’s grand architectural ambitions attract comparisons with Shah Jehan, the great emperor and architect who built the Taj Mahal, but these comparisons imply Abraham’s dark as well as his light side:

He showed how easy it would be to persuade those worthy officers whose job to was it monitor and control the number and height of new buildings in the Reclamation that they would be much advantaged were they to lose the gift of sight – ‘metaphorically, of course, boy – it was only a figure of speech; don’t think we wanted to
put out anybody’s eyes not like shah Jehan with that peeping Tom who wanted a sneak preview of the Taj’. (186)

Abraham’s new constructions are grand, on the scale of Taj, but like the Taj they grow out of the suffering of others. In Abraham’s Bombay, the builder is legally non-existent and the inspectors are “blinded” by corruption. He may be in competition with Fielding, but it is only a competition for power; while their ideologies differ, Abraham is perfectly willing to profit from the recent migrants. Fielding’s agenda however reprehensible has some measure of affection for the old Bombay, but Abraham has no interest in preserving any aspect of local culture.

Rushdie’s expatriate identity and physical marginality pull him to a condition to interrogate and demand a description. He attempts to distance himself by parodying the educational knowledge that apparently embodies the nation and individual within the structure of the reality. The lifting of inhibition is politically weakened as well as troublesome:

After a long while I found my way blocked by a man with – I narrowed my eyes and peered – the head of bearded elephant who held in his hand an iron crescent dripping with keys… I was ordered to remove my clothes. Naked, shivering in the hot night, I was manhandled into a cell. A door – a whole life, a whole way of understanding life – closed behind me. I stood in darkness, lost. (286) Here the confining of the protagonist is absurd, logically and terribly unjustified. Nevertheless he is incarcerated into a “solitary confinement” of a terrible description.

Rushdie’s chronological type of the expatriate account of nation is a re-description and merging of myth memory of history and fiction. His homeland
definitions disrupt the politically available history of the nation. Sometimes it is parodied, lampooned, metaphorized or mythified. As Viney Kirpal in “The Moor’s Last Sigh and Writers Freedom” comments:

Postmodern writers including Rushdie have variously shown through their works, how powerful modern state governments have become and correspondingly, how marginalised is the common man. Writers are only the word’s court jesters, its Fools whom tradition has given the license to talk back even to kings. They need a calm, harmonious, free universe to live and work in, for they are self-directed to ‘tell the truth’. They fear no powers and it is their destiny to stand along. So they are more vulnerable, more easily marginalized than anybody else. (350)

The mythic dimension of the novel is underlined by the fact of the protagonist being exiled for fourteen years like that of the hero of Indian epic who continues to produce tales even being away from his native space. Moreas discovers “Fourteen years is a generations; or enough time for regeneration” (430). The political and historical body interfusion of the past and present imprinting exposes celebrating subject of the birth of new form of discourse. Rushdie’s tales keeps on generating with the narrative discourse of his fiction:

I’ LL SAY IT AGAIN: form the moment of my conception … I have aged twice as rapidly as the old earth and everything and everyone thereupon… Engendered on one hill, born on another, I attained mountainous proportions when I should still have been at the minor mokhill stage. (144)
The thematic obsession of Rushdie is reflected through his fictional approximation to the native national space.

_The Moor’s Last Sigh_ intertwines the alternative realities of magic and real; irrational and rational on the authenticity of facts. When Aurora wishes for a child who would grow faster than a usual child grows, the imaginary vision of Aurora in personal, but ultimately gave birth to magic that is clear in the birth of Moreas. Moreas is extraordinarily big and grows fast enough for him to have a moustache at the age of eight. Moreas obediently obeys his mother’s wish by emerging four and a half months after his suspected birth, but in reality nine months previous to his birth the narrator points out that Aurora goes to Delhi and meets “her good friend the Prime Minister [Jawaharlal Nehru]” (175). If conceived nine months earlier, as logically, then it is a story of magical dimension becomes socially acceptable. To accept the concept that Moreas was conceived four and half months before his birth which is a magic and moreover the lie obtains real existence as baby himself accepts the course and does indeed magically speed out of his mother’s womb and through life:

The day Baby Gargantua Zogoiby drew his first breath…, his physical development was already so advanced that a generous reaction serving somewhat to impede his passage down the birth canal – that nobody in their right mind would have thought of calling him half-formed. (144)

This disorder allows him to grow “a fully waxed – pointy tipped moustache” at the age of eight (189) and “makes his body seventy when his actual age is thirty – five” (339). Thereby Aurora’s irrational wish that comes true becomes a reference
for the way facts are created and history constructed so as to fit into the magic realism technique of writing.

Rushdie’s research with ekphrasis (recalls the past and foreshadows the future) and his narration carries out the imaginary works of art throughout the novel. The best-known instances of ekphrasis in western literature are the description of the shield of Achilles in the *Iliad* and of the frieze on Keat’s *Grecian Urn*. For Rushdie’s ekphrasis becomes a helpful device to recall the past and foreshadow the future. The magical tiles in the Cochin synagogue (a Jewish place of worship) not only tell the story of the Jews in India but foretell the atom bomb. Aurora’s paintings on the wall of her bedroom portray her son into the past from Boabdil, the entire history of India to the mythic times to the present that are focused on the hybridity. In a chamber of Aurora’s fictional Malabar Alhambra, against a wall decorated with intricate geometric patterns:

the Moraes stood naked in the lozenge – patterned Technicolor of his skin. … To the Moraes’s left was his fear some mother, queen Ayxa – Aurora in her flowing dark robes, holding up a full – length mirror to his nakedness. But the lozenged Moraes was not looking at himself in the mirror for in the door way to his right stood a beautiful young woman – Uma, naturally. Uma fictionalized, His panicised, as this ‘Chimene’… introduced without explanation into hybrid universe of the Moraes – and between her out spread, inviting hands were many marvels – golden orbs, bejeweled birds, tiny homunculi – floating magically in the lucent air. (246 – 47)
Aurora’s beautiful major painting of Moreas has been changed the day she meets her frustrate Uma Sarasvati called “Mother – Naked Moraes Watches Chimenes Arrival” (246). The painting changed from a beautiful Bombay to the dark side of Bombay and Uma becomes the centre of her painting. Uma the more appealing of the two women in this painting distracts Moreas from his mother by offering him many beautiful “treasures” and “marvels”. According to the painting, the figure of Uma seems to have been witched him with these objects, as they seem to magically float in the air between her hands. Uma, a sculptor reinforces the majority’s dominant ideas through her art. Moraes notes:

my first exposure to Uma’s work… was also my first intimation that she was in any sense religious. That she should now commence giving interviews declaring herself a devotee of lord Ram was bewildering, to say the least. (262)

Her apparent devotedness to Hinduism is what wins her over in the Hindu majority’s eyes, while Aurora’s secularist surrealist work of an equal hybridized world was “mauled” by the same people for being immoral. Aurora says about Uma, “That girl of yours in the most ambitious person I ever met, excuse me… she sees how the breeze is change offing and her public attitudes are blowing in that wind” (262).

Magic realism or the epic – fabulist manner or the mythic – romantic mode to which Aurora’s had turned obsessively since she was thirteen had freed her as an artist. She could mix history, family, politics and fantasy with “the great crowds at V.T. or Church gate stations” without having to visit them actually (203-4). Thereby magic realism allows an artist to fuse ordinary day events; it gave Aurora
ample scope to represent India which in her favourite theme as cosmopolitan and multicultural rather than limit herself to a realistic representation of India as Hindu nationalist.

Rushdie in order to bring out the reality presents Aurora’s another painting called *The Kissing Ali Baig* (1960) based on a real incident. The incident occurred during the third Test Match against Australia at Bombay’s Brabourne Stadium. When Baig reached 50 (half century),

a pretty young woman spectator dashed out from the stands and kissed the batsman on the check. Aurora who liked cricket, rushed home and in a single sustained burst of creativity completed the painting converting the “real” shy peck, done for a dare… into a full–scale western–movie clinch. (228)

Aurora’s version which was quickly displayed and reproduced in the national press was received “as a state–of–India painting, a snapshot of cricket’s arrival at the heart of the national consciousness, and, more controversially, a generation cry of sexual revolt” (229). After a while, just as the tiny scandal seemed to have fizzled out that a young cartoonist named Raman Fielding did them all, when he viciously and falsely accused the talented Baig of having deliberately thrown away his wicket against Pakistan because he was a Muslim. The caricature said: “And this is the fellow who has the nerve to kiss our patriotic Hindu girls” (230.)

Rushdie presents the notion of multiplicity to counter religious and communal singularity through Aurora’s art and her postmodern aesthetics. Her art represents a diversity of harsh voices, some orthodox, some subversive of the times in which they were produced. Moraes informs soon after the picture was re–withdrawn that:
…Aurora herself never made great claims whether of principle or quality – for *The Kissing*; to her it was a jeu d’esprit, quickly conceived, lightly executed. It became, however, an albatross and I witnessed both her annual at having endlessly to defend it… [It] had distracted attention from the body of her real work… Suddenly she found herself being described…as a ‘Christian artist’. (233 – 34)

Rushdie hints that the root cause of world conflict today is solipsism, the theory that the self is all that exists and singularity between individual and national. The solution is multiplicity, Aurora’s palimpsest world, where the world mix and merge indistinguishably. The postmodern fear of destruction is exposure to hardened positions out of anger and hatred, giving rise to more conflict and more evil. The situation for the writer becomes very difficult; therefore the alternative for Rushdie is the Alhambra. It is across the water of Spain, a monument to pure, unalloyed “defeated” and love that is victorious in humility and purity:

Love that endures beyond defeat, beyond annihilation, beyond despair: the defeated love that is greater than what defeats it the most profound of our needs, our need for flowing together, for putting an end to frontier, for the dropping of the boundaries of the self. (433)

Therefore love is the only solution for the globalization in this world; everything interwines with the other. According to Rushdie by loving and living together these problems can be solved.

*Fury* is the first American novel that depicts New York, which has entered the twenty first century at the height of its global economic success and cultural
domination. Salman Rushdie is best known contemporary writer in the Postmodern English Literary world. His works carry a deep imprint of the complex socio-cultural scene of India as well as his passionate towards the Indian history. As a postmodern novel *Fury* pictures the hyper reality and penetrates the social aggression of urban life. Rudiger Kunow criticizes in “Rushdie’s *Fury* as an Endorsement of American Cosmopolitanism”:

*Fury* epitomizes a carefree cosmopolitanism with a noncommittal view less a victim suffering from globalization than a member of the elite profiting from it, Rushdie has left the diaspora and has integrated with mainstream America. (367)

Salman Rushdie’s postmodern characterization in *Fury* is in the grip of “furies”. He exposes the inner turmoil of the major characters that the unknown anger spells rain around them. The four main characters in the novel struggle with their furies and they fulfil certain roles in the city of New York thereby becoming archetypes of particular social groups of the real world.

“Fury-sexual, Oedipal, political, magical, brutal - drives us to our finest heights and coarsest depths,” (30) the protagonist Malik Solanka says. He also says that “Out of furia comes creation, inspiration, originality, passion, but also violence, pain, pure unafraid destruction, the giving and receiving of blows from which we never recover” (31). This exploration revisits old concerns, while attempting to stake out new territory in styles and subjects unfortunately. Professor Solanka turns out to be an intellectual and emotional charlatan who finds himself at first standing over his sleeping spouse with a kitchen knife, then playing out
incestuous fantasies with his nubile neighbour and finally peddling philosophy for the masses in a cheap internet saga.

Solanka’s life history of “unbelonging” is present with bits and pieces of insights into his psychological structure. Solanka conducts three love affairs in the novel first with his wife Eleanor, second Mila and Neela. Mila and Neela are young enough to be his daughters; all three marriages becomes a failure. His first wife Eleanor leaves him and joins advertising. His second wife Mila Milo, an immigrant from central Europe, who submerges herself in the urban world of America become “a postmodern vampires” (41). She understands his anger and rechannels his fury towards something positive. She encourages him to go for work but he is able to reconstruct his life with new passion and new dolls: “a Mila as fury, the world-swallowes, the self as pure transformative energy” (178). She teaches him that “just as rage grew out of despair, its opposite, hope and optimism, are its only antidote: Furia could be ecstasy too” (193). She helps him to overcome his anger and introduces the latest technology and shows him how to work in. She gets him back to active, creative life and Solanka creates Akaszkronos, the cyber king, to replace “Little Brain”. Little brain is “smart, sassy, unafraid, and genuinely interested in the deep information” (17) where as Akaszkronos, the travelling doll has grown out of its creator’s control aided by the unnecessary attention; it has gained in the media that is driven by commercialization. Mila also gets annoyed with Solanka and walks out of his life. She gratifies her desires in Solanka’s bed but with Eddie:

What we did wasn’t wrong… I thought you understood that. I thought you might be that impossible creature, a sexually wise man who
could give me a safe place, a place to be free and set you free, too, a place where we could release all the built-up poison and anger and hunt, just let it go and be free of it, but it turns out, professor, you’re just another fool. (173)

Mila’s justification that “everybody needs a doll to play with” (31) makes Solanka realize that this role play is not simply an echo, but a reprise of this seduction of her own father. He started to think her as: “... the spider – sorceress now caught in her own necrophiliac web, dependent on men like him to raise her lover very, very slowly from the dead” (131). Each of these versions of Mila was born out of her immersion into the postmodern urban world.

Mila leaves him because he has neglected her. In this marriage it appears that the wife tried her best to erase all traces of his first doll, Little Brain, the cause of Solanka’s “fury” from their residence. But Solanka is apparently fighting the untruth of his “witty” doll by political activism, a kind of falsehood of his mind by a society to which he does not belong. Solanka’s appearance in New York with the doll sets stage for all manner of adventures, most of which generate satire filled with pessimism about the people, politics and culture of postmodern America.

After Mila, Neela Mahendra gets into Solanka’s life; she is the daughter of Jack Rhinehart, a journalist. Rhinehart’s abandonment of his life as a war correspondent for a position as a celebrity gossip journalist and his obsessive compulsion to seduce wealthy white women are merely the signal of identifying crisis. He had been seduced and his desire to be accepted into the Whiteman’s club was the dark secret from which his anger grew. Jack Rhinehart’s fury resulted in suicide, after his suicide, Neela in search of comfort comes to Solanka.
Neela escaped to New York just as Solanka. She used her time in the city to prepare for a return to her past. And she actively involved in political demonstrations held in New York in support of her fellow Indo-Lilliputians. But, the protest ultimately fails because they degenerate into violence, which Solanka takes:

… evidence here in New York City of the force of a gathering fury on the far side of the world a group fury, a born of long injustice, beside which his own unpredictable temper was a thing of pathetic insignificance. (193)

In Neela’s arms, Solanka experiences transformation of “Love conquers fury” (219), they share precious moments. But even this does not last long, Neela gets caught up in Lilliput Blefucu politics and civil war and loses her life.

Rushdie’s portrait of American psyche and contemporary scene of observation of present culture is embedded through professor Solanka’s intellectual powers in the form of nostalgia. His first wife has become a well known figure in advertising. The fifty five year old Solanka observes that the society of the seventies saw advertising as “When Sara gave up the serious life for the frivolous, working in ad-land had been slightly shameful… Advertising was confidence trick, a cheat, the notorious enemy of promise” (33). Linked with capitalism advertising was seen as horrible, the job of selling was considered dishonorable in that era but in the present day Solanka remarks, “Everybody, as well as everything was for sale” (33). Advertisement contributed to “presenting the dream of an ideally beautiful America” (34), which Solanka found untrue. This is again a reference to thinly masking the real, since “beyond money management” (34) and networking,
Through his protagonist Solanka who is caught in the maelstrom of American customers, Rushdie exposes the absurdities and tragedies of postmodern American life. The more subtle connection between the way Solanka’s constructed dolls and the way Rushdie used his experience of the *fatwa* is explained very clearly in the novel. “Solanka soon learned the value of working, like the great matedor, closer to the bull; that is, using the material of his own life and immediate surroundings and, by alchemy of art, making it strange” (16).

Solanka is failing himself and it is made clear through his inability and unwillingness to blend into New York’s cityscape. Instead of the “gold - hatted figure” that leads the “exemplary American life” (82), Solanka’s old world, “dandyish, cane-twirling figure in a straw Panama hat Cream linen suit” (4), cement him as an “un-American” and therefore becomes fundamentally “unbelonging”. America is the land of self-creation, “country whose paradigmatic
modern fiction was the story of a man who remade himself” (79), and of course, the “Promised land” is at the zenith of its “hybrid omnivorous power” (44). 

America welcomes everyone with lots of dream and they look forward to that as a Promised Land, nothing back home would interfere with one’s life. It is not freedom, not belonging to America, nor preferring American culture, that drives people like Solanka to America, is it merely the vastness of the land. Solanka comes to realize that this is not the haven he imagined in his quest for quiet and peace. This is because of the growing materialism and commercialism of America. Solanka notes that everything in America can now be bought and “sold, even people, especially women, who are becoming less human and more doll-like” (74).

Solanka admits that he has been seduced by the veneer of “its brilliance” and “he was compromised by this solution”:

it made him what it promised and eternally with held. Everyone was an American now, or at least Americanized: Indians, Iranians, Uzbeks, Japanese, Lilliputians, all. American was the world’s playing field, its rule book, umpire and ball. Even Anti-Americanism was Americanism in disguise, conceding, as it did, that America was the only gama in town and the matter of America the only business at hand. (87)

Solanka believed the world’s greatest city would afford him with peace and harmony, but finds out that the city had made to strive in vain for that healing. Solanka’s behaviour sets him apart from crowd, because he cannot overcome the simmering disconnected anger that continued to seep and flow deep within him.
Solanka’s disillusion leads him to the comprehension that America had it all wrong. With all the powerful dollar and wealth it is empty, “people were stressed-out, cracking up” (115). He wonders how he would have surrendered to the thought that America would heal him. Solanka thinks that people in America were highly disappointed because their expectations were high. Experience of Solanka is that “This was the only subject: the crushing of dreams in a land where the right to dream was the national ideological cornerstone” (184). American urban life style positions him outside of New York’s frame.

Malik Solanka’s unbelonging made him run away not from his family, but from himself as well as from future. People around him Eleanor, Mila and Rhinehart fail to understand him and he leads a haunted life. He becomes an orphan in the society and to the world; his behaviour appears abnormal. But inside the exploration of his fury, he tries to regain his normal self and starts a new life. Neela’s words come to mind sprinkled with optimism. The earth moves and sun is the centre: “The earth moves. The earth moves around the Sun” (225). So he returns to the world with the hope of his son Asmaan, Asmaan means the sky in Urdu. Solanka gets back to London with a hope to reunite with his family.

But his wife Eleanor and his son Asmaan are leading a happy life with Morgon Franz. He watches his son cycling from “the privacy of a grove of Oaks,” but does not produce himself before him. At this he is so dejected that he once again feels that he is of no use, not even for a dog that refuses to piss at him. The image of dog adds poignancy of his dilemma: “The dog moved on, having established that Solanka was not suitable for his propose. The dog was right. There was little purpose for which Solanka felt suitable right now. Nothing its beside
remains” (256-257). Solanka once again feels betrayed by the world. As if to give
meaning to his lost family life he adopts a romantic end in order to bring himself to
the notice of his son. He climbs up the top of the stairs of a bouncy ledge and
shouts at the top of his voice. “Look at me! Asmaan! I am bouncing very well: I’m
bouncing higher and higher” (259). Still seized by the furies, he jumps off from the
ledge, from life itself. Furies have registered their conquest at last.

The significance of the novel is reflected through Solanka’s own abuses
about the consequences of failure in the postmodern world and how one should not
“Contemplate what lay beyond failure while one was still trying to succeed” (82).
The ending of Fury brings out the nature of urban life and particularly of American
life at the end of what is called “American Century”. Rushdie through his character
brings out the fury established between individual and national urban environment.
The exploration has multilayer ramifications – social, psychological, cultural and
political.

Thus, the novel Fury offers a unique perspective on postmodern America
and urban life within a moment of transition between twentieth century and
twenty-first centuries. Even though it is Rushdie’s first American novel, it is as
much Indian, Asian, African or the British in that it echoes the globalization within
it. R. Chakkaravarthy in “Seized by ‘Furies’: A Study of Salman Rushdie’s Fury”
says:

The novel makes it clear that the furies have the individuals and the
society in their grips and cause all such tragedies. There is need for
more tolerance and understanding. Rushdie spells in clear terms that
our hopes are founded upon respect for human rights and a desire to
see good prevail. As the inevitable conclusion Rushdie suggests that Solanka and his likes are to seek ‘peace within’ since the media and the postmodern society only tend to rob it. Only love can conquer fury. (171)

Salman Rushdie an eminent postmodernist has a touch of unreality and vastness that needed to project contemporary reality, a reality devoid of borders. In Shalimar the Clown, he voices this concept of a borderless world and its implications:

Everywhere was now a part of everywhere else. Russia, America, London, Kashmir. Our lives, our stories, flowed into one another’s, were no longer our own, individual, discrete. This unsettled people. There were collisions and explosions. The world was no longer calm. (37)

He employs the postmodernist technique of merging history with reality. The pictures of men and women present in history are converted into fantasy through film techniques, melodrama and dark humour. He is able to convey his deep longing for Kashmir, the land of blue-eyed saga of Markandeya and Adishankara through his techniques. The novel may be an ode to the simple, idyllic life of the valley, the land of Rushdie’s roots, a land of eternal beauty and charm, that “… as lost … like paradise, … Kashmir, in a time before memory”(4). He portrays an ideal world of Kashmir with its unique way of life, it’s “Kashmiriyat”, where differences and divisions were non-existent; a world untouched by hatred and communalism in the beginning of history.

Rushdie’s vision of a paradise on earth is introduced in the “bed story” of Shalimar the terrorist. The Kashmir of the days of Rushdie’s grandparents to
whom the novel is dedicated was full of fun and frolic, peace and harmony, beauty of human life and nature that was incarnated in the village of Pachigam. It is a place of peace, love and brotherhood. The Kashmiri way of life is a world of innocence that is betrayed by its own people and slowly walks down the path to destruction. Jason Cowley in “From here to Kashmir” states about Rushdie’s expression, “… Sadness for the ideal has been lost in Kashmir and in so many parts of the Muslim world, the ideal of tolerance and secular pluralism” (27).

As a magic realist text Shalimar the Clown a global nature of the narration ranges from different geographical locations around the world. Starting in Los Angeles, the action moves to Kashmir and Delhi, 1940’s Strasbourg and France, 1960’s London, back to Kashmir, the Philippines and reaches its climax in 1990’s Los Angeles. Just as the novel moves over the globe, it has different timelines. Max moves across frontiers and through time zone, with rudeness, “In civilization, there are no borderlines” (143), his father tells him. Rushdie combines the wonder of fairy tale with grittiness of hard and political realism. Especially Max’s wartime experience is described in a long section which is unbelievable for the reader. “On June 13th, the government abandoned the capital to the aggressor, out flanked and irrelevant, the French forces at the Maginot line surrendered a few weeks later …” (149).

Rushdie has displayed a lot of violence to say in his novel. He says, “The cycle of violence was endemic to the human race, a manifestation of the life cycle. Perhaps violence should be what we meant, or, at least, perhaps it was simply what we did” (297). Shalimar joins the “Iron Mullahs”, who condemn harmony and tolerance and want to rid Kashmir. His performance and clowning acquire a new
ferocity. The departure of his wife Boonyi with Max addicts his terrorist zeal. After taking an oath of revenge he becomes “an unplugged automation” (236). Around this time he takes another oath of complete loyalty to the cause of terrorism. “I cleanse myself of everything except the struggle! Without the struggle I am nothing” (268). To demonstrate his total obliteration of his past and the adoption of a new identity, he puts off all his clothes in front of Balbul Fakh, a leader of the terrorist group. Shalimar would like to take revenge on his wife Boonyi and her lover Max, first he kills Boonyi and then he plans to kill Max.

There is an intricate, international plot of magic realism at the back story for a murder of Max, thought it’s a simple crime of passion. The novel starts with a flashback technique. In the beginning Shalimar in mature adulthood lives in Los Angeles and works as a chauffeur for the aged Max Ophuls. Max knows nothing of Shalimar’s secret history and the reason for his present in America; this is the reason for his murder. And this was the mistake of Max, because one afternoon, shortly after Max has appeared on television to denounce the insurgency in Kashmir, Shalimar removes a knife from his pocket and slits the former ambassador’s throat. The murder is witnessed by Max’s adult daughter India. The narrative is framed by India or Kashmira’s story and maps her relationship with her father Max Ophuls. The murder of her father is apparently politically motivated crime. To understand her father’s murder, Kashmira has to confront her father’s role as part of the U.S. government:

Was she, in mourning her butchered parent, crying out (She had not wept) for a guilty man? Was Shalimar the assassin in fact the hand of justice, the appointed executioner of some unseen high court, was his
sword righteous, had justice been done to Max, had some sort of sentence been carried out in response to his unknown unlisted unseen crimes of power …? (335)

Shalimar’s revenge to kill his wife Boonyi and his enemy Max had been accomplished. Finally caught and sentenced to death, largely on the basis of the revenge mainly for the murder of Boonyi, Shalimar remains in his cell doing “Slow-motion dancelike exercises” and sometimes “simply sitting cross legged on the floor with his eyes closed and his hands lying open on his knees, with his palms upturned” (387).

Shalimar was waiting for his final ends, yet he did not forget the next item of his revenge to murder his illegal step-daughter India. His youth, along with all its clowning shows, wakes up and after his jail-break by jumping over the wall, almost walking on air, he rushes to India’s house with his favourite weapon the knife, but he does not get any opportunity to kill her. India who wanted to take revenge for her father and mother death is waiting for Shalimar to arrival. She targets Shalimar first not with arrows or knives but with her letters that were her “arrows of hate” (374). She slowly kills Shalimar’s ego, which is the real cause of her parent’s death. Yet his hurt ego does not die, India fails.

India’s desire to seek justice for her father’s death appears to be a re-enactment of Max’s own wish to avenge his parent’s death in a Nazi concentration camp, which he did by joining the French Resistance Movement. Rushdie complicates his argument by paralleling the story of Shalimar and Kashmir with the narration of Max Ophuls in 1930’s Strasbourg, the subsequent occupation of France by Nazi Germany and Max’s involvement in the French Resistance. The
story of Max, the Resistance hero, is related through his own memories that set him up as a romanticized war hero: “Max Ophuls was a living flying ace and a giant of the Resistance, a man of movie-star good looks and polymathic accomplishment, and in addition he had moved to the United States…” (161). The Resistance provides Max with the discovery that the self can be remade. This is later given a gain parallel with the reconfiguring of selves in the terrorist training camps across the border from Kashmir, where Shalimar acquires his skills as an assassin. Max further elaborates on his role in the Resistance.

Entering the Resistance was, for me, a kind of flying, … One took leave of one’s name, one’s past, one’s future, one lifted oneself away from one’s life and existed only in the continuum of the work, borne aloft by necessity and fatalism. (166)

Through the character of Max, Rushdie brings out the overwhelming might of America and how it acts in remote areas of the world to secure its own interests by installing that government loyal to its political agenda. Max is part of system who understands the world through neoliberal globalization, where new market is opened through an aggressive foreign policy that defends American interest across the globe. Max a Jewish born from France who has lost his family in Nazi atrocities and leaves Europe to become a key architect of the new post-war world of America, but plays off small nation for America’s own gains, to secure its position as the globe’s pre-eminent and triumphant superpower. As the extent of Max’s dealings is revealed, India concludes:

The word right and wrong began to crumble … as if the Max she knew were being unmade and replaced by this other Max … moving
through the world’s burning desert places, part arms dealer, part
Kingmaker, part terrorist himself … He had been … both a
manipulator and a benefactor, both a philanthropist and a dictator,
both creator and destroyed, buying or stealing the future from those
who no longer deserved to possess it, selling the future to those who
would be most useful in it, smiling the false lethal smile of power at
all the planet’s-future greedy hordes …. (335-36)

The blurred line between Max and Shalimar is different, and insurgency reappears
when India both physically and mentally arms herself for her private guerrilla
warfare against her father’s killer. “After a day of archery or … a trip out of town to
Saltzman’s shooting range, she came home and retired wordlessly to her private
wing … She no longer lived in America. She lived in a combat zone” (382).

Like her mother who left home and family for the sake of a false and
borrowed identity, India leaves for Kashmir’s inquest of her true identity. She
returns not as India but as Kashmira:

Kashmir lingered in her, however, and his arrest in America, his
disappearance beneath the alien cadences of American speech,
created turbulence in her that she did not at first identify as culture
shock. She no longer saw this as an American story. It was a
Kashmiri story. It was hers. (372)

Shalimar’s first and innocuous encounter with India negates the moment of Boonyi
is death as he reincarnates the mother in the daughter:

When he saw her, when those green eyes speared him, he began to
tremble … She’s alive. He didn’t know what he wanted. She was
living in America now and by some miracle she was twenty four years old again, mocking him with her emerald eyes, she was the same and not the same, but she was alive again. (323)

Shalimar’s desire for revenge is disturbed by the simultaneous negation of an earlier violent act of vengeance by Boonyi’s murder and less clearly articulated in his wish to have her back in the moment of his encountering India.

The character of Boonyi is where Rushdie brings out his opposed state of mind in the novel. Boonyi in her teenage sexual relationship with Max is contrast to her innocent young girl in Kashmir. Boonyi’s earlier sexual awakening in Kashmir produced scenes which were tender, evocative, humorous, richly embroidered and ultimately tragic. But the adultery sexual Boonyi scenes given with Max at Delhi are vulgar, exaggerated, ugly and farcical; it brings out Rushdie’s bad interest in her character. All the innocent charm and brave beauty of Boonyi is thrown away suddenly and she is made out to be depraved, lazy, greedy, immoral, shallow and brainlessly self indulgent in Delhi scenes.

Boonyi is bored by the prison of a paradise and eager to see the world, she like Eve is easily tempted and eagerly accepts the ambassador’s offer of a change and quickly leaves with him, soon to become his pampered sex object become pregnant. There is nothing that is common in Boonyi; the lovable heroine of Kashmir in the beginning becomes the hideous anti-heroine in the middle of the novel at Delhi. Rushdie shows her falling victim in her depression, then to pill-popping and then to opium addiction. She doesn’t just become fat in an impossibly short period of time, one year or so, she becomes so large that she is compared to
the trapped whale who cannot fit through the doorway and who needs two seats in the aeroplane:

Inevitably her beauty dimmed. Her hair lost its lustre, her skin coarsened, her teeth rotted, her body odour soured, and her bulk-ah! Her bulk-increased steadily, week by week, day by day, almost hour by hour. Her head rattled with pills, her lungs were full of poppies. (203)

And later Rushdie describes Boonyi:

Boonyi was no longer Anarkali, she had lost her beauty and could no longer dance, and the ambassador was nobody’s son but the man of power himself…. Stories were stories and real life was real life, rated, ugly, and finally, impossible to cosmeticize in the greasepaint of a tale. (204)

Max makes her pack up for Pachigam where she is considered to be dead by her family. She gives birth to girl who is named “Kashmira” there and later “India”, a name given to her by her biological father Max Ophuls: the two names symbolize the oneness of Kashmir. This child is taken by Peggy, the British wife of Max, the heroine of World War-II. She takes the child as the revenge of the long suffering from Max. Max the superhero, Boonyi the lovable heroine can do anything; they were helpless; in the same way the Kashmira’s peace and harmony was taken up by the terrorists; no one can stop it.

Devasree Chakarvathya and G.A. Ghanshyam in “Salman Rushdie Shalimar the Clown: a Trilogy of Innocence, Betrayaln and new Beginning” say that India is the beginning of the new world with peace and harmony; therefore she cannot be killed towards the end:
Hatred can never extinguish the life force. It lives on in the hearts of people, like it does in Kashmir. Kashmira embodies the emergence of a new beginning from the chaos and turmoil of betrayal to the arrival of a bright new dawn, full of hope and regeneration. Her presence is an indication by the author that Kashmir will not be lost; it will emerge from the darkness into the light of true freedom and hope for all its people a new life. (98)

India put on her darkness spectacles and switches off all the lights and waits for Shalimar to enter. She is already well trained in archery, shoots him dead with her traditional weapon, the bow and arrow. Therefore Shalimar is killed by India towards the end of the novel in order to make India alive. She had already killed Shalimar with the glimpse of truth and the one she kills with her arrow at the end is the shadow of that man. Rushdie mixes some earthy humour with his high tragedy; he ends the story with the tragic distraction of the paradise Kashmir and deadly effects of division of Muslims and Hindus. His fictional suggestion combines the harsh conclusion of the defiled marriage of Boonyi and Shalimar and tolerant Kashmir into the hell of racial hatred. David Myers in “The Pitfalls of Magic Realism and the Fall from Paradise: The Rape of Kashmir in Salman Rushdie’s Shalimar the Clown” states:

Rushdie is a restless, postmodernist writer. He is intellectual, cultural, imaginative, but easily led into hyperbole and arabesques of decoration, farce and parody. He provides superb narrative entertainment and a kaleidoscope of moods, settings and mythically embroidered tales. For these reasons he is perhaps at his best with
falulation on the minor characters such as Maulana Bulbul Fakh, the
witch Nezarebad door, Olga Volga, General Kachhwaha and Bombur
Yambarazal. They are wonderful creations and some grotesque hyper
bole does them no harm. (29)

Rushdie has portrayed the tragic history of Kashmir through his portrayal
of characters. All the characters mingle and blend with the recent Kashmir’s
political life and culture. He has given his protest against the Kashmir condition
and wanted this condition to be changed in the near future. He has ended his novel
with a positive note “There was no India. There was only Kashmira and Shalimar
the clown” (198). This represents a new life, new beginning with the distraction of
all division and become a hybrid and a multicultural horizon, which has no place
for division or borders with each other.