GOATS AND GODS, DEMONS AND DOGS: ZOOMORPHISM IN SALMAN RUSHDIE'S NOVELS

by

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of

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Salman Rushdie makes widespread use of bestial imagery in writings about the postcolonial subcontinent. This thesis examines Rushdie's use of zoological language and the metamorphosis of human characters into animals in *Midnight's Children* (1981), *Shame* (1983), *The Satanic Verses* (1988), and *Shalimar the Clown* (2005). The great majority of metamorphic experiences in Rushdie's fiction are not positive. With very few exceptions, sustained animal metaphors attached to particular characters, or tales of the transfiguration of human characters into animals, use bestial imagery in a pejorative sense, to represent the destructive consequences of intolerance, dislocation, violence and injustice, or as a vehicle for ridiculing/condemning those who treat others unjustly.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: Zoomorphism, Allegory, and Postcolonial Theory 3

Chapter Two: Literal Metamorphoses in *The Satanic Verses* and *Shame* 24

Chapter Three: Metaphorical Metamorphoses in *Midnight's Children* and *Shalimar the Clown* 56

Chapter Four: Conclusions: Bestial Metamorphoses in Salman Rushdie's Argumentation 85

Appendix 97

Works Cited 99

CHAPTER ONE

ZOOMORPHISM, ALLEGORY, AND POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

The use of broad descriptive categories in literary studies is commonplace, providing a convenient heuristic for grouping writers by geography, genre, gender, and the like. Such labels tell very little about a specific author, of course, and at the same time, overly detailed ones are problematic if they do not represent the entire body of work in question. Both concerns apply to academic treatments of Salman Rushdie's fiction. Scholars like to compartmentalize his novels as exemplary of postmodern, postcolonial, or Indian literature but such simplistic branding becomes messy when put under pressure. Is Rushdie not a British writer? Is *Shame* really a postcolonial novel? It is difficult to subsume Rushdie's creative work under any one heading. At the same time, despite the rich diversity of his literary output, from *Grimus* (1975) to *Shalimar the Clown* (2005), Rushdie's novels share numerous common traits. This thesis argues that an examination of his use of one recurring image provides a useful strategy for characterizing Rushdie's fiction as a whole, without losing sight of the distinctive qualities of the individual novels.

A fascination with frontiers, borders, and migration, and the changes experienced by those crossing boundaries and encountering otherness is a recurring trope in Rushdie's writing. At Yale University's Tanner Lectures on Human Values in 2002, he made the provocative claim that "To cross a frontier is to be transformed" (published in *Step Across This Line* 353). I examine this idea throughout this thesis and argue that Rushdie often introduces bestial imagery in those very places where his characters cross into or encounter new worlds. Frontiers are dangerous places where people are especially

vulnerable. At the frontier, continues Rushdie, "our liberty is stripped away." Border crossings are always "unfree at the edge" and people must be "passive, docile" (354).[1] Vulnerability can easily lead to abuse and regarding this matter too, as we will see, Rushdie regularly turns to human-animal binaries to present the plight of the weak.

Rushdie frequently presents the crossing of literal and metaphorical boundaries in his novels, and the subsequent transformations that follow, as a blurring of species. Sometimes humans become animals or act like animals, sometimes they see others as animals, and sometimes they see themselves as animals. This language of interspecies metamorphosis occurs often enough to warrant examination. Occasionally the language moves from the monstrous to the human (evolution): "I imagined [an alien as] a chameleon-like creature, a cold-blooded lizard from across the cosmos, who could take human form, male or female as required" (*The Moor's Last Sigh* 320); "She had once been a rat herself but she had turned into a human being eventually" (*Shalimar the Clown* 175). However, the direction of change is usually the opposite with an implied descent from human dignity, status, or morality toward an animalistic, wild state (devolution). Animals are dangerous, lacking control, and ultimately a threat to the ordered society of humans. Before proceeding to an analysis of Rushdie's metaphoric and metamorphic language, a brief taxonomy of this imagery is necessary.

I suggest there are five principal ways Rushdie uses bestial imagery and I list these on a trajectory moving from the concrete to the abstract:

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[1]Eva Hoffman's observations about the exilic experience are relevant here. She points out that "within a framework of postmodern theory" we tend to celebrate aspects of the exile's experience, such as uncertainty, displacement, and fragmentation. When considered this way, exile becomes "sexy, glamorous, interesting." Nomadism and diasporism, she continues, "have become fashionable terms in intellectual discourse" (44). For an alternative perspective, one that argues that transnational identity is not simply a "liberatory position," see Marciniak xiv, 23, 25, and throughout. Since Rushdie introduces the concept of borderlands, migration, and exile so frequently in his work, it is reasonable to ask whether he glamorizes the experience. I address this point further in Chapter Four below.

(a) literal metamorphosis of human characters into animals or monsters

(b) behavioural metamorphosis of human characters whose bodies do not change but whose speech and/or actions and/or values are bestial in some way

(c) perceived metamorphosis of human characters into animals, whether this is a self-assessment or the opinion of others

(d) erroneous suspicion of metamorphosis, the mistaken identification of a human character with an animal or monster

(e) the use of bestial metaphor with no suggestion of metamorphosis

I use the term transformation repeatedly in this thesis. Of course, all bestial metamorphoses involve transformation but the reverse is not necessarily true. Many unremarkable transformations occur in Rushdie's stories just as they do in most novels: characters become rich or poor, experience religious conversion or loss of faith, fall in and out of love, and undergo changes as they encounter people from other places and cultures. Such developments are perfectly normal, mundane, and familiar to readers yet quite often Rushdie uses animal metaphors – more than most writers perhaps – to relate them (usually category [e]). The use of metamorphic language (categories [a] through [d]), I argue, is different in kind from his use of metaphoric language. Here the transformations Rushdie describes almost always involve cross-cultural encounters and/or abuse. Dehumanizing imagery provides Rushdie with a vocabulary to articulate the traumas of marginalization, disorientation, and the experience of inhumane treatment by others.

The clustering of metamorphosis, bestial metaphor, encounters with otherness, and brutality is widely represented in Rushdie's novels, and I examine this recurring

trope throughout this thesis. Specifically, I intend to demonstrate that Rushdie reserves bestial metamorphoses for the drama of encounters with the other and/or moments of intolerance and abuse, focusing on *Midnight's Children*, *Shame*, *The Satanic Verses*, and *Shalimar the Clown*, but occasionally comparing these novels with his other works as well. I choose to focus on these books because they provide the clearest examples of the use of language described above. In *Midnight's Children* and *Shalimar the Clown*, Rushdie includes characters that do not literally transform into animals but evolve into bestial behaviours (esp. categories [b] and [c]). In *Shame* and *The Satanic Verses* we find the clearest examples of actual metamorphosis (category [a]) in Rushdie's fiction. These four novels are representative of Rushdie's work as a whole where we find a tendency to introduce bestial language at the very times and places where characters are marginalized and most vulnerable.

Rushdie's use of animal imagery and transformation tales is certainly not unique. Stories involving metamorphoses of people into new states of existence are ancient and widely represented in literature at least since the Latin writer Ovid (43 B.C.E.-17 C.E.) gathered up his collection of tales about "bodies [. . .] transformed into shapes of a different kind" (29).[2] According to Marina Warner, "tales of metamorphosis often arose in spaces (temporal, geographical, and mental) that were crossroads, cross-cultural zones, points of interchange on the intricate connective tissue of communications between cultures" (17). These stories can serve numerous functions, such as promising change,

[2]Examples are legion. A few notables of more recent vintage include Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* (1916), Marie Darrieussecq's, *Pig Tales: A Novel of Lust and Transformation* (1997), and J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (1999), in which the werewolf character John Remus Lupin first appears.

providing a rationale for the oppression of others, indicating progress, or articulating traumas.

Writers regularly introduce animal imagery, often in similes and descriptive metaphors, in efforts to capture certain qualities in their characters. This is perhaps most evident in depictions of literary villains. We find this, for instance, in Charles Dickens' depictions of Uriah Heep, to choose an example almost at random. When describing him, David Copperfield uses such terms as "writhing" (Dickens 224, 356, 586, 584, 711) to depict Heep's movements, refers to "the snaky twistings of his throat and body" (224), and more than once finds his fishy or frog-like handshakes repulsive (224, 357, 577). This character lacks humanity; he is a "monster in the garb of man" (721) but still literally a human being. Elsewhere he is identified as "a red-headed animal" (361), a dog (589), and a serpent (677). Other writers use animal images to symbolize villainous people or institutions not directly named in the text, as in George Orwell's allegorical *Animal Farm* (1945).[3] There are also examples, of course, of animals functioning non-allegorically as characters in stories (e.g., Timothy Findley's *Not Wanted on the Voyage* [1984]). Literary metamorphoses, on the other hand, go beyond mere descriptive language. They are more than attempts to represent the nonhuman behaviour of human

[3]This is common in biblical apocalyptic literature as well where strange beasts occasionally represent enemy nations. For instance, Daniel writes about a lion with wings, a bear, a multi-headed leopard with wings, and a beast with iron teeth and ten horns, commonly understood to represent Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece respectively (Daniel 7:1-8). The writer identifies these monsters as four kingdoms (Daniel 7:17). The human figure that approaches the ancient of days (7:13-14) presumably represents the people of Israel. A human figure carries a certain dignity that animals, especially grotesque, distorted ones, would not because God made humans in his image (Genesis 1:27). The contrast between the distorted beasts and the human figure standing before God is a sharp polemic against Israel's oppressors, one that denies them dignity while vindicating the people of God. Another well-known biblical example of bestial imagery occurs in John the Seer's representation of Rome as a grotesque beast rising out of the sea (Revelation 13:1-8).

characters, or something or someone who is for the most part unknown. Here we are referring to actual transformations of characters from one state to the other.

This thesis analyzes Salman Rushdie's use of animal transformation stories with attention to their various functions in novels depicting the postcolonial realities of those in or from the subcontinent. I begin this analysis by noting three ways this use of language ties in with Rushdie's reflections on colonization and its consequences: (a) representation and identity, (b) representation and assertions of power, and (c) representation and autobiography. Rushdie's concerns extend beyond these themes, naturally, but some preliminary observations about connections between metamorphoses and identity, power, and autobiography provide a convenient way into this topic.

Rushdie often literalizes his metaphors, an expression I take from the writer himself. The narrator of *The Moor's Last Sigh*, for example, speaks of "being forced, against my will, to live out the literal truth of the metaphors so often applied to my mother" (161; for further examples, see below). Rushdie draws heavily on animal-rich mythologies in his novels, including Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which he acknowledges as an influence (*Step Across This Line* 68),[4] and constructs many characters that blur distinctions between humans and other creatures. Some have animal names (e.g., Flapping Eagle and Bird-Dog in *Grimus*; the Walrus in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*); others are constantly associated with nonhuman species (like Ayesha and butterflies in *The Satanic Verses*[5] and Doctor Schaapsteker and snakes in *Midnight's Children*), or

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[4]Rushdie takes some of his bestial images from literary, religious, and mythological sources (on which, see Clark). On the use of zoomorphism in ancient Indian literature generally, see Doniger.

[5]Butterflies always accompany Ayesha. In this respect, she resembles Mauricio Babilonia in Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Yellow butterflies always precede him (287).

actually become bestial (like the dreaming Haroun Khalifa in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*). This use of imagery features prominently in the context of novels explaining the dynamics of colonization and decolonization.

(a) Representation, Bestial Language, and Identity

Various postcolonial theorists highlight the difficulties involved in positing absolute dichotomies between pre-colonial/traditional cultures and colonial/postcolonial realities. Contact between different people and different cultures inevitably results in influence. For instance, Bill Ashcroft uses the term "interpolation" (48-49, 52) and Edward W. Said "*voyage in*" (*Culture and Imperialism* 216, 239-61 [italics original]) to explore the dynamics at work in the inevitable mingling of culture and ideas. Homi K. Bhabha writes of a "Third Space" to indicate all cultural performance that lies at the disjuncture between historically fixed entities (53-56). For Bhabha, identity is constructed out of the intermingling of histories, cultures, and languages because indigenous people might simultaneously resist and embrace aspects of colonial society. For Bhabha, this Third Space avoids simplistic dichotomies and essentialism, constituting "the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew" (55). For Salman Rushdie, bestial-transformation stories are similarly concerned with the experiences of those living within Third Spaces, living along literal and metaphorical borders. This is consistent with Warner's point, namely, that metamorphosis stories traditionally occur along temporal, geographical, and mental points of transition (17). When characters resist simplistic labels, when they are not easily reduced to non-nuanced terms like traditional/nontraditional, Eastern/Western, rich/poor,

educated/non-educated, or whatever, Rushdie tends to represent their hybridity through bestial metaphors and metamorphoses.

(b) Representation, Bestial Language, and Assertions of Power

Some zoomorphic imagery represents abuses of power and the consequences of violence. This can occur in several ways as the following similes indicate. Abusive people, institutions, or governments *treat others like dogs* and when they do, there are often severe consequences. Maltreatment can produce anger leading to reprisals and revenge and so it is that abusive treatment provokes violent reactions, leading human beings to *fight back like tigers*. Human-to-animal transformations can also represent the moral descent of the powerful, as they become predatory, using violence or repression to control others. These human beings *act like animals*, their actions against others lack compassion and so they behave in nonhuman ways. Frantz Fanon regularly introduces this kind of language in *The Wretched of the Earth* where he observes that while imperialism might deny the colonized their humanity, it is the oppressor who behaves as a beast (e.g., 236-37). Abusers become animals when they treat the vulnerable as animals.

(c) Representation, Bestial Language, and Autobiography

Human-to-animal transformation stories can also serve autobiographical ends. Those who view themselves as lacking human qualities – often because others treat them as less than human – may turn to such metaphors to explain their place in the world, as they perceive it (category [c]). Rushdie uses language this way in *The Moor's Last Sigh* where the narrator Moraes (Moor) Zogoiby tells his story. This narration involves recurring use of monstrous/bestial language in Moor's self-descriptions. For instance, he aligns himself with Milton's Satan through various allusions in the opening pages of the

story, describing himself as the offspring of a daemonic woman and therefore "a modern Lucifer" (5). Moor tells his readers, "Mine is the story of the fall from grace of a high-born cross-breed [. . . .] my banishment from what I had every right to think of as my natural life" (5). Tales about his great grandparents are "the first of my story's four sequestered, serpented, Edenic-infernal private universes" (15).[6] Furthermore, Moor constantly describes his family through animal metaphors. For instance, his great grandmother Epifania has snaky white hair (7) and is venomously poisonous (16). Other relatives are "pig-ignorant" and behave like dogs (50). When together, Aurora and Abraham are flies (98), and separately, Aurora is a lizard, bug, and monkey (130) and Abraham a sceptical parrot (151). Aurora treats Vasco like a pet (150, 157). The family eats so much pork there was concern "we were all starting to turn into pigs" (156). When speaking of himself, Moor frequently introduces bestial metaphors: he tells, "shaggy dog yarns" (4); is a "hound from hell" (145); has "serpentine" hair (145; cf. his great grandmother [7] and father [187]), a beaky profile (145), and a broken wing (146); he is "Chicken-necked and pigeon-chested" (146); an old horse (146); a peacock (147, 162, 169), and so on.

Poignantly, Moor sees himself as monstrous. He is afflicted with what he calls "some cock-up in the DNA" which results in a "double-speed existence" (145). His body ages quickly while his mind matures at a normal rate. Moor is also deformed, with a right hand "like a club," "the fingers welded into an undifferentiated chunk" (146). This deformed boy, suffering from an accelerated physical maturation, is also enormous. His older sister observes, "You have become Mr Gulliver-Travel and we are your Lilliputs"

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[6]Similar use of imagery based on the fall of Milton's Satan occurs in *The Satanic Verses*, which I discuss in Chapter Two and in the Appendix.

(188). Moor calls himself "a skyscraper freed of all legal restraints" and a "shirt-ripping, button-popping Hulk" (188). As he grows, Moor transforms into an "appalling monster in whom a child's mind peered out" (189). The narrator's category (c) language includes comments about his "sense of self-disgust" and he is well aware that few can find any beauty in him (189-90).

Whereas Moor interprets his failures and deficiencies in relation to his family as a Miltonian fall from perfection, he views his physical deformities (clubbed hand, enormous size) as lack of/loss of humanity. To capture these inadequacies, the narrator turns to bestial imagery for self-description. Significantly, Moor's deformities lead him to a violent career as a hired thug. Once again, Rushdie clusters stories involving violence (Moor's profession) and marginalization (Moor's family rejects him) with animal descriptors.

Metamorphoses, Allegory, and Postcolonial Theory

Saleem Sinai is the narrator of *Midnight's Children* and he claims at the outset of the story "I had been mysteriously handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country" (9). His tale clearly operates at times on an allegorical level. This novel also makes extensive use of figurative language that helps make sense of the allegorical strategies of the text. In *Midnight's Children* the common metaphors found in India's national history and political rhetoric become literal. As Neil Ten Kortenaar (32-35) illustrates, there are a wide range of metaphors used by politicians and historians who attempt to tell the nation's story in terms of a person. For instance, the nation of India experiences a birth, goes through several stages of maturation, has a body that can be dismembered (the Partition of Pakistan), and so on. In *Midnight's Children*,

Rushdie literalizes these nation-as-person metaphors: "if India were a person it would be a grotesque such as Saleem, its paternity would be in dispute, and its ability to tell its story would be in question" (35).[7]

Though introducing the term allegory to a reading of Salman Rushdie's novels, as Ten Kortenaar does, seems like an obvious starting point, it is a contentious matter among postcolonial theorists. In a 1986 article Fredric Jameson makes the provocative claim that all "third-world" texts are consciously and overtly "*national allegories*, even when, or perhaps I should say, particularly when their forms develop out of predominantly Western machineries of representation, such as the novel" (69, italics original; cf. 80). He differentiates this literature from "first-world" cultural productions, which typically involve a radical split between the private and the public (69). Though allegorical levels of meaning appear in first-world writing, they are "*unconscious*" (79) whereas third-world national allegories are consciously and overtly political in nature (80). For Jameson, the distinction between third and first world texts is essentially the difference of a Marxist versus a Freudian worldview.[8]

Jameson correctly highlights the significance of allegory in postcolonial literature. Similarly, Bill Ashcroft points out that as a discourse, formal historical writing is largely a Eurocentric phenomenon and that the colonized within Empire are usually relegated to the margins of official versions of the past (104; see too 89, 92). Exclusion from this discourse forces them to communicate their stories through literary writing and the

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[7]Cf. Abdullah Noman in *Shalimar the Clown* who experiences "the bizarre sensation of living through a metaphor made real" (88). Gorra uses the term "literalized metaphor" with reference to *Midnight's Children* (118) and *The Satanic Verses* (154).

[8]Many critics read *Midnight's Children*, for example, as a national allegory (e.g., Bardolph, Hogan). This does not mean, of course, that they subscribe to Jameson's theory.

"dominant mode of representation of these colonial texts is allegorical and hence allegory becomes the site of cultural struggle, a prime site of counter-discourse" (105). Ashcroft adds that it is possible to distinguish allegory from the narrativity of formal historical writing. Narrativity

> [. . .] reproduces, metonymically, the teleological progression of the history it 'records'. The virtue of conscious allegory is that it 'questions its own authority by inescapably drawing attention to the *will* exerted in its creation; this will to represent is revealed as a human need, the product of desire or "Care" and can be understood only within the authoritative confines of . . . another allegory' ([Paul] Smith 1982:113). The literary interpolation of history therefore unveils the figural mode on which history is based and which narrativity serves to conceal. (105; [ellipses in the citation of Smith are original])

Thus, postcolonial allegories challenge traditional, European histories. This phenomenon is evident in Salman Rushdie's novels, which are 'literary interpolations of history' and accordingly, a form of subversion. For example, though *Midnight's Children* rehearses various shortcomings of the newly independent India during its first forty or so years, it also makes it clear that many of these shortcomings are consequences of colonial intrusion. We see this illustrated, for instance, in the gradual degradation of Ahmed Sinai, which commences after he moves his family into the colonial Methwold's Estate (discussed in Chapter Three below). The empire may have retreated, but it leaves a legacy of destruction.

Still, Jameson has his critics. Aijaz Ahmad, for one, questions Jameson's simplistic categorization of creative writing, arguing there is "no such thing as a Third

World Literature" (96). He also finds Jameson's thesis reductive and condescending: "To say that all Third World texts are necessarily this or that is to say, in effect, that any text originating within that social space which is not this or that is not a 'true' narrative" (105). Though Jameson's sweeping claims are open to criticism, the significance of allegorical writing as a form of counter-discourse, an alternative to Eurocentric historical writing, is clear (see e.g., Ashcroft 104; Slemon 11).

With respect to Salman Rushdie's novels, there are critics on both sides of this debate. As noted already, some read the novels as national allegories (e.g., Bardolph, Brennan). Others downplay this emphasis in particular instances, such as Justyna Deszcz, who argues that the subordination of the feminist dimension in *Shame* to a national political agenda is misguided (40). Ben-Yishai contests allegorical interpretations outright, arguing that despite allegorical moments in *Shame* "the novel is not an allegory because its levels of meaning are not distinct from each other" (195). Rushdie is concerned, rather, with a representation of shame and the "causal connection between shame and violence" (212). Questioning the usefulness of Jameson's model for interpreting *Midnight's Children*, Mossman notes, among other things, that Rushdie is in no position to be a national writer for India. Not only is he an expatriate, he also writes in the colonizer's language. Consequently, it is better to understand *Midnight's Children*, "this supposedly national narrative, [as] a kind of joke, a playful comment on the possibility of Rushdie even writing the emblematic national novel, the narrative that symbolizes the nation, his culture at large" (75).

If those following Jameson are correct, the novels as a whole are allegorical, non-Western accounts of the colonial experience, and obviously, the

transformations/metamorphoses within them function this way. However, if Jameson's critics are correct, commentators need not read Rushdie as a (mere) political allegorist. Other interpretations of his stories would be possible. There seems to be wisdom in Ten Kortenaar's middle position. In his reading of *Midnight's Children* he recognizes that the opening section "lends itself well to [an] allegorical interpretation" but after "it turns to Saleem's memories of childhood, however, other inspirations inform the narrative" (63). Among these other inspirations, Ten Kortenaar includes Rushdie's childhood experiences growing up in Bombay and influential literary precursors, especially examples of the *Bildungsroman* (63-76; cf. Castle 287, 289). Following Ten Kortenaar's lead, the remainder of this opening chapter will argue that Rushdie's complex novels do not slavishly follow any particular guiding principle. Although Jameson's model remains useful to a degree, it does not do full justice to these sophisticated literary works.

Reducing Rushdie's novels to mere allegory is problematic for various other reasons as well. For one thing, Rushdie does not always emphasize a colonizer-colonized binary. Rather, he tends to blur the familiar political, cultural, social and geographical boundaries, which form the basis of Jameson's argument. Many of his characters move across a variety of literal and metaphorical borders, sometimes migrating from East to West or West to East, at other times embracing foreign cultures. This brings straightforward allegorical interpretation into question because Rushdie is ambivalent about cultural distinctions, at times celebrating the East, at others celebrating the West. This also blurs the distinction between First and Third World literatures.

This ambivalence extends to Rushdie's professional life as well. He is clearly of two minds concerning the influence of Western culture in the rest of the world,

particularly the subcontinent. On the one hand, he is Oxford educated, writes and teaches in English,[9] and currently resides in Britain and the United States.[10] He can be sharply critical of political and religious ideologies that resist notions of progress or limit freedom of speech and expression. However, at the same time he occasionally laments the loss of dignity once characterizing the pre-colonial world, frequently lampooning the Anglophile mimicry of some of his characters (e.g., Sir Darius Xerxes Cama in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*; Ahmed Sinai in *Midnight's Children* with his "hideous mockery of an Oxford drawl" [96]; Saladin Chamcha in *The Satanic Verses*).

A second reason for moving away from an exclusively political-allegorical reading of Rushdie's novels stems from his engagement with significant social, cultural, and religious problems in the subcontinent, injustices that occur in India and Pakistan that have little or nothing to do with Western influence. Indeed, the settings of his complex novels may be largely India and Pakistan but the themes he explores are universal in scope. Rushdie is concerned with violence in whatever form it takes, whether religious

[9]On the use of the colonizers' language by the colonized, see Ashcroft's *Post-Colonial Transformation*, especially chapter 3. Ashcroft discusses the use of language in resistance to imperialism. His term "metonymic gap" indicates the sense of distance created by the use of various linguistic strategies. It is a "cultural gap" created when the colonial language is used but interspersed with words and phrases from the writer's first language, or when writers introduce concepts, allusions or references unfamiliar to those outside the culture. Ashcroft adds that "Such words become synecdochic of the writer's culture – the part that stands for the whole – rather than representations of the world, as the colonial language might" (75). The use of non-English terms and expressions by colonized writers, along with cultural and geographical descriptions that would be foreign to most Western readers, accomplishes this very thing. They cannot hope to represent that cultural experience completely but through this linguistic strategy, they acknowledge ways it differs from the dominant culture (cf. ibid., 79). The use of English by non-Western authors is an act of resistance, an attempt to assert a minority perspective onto a predominantly Western society and readership. In comments about the English-speaking world, Rushdie points out that writers frequently adapt the colonial language for purposes of resistance: "What seems [. . .] to be happening is that those peoples [in the British Commonwealth] who were colonised by the language are now rapidly remaking it, domesticating it, becoming more and more relaxed about the way they use it – assisted by the English language's enormous flexibility and size, they are carving out territories for themselves within its frontiers" (Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*, 64; see too Lazarus 14-15). Ten Kortenaar's extensive glossary of Hindi-Urdu terms, cultural references, and names used in *Midnight's Children* (257-97) provides a sense of the extent to which Rushdie's novels create a cultural gap for his Western readers.

[10]As of 2006, Rushdie is teaching at Emory University as Distinguished Writer in Residence.

extremism, intolerance, inequality, or oppression. Injustice exists everywhere, and since these themes are universal, Rushdie's novels resist simplistic categorization. He does not just allegorize Indian and Pakistani politics in his novels, rather, Rushdie's stories record the unpleasant legacy of twentieth and twenty-first century abuse left in the wake of intolerance wherever it occurs. Zoological language is one of Rushdie's many strategies for narrating this inhumanity.

A third reason for moving away from an exclusively political-allegorical reading of Rushdie's novels is his recurring use of unreliable narrators. He regularly introduces narrators in his stories that are untrustworthy or altogether incompetent. This device is fitting for postmodern novels that avoid notions of a singular, authoritative narrative or interpretation of events. Readers are often uncertain about the accuracy of information provided by the novelist and his narrators. In *Midnight's Children*, for instance, the self-conscious narrator regularly interjects his own opinions about the story he is relating to his immediate audience (Padma) and his readers. Saleem Sinai introduces himself explicitly (37-38) and he tells much of the story in the first person. What is particularly striking about this narrator is his self-consciousness (e.g., 65, 75, and 149-50). He admits to a wide variety of shortcomings: he is untrustworthy (166); needs to "improvise on occasion" because of his failing memory (384); suggests that his story of baby-swapping may be a deception attempting to justify an incestuous love of his sister (460); acknowledges that he cannot prove various details in his story (440); admits to lying in his story (443 [two times]); bases his autobiography on scraps of memory (426); claims to fill gaps (426-26); and confesses that his narrative involves distortions and imperfections (459).

Neil Ten Kortenaar points out that the notion of "a memoirist [Saleem Sinai] who is himself an allegory" involves a glaring contradiction (9). The narrator's story is based on personal experience, memory and invention, so that his version of the nation ("my India" [*Midnight's Children*, 164]) is only one of many that could be written; "'my' India [is] a version and no more than one version of all the hundreds of millions of possible versions" (Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands* 10). At the same time, as noted above, Saleem believes his personal history links magically with the story of India, even determining the course of important events in its history (e.g., *Midnight's Children* 271, 327). Ten Kortenaar suggests that what is true of Saleem – "that memories tell us about the one remembering and about the world that produced him" – is absurd in the case of an allegorical memoirist (9). Such a selective, unreliable storyteller as Saleem is only awkwardly able to serve as a representative of the country.[11] In short, he goes out of his way to undercut his own authority as a storyteller, a strategy also practiced in *Shame* and *The Satanic Verses*.

Finally, to these three responses to Jameson's proposal concerning allegory I add a fourth, one directly connected to the principal subject matter of this thesis. Rushdie's use of the various kinds of bestial metaphor and metamorphic language described above indicates interests that go far beyond concern about the politics of the postcolonial world.

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[11]Even when he confronts his shortcomings explicitly, this narrator does little to instil confidence in his readers. At one point, he realizes he got a fact wrong and proceeds to ask, "Does one error invalidate the entire fabric?" Almost immediately after admitting that his story will inevitably include distortion and rewritten history he then refuses to make corrections: "there can be no going back" (166). The reader has no choice but to follow this untrustworthy narrator as a guide. Later in *Midnight's Children*, Saleem Sinai speaks of cutting up history to suit his own purposes when clipping headlines to write a note (259-60), an activity he describes as his "first attempt at rearranging history" (260). He is quite aware of his tendency to distort his record of events and frequently returns to this subject when conversing with Padma Mangroli (her full name is given once [270]). He recognizes that errors are bound to happen (270-71), some of them the result of a faulty memory that selects, eliminates, alters, and exaggerates material (211). He acknowledges that he takes some liberty in making deliberate changes (199) and admits that imposing ideas on others is always a possibility (212).

To borrow Warner's terms again, Rushdie's novels consistently describe those inhabiting temporal, geographical, and mental spaces at some kind of crossroad. These cross-border spaces involve communication between cultures, some kind of encounter with otherness. Sometimes Rushdie's work involves national allegory, as Jameson describes it, but not exclusively. In the diverse worlds of his fiction, there are other crossroads. We find confrontations and dialogue between rich and poor, old and young, men and women, educated and uneducated, religious and irreligious, and so on. Whenever such encounters occur, the potential for abuse and violence exists and it is at such moments that Rushdie's use of bestial language is most prevalent.

Metamorphoses, Bestial Transformations and the Uncanny

Why do writers – from Ovid in the first-century B.C.E. to the present – constantly animalize human beings?[12] Bestial imagery frequently serves polemical ends. When abusers *treat* a person like an animal, they deny that person the dignity of being human. When someone *behaves* like an animal, he or she lacks human dignity. The presupposition behind both metaphors is that humans are not like (other) animals; they have capacities for reason, moral discernment, and intelligence far beyond the capabilities of other species. When vindictive language attributes animal qualities to others, the imagery is often powerful, though at times it is so clichéd as to be altogether transparent and therefore virtually innocuous. It can be destructive but it can also provide an effective vehicle for critique of systemic injustice as selections from Rushdie's fiction

[12]For general reflections on this question, and remarks about the universal interest in the proximity of humans with other species in literature, see Daston's and Mitman's editorial introduction to *Thinking With Animals: New Perspectives on Anthropomorphism* (1-14). They examine in this introductory essay, as do all the contributors to this book, "an intense yearning to transcend the confines of self and species, to understand from the inside or even to become an animal" (7).

will illustrate. Animalizing otherness works in both directions, characterizing the abuser and the abused.

Strange monsters emerge out of repression and efforts to define and demarcate cultural and religious boundaries create them. As noted earlier in this chapter, the practice of demonizing enemies is ancient. According to anthropologist Mircea Eliade, one of the functions of religion is to define sacred space (20-24), protecting against that which is unknown or monstrous:

> One of the outstanding characteristics of traditional societies is the opposition that they assume between their inhabited territory and the unknown and indeterminate space that surrounds it. The former is the world (more precisely, our world), the cosmos; everything outside it is no longer a cosmos but a sort of 'other world,' a foreign, chaotic space, peopled by ghosts, demons, 'foreigners' (who are assimilated to demons and the souls of the dead). (29)

Attempts to define and explain ordered society depend upon recognition of the unknown and so the sacred order contrasts with an otherness often labelled demonic or chaotic. Consequently, "An attack on 'our world' is equivalent to an act of revenge by the mythical dragon, who rebels against the work of the gods, the cosmos, and struggles to annihilate it. 'Our' enemies belong to the powers of chaos" (Eliade 48).

We sometimes find the use of bestial language in stories involving encounters with otherness, a phenomenon further illuminated by Sigmund Freud's notion of "uncanny strangeness." As Freud explains in his essay of the same name, the German adjective *unheimlich* means frightening, eerie, or sinister whereas its antonym – *heimlich* – involves associations with the home (*Heim*), that which is familiar, comfortable, and

safe. The positive adjective also means secret. For Freud, this is significant because the term can hold in tension the positive idea of things friendly and comfortable (*heimlich*, associated with home and domesticity) and the more sinister resonance of something hidden from sight, potentially deceitful and malicious (*heimlich* as secret). Significantly, there is a close link between the terms *heimlich* and *unheimlich*; in the former, "the familiar and intimate are reversed into their opposites, brought together with the contrary meaning of 'uncanny strangeness' harbored in *unheimlich*" (Kristeva 283). This semantic observation – the presence of the strange within the familiar – provides Freud with support for "the psychoanalytic hypothesis according to which 'the uncanny is that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar' [. . .] 'everything is *unheimlich* that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light'" (Kristeva 283; cf. Freud, "The Uncanny" 220, 225). In these terms, Freud found a linguistic basis to articulate his concept of "uncanny strangeness" – that which is vaguely familiar and yet strange and terrifying.

Encounters with people who differ from us, those perceived as frightening, eerie, or sinister (*unheimlich*), involve that mix of the familiar yet strange (*heimlich*). Whether highlighting differences in culture or language, gender or sexuality, religion or ideology, the use of animal metaphors to represent another can function as a means of articulating and emphasising that perceived sense of otherness.

Closely related to this animalizing of otherness is the fascination with mythical dragons (Eliade's phrase) in ancient and modern literature. Timothy K. Beal explores this phenomenon in *Religion and its Monsters* where he analyzes a long lineage of monstrous villains – a list that includes such infamous figures as the Babylonian Tiamat, the Hebrew

Leviathan, the Sanskrit Vṛtra, the Ugaritic Yamm and Mot, Frankenstein's Creature, Dracula, and the flying monkeys of Oz. He links this culturally diverse tradition with the need to personify "that which is of the world but not of it," that "ambiguous [edge] of the conceptual landscape, where the right order of things touches on a wholly other chaos, where inside and outside, self and other intertwine" (195). Beal also finds in Freud's idea of the "unhomely" or "uncanny" the key to explaining the universal need to give otherness a monstrous [or animal] face (4-5).

When Homi Bhabha reads Freud, he understands the term "unhomely" (*unheimlich*) as the invasion of domestic space, a displacement that blurs the borders between home and world, private and public (Bhabha 13; cf. Warner 17, cited earlier). This image is useful for comprehending aspects of the magical-realistic fiction considered in this paper, a genre of literature that often deals with the confusion and disorientation that accompanies persecution and/or marginalization and/or colonization. Things that are *unheimlich* ought to remain secret and hidden (Bhabha 14-15; Kristeva 283; both referring to Freud, "The Uncanny," 220, 225), distinct from and outside of intimate domesticity. Any invasion that involves crossing boundaries between outside and inside forces "upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting" (Bhabha 13). Freud's terminology is useful for exploring the particular themes in Rushdie's novels I address in this thesis. Contact with and influence from other religions, cultures, worldviews, and value systems are kinds of invasion. For Rushdie, the uncanny often has an animal appearance.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERAL METAMORPHOSES IN *THE SATANIC VERSES* AND *SHAME*

In the tradition of such diverse storytellers as Ovid and Franz Kafka, Salman Rushdie imagines the plight of characters literally transforming into nonhuman species. The most developed illustrations of these category (a) transfigurations are found in two of his novels from the 1980s, *Shame* and *The Satanic Verses*.

Metamorphosis in Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*

I begin this chapter with analysis of Rushdie's 1988 novel *The Satanic Verses*, even though *Shame* (1983) is chronologically first, because it provides the most explicit example of the metamorphosis of a human character into an animal. The transformation of Sufiya Zinobia Hyder in the earlier novel appears to be a category (a) metamorphosis but there are ambiguities. It may be easier to address the challenges her story presents for definition after considering the unambiguous alteration of Saladin Chamcha into a goat-like creature.

Rushdie includes two major, interrelated transformation stories in *The Satanic Verses*. One describes the alteration of the human Gibreel Farishta into the archangel Gibreel. In his transformed state, Gibreel transcends time and space and is both a spectator and participant in events described, whether in modern London or the world of the sixth and seventh-century prophet Mahound/Mohammed. Much of Rushdie's sharpest religious critiques involve the angelic Gibreel. For instance, Gibreel's mobility and constantly changing perspective suggest flaws in the process that communicates the divine word because this character alternates between so many roles, including auditor, prophet/speaker, divine source, and stand-in for the deaf masses (Cavanaugh 395).

Furthermore, Gibreel makes dubious contributions to Mahound's new religion because of the ambiguities of his prophetic role; Gibreel tends to "reduce prophecy to prescription" and serves as both prophet and fulfiller of prophecy in a tyrannical way (Cavanaugh 403).

While Gibreel's story is a central one to the novel, and closely tied to Saladin Chamcha's story (see below), I will not focus on it here because his transformation is not bestial in nature. Saladin Chamcha's metamorphosis is clearly one that involves a trajectory from the dignities of a human being to the degradation of an animal and is, accordingly, relevant to this thesis.

The Indian migrant Saladin Chamcha becomes a monstrous, goat-like devil. Here we see a clear illustration of a literal metamorphosis of a human character into an 'animal' (category [a]). This transformation begins in the opening pages of *The Satanic Verses*, which describe its two principal characters – Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta – falling from the sky to the shores of England after their plane explodes. Farishta interprets the miracle of a second chance at life as a rebirth, a "second period of gestation" (85). As he puts it, "'Born again, Spoono, you and me'" (11), "'To be born again [. . .] first you have to die'" (3 [the opening words of the novel], repeated 86). Birthing imagery is explicit in the moments following the explosion of the jumbo jet Bostan, Flight AI-420. Chamcha, for example, falls head first, the "recommended position for babies entering the birth canal" (5). At the very moment the bomb is detonated, the narrator observes this is "not death: birth" (89). In the days before the explosion, when Gibreel and Saladin are hostages aboard the Bostan, Gibreel names a long list of stories and mythologies involving different kinds of metamorphoses or "eccentric reincarnation theories" (85). Each represents a form of rebirth: phoenix-from-

ashes, the resurrection of Christ, the transmigration of the soul at death, the soul of the Dalai Lama in the body of a newborn baby, the metamorphosis of Jupiter who changes into a bull (imitating Vishnu). He also comments on Hindu beliefs concerning the progress of humans through successive cycles of life "now as cockroaches, now as kings, toward the bliss of no-more-returns" (86). Collectively, these stories anticipate the metamorphoses of the novel's two principal characters. Since Gibreel draws most of his examples of transformation from religious myths, it is appropriate that he and his friend become the embodiment of religious figures, resembling in particular ones from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (i.e., the archangel Gabriel and the fallen angel Lucifer).

The explosion and birth that propel the narrative defies conventional notions of time and space, suggested not least by the biblical language of "falling stars" (4; cf. Isaiah 34:4, cited by Jesus in Mark 13:24-25).[1] The narrator of *The Satanic Verses* speaks of "a big bang [. . . .] A universal beginning, a miniature echo of the birth of time" (4). Such language appears to anticipate the angelic presence of the novel, namely the transformed Gibreel. The divine speaker in the Book of Job indicates that angels ("morning stars") attended the creation of the universe (38:4-7; cf. reference to this passage in the Appendix). There is also a devilish presence, a satanic narrator lurking in the pages of this book (e.g., 4, 95-97, 114, 137).[2] To give but one example, there is a moment when Gibreel Farishta, transformed into the angel Gibreel, finds another entity speaking through him to the prophet Mahound:

The dragging again the dragging and now the miracle starts in his my our guts, he

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[1]There is a pun involved in Rushdie's imagery here as well since both men were actors, celebrities, and therefore "falling stars" in a literal sense.

[2]Saladin Chamcha might appear physically devilish but he is still distinct from this satanic narrator. The relationship is one of possession. Saladin is not himself satanic.

> is straining with all his might at something, forcing something, and Gibreel begins to feel that strength that force, here it is *at my own jaw* working it, opening shutting; and the power, starting within Mahound, reaching up to *my vocal cords* and the voice comes. *Not my voice* I'd never know such words I'm no classy speaker never was never will be but this isn't my voice it's a Voice. (114; italics original)

The scene suggests the machinations of a puppeteer controlling characters in the novel, including the angelic Gibreel. He and Saladin are in some sense possessed during their rebirth, following the universal beginning represented by the exploding plane. While falling these characters experience trans/mutation (5), they tumble into Alice's Wonderland (7), and experience, as seen, "birth" (9; see too 137). While undergoing these transformations following the explosion, both men become intertwined, literally as they hold on to each other while dropping, and more profoundly at the moment when their "transmutation began": "Gibreelsaladin Farishtachamcha, condemned to this endless but also ending angelicdevilish fall" (5).[3] This blending of names and the nature of their possessions/rebirths introduces the inevitability of their combined fates in a way that recalls the close ties and ongoing battles between the fallen and loyal angels of the biblical and Miltonian stories (see Appendix).

This chapter focuses on Saladin Chamcha and the satanic figure who takes hold of him. He makes his presence known quite suggestively early on, asking the reader "Who am I? Who else is there?" (4), language that echoes the Rolling Stones' song "Sympathy

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[3]Saladin and Gibreel's close connection is evident in other ways as well. For instance, later in the story readers learn that Gibreel Farishta's legendary bad breath (13) is sweetened and his halitosis inherited by Saladin Chamcha (137).

for the Devil": "Pleased to meet you, can you guess my name?"[4] There are further intertextual echoes in recurring allusions to *Paradise Lost*. As Chamcha falls, he feels "his heart being gripped by a force so implacable that he understood it was impossible for him to die" and after his "feet were once more firmly planted on the ground" he is overtaken by "a will to live" (9). This possession transforms Chamcha and he quickly loses all sense of independence. He feels like a bystander watching his metamorphosis, as his blood changes to iron, his flesh to steel. Soon this "will to live" that takes hold of him conquers him completely, "could work his mouth, his fingers, whatever it chose, and once it was sure of its dominion it spread outward from his body and grabbed Gibreel Farishta by the balls" (9).

Significantly, this demonic possession and zoomorphic transformation occurs as he moves from East to West, from India to England. By attempting to integrate into a new culture, Saladin tries to conform to the new environment knowing the cost of success is the loss of his individuality and culture. The physical abuse Saladin Chamcha encounters (which I describe below) points to a trauma experienced by many migrants. This novel is quite explicit in its portrayal of prejudices and racism among police and government officials, as well as the general populace.

Early in the story, Rushdie links Saladin Chamcha's identification with England with his struggle to escape India, and especially his father's attempts to preserve both the past and the traditional family ways. Like other migrants, Saladin's true self/identity remains hidden beneath disguises when he moves to England (49) as he attempts to deny his familial and ethnic inheritance. His father recognizes this, calling him a "demon up

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[4]This connection is plausible given Rushdie's love of rock and roll music generally (see *Ground Beneath Her Feet*) and The Rolling Stones specifically. For a glowing review of a Rolling Stones performance, see Rushdie's "In the Voodoo Lounge," in *Step Across This Line* 87-91.

from hell," language that anticipates the literal transformation he will undergo later in the novel. He also claims his son possesses his own "bad djinni" (48) and insists his true soul remains preserved in the garden of the family home (48, 65, 70). The father's language here equates the desire to Westernize or integrate with the demonic and to a degree, this parallels those in England who demonize Saladin – and all immigrants – as invading outsiders. Saladin becomes a devilish figure when he migrates, during his encounters with Westerners. At the same time, he is already devilish in the eyes of his Indian father who condemns his son for his desire to move to London in the first place.

We find another illustration of Chamcha's transformation from one world to the other, from India to England, in his relationship with the British Pamela Lovelace. Saladin realizes he needs her to complete his metamorphosis (50), namely his escape from family and culture, and transformation into an Englishman. He does not win her easily – "England yields her treasures with reluctance" (50) – and even when he does, he recognizes that the pleasures she brings are counterfeit (51) and he has to work at convincing himself that she is good for him (51-52). The couple is not able to have children (51) which may illustrate the difficulty involved in bridging cultures.

The hollowness of the union between Saladin Chamcha/India and Pamela Lovelace/England is obvious when he goes "to bed with Zeeny Vakil within forty-eight hours of arriving [back] in Bombay" (51). Chamcha is conflicted, torn between two women representing two countries and cultures: he passes out when he is with Zeenat/India, "because the messages reaching his brain were in such serious disagreement with one another" (51-52). She comes to symbolize India for Chamcha: she never leaves it, is always there when he returns to visit, and has certain habits that remind

him of his homeland. She makes several efforts to convince him to return home, even trying to reconcile him with his estranged father. Chamcha's plural identity (Indian/English) parallels his transformation into a beast (both human and monstrous), a possession and dehumanizing process described as "metamorphic, hybrid" (7).

The category (a) bestial metamorphoses in *Shame* and *The Satanic Verses* represent aspects of systemic abuse. Rushdie claims that metamorphosis is the central theme of *The Satanic Verses* (*Step Across This Line* 68). In this novel, the man-to-animal sequence represents the experience of those crossing the frontiers from East to West. For the most part, it is during his migration from India to the United Kingdom that Chamcha's remarkable transformation from a human being into a devilish animal occurs, a nightmare that commences with the appearance of "two new, goaty, unarguable horns" (*The Satanic Verses* 145). Hints of this process of change are evident in earlier scenes on the beach after Chamcha lands on the shores of England. Rosa Diamond observed not only a "golden, *glow*" around Gibreel Farishta's head but also "bumps, at Chamcha's temples" (137; emphasis original).

Three scenes, set in three different locales, illustrate Saladin Chamcha's profound sense of displacement as an immigrant from India trying to fit into his new London home. The common link between them is Saladin's physical transformation from human to animal. Following them chronologically, the first scene involves his time in the back of a police van shortly after his fall from the Bostan where the actual metamorphosis occurs. In the second, Saladin is in a hospital, recovering from the injuries received during his police detention. Here he makes the unpleasant discovery that London is home to many human-animal hybrids like himself. He is only one man-beast out of many. The third

scene is the Shaandaar Café where, somewhat reluctantly, Saladin finds a refuge in which to hide his monstrous self. Here he discovers he resembles most closely the unassimilated immigrants living on the fringe of British society. Saladin, of course, is an Anglophile, so to him this location is perhaps the most distressing of all.

The process of his metamorphosis occurs largely while Chamcha is in the back of a police van as three immigration and five police officers brutalize and humiliate him (*The Satanic Verses* 162-69). The fact that a new immigrant arriving to the West experiences this abuse/transformation while under the authority of white, Western authority implies a sharp criticism of British society. Chamcha is not British in their eyes and therefore he is 'other,' treated like, and therefore transformed into, an animal. The brutal treatment and racist slurs directed at Chamcha during his captivity coincide with his physical transformation into a devilish goat. It is telling that some of the police officers' remarks distinguish cleanliness from filth. This is a recurring trope in discourse relating immigration experience, according to Katarzyna Marciniak. Those crossing borders represent a threat to the establishment, often represented as contamination (e.g., 39-41, 92, 94) or the entry of filth into an otherwise clean space. Rushdie literalizes this notion. When the frightened Chamcha shits himself ("a large number of soft, pellety objects had appeared on the floor") during interrogation, the guards respond with further derision:

> 'Animal,' Stein cursed him as he administered a series of kicks, and Bruno joined in: 'You're all the same. Can't expect animals to observe civilized standards. Eh?' And Novak took up the thread: 'We're talking about fucking personal hygiene

here, you little fuck.' (164)[5]

Chamcha becomes a symbol of the migrant experience, at once despised by the English and ridiculed as an Anglophile by other migrants and those back in India.

To return to Saladin's connections to India once again, his efforts to embrace Western values and ways of living create a great distance between himself and those still living in his homeland. This explains two remarks by Zeenat Vakil when she meets with Saladin while he is visiting India. The first follows her disillusionment with Saladin's acting: "'Yaar, what a disappointment, I swear, I sat through the whole thing just to hear you singing 'Goodness Gracious Me' like Peter Sellers or what [. . .]'" (52). He is a sell-out, compromising his art and embarrassing himself in the process. She adds, "remember when you did Elvis impersonations with your squash racket, darling, too hilarious, completely cracked." He claims to be a serious actor, not a slapstick comedian (Peter Sellers) or a wannabe musician (Elvis), but his performances suggest otherwise. She sees

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[5]If we read this short speech as a kind of colonial discourse, and therefore more than mere trash talk, certain rhetorical strategies are discernible. Homi Bhabha describes colonial discourse as an apparatus that both recognizes and disavows racial, cultural, and historical differences (100). Strategically, it serves to create space for subjugated people by producing knowledge through which "surveillance is exercised and a complex form of pleasure / unpleasure is incited" (100-01). This knowledge involves stereotyping both colonizer and colonized but in such a way that the two are antithetically positioned to one another. Furthermore, Bhabha observes that colonial discourse constructs the colonized subject as a social reality "which is at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible" thus producing a narrative and a system of representation "that is structurally similar to realism" (101). Edward Said presents a strategy for intervening within this system of representation, a way of reading European literature that involves what he calls "orientalism" or "radical realism" (*Orientalism* 72). What Said observes in Western narratives, with reference to that which is 'oriental,' is a tendency toward simplistic reduction. Those employing orientalism, by which he indicates the habit for dealing with questions, objects, qualities and regions deemed Oriental, "will designate, name, point to, fix, what he is talking or thinking about with a word or phrase, which then is considered either to have acquired, or more simply to be, reality. [. . .] The tense they employ is the timeless eternal; they convey an impression of repetition and strength. [. . .] For all these functions it is frequently enough to use the simple copula is" (*Orientalism* 72). Elsewhere, Said speaks of a tendency toward caricature and sensation, which is far easier than representing the "slower processes of culture and society" (*Culture and Imperialism* 37). This in turn results in misconceptions about the other fuelled by the "imperial dynamic and above all its separating, essentializing, dominating, and reactive tendencies" (37). The police van scene in *The Satanic Verses* involves repetition of familiar tropes concerning migrants – they are dirty, undignified and somehow less than human – and functions, for those abusing Saladin, as a rhetorical means of distinguishing themselves as insiders from Saladin as an outsider.

in both roles Saladin's humiliation. The second remark from Zeenat refers to her attempt to restrain his Anglophile ways: "Zeenat Vakil made Saladin her project. 'The reclamation of,' she explained. 'Mister, we're going to get you back'" (53). Saladin's determination to be English – literally and symbolically, by moving to England and mimicking English mannerisms and affectations – completes his humiliation, something illustrated by his transformation into an animal.

The second scene illustrating Saladin's displacement as an immigrant occurs in a hospital (169-77). Hospitals should be a place of comfort and healing where one can recover from injury but for Saladin it proves to be a scene of violence and further emotional distress. The nurse with a "friendly woman's face" initially suggests the appearance of genuine care but her treatments prove to be aggressive and frightening: "she began pummelling him briskly about the middle body" (170). Furthermore, he soon realizes by the "jungle and farmyard odours" (171) that he is not the only mutant in the place. A menagerie of creatures, including humans with the attributes of tigers, water-buffaloes, snakes, and wolves, share the wards with Saladin, and reveal to him the startling truth that he is "'not alone'" (173). It is significant that the narrator identifies the places of origin for some of these individuals: Nigeria, Senegal, and Bombay. This makes it clear that the transmogrifications described illustrate the animalizing effect of their migration experiences and the abuses that accompany such displacements and transitions.

Rushdie represents the traumas of migration in other ways in *The Satanic Verses* as well. For example, Saladin Chamcha's "big break" (62) as an actor is on a children's show in which he plays an alien (from space). Radical commentators of the show criticize it because of its stereotyping and presentation of (ethnic) aliens as "freaks" (63).

Furthermore, as noted earlier, Zeenat also points to the way Chamcha is degraded in his profession, first by being a star only when visibly absent from audiences (either by masks or advertisement-roles that require his voice only [60-62]) or the assignment of "the babu part" when performing for a "two-bit [British] company" (62). When not playing an ethnic role, Chamcha must remain hidden from view – "the big star whose face is the wrong colour for their colour TVs" (62). Chamcha is clearly a sell out who sacrifices his artistic integrity for money. There are numerous references to his great wealth, earned from these degrading roles (e.g., 60, 62). Though it is possible to see Chamcha as the victim here – these are the only roles the Western media allows him to fill – Rushdie seems to suggest otherwise. The heinous nature of his decision to compromise integrity and dignity appears to parallel the disturbing behaviour of his father. Immediately after Chamcha tells Zeenat about his career, he discovers that his father pays his servants to participate in "perversions" (as Chamcha calls it [72]). His childhood ayah, Kasturba, wife of the household servant Vallabh, plays the role of Chamcha's mother. This arrangement is referred to as prostitution (69), which is, the parallel suggests, what Chamcha is doing professionally – selling himself to the British entertainment industry.

The third episode illustrating Saladin Chamcha's liminal status occurs in the Shaandaar Café. This location is, according to Richard J. Lane, a "nightmarish urban space" which is also "a vision of a dystopian London [. . .] focused on the migrant cultures that live out their 'indeterminate' identities of belonging and not-belonging through their ongoing redefinition of the situations that they have found themselves in" (Lane 89). Lane is describing here the café and rooming house where Saladin sequesters himself in an effort to hide his disfigurations. The Shaandaar Café is a ghetto where

immigrants from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh – "variegated, transient and particoloured inhabitants" (*The Satanic Verses* 251) – who cannot assimilate into their new environment find refuge with other, similarly marginalized, dislocated souls. Though he finds temporary shelter here, Saladin insists that he does not belong in such a ghetto because unlike the other residents, who do not assimilate well into British society, the anglophile Saladin embraces the culture and language of the United Kingdom.

Saladin Chamcha is, Shailja Sharma observes, the ideal immigrant; he is upwardly mobile, without accent, wealthy, and thoroughly assimilated (607-08). Once the transformation into a goat-man occurs, he "tries his best to retain the vestiges of his bowler-hatted, English self with his tweedy-voiced wife, but fails" (Sharma 608). The anglophile Saladin's metamorphosis is complete when he ends up at the Shaandaar Café, the antithesis of everything he holds dear. Leftist Muhammad Sufyan owns the Café and his establishment is a haven for working class Asians and illegal immigrants. Chamcha rejects identification with this group ("I'm not your kind. You're not my people" [*The Satanic Verses* 253]) thus setting up two "opposing models of integration in a foreign country" (Sharma 608). On the one hand, Chamcha is "a determinedly apolitical, upper-class man who wants to be adopted as part of Britain" and on the other, Sufyan is an "exploiter of fellow immigrants [. . .] whose sense of community unites in his victimhood and resistance with people of his 'own kind'" (Sharma 608). Simultaneously, British society rejects and ghettoizes Chamcha. Bhabha observes that when Saladin is at the Shaandaar Café in his transformed, mythic-animal state, his symbolic role is evident: "Chamcha [. . .] has turned into a Goat and has crawled back to the ghetto, to his despised

migrant compatriots. [. . .] He has become the 'borderline' figure of a massive historical displacement – postcolonial migration" (320).

Saladin Chamcha's story illustrates Rushdie's pattern of introducing bestial imagery at intersections between cultures and in contexts involving violence. Though *The Satanic Verses* deals with religious subject matter to some extent, and despite the hysteria following its publication and the infamous fatwa calling for the author's death, this novel is not concerned primarily with Islam. According to Rushdie himself, the "central theme [of *The Satanic Verses*] is that of metamorphosis" (*Step Across This Line* 68). Saladin finds himself at the interstices between two worlds as he tries to escape India for the West. His eccentric father recognizes the confusion over Saladin's identity that results: "'I have your soul kept safe, my son, here in this walnut tree. The devil has only your body'" (48). The first half of this statement rightly points to a failed metamorphosis; Saladin is unable to integrate completely into his new world because the British will never accept him fully as one of their own. The second half of this statement points to the very 'real' metamorphosis the migrant Saladin does experience. Rather than becoming British, Saladin is humiliated, beaten, and rejected. His father's reference to the devil having Saladin's body not only anticipates the literal, category (a) transformation of the actor into a goat – the goat traditionally a symbol of the devil's incarnation – it also points to the vulnerability of migrants more generally. As is often the case in Rushdie's novels, he introduces hostility and monstrous/bestial imagery at a moment of encounter with otherness.

Shame and the Transformation of Sufiya Zinobia Hyder

Shame, the narrator tells us, is "a novel about Sufiya Zinobia" (55), whose possession by/transformation into a monstrous entity is a consequence of abuse at the hands of those in positions of power. In this novel, Sufiya transforms into a Beast (category [a] in the proposed taxonomy, or possibly category [b]) and the narrator offers a very simple explanation for this: "Humiliate people for long enough and a wildness bursts out of them" (119). Whereas many of the abuses Saladin Chamcha endures leading to his metamorphosis are external (pressures to conform; physical violence; ridicule), the causes behind Sufiya Zinobia's transformation into the Beast are largely internal/psychological in nature. Both, however, represent category (a) metamorphoses though, as noted earlier, classifying Sufiya in this way involves some ambiguities.

Salman Rushdie's disdain for the politics of Pakistan during the 1970s and 1980s is clear for all to read. In an essay on Zia ul-Haq, included in *Imaginary Homelands*, Rushdie describes Zia's Pakistan as

> [. . .] a nightmarish, surreal land, in which battlefield armaments meant for the Afghan rebels are traded more or less openly on the country's black markets; in which the citizens of Karachi speak, with a shrug, of the daily collusion between the police force and large-scale gangs of thieves; in which private armies of heavily armed men defend and service one of the world's biggest narcotics industries; in which 'elections' take place without the participation of any political parties. That such a situation should be described, around the world, as 'stability' would be funny if it were not vile; that it has been concealed beneath a cloak of religious faith is more terrible still. (53-54)

President General Mohammed Zia ul-Haq (1924-1988), who ruled Pakistan from 1977 until his death, figures prominently in Rushdie's novel *Shame*, at times named directly, but most clearly represented in his character Raza Hyder, father of Sufiya Zinobia. For Rushdie, "the medieval, misogynistic, stultifying ideology which Zia imposed on Pakistan in his 'Islamization' programme was the ugliest possible face of the faith, and one by which most Pakistani Muslims were, I believe, disturbed and frightened" (*Imaginary Homelands* 54). Rushdie's tirade also appears in *Shame*, his "blackest, most pessimistic, and most relentlessly satiric work" (Ball 136).

The story is set in Pakistan, though the author qualifies this by distinguishing "two countries, real and fictional, occupying the same space, or almost the same space" (*Shame* 22). Like *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie places the characters of this novel in recognizable times and places, and while he playfully denies connections between the imaginative and the real worlds, he barely conceals references to identifiable historical events. Rushdie is quite explicit about this tension between fiction and non-fiction: "If this were a realistic novel," he writes, "I would not be writing about Bilquìs and the wind" (*Shame* 65). Elsewhere he observes, "Realism can break a writer's heart. Fortunately, however, I am only telling a sort of fairytale" (68; cf. 22, 66-67). However, the representations of Zia ul-Haq in the character Raza Hyder and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1928-1979) in Iskander Harappa are unmistakable. The novel rehearses significant events in Pakistani politics of the period, including the coup d'état during which Zia had Ali Bhutto arrested (see esp. 238-44). Rushdie even appears to incorporate autobiographical elements in his novel. Like the author himself, the narrator immigrated to England from India and lived for a time in Pakistan (84).

The narrator introduces his story about Sufiya Zinobia by recollecting the recent murder of a young woman by her Pakistani father in East London. He "murdered his only child, a daughter, because by making love to a white boy she had brought such dishonour upon her family that only her blood could wash away the stain" (117). Moved by the tragedy of this honour killing, the narrator tells readers "My Sufiya Zinobia grew out of the corpse of that murdered girl" (118). The parallelism of these two girls indicates that the 'medieval, misogynistic, stultifying ideology' Rushdie writes about involves the corruption of all that is good in Islam and the destruction of the most vulnerable in Pakistani society. Sufiya Zinobia, like the girl in East London, is a victim of religious extremism and intolerance. Sufiya also represents the fate of the offspring of Zia's abusive ideology and regime. She is the daughter of Raza Hyder/Zia ul-Haq, "known as 'Shame'" (207; cf. "shame made flesh" [144]). The oppressive society that produces such shame ultimately results in violence, a consequence embodied in Sufiya. In her "unconscious self," there is a "hidden path that links *sharam* to violence" (144).[6] Similar to the majority of Pakistani Muslims living during Zia's rule, which Rushdie describes in the citation above, she too is disturbed and frightened by the world around her and gradually manifests an unrestrained violence that is born out of extremist politics and fundamentalist religion.

Rushdie first links Sufiya's internalized shame and violence in a scene involving her unwitting slaughter of turkeys (142-44). While sleepwalking, the somnambulist Sufiya tore "off their heads and then reached down and into their bodies to draw their guts up through their necks with her tiny weaponless hands" (143). There is an escalation

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[6]Rushdie comments on the etymology of the terms shame and *sharam* elsewhere in the novel (33).

in her violence as the novel progresses, and the narrator refers to the Beast within her as a growing, slowly emerging threat: "We have already seen something of the growth of this unspeakable monster" (208; cf. 210). For instance, she not only wills damage on herself, according to Dr. Khayyam (147), but also attempts to kill Captain Talvar Ulhaq (178) and eventually succeeds in killing others, including four adolescent males whose heads "had been wrenched off their necks by some colossal force: literally torn from their shoulders" (228).

Sufiya experiences shame, the narrator surmises, because she is "preternaturally receptive to all sorts of things that float around in the ether [enabling] her to absorb, like a sponge, a host of unfelt feelings" (124). As John Clement Ball puts it, she acts as "a repository for the diverted shame her shameless family refuses to acknowledge" and ultimately it manifests itself in the form of violence (138). This "violent revenge of the symbolic oppressed" transforms the girl into a monster who carries out a destructive rampage against those whose shame she internalized, especially her morally repugnant husband Omar Khayyam, and her father Raza Hyder. Ball suggests that Sufiya is "inseparable from the satiric verbal violence Rushdie performs in his writing" (139), as she 'literally' carries out the violent judgement Rushdie attempts through his words. While this idea is certainly intriguing, it does not account for the apparent randomness of some of the Beast's violent attacks, implied by unspecific references to "missing children" and "headless bodies" (227), and the killing of "farmers, pie-dogs, goats" (275). The Beast's rampage extends beyond the named villains of the novel – children and farmers harmed neither Rushdie nor Sufiya – which makes me think Ball overstates the connection between Sufiya and Rushdie to some extent.

Though the Beast's attacks appear largely random, it is possible that it chooses its victims based on gender. Some of its victims fall into categories that are not gender specific so we cannot be certain (e.g., farmers, children), but otherwise its prey are identified as male. If in fact the Sufiya/Beast targets males exclusively, then we can read the violent outbursts as acts of revenge against the abuses of patriarchy. Otherwise, the Beast emerging from Sufiya might be an expression of a generic, non-specific rage. "The Beast has many faces," the narrator reports, and it "takes any shape it chooses" (296). The Beast is born out of humiliation and "bursts" from those subjected to forms of degradation (119). Sufiya's story is unique, defined by the particular details of her family and society, but the more general pattern of humiliation leading to angry, violent outbursts is universal.

As Ball suggests, Sufiya is a 'repository' for diverted shame, specifically the shame others close to her refuse to acknowledge. This is most striking in the clear contrast between Sufiya and her husband Omar Khayyam Shakil. Omar is truly shameless. He is the child of three mothers, sisters so close they share the experience of pregnancy and childbirth:

> In spite of biological improbability, I am prepared to swear that so wholeheartedly did they wish to share the motherhood of their sibling – to transform the pubic shame of unwedlocked conception into the private triumph of the longed-for group baby – that, in short, twin phantom pregnancies accompanied the real one [. . .]. (13)

This determination to live free of public shame leads Omar's mothers – he himself is never certain which is his biological mother – to make a solemn declaration that he is not

to "feel the forbidden emotion of shame" (33) and he lives up to their demand. His body is grotesque; "fatter than fifty melons" by the age of eighteen (49) and his moral turpitude knows no limits. Omar's immunity from shame is highlighted by his short-lived possession "by a demon" after raping his beloved Farah Zoroaster (48). He manages to exorcise this demon quickly when he "Vomit[s] out the thin yellow fluid of his shame" (49). Omar is incapable of internalizing this emotion. Sufiya Zinobia, on the other hand, is exactly the opposite. She absorbs the shame of others and it manifests itself physically. This first appears in her blushes:

> [The baby Sufiya] in Raza's arms began – it's true! – to blush. (89)
>
> They say the baby [Sufiya] blushed at birth. (89)
>
> Sufiya Zinobia, the idiot, is blushing. (123)
>
> She also blushed. You recall she blushed at birth. (124)
>
> Sufiya Zinobia Hyder blushed uncontrollably whenever her presence in the world was noticed by others. But she also, I believe, blushed for the world. (124)
>
> Well then: Sufiya the moron blushed. [. . .] Sufiya Zinobia – by blushing furiously each time her mother looked sidelong at her father – revealed to watching family eyes that something was piling up between those two. (125)
>
> [With reference to Sufiya] Blushing is slow burning. (126)

Later in the story, Sufiya's shame finds different manifestations. She tears out her hair (140), there is fever, blotchy rashes, and boils (145), and ultimately, shame materializes as a Beast, a kind of transformation into a nonhuman entity.

In addition to physical manifestations, we discover Sufiya's capacity to feel emotion deeply, something most evident from her internal dialogue. Though young and

mentally limited, Sufiya is married to Dr. Omar Khayyam but spared any sexual involvement with him because her ayah Shahbanou takes her place in his bed (222-24). She may be simple, but Sufiya still discerns something is not quite right and assumes it must be "her own stupid fault" (226). The internal dialogue the narrator presents illustrates the gradual shift from abstract emotions of shame toward concrete manifestations of those feelings:

> There is a thing that women do at night with husbands. She does not do it, Shahbanou does it for her. [. . .] Her husband does not come to her at night. [. . .] There is no ocean but there is a feeling of sinking. It makes her sick. There is an ocean. She feels its tide. And, somewhere in its depths, a Beast, stirring. (227)

Here a vague sense of guilt takes on physical manifestations in certain psychosomatic illnesses ("makes her sick"), and she is also cognizant of guilt's consequences internally, sensing the stirring of a monster within.

We are not privy to unambiguous descriptions of Sufiya Zinobia's transformation and consequently, she does not fit the proposed taxonomy with any precision. The physical strength she exudes suggests a category (a) transformation, a literal metamorphosis into an animal/monster. The mixing of animal and human terms in descriptions of her/it suggests the same thing, as in the use of the terms "forepaws" and "her hands" in an account of the same attack (304). At the same time however, during some of her violent outbreaks she is still unambiguously human. While attending a party, for instance, Omar observes a "glazing-over of her eyes" before her attempt to kill a man, but there is no indication of a physical transformation into something nonhuman (178).

Category (b) is equally problematic. There is something going on here beyond mere behavioural metamorphosis of this human character.

Sufiya's body may or may not change yet her actions are obviously bestial. There is more going on than metaphoric language. Her story involves the language of possession as much as transformation: "Lurking inside Sufiya Zinobia Shakil there was a Beast. [. . .] feeding on certain emotions, it took possession of the girl from time to time" (208). The violence produced during her hypnotic, somnambulist states implies as much. Nevertheless, we must be careful not to separate the girl and the Beast too sharply. Unlike a bodily invasion by a foreign entity, such as those in the films *The Exorcist* (1973) or *Alien* (1979), this possession involves the suppression and eventual re-emergence of shame. Sufiya is the Beast because she is the one who experiences and internalizes all manner of guilt. We find a better analogy than the films mentioned above in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, which Rushdie briefly mentions in the novel (165). There is also an echo of Stevenson's villain, of course, in the girl's name – Sufiya Zinobia *Hyde*r.[7] There the eponymous characters are in reality one and the same, the transformation resulting from a potion. Just as Jekyll internalizes a tonic and becomes monstrous, Sufiya internalizes shame and becomes the Beast. This "Beast of shame," as the narrator refers to it, and Sufiya Zinobia are inextricably one, the girl housing this embodiment of ignominy and disgrace within a "frame of flesh and blood" (304-05). The fact that Rushdie always capitalizes the term

[7]I comment below on Rushdie's novel *Fury*, in which he also refers to *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. In that novel, the principle character Prof. Malik Solanka recalls the story of Mr. Hyde while worrying he is guilty of unconsciously committing violent crimes in a somnambulist state, much as Sufiya does (83).

Beast might further support its oneness with the girl, as if the former were as much a proper name as Sufiya.

A similar story in one of Rushdie's later novels is instructive here. Prof. Malik Solanka in *Fury* fits the major lines of argument put forward in this thesis rather well. After arriving to the U.K. from India for his education, and settling in Britain for many years to further his career, he unexpectedly leaves his family in London and moves to New York. He does so to protect them, fearing he might harm them if he is unable to control his simmering rage. Here too, Rushdie aligns migrations with violence, and in exploring the destructive potential of encounters with otherness, he raises the spectre of monsters and beasts. Rushdie's story about Prof. Malik Solanka, like that of Sufiya Zinobia in *Shame*, is a psychological drama that considers the potential outburst of a previously suppressed rage. Solanka is most frightened of "fury's hour, the time of the beast set free" (*Fury* 129). Unlike the young, uneducated, mentally deficient Sufiya who is completely unaware of her dangerous potential, the older, highly educated Solanka is fully cognizant of the possibility of a murderous eruption (128-29).

The monster within Solanka threatens to emerge with destructive consequences. There is no literal, category (a) metamorphosis in *Fury* and the language used to describe 'the beast' in this novel is closer to that found in *Shame* than *The Satanic Verses*. Solanka may cross literal borders like Saladin Chamcha, and experience a similar sense of identity confusion as a British-educated Indian living in the United States, but he resembles Sufiya Zinobia Hyder far more. In both *Shame* (165) and *Fury* (83), a passing reference to Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde suggests a paradigm for understanding their

respective transformations and beastly interior lives, and in both the author couples the experience of rejection with an emerging rage.

The actual girl-to-beast metamorphosis in *Shame* is less concrete than the story of Saladin Chamcha's transformation, which Rushdie describes in great detail in the pages of *The Satanic Verses*. Readers witness his 'literal' transfiguration from man to goat. In *Shame*, the girl's human form and the Beast appear intertwined, though the monstrous/animal form does not replace the girl's humanness. The language depicting the Beast's emergence suggests a hybrid, human-nonhuman, Medusa-like character:

> The monster rises from the bed, shame's avatar [. . . .] The burqua comes from somewhere, anywhere, it has never been a difficult garment to find in that sad house, and then the walk. In a replay of the turkey disaster she bewitches the nocturnal guards, the eyes of the Beast blaze out of hers and turn the sentries to stone, who knows how, but later, when they awake, they are unaware of having slept. (231)

Here, the monster roams the streets while wearing the garb of a human female. At the same time, there are two sets of eyes, one blazing through the other. In some ways, such possession-language resembles possession stories involving the habitation of a human body by a completely distinct, foreign entity (as in the movie *Alien* or biblical stories of demon possession). However, Sufiya's story is not an exact parallel. She is not merely a body, chosen randomly by some nonhuman being to function as a container. Sufiya herself experiences the marginalization and disdain that produces the blushes, and the Beast's attacks involve *her* "weaponless hands." When Omar Khayyam finally meets the Beast himself, he stands "before her" and sees "her hands, his wife's hands" reaching out

to kill him (304). The Beast is simultaneously distinct from her (it has its own eyes and forepaws), and one with her (she has her own eyes and hands). Rushdie seems to nurture ambiguity here regarding the actual manifestation of the Beast in Sufiya Zinobia, allowing readers to exercise their own imaginations for this part of the story and possibly reinforcing the human consequences of the kinds of abuse and marginalization this girl experiences.

The narrator's interesting remark, "Shamelessness, shame: the roots of violence," (118), identifies two dangerous potentials, represented by Omar and Sufiya respectively. The former lives without any moral restraints or real concern for those around him, imposing his needs on others. The latter absorbs the shame placed on her by others, as well as the shame those others should themselves feel, but do not. Whereas the destructive forces of shameless people are obvious because they have no social or moral restraints, the potential danger of those who carry shame is less apparent. However, the narrator warns, "Humiliate people for long enough and a wildness bursts out of them" (119). Those who internalize shame placed on them by others will eventually fight back, a phenomenon that literally occurs in the story of Sufiya Zinobia Hyder. As in *The Satanic Verses*, this story brings together violence and bestial imagery. The transformation of Sufiya, whether category (a) or (b), causes unparalleled destruction according to villagers (268-69) and their descriptions of these attacks involve various animal terms ("hunting human and animal prey," "blood-curdling howls," "man-eater," "white panther," etc.).

How should we interpret Sufiya Zinobia's experiences? Sufiya can be read as "the silent, demarcated child subaltern subject produced by Western and patriarchal

historiography in the postcolony" though this interpretation, Bahri argues, is problematic (168). For one thing, her violent rebellion "has no fixed target" (169) but is rather a completely random outburst lacking "design or plot movement" that might be expected in a figure representing a postcolonial, Pakistani subject reacting against Western domination. I disagree with this claim of a completely random attack. The beast seems to target males, a point noted earlier. Bahri's main conclusion remains, however, that the Beast is not a representation of rebellion against imperialism.[8]

Furthermore, Sufiya is "progressively dematerialized" in the novel, according to Bahri. The narrator may claim that *Shame* is "a novel about Sufiya Zinobia" (*Shame* 55) but in fact she is "simultaneously aggrandized into mythic proportions even as she dwindles into abstraction and immateriality" (Bahri 170). Once her metamorphosis into a wild Beast is complete, she "was not Sufiya Zinobia Shakil, but something more like a principle, the embodiment of violence" (*Shame* 256-57). For Bahri, there is no social realism involved in this character; she does not represent the plight of real Pakistan in any sense. This claim is not convincing, however. In light of Rushdie's remarks about Zia's Pakistan, it appears more likely that Sufiya is very much a figure standing in for that regime's many victims.

I also propose another strategy for interpreting Sufiya's transformation, one that considers the psychological dimensions of her story. Several theorists examine the relationship between trauma and silence and this link provides a useful entry point for a

[8]Though it is not a major concern of the novel, there are occasional remarks about Pakistan's colonial past and postcolonial condition in *Shame*. For instance, the narrator takes time to ridicule those indulging in the luxuries of the "Hotel Flashman" where "the suited-and-booted Angrez officers and white-tied civilians, and ringleted ladies" of colonial times congregated to listen to "the music of the Imperialists" (4; cf. 8). Is the name "Flashman" an allusion to the George MacDonald Fraser "Flashman" novels whose nineteenth-century hero epitomizes many of the worst colonial attitudes and values?

discussion of this character's experiences. Walter Benjamin, for one, reflects on the link between trauma and silence by focusing on soldiers returning from the First World War. Shoshana Felman's reading of two key Benjaminian texts on the subject of trauma – "The Storyteller," and "Theses on the Philosophy of History" – demonstrates how these essays "can be construed as two theories of silence derived from, and related to, the two world wars" respectively (204). Benjamin asks, "Was it not noticeable at the end of the war that men returned from the battlefield grown silent – not richer, but poorer in communicable experience?" (84). The experiences of combatants in the Great War were somehow outside their abilities as storytellers. Benjamin observes that, "A generation that had gone to school on a horse-drawn streetcar now stood under the open sky in a countryside in which nothing remained unchanged but the clouds, and beneath these clouds, in a field of force of destructive torrents and explosions, was the tiny, fragile human body" (84). Trauma, according to Felman, cannot be fully articulated (205-06) and Benjamin's text itself, she argues, exemplifies this inability to "cope and catch up" with the trauma it introduces. She adds, "this ungraspability or unintegratability of the beginning is not a mere coincidence; it duplicates and illustrates the point of the text, that the war has left an impact that has struck dumb its survivors" (205-06).

Like the mute soldiers returning from war, Sufiya Zinobia's silence reflects in part an inability to articulate the stories of her personal traumas. Benjamin draws on Sigmund Freud's well-known discussions of response to shock, including the notion of suppressed memory, especially in his essay "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" (160-63) where he reflects on Freud's "Beyond the Pleasure Principle." Freud bases his discussion of trauma entirely on his experiences with shell-shocked soldiers of the First World War

in this essay. Commenting on traumatic neuroses, he observes, "The terrible war which has just ended gave rise to a great number of illnesses of this kind" (*Penguin Freud Library* 281). This idea of trauma-induced silence provides a useful lens through which to consider the human side of Rushdie's Sufiya.

Of course, Sufiya is more than human; she becomes increasingly bestial, demonic, and monstrous as the novel progresses (e.g., *Shame* 268-69). In developing this side of her character, Rushdie explores the notion of boundaries between the home/known and unhomely/unknown, discussed earlier:

> [. . .] there is no place for monsters in civilized society. If such creatures roam the earth, they do so out on its uttermost rim, consigned to peripheries by conventions of disbelief . . . but once in a blue moon something goes wrong. A Beast is born, a 'wrong miracle', within the citadels of propriety and decorum. This was the danger of Sufiya Zinobia: that she came to pass, not in any wilderness of basilisks and fiends, but in the heart of the respectable world." (210 [ellipses original]).

In the story about Sufiya Zinobia we see something monstrous, unknown, strange, and terrifying – *unheimlich* – entering domestic, familiar, and safe space. The Beast terrorizes her family and those close to it, killing many as it wreaks a terrible revenge. This is ironic in two ways, however. First, this Beast emerges from within the family, in an otherwise harmless girl who belongs to the domestic space. Second, it is the familiar customs and behaviours of home, society, and culture that produce this monstrous doppelganger, such as regret for producing a female child and prejudices against a mentally incapacitated individual. For those close enough to Sufiya to see and experience her metamorphosis, the emergence of the Beast is simultaneously an invasion into the normal rhythms of

home and society and a by-product of behaviours in those domestic spaces. Those close to her may believe the socio-cultural, religious, and political mores they are most familiar with – such as the status and treatment of women, religious dogmatism, and authoritarianism – to be innocuous. Accordingly, in their view the family's way of life should not produce the kind of demon that emerges from the girl. For this reason, Rushdie's critique of aspects of Pakistani social and political realities proves to be effective; Sufiya's transformation into the embodiment of shame is startling because unexpected. Young girls do not usually go on killing sprees.

The extent of Sufiya Zinobia's tragic plight deserves further comment. Her shame-filled story begins at birth, a moment of great disappointment to her father who only wants a son; so it is "the baby blushed at birth. [. . .] Even then, she was too easily ashamed" (89). There is more adding to her father's disappointment: "his only child Sufiya Zinobia contracted a case of brain fever that turned her into an idiot" (100). Grief also consumes her mother Bilquìs: "He wanted a hero son; I gave him an idiot female instead. [. . .] She is my shame" (101). Though others experience shame because of her, Sufiya herself ultimately internalizes that shame. The Sufiya/Beast emerges out of Raza Hyder's/Zia ul-Haq's family and in addition, Hyder/Zia's religious authoritarianism introduces various kinds of repression:

> [. . .] sexual and democratic impulses denied by puritanism and Islamic Law; the anger of marginalized women [. . .]; Hinduism and its powerful gods and goddesses; Baluchistan's subterranean angels brutally kept down by Raza's centralized State [. . . .] The undercurrents and pressures in this realm accumulate throughout the novel and find their outlet in the marginalized, pagan, polytheistic,

> female, demonized figure of the possessed Sufiya. (Clark 111; cf. 122)

The Beast in *Shame* is a consequence, Roger Y. Clark argues, of the destructive effects of political and religious injustice (112). Indeed, Rushdie's commentary on societal injustices is not particularly subtle:

> Repression is a seamless garment; a society which is authoritarian in its social and sexual code, which crushes its women beneath the intolerable burdens of honour and propriety, breeds repressions of other kinds as well. [. . .] It is commonly and, I believe, accurately said of Pakistan that her women are much more impressive than her men . . . their chains, nevertheless, are no fictions. They exist. And they are getting heavier. (*Shame* 181 [second ellipses original])

One of the principal arguments of this thesis is that Rushdie frequently returns to images of transformation when commenting on migration and the crossing of frontiers. In *Shame*, however, Rushdie sets his sights on injustices facing individuals in what should be a *heimisch* (indigenous, native, local), and therefore safe space.

One of Rushdie's targets in telling Sufiya's story appears to be religious intolerance, cultural suppression of the weak and vulnerable, and the marginalization of women. Sufiya carries with her the abusive labels placed on her by her family ("idiot" etc.) and must endure the experience of being married even when she lacks the capacity to understand what this means. Eventually, the transfiguration of Sufiya into the Beast provides an expression of suppressed rage that involves a sense of revenge not found in other transformation stories (e.g., Saladin Chamcha in *The Satanic Verses*).[9]

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[9]Again, the Beast's victims are usually men. On one occasion when the Beast emerges in Sufiya, "Shame walks the street," and summarily kills four men who follow her to a "rubbish-dump of doom" (231-32). Legends of a mythological creature circulate among villagers who are trying to explain this "*man*-eater scare" and the death of so many "animals and *men*" (269 [italics added]). This choice of victims

Is Rushdie qualified to speak to the issues raised in *Shame*, such as the harsh treatment of women, and authoritarian Pakistani politics and religion? It is worth noting that his authorial perspective involves a position of power. As creator of his literary worlds, Rushdie has authority to vilify and vindicate. What is different between the two novels discussed in this chapter is how he does this. In *The Satanic Verses*, Rushdie looks at the treatment of migrants moving from East to West, from one culture to another, and so this novel presents Westerners as abusers ultimately sharing responsibility for Chamcha's horrible transformation. His subjects of interest in *Shame* include the treatment of women and the physically handicapped, which produces the Beast Sufiya. Here, arguably, Rushdie is writing from a Western perspective, questioning, among other things, traditional patriarchy. However much these two novels differ, Rushdie employs bestial imagery in both critiques, picturing the effects of violence and abuse in a causal relationship.

Sharma correctly observes that Rushdie's status as part of "the Western literary intelligentsia" limits his ability to identify with migrants and other vulnerable subgroups represented in his novels (598). This does not reduce the poignancy of his social analysis, however, whether he is addressing racism and informing the (English-speaking) West of the damage done by colonial attitudes and the unjust treatment of immigrants/migrants, or challenging religious and cultural exclusivity that oppresses women. In an interesting moment of authorial self-consciousness in *Shame*, Rushdie explicitly acknowledges the polemical nature of his novel:

> [. . .] if I had been writing a book of this nature [one riddled with criticism of

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and language to describe the killings seems to be deliberate, perhaps indicating an angered response to abuses against women within a patriarchal society.

> Pakistani politics], it would have done me no good to protest that I was writing universally, not only about Pakistan. This book would have been banned, dumped in the rubbish bin, burned. All that effort for nothing! Realism can break a writer's heart. Fortunately, however, I am only telling a sort of modern fairytale, so that's all right; nobody need get upset, or take anything I say too seriously. (67-68)

This tongue-in-cheek disavowal of exclusive concern with Pakistan not only universalizes the accusations of marginalization but also demonstrates the effective nature of imaginary literature. Rushdie's magical realism permits moving from a narrow cultural, historical situation (Pakistani politics of the 1970s and 1980s) to a universal agenda. Encountering the unfamiliar, enduring abuse from the more powerful, being labelled by others – all involve unwelcome invasion into the domestic sphere, encounters with the *unheimlich*.

There are three clear similarities between Saladin Chamcha and Sufiya Zinobia which I note in closing. First, both narratives involve scenes of violence. Chamcha's transformation is the *result* of violence (police brutality, humiliation at the hands of those in positions of power). The abuses leading to Sufiya's transformation (diminished status as an idiot female in a patriarchal society) *produce* violence.

Second, Rushdie describes the devolution of both characters as those in power take away their humanness through forms of mistreatment. They become bestial. Chamcha provides a clear illustration of a category (a), literal transformation into an animal/monster. Sufiya's story is either a category (a) transformation or a category (b) behavioural metamorphosis, though the former seems most appropriate.

Third, both characters represent something frightening to those around them. The immigrant Chamcha is an other, treated as an invader from outside the borders of the civilized, clean, familiar homeland. There is a fine line between misunderstanding and fearing the unknown, and racism. Those abusing Chamcha model the worst kind of prejudice; by calling him a beast, they make him a beast: "'Animal [. . .] Can't expect animals to observe civilized standards.'" Sufiya is also an outsider of sorts. Though born within the confines of the family and culture in which the story is set, she is still an invader who disrupts domestic space: "A Beast is born [. . .] within the citadels of propriety and decorum" (*Shame* 210).[10] When treated like animals, people become animals. Both characters are marginal, vulnerable, and victims of abuse. To represent their liminal status, Rushdie turns to bestial imagery.

[10]There are examples of the rejection of Sufiya by family members. For instance, her sister says to her mother, "'That monster [. . .], you should have had her drowned at birth'" (179).

CHAPTER THREE

METAPHORICAL METAMORPHOSES IN *MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN* AND *SHALIMAR THE CLOWN*

Rushdie consistently introduces bestial imagery at moments when his characters cross into or encounter new worlds. He is clearly fascinated with frontiers, borders, and migration, and the experiences of those crossing them. At the interstices between what is familiar and what is foreign, there is both danger and the potential for change. Encounters with otherness, in whatever forms they take, involve both vulnerability and inevitable transformation (*Step Across This Line* 353-54). I propose that Rushdie attempts to capture aspects of such vulnerability and transformation in his recurring use of animal metaphors and zoomorphic stories. The language of *Midnight's Children* and *Shalimar the Clown* supports this claim.

Categories (B) Through (D) Bestial Imagery in *Midnight's Children*

An intriguing feature of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is the mixing of magical and dreamlike qualities with recognizable historical moments. The story told in this novel commences in the year 1915 with Dr. Aadam Aziz's return to India after studying abroad, and narrates events through to the 1970s, including The Emergency of 1975-1977. This was a tumultuous period for the subcontinent that witnessed the partition of British India, the emergence of the newly independent India and Pakistan in 1947, and the further division of Pakistan itself and the creation of Bangladesh in 1971.

The birth of the novel's narrator at the precise moment of India's independence, the stroke of midnight on August 15, 1947, results in Saleem Sinai's magical link to the nation: "I had been mysteriously handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country" (9). Saleem's experiences parallel, and in his mind even

determine, the direction of India's development as a country. This connection between the fictional character Saleem and the birth and subsequent history of India suggests an allegorical quality to the novel. The narrator reminds readers of this allegorical level of signification repeatedly throughout the story, beginning with his recounting of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's letter to the newborn Saleem: "'Dear Baby Saleem, My belated congratulations on the happy accident of your moment of birth! You are the newest bearer of that ancient face of India, which is also eternally young. We shall be watching over your life with the closest attention; it will be, in a sense, the mirror of our own'" (122). Furthermore, in addition to the timing of his birth, which coincides with the independence of India and Pakistan, there are numerous other places where Saleem's story parallels developments in the subcontinent during the second half of the twentieth century. For example, Saleem assists his uncle in planning the coup that leads to a dictatorship in Pakistan in the mid 1950s (287-91); as General Zulfikar describes troop movements, Saleem "moved pepperpots symbolically while he spoke. In the clutches of the active-metaphorical mode of connection, [he] shifted salt-cellars and bowls of chutney" (290). Other events in his life connect to the struggle for independence in East Pakistan. For instance, the dog-like Saleem fits in to the latter as part of the canine CUTIA Unit 22, whose mission is to "root out undesirable elements" (348). Saleem's role is to serve the West (Muslim) Pakistani military by sniffing out subversive Hindu separatists.

The narrator presents other evidence of the mysterious link between boy and nation. As a student, Saleem Sinai's teacher singles him out in front of his classmates and asks, "'In the face of thees ugly ape you don't see the whole map of *India*?'" (231).

Saleem holds to this perceived equation of state and self throughout his life and constantly calls attention to correspondences between the two parallel stories – his personal experiences and his country's development – for his audience. Saleem is anxious as a young boy because of the high expectations placed on him. "Adrift in this haze of anticipation," the narrator writes, "I had already felt within myself the first movings of that shapeless animal which still [. . .] champs and scratches in my stomach [. . .] this beast [. . .] the creature [. . .] inside me" (152). This animal is a sense of purposelessness that plagues Saleem (152, 153). The allegorical level of meaning is clear; people expected great things of India from the moment of its birth but the dream became a hellish nightmare.[1]

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[1]It is clear that *Midnight's Children* is at some level an allegory, telling India's story in the person of Saleem Sinai. However, there are complications with the simple equation of Saleem and India. For instance, there is a breakdown in the allegory and a growing distance between India's history and Saleem's story. On the one hand, Saleem discovers that India is his true twin and that his love for his sister Jamila Singer is ultimately a misplaced affection – "my truly-incestuous feelings were for my true birth-sister, India herself, and not for that trollop of a crooner" (385). On the other, this tight bond between Saleem and India disintegrates toward the conclusion of the novel (442) and he admits by the story's end that he has had enough of politics (441).

To a point Jameson's claim that "third world" writing is always allegorical and embodies the nation's experience seems a fitting assessment of *Midnight's Children* but as noted in Chapter One, there are problems with this theory when applied to Rushdie's work. In addition to the growing distance between Saleem and India noted above, that implies the allegory falls apart before the novel ends, a few other items can be noted. First, the narrator acknowledges that his recounting of India's story includes speculations, errors, selection, biases, and even outright lies (cf. 443). If *Midnight's Children* is only an allegorical account of the twentieth-century emergence of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh as independent nation states, one would expect the two levels of narrative – Saleem's story, the countries' stories – to align more consistently, accurately representing the political situations of concern.

Second, the recurring introduction of religious and secular mythologies suggests that Rushdie's story is guided as much by non-political material as political (see especially Clark chap.4). Allusions to Islamic, Hindu, Jewish, and Christian sacred stories, as well as such diverse influences as classical Greek mythology and American and Indian popular culture punctuate the novel. Politics is an important organizing principle but by no means the only one.

Third, Rushdie's novels also address non-political concerns. His abhorrence of racism and intolerance, for instance, is obvious (and Rushdie constantly introduces animal imagery to represent this kind of violence; see e.g., the non-Indian Emil Zagallo's use of "ape" in the citation above to represent Indians as a whole [i.e., the "ape" Saleem's face is a "map" of the whole of India]).

Fourth, an exclusively allegorical approach to postcolonial literature generally, and Rushdie specifically, overlooks the complexities involved in the mingling of cultures. Colonized and colonizers influence one another. Rushdie's novels are ambivalent about the West. Among his regular targets is the resistance of modernization and Western education by people in the formerly colonized subcontinent. Aadam Aziz illustrates this mixed assessment of Western influence on India. He resents versions of history

This thesis explores the theme of transformation and metamorphosis in Salman Rushdie's writing, and in *Midnight's Children* we have an interesting case for this exploration of the use of animal imagery in relation to humans. The use of bestial language in character description is widespread throughout the novel but in addition to this, the narrative itself undergoes a transformation of sorts. As noted earlier, *Midnight's Children* is Saleem's first-person account of his own – and therefore India's – story (cf. the citation of p. 9 above). This Saleem-cum-India motif allows Rushdie to tell the story of India's birth and describe its endless diversity through the often-fantastic experiences of his narrator.

Transformations of identity and character abound in *Midnight's Children*, some of them are clearly realistic while others are magical. Among realistic transformations, we have the sad downfall of Saleem Sinai. Saleem is born into a wealthy family, recognized by the state as the firstborn child of the new nation, and raised in a beautiful home in Methwold's Estates, where the houses are "built in a style befitting their original [British] inhabitants (conquerors' houses! Roman mansions; three-storey homes of gods standing on two-storey Olympus, a stunted Kailash!)" (94). Within the family he is also a favoured child, a fact not lost on his younger sister who is troubled by relative neglect and obliged to "fight for attention, possessed by her need to place herself at the centre of events"

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that refer to the discovery of India by Europe, and European construction of the people of India (11; cf. *The Moor's Last Sigh* 4) but at the same time is European educated and quick to reject cultural and religious practices he deems unenlightened (cf. comments on *Shame* in the previous chapter). Rushdie is not simply resisting the cultural domination of Western imperialism.

Fifth and finally, though Rushdie's writing is concerned largely with major political events of the twentieth century, his writing is not limited to these. He also addresses such matters as fanaticism stemming from narrow-minded religiosity. Among other issues, there are concerns expressed about the status of women in patriarchal societies, economic exploitation, and various forms of systemic abuse (cf. comments about the "hierarchal" nature of the midnight miracle [*Midnight's Children* 227]). Racial hatred is evident in the account of the Ravana gang and their anti-Muslim behaviour (72). This use and non-use of allegorical levels of meaning is significant for a discussion of transformation and metamorphosis in *Midnight's Children* (see further below).

(150). Saleem's fortunes change, however. He eventually discovers he is not the biological child of his parents, he ends up living in a slum, and his sister the Brass Monkey becomes far more than the favoured child of a family when she transforms into Jamila Singer, the favourite child of a whole nation. Other examples of dramatic but still realistic character developments include the transformation of Naseem Ghani into the Reverend Mother, and Cyrus the Great into "Lord Khusro, the most successful holy child in history" (269; cf. 405). The story of Cyrus' transition into a superman/religious leader illustrates that some transformations are in fact fraudulent. It is an example, therefore, of a category (d) metamorphosis, though not one involving bestial imagery.[2] The Brass Monkey's transformation into Jamila Singer is equally dubious, ultimately being a marketing phenomenon.

There are also magical transformations, again associated with changes in identity. For instance, one of the midnight's children changes their sex back and forth (219) and Saleem becomes a dog (a category [b] metamorphosis). Saleem's wife Parvati transforms into his sister: "when she came towards me for comfort or warmth in the isolation of our sleeping hours, I still saw superimposed upon her features the horribly eroded physiognomy of Jamila Singer" (423).[3] The cumulative effect of these transformations suggests that very little is stable in the world described by Saleem Sinai. Everything is in flux.

Rushdie's style of presentation seems to reflect this development as well.

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[2]An example of a category (d), bestial-like metamorphosis appears in *Grimus* when the hallucinating Flapping Eagle sees Virgil Jones transformed into "a huge suppurating monster" (84).

[3]This transformation is difficult to locate within the taxonomy outlined in Chapter One. Though it appears to be magical, the transformation of Parvati into Jamila could also originate in Saleem's mind. If the latter, the psychological origin for the transformation is analogous to a category (c) metamorphosis – a perceived transformation – though one not involving animal imagery.

Consequently, a further level of transformation worth noting is the form of the novel itself. Neil Ten Kortenaar notes a discernible shift in *Midnight's Children*. Whereas Book One with its account of events occurring before Saleem's birth "lends itself well to [. . .] allegorical interpretation," other inspirations inform the rest of the narrative such as Rushdie's memories of growing up in Bombay and the conventions of the *Bildungsroman*. As a result, we cannot easily fix *Midnight's Children* within a single generic category because the form of the novel changes along with its narrator. This evolution is striking in the light of comments made by Fredric Jameson noted in Chapter One. Jameson argues that all "third-world" texts are consciously and overtly "*national allegories* [. . .] when their forms develop out of predominantly Western machineries of representation, such as the novel" (69; cf. 80). If Ten Kortenaar's observation is correct that *Midnight's Children* is not rigidly allegorical, Jameson's thesis does not adequately describe this particular novel (cf. comments n. 1). *Midnight's Children* is not merely a political allegory rehearsing the history of postcolonial India and Pakistan. This novel also explores the myriad diversities found in the subcontinent and the endless ways the differences of its people mingle and intersect. The variety of its population is evident in the cross-section of humanity comprising the Midnight's Children Conference, each member "endowed with features, talents or faculties which can only be described as miraculous" (195). Frequently, Rushdie depicts those encounters with otherness – those meetings between rich and poor, Muslim and Hindu, progressive and traditional, Eastern and Western, political opponents – as marred by violence. It is in such moments that the author also tends to introduce bestial imagery.

There are no explicit, literal (category [a]) human-to-animal transfigurations in

Midnight's Children, like those found in *The Satanic Verses* and possibly *Shame*. Interestingly, Rushdie hints at such a transformation in a brief reference to a painting early in the novel. In the home of Ghani the landowner, there is "a large oil painting of Diana the Huntress" (18).[4] Diana is the Roman, virgin goddess of the hunt and equivalent of the Greek Artemis. She is regularly associated with wild animals in artistic representations, usually in close proximity to a deer because she transforms the prince Actaeon into one after he sees her bathing naked:

> As she sprinkled his hair with the vengeful drops she also spoke these words, ominous of coming disaster. 'Now, if you can, you may tell how you saw me when I was undressed.' She uttered no more threats, but made the horns of a long-lived stag sprout where she had scattered water on his brow. She lengthened his neck, brought the tips of his ears to a point, changed his hands to feet, his arms to long legs, and covered his body with a dappled skin. (Ovid 79; full story 78-80)

Rushdie makes no explicit reference to this story apart from this subtle allusion. Since the painting hangs in Ghani the landowner's house, it seems likely there is a connection between the story it tells (the destruction of a male gazing on a naked female), and Aadam's examination of Naseem's naked body through a hole in a sheet. The painting is, then, both prophetic and humorous; Aadam sees the painting, presumably recognizes the story it tells, but does not heed the warning. There is a further level to the humour as well, one that connects more directly to the subject matter of this thesis. The story behind the painting is part of the classical origins of Western culture, a culture the European-

[4]There is also a reference to a painting of Diana in *Shalimar the Clown*. There are various European paintings in a Kashmiri home, one of them "a picture of Diana the Huntress that is particularly fine" (255). The context of the reference is the war for Kashmir among Kashmiri liberationists, Pakistan, and India. Here too, an allusion to a metamorphosis story appears during a scene involving clashes of cultures and violence.

trained doctor embraces. His eventual marriage to Naseem – the woman behind the sheet – involves a union and clash of worldviews. Whereas Aadam embraces Western, progressive thinking, rejecting his religious roots (10), Naseem holds to traditional values and despises her husband's godless ways. To the extent that this painting, however vaguely, anticipates their marriage, it illustrates the recurring pattern of storytelling treated in this thesis, namely, that the convergence of difference is regularly destructive in Rushdie's novels, and signalled to readers by metamorphoses and bestial imagery.

As said, there are no category (a) metamorphoses in *Midnight's Children*. What we do find in this novel is Rushdie developing sustained metaphors using brutish terms to describe human characters (categories [b] through [e]). In fact, animal metaphors and similes abound in *Midnight's Children* as the following examples illustrate. Aadam Aziz is "as silly as an owl" (according to Tai the boatman [19]; cf. Zohra's remark that the newlyweds Ahmed and Amina Sinai are "crazy as owls" [78]). He also has the nose of a monster (272) and is as broken as an old horse (148). Naseem Aziz (the Reverend Mother) is "like a large smug spider" (41). Amina has a fish-like fluttering of lips, her mouth makes fish motions (159), and her hands are like spiders (217). Ahmed Sinai drops like an ox (296) and the Narlikar women who are his nemeses are like vultures (296). His voice is far away like a bird (280) and he speaks like an animal (283). Saleem Sinai is a bad-tempered dog (323) and a sacrificial lamb (297). He has a nose like an eagle (247), which elsewhere he compares to Ganesh's elephantine trunk (155, 195) and a mammoth (195). He is also "the old billy goat" (359) and has the face of a fish (379). People call Saleem Sinai's sister the Brass Monkey "because of her thick thatch of red-gold hair" (149). She talks to animals and often exhibits animalistic rage (183). Mary Pereira thinks

the Brass Monkey "should have been born with four legs" and the narrator agrees: "the Brass Monkey was as much animal as human" with a gift of talking to birds, cats, and dogs (151; cf. 293). She learns to sing from the birds (293) and her voice has "the purity of wings [. . .] and the flying of eagles" (294). After her transformation into Jamila Singer, she has deer-startled eyes (325). Alia Aziz is a spider with a web, and the Sinai family are flies when they are with her (307, 333). Padma is stunned like a fish (280). Cyrus the Great/Khusro is bovinely placid (269), Sheikh Abdullah is a lion of Kashmir (260), and Musa and Mary are like aged tigers (144). Joseph D'Costa is caught in a trap like a rat (147; he is also compared to a wolf and a snail [171]). Shiva is rat-faced (220, 226, and 378) and people call Ismail's wife Nussie-the-duck because of her waddling gait (97; she also "smiles a bovine smile" [135]). Evie is rodent-like (183) and Mustapha has an insect-like family (390).

Furthermore, there are many "monsters" in this novel. Ravana is responsible for fires and referred to as a "many-headed demon" (71, 74). There are in fact many things described as having one or more heads: e.g., crowds and/or the poor (71, 74, 81, 280, 357, 462); Amina's unborn children (87; 332); suspicion (88, 89, 90); lust (251); revenge (256, 258, 260); the city of Delhi (390); and Saleem's inquisitors (433). The midnight's children collectively are "a sort of many-headed monster" (229; see too 90, 115, 116, 125, 130, 151, 245). The narrator describes panic as "a bubbling sea-beast" (37) and accuses Saleem of being a monster, which he denies (118; note he has "temples like stunted horns" [124] which may suggest something monstrous). There are also recurring references to Shiva, god of procreation and destruction (128). Shiva is the name of the other child born at the stroke of midnight, Saleem's alter ego (200).

Most of these terms are one-time descriptors (category [e]) but as noted, there are occasions in the novel when Rushdie develops more sustained bestial metaphors, using animal imagery to further character development (categories [b] and [c]). Saleem Sinai illustrates the point. Unlike characters in *Shame* and *The Satanic Verses*, he experiences a bestial transformation that is not physiological. He becomes at one point in the novel "the man dog" (347, 352, 354). Those with him are careful to observe that he is not an actual dog but they remain impressed with his abilities to follow scents like a real one (351; cf. 348, 349, 364, 365). Also consistent with this metaphor, Saleem is abject, mute, and lusty during this time. Here we have a metaphorical use of language ("the man dog") accompanied by literal qualities (his keen sense of smell and dog-like behaviours).

Saleem is also snake-like. Descriptions involving snakes are widespread in *Midnight's Children*. Homi Catrack has a cobra-like voice (247), and Naseem Aziz (the Reverend Mother) has a basilisk glare that pierces visitors with lidless eyes, staring them down while their voices turn to stone (43). Saleem Sinai has numerous snake-like qualities as well. As a narrator, he is a snake alongside Padma who is a mongoose (121). As a boy his "member waggled frantically like a slithering snake" (127). As a school-age boy, he wears an "elastic belt with a snake-buckle" (153). In a strange exercise of etymology and transliteration he observes that snakes are found in his very name ("[the letter] S, as sinuous as a snake; serpents lie coiled within the name" [305]). In the Sundarbans he finds liberation when a snake bites his heel (364).

Saleem's serpentine qualities have a clearly identified source. They come from Doctor Schaapsteker, who studies the medicinal properties of snake venom at his Schaapsteker Institute and rents the top-floor apartment in the Sinai's home. His name

not only indicates a kind of snake (Ten Kortenaar 291: "the name derives from Afrikaans: sheep piercer"), he also physically resembles the serpentine creatures he studies: Schaapsteker's "tongue flicked constantly in and out of his papery lips" (*Midnight's Children* 137; cf. 147, 148, 306). The orderlies at his Institute suspect he dreams about being bitten by snakes and thus remains immune to their venom. They further suspect "that he was half-snake himself, the child of an unnatural union between a woman and a cobra" (137). Age eventually "turned him [. . .] into the incarnation of snakehood" (257).[5]

The mad Schaapsteker is an important influence on young Saleem. When describing the arrival of the new tenant to the upper-floor Sinai apartment, the narrator writes, "At the end of February, snake poison entered our lives" (137). Schaapsteker saves the young man's life by providing cobra venom to cure an illness (148-49), and in later years advises Saleem to "Imitate the action of the snake. Be secret; strike from the cover of a bush" (258). Saleem follows Schaapsteker's advice and as he carries out an act of revenge, he imitates "the action of a snake" (259) and is said to be "snake-like," carrying "poison" and experiencing "the delight of the snake who hits its target, and feels its fangs pierce its victim's heel" (260; cf. 276 and 364 where similar imagery is used).

Dr. Schaapsteker plays a key role in the Sinai family's story. First, his influence on Saleem's life is clear. The doctor seems to pass on his own immunity to snake venom (137) to the boy, along with its healing benefits. Venom not only saves the ailing Saleem when still living in his parents' house, but again in later years during his amnesiac state in the Sundarbans. Snake venom brings him to himself: "I was rejoined to the past, jolted

[5]Schaapsteker resembles Firdaus Noman in *Shalimar the Clown* whose life involves various serpentine associations. Snakes loom large in her worldview and there is a certain physical resemblance resulting from her lazy eye. Her neighbours claim, "once you had been fixed by that lidded sidelong look you knew that she must be part snake herself" (56; cf. 58). This is a category (d) use of bestial imagery.

into unity by snake-poison" (137). Second, Schaapsteker saves the Sinai family economically. Immediately after the freezing of Ahmed Sinai's assets (135), the family faces certain fiscal disaster. As Amina tells Mary Pereira, "'He pays his rent, and permits us to live'" (137). This might hint at the continued reliance of a newly independent, Indian family on colonial wealth – he is, after all, specifically identified as "the *European* snake doctor" (137; emphasis added). Alternatively, perhaps, it points to the ambivalence toward colonial influences in the Sinai family. They live in the British Methwold's Estate, and now another European is paying the rent so they can continue to do so. At the same time, though there are benefits to this Western influence (his scientific research saves Saleem's life [148-49]), he remains a 'snake,' a mythical symbol of danger and deception.

Transformations abound in *Midnight's Children*, sometimes using bestial imagery, sometimes not. As suggested in Chapter One, Rushdie frequently introduces bestial imagery to articulate clashes between cultures, periods of social upheaval, and attempts to represent diversity. These and other instances of the blurred lines between humans and animals in *Midnight's Children* are consistent with this observation. Rushdie's choice of terminology highlights this interest in encounters with otherness and the potential for change when dissimilar people meet and interact. For instance, Aadam Aziz undergoes a "transformation" while away from Kashmir studying in Germany (28). He becomes an "alien" in his home (28) after his transformation abroad (33-34; cf. 107). Later on, the new Indian residents of the British influenced Methwold's Estates also experience a "transformation" when living in their new Western-style accommodations (99).

The transformation of Dr. Aadam Aziz is an interesting case that deserves further attention. Aadam Aziz is from Kashmir, which "is not strictly speaking a part of the Empire, but an independent princely state," and he moves from there to India, which is "occupied territory" (33). He has mixed feelings as a result. He is not sure whether the Gandhi-inspired resistance to the British (*hartal*) is his fight or not. In addition to his political ambiguity as a Kashmiri living in India, his own people view Aziz with suspicion. According to his narrator grandson, Aziz has an "altered vision" (11) following five years away from home. While in Heidelberg with anarchist friends, he acquires a distaste for European condescension about India (11), which seems to motivate his short-lived interest in rediscovering the old traditional ways (prayer) upon his return (10). But despite attempts to "recall his childhood springs in Paradise" and "re-unite himself with an earlier self which ignored [European] influence" (11) following his return, Dr. Aziz does not fit into his old world.

While praying, "Heidelberg invaded his head" and he could imagine his friends scorning and mocking his "Mecca-turned parroting." He sees his childhood home through traveled eyes and notices the valley's "narrowness." What was initially a "coldly neutral" landscape would soon become "a hostile environment" (11). The people of the valley reject Aziz as an "alien, and therefore a person not completely to be trusted" (28) and to the end of his life he remains the "*Heidelberg-returned*" Doctor Aadam Aziz (278; italics original). On the bottom of Dr. Aziz's medical bag, the word HEIDELBERG appears on the leather, serving as a permanent reminder of his German experiences. Tai contemptuously refers to the doctor's "bag full of foreign machines" (19) that is made of pigskin and "makes one unclean just by looking at it" (20).

For the narrator, these two Kashmiri men represent opposite ends of the spectrum: "I have Tai-for-changelessness opposed to Aadam-for-progress" (107). Tai sees the bag as representing "Abroad; it is the alien thing, the invader, progress" (21). Others find Aziz's otherworldly experiences frightening. His mother complains that her "big-shot doctor" son has left the traditional family business for a new profession (20), and later his wife Naseem is horrified that her "Europe-returned" husband expects her to "move [sexually] a little" like the "terrible women" elsewhere in the world (33-34).

Aziz lives trapped between two worlds. As noted, though he has embraced a Western education and longs for progress in Kashmir and India, it troubles him that Europeans believe "he [as a non-European from the subcontinent] was somehow the invention of their ancestors" (11).[6] However, the old ways are equally problematic, symbolized in part by his troubled faith; he was "knocked forever into that middle place, unable to worship a God in whose existence he could not wholly disbelieve. Permanent alteration: a hole" (12). Aziz epitomizes Bhabha's concepts of mimicry and hybridity. Here we have a character that resists containment within simple categories. He is at once progressive and traditional, critical of both colonial condescension and his Kashmiri roots, simultaneously believing and unbelieving.[7]

A second example of cultural diversity and encounter with otherness in

[6]This same concern appears in *The Moor's Last Sigh* as well, in a question raised by Moraes [Moor] Zogoiby: "English and French sailed in the wake of that first-arrived Portugee, so that in the period called Discovery-of-India – but how could we be discovered when we were not covered before? [. . .]" [4]).

[7]On mimicry, see esp. Bhabha 121-31. For Bhabha, the expectation that colonized people will mimic the colonizers stems from "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*" (122; italics original). This represents a form of control because the colonial expectancy of mimicry provides a means of surveillance (123). Aziz certainly resembles this mix of old and new, East and West, traditional and modern. Ten Kortenaar's caution deserves acknowledgement here, however: "The problem with most critical discussions of hybridity [. . .], including Saleem's own, is that they assume India has an essence that can always be recognized, even when mixed with things derived from elsewhere" (18).

Midnight's Children involves the arrival of Ahmed Sinai and his family to Bombay. Bombay is the site of many metamorphoses throughout the novel. Not only do the members of Ahmed's family experience many changes while living there but also the city itself is in a constant state of flux, and has been from the beginning. Bombay's origins lie, the narrator reports, in a dream by a British officer of the East India Company in the seventeenth century. The first William Methwold's vision of "a British Bombay [. . .] was a notion of such force that it set time in motion" (92). Bombay would defend "India's West" (92), a city described as a "Star of the East / With her face to the West" (93). The "first inhabitants" of the pre-colonial "primeval world"[8] are now "under concrete" (referring here to rice), renamed and neglected (the city is not named for the benign goddess Mumbadevi, but the harbour [Bom Bahia], a name suggesting commerce), or "squashed" like the Koli fishermen (92-93). The British are responsible for ending "the dominion of fishing-nets, coconuts, rice and Mumbadevi" and now they too are leaving (in 1947) because "no dominion is everlasting" (94).

This brief overview of the history of Bombay introduces several important ideas to the world Saleem Sinai is about to enter as he relates the story of his birth. That world, that city that he inhabits, is unstable, constantly shifting and evolving as new people, cultures and ideas meet. Consistently, then as now, constant friction resulting from encounters with otherness in this city brings change (renaming), often with destructive results (squashing). The Portuguese and British conquerors refurbish, and rename a pre-

[8]This recalls language used by Joseph Conrad in *Heart of Darkness*. Conrad's story includes several terms and phrases that suggest an underlying concept of progress that locates Western society far ahead of Africa in terms of development. In his descriptions of Africa we find phrases like "primeval mud," "primeval forest" (27) and "primeval earth" (69), and as Marlow moves further into the continent, he imagines it as "travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world" (34). He and his fellow sailors "were wanderers on a prehistoric earth [. . . .] the first men taking possession of an accursed inheritance" (36).

colonial, pre-urban and primeval world. That earlier, pre-colonial world is lost; now, as the section about Methwold's Estates indicates (esp. 92-106), Western influence is ubiquitous. The new residents experience a "transformation" soon after moving in (99). The second William Methwold, whose namesake and "ancestor was the chap who had the idea of building this whole city" (97), enters into a curious bargain with Ahmed Sinai who wants to buy his Estate. There is a condition of sale: Methwold will only sell the house with everything in it included, and the actual transfer cannot occur until midnight, August 15, 1947, coinciding with the transfer of power from Britain to India.

This incident introduces levels of irony to India's new independence, at least as experienced by the Sinai family. One anticipated metamorphosis does not occur because the property does not become fully 'Indian' at the time of purchase. What India reclaims from the British, remains British in character. At the same time, an unexpected metamorphosis occurs as the Sinai family adapts to its new, British surroundings. The first Methwold's city served British interests, and the second Methwold, who is "transferring power too" (96), insists that his Estate remain crowded with British items as a condition of sale. As Amina Sinai observes, "the cupboards are full of old clothes" (95), "there's nowhere to put one suit!" (96), and "No place to hang my own father's photo on the wall" (96). Significantly, however, though the Sinais are only obligated to keep these signs of the colonial presence for a short time ("less than two months" [95]), reminders of William Methwold's presence in the home remain for as long as they live there.

Methwold influences the family in other ways too. He passes on a love for alcohol ("cocktails in the garden" [95]) to Ahmed Sinai, who in time starts drinking to excess. Ahmed's voice also changes in Methwold's presence as he picks up a "hideous mockery

of an Oxford drawl" (96). Methwold's palaces only die gradually as the story progresses (271), indicating his ongoing, lingering influence on the new Indian residents.[9]

Just as Bombay is a site where cultures collide, so too is the novel's narrator, Saleem Sinai. He is literally the product of a union between East (the Indian Vanita) and West (the British Methwold). This thesis argues that violence and bestial imagery regularly emerge in Rushdie's novels when there are encounters with otherness. The hybrid Saleem is the result of a union between a colonized Indian and a colonizing Englishman, and Rushdie regularly depicts him in bestial terms. Saleem also becomes the victim of violence in various forms. Consequently, he embodies the very encounter with otherness explored in this thesis. This connection between animal imagery and contacts with difference is evident in the stories about Saleem's dog-like and snake-like (category [b]) transformations.

Readers discover the truth of Saleem's hybrid nature in the story about Methwold's parted hair (95, 101, etc.) which to some extent symbolizes the parting of India and Pakistan in the wake of decolonization. The narrator also notes that along this hairline "history and sexuality moved" (95) and that it is "irresistible to women" (95). When Wee Willie Winkie's wife Vanita is alone with Methwold's centre parting she feels it "exert a pull on her fingers that was impossible to resist" and "nine months later, Wee Willie Winkie joked about his wife's imminent baby and a stain appeared on an Englishman's forehead" (103). The scene suggests – though not explicitly at this point – that Saleem is in fact the biological child of the Englishman (note Saleem's "western hairline" and "eastern ear" [124] and his blue eyes like a foreigner [369]). The fact that

[9]Again, this notion of an inescapable cultural influence coincides with Bhabha's idea of hybridity. Those choosing to live under the eccentric Englishman's terms change after living in Methwold's Estate (*Midnight's Children* 99; note also the use of "transformation" in this context).

the hair that so attracts Vanita is a toupee (114) suggests that everything that Methwold and his namesake stand for – the dream of a city protecting Western interests, etc. – lacks substance and meaning.

The mixed-blood Saleem Sinai experiences much of the brutality that mars the early decades of Independence, and as noted in Chapter One, storylines in Rushdie's novels involving encounters with otherness often involve forms of violence. Saleem is the offspring of a British father and an Indian mother, and it is a European doctor who saves his life (148-49) and suggests he imitate the behaviour of snakes (258). Saleem is also on the receiving end of systemic abuses later in the novel (e.g., forced sterilization). Rushdie appears to present a version of India marred by violence, particularly at points of intersection between different cultures and religions and political viewpoints. At moments when intolerance emerges, such as scenes depicting Hinduism at war with Islam (as in the Sundarbans), the rich at war with the poor (e.g., slum clearing, and Shiva's hostility to Saleem), or mutual suspicion between Europeans and Indians (e.g., fear of Dr. Schaapsteker [137]), Rushdie introduces bestial imagery. Said differently, Rushdie develops these sustained bestial metaphors and metamorphoses as a way of highlighting diversity and depicting the nonhuman behaviours of the intolerant. Ironically, Saleem is both an allegory of India itself and a casualty of its violent outbursts. Presumably, such a character would experience a kind of cognitive dissonance since he is the first and favoured child of the country and simultaneously a victim of its intolerance and systemic attacks. However, as the reader knows, this favoured symbol of the newly independent India is not a pureblood but rather ethnically mixed. Consequently, Saleem is frequently associated with animal – especially canine and

serpentine – terminology and comes to embody the cruelty that accompanies bigotry against otherness.

Bestial Imagery in *Shalimar the Clown*

The stories about Sufiya Zinobia in *Shame* and India Ophuls in *Shalimar the Clown* (2005) resemble one another in certain respects. Both characters are females born to parents associated with cultural diversity,[10] and both appear as animals in stories told about them. They are children produced in symbolically diverse unions who further illustrate Rushdie's habit of introducing bestial terminology at points of contact with otherness and in situations marred by violence.

Most refer to Maximilian Ophuls' wife, Margaret "Peggy" Rhodes, as "the Grey Rat," a moniker given to her by the Germans during World War II because of her elusive nature (167-68). Shortly before leaving for New Delhi so her husband could assume his post as American Ambassador to India, the Grey Rat has a dream in which she finally has a child after twenty-one years of marriage:

The baby was beautiful and furry with a long, curling tail but she was unable to

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[10]This hybridity is not as obvious in *Shame* but it is significant that Sufiya's grandfather loses his life in an attempt to bridge the Hindu and Muslim worlds. Sufiya's maternal grandfather, Mahmoud the Woman, is an idealist who ultimately dies because of his "tolerance" (58). Those who enter his theatre divide along religious and cultural lines at a time when even attendance at a movie "had become a political act" (57). There are two groups: "The one-godly [Muslims] went to these cinemas and the washers of stone gods [Hindus] to those; movie-fans had been partitioned already, in advance of the tired old land" (58-59). The entertainment preferences of meateaters vs. vegetarians, or one-godly vs. stonewashers (57-60), anticipate the post-British demarcation of the subcontinent into predominantly Muslim Pakistan and predominantly Hindu India. Mahmoud the idealist grows impatient with this political and religious divide and attempts to "rise above all this partition foolishness" by showing a double bill in his theatre, one movie for Muslims and one for Hindus. The results are predictable: "How the double bill was settled: both sides, veg and non-veg, boycotted the Empire" (58). Eventually, a fanatical meateater/one-godly/Muslim blows up the theatre, the narrator speculates, because the bomb detonated "during a particularly suggestive love scene, and we know what the godly think of love, or the illusion of it, especially when admission money must be paid to see it . . . they are Against. They cut it out. Love corrupts" (60; ellipses original). The point here is that Sufiya has a family link to a site of encounter between otherness, one marred by violence. She is not biologically hybrid like India Ophuls or Saleem Sinai, but related to one whose day-to-day praxis embraces diversity and tolerance.

> love it [. . .]. It was a girl baby and even though her friends were horrified to see her cradling a black rattess she didn't care. She had once been a rat herself but she had turned into a human being eventually [. . .]. (175-76)

Here Rushdie again presents a blurring of animal and human at a moment of border crossing and cultural mingling. The dream occurs, Rushdie states explicitly, "on the night before she left with her husband for New Delhi" (175) and the dreamer connects its meaning to the foreign land she is about to visit:

> On the plane [. . . .] she closed her eyes and there was the vision again, the midnight rat standing up on its hind legs, begging for love, calling her *mother* in its high Ratetta voice. In India, she decided, she was going to have a great deal to do with orphans. Yes: the motherless children of India would discover that they had a good friend in her. Maybe that was the meaning of the dream. (177)

The Grey Rat's interpretation proves to be correct in a literal sense (186, 209, 344) but there is a further and more significant level of meaning. Maximilian Ophuls has an affair with Boonyi Kaul Noman (Shalimar the Clown's wife) and their child, named India, is clearly the beast-child anticipated by the Grey Rat's vision. In her first dream about the monstrous baby, Margaret Rhodes Ophuls "was unable to love it" and this is the case for the (physically normal) child born out of the union between the Franco-American Max Ophuls and the Kashmiri Boonyi Kaul Noman. To the English-American Margaret Rhodes Ophuls, the hybrid girl named India is unlovable (as suggested, e.g., in 344-45).

India carries a profound sense of displacement into her adult life and various stigmas associated with her birth. Only after her father's death is she able to sleep soundly, sensing the forgiveness of her sins ("or, perhaps, his") and their burden passed

on (4). She does not like the name India, it "felt wrong to her, it felt exoticist, colonial, suggesting the appropriation of a reality that was not hers to own" even though she had certain physical characteristics appropriate to the name (5; i.e., skin colour and dark hair). Her constructed persona, however, owes more to English and American influences than Indian ones (6). Like her home state California that appears to have no mysteries or depths, "this banal clarity was an illusion" (5).

Rushdie introduces the images of a rat mother and rat child in *Shalimar the Clown* at moments of cross-cultural contact and mingling, ones involving struggle and pain. During the War, the Germans give the bestial nickname to the English Margaret Rhodes and later on the English-American Rhodes dreams of her beast-child, as she is about to migrate to war-torn India in the 1960s. The child is born out of the illicit union of two married people from different cultural backgrounds, and she struggles with her sense of identity in adult life. Max and Boonyi's spouses, Margaret and Shalimar, also agonize because of the affair, which the beast-child India represents.[11]

This short scene about the Grey Rat's dream is consistent with the primary claim of this thesis, namely that Rushdie introduces stories involving animal metaphors at moments of border crossing and engagements with new communities. There does not appear to be any moralizing here. Rushdie's stories prize migrations and pluralism but he is also aware that not everyone does, and that conflict is often the result. In *Shalimar the Clown*, Rushdie contrasts the beauty and harmony of the richly variegated life of Kashmir in an earlier time, particularly in stories about the diversity of the village of Pachigam, with numerous narratives highlighting destructive intolerances. Some are racial (e.g.,

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[11]Her illegitimate birth appears to be an issue of concern for India; she is aware she "had been conceived in the East – conceived out of wedlock" (5; cf. 345).

hints about the plight of European Jews during World War II) and others are religious (particularly the challenges of Muslim and Hindu coexistence in the subcontinent). There are rivalries between individuals (Abdullah Sher Noman and Bombur Yambarzal), communities (Pachigam and Shirmal), and countries (India and Pakistan; The United States and The Soviet Union). Rushdie does not always include bestial-transformation imagery in his stories during moments of contact and conflict with otherness. However, when metaphoric and metamorphic tropes do appear, there is usually such an encounter, often involving pain or grief in one form or another.

Rushdie's *Shalimar the Clown* provides clear illustrations of the convergence of bestial imagery, metamorphosis, the mixing of cultures, and violence. Firdaus Begum is the mother of Noman Sher Noman, or Shalimar the Clown. Snakes "loomed large" in her worldview and the association of this woman and snakes is such that people suspect "she must be part snake" herself (56). She even threatens to turn Shalimar and his father into snakes at one point (56). Shalimar's father is also associated with bestial imagery but here the dominant metaphors are associated with birds, to the point that their neighbours suspect the village name means "birdville" (60). Furthermore, Abdullah Sher Noman "was indeed a lion" (59; cf. 275) who passes on his leonine middle name to the boy, something Shalimar recalls later in life when the assassin is in prison (59-60; cf. tiger imagery 272-73). One of the important life lessons Shalimar hears from Abdullah Sher Noman is that "A boy could become a bird. Metamorphosis was the secret heart of life" (56). However, while the air-walking Shalimar is in some sense bird-like – appearing to fly when performing his high wire, tightrope act – he does not metamorphose into a bird as his father suggests. Instead, as the story unfolds, he changes into a violent, lion-like

killer. Indeed, this statement by Abdullah provides an important clue for understanding Rushdie's novel. Change, metamorphosis, is inevitable. Migrations and the unavoidable intermingling of cultures, religions, and ideas invariably produce new ways of looking at the world and new kinds of legitimate experiences of the world. There are two options open to individuals. One can embrace the ever fluid, ever shifting and morphing world, or retreat into a defence of stasis. The liberal-minded and peace-loving Abdullah chooses the former but is unable to convince his son of the merits of this position. Shalimar's inability to accommodate diversity results in unspeakable violence.

Shalimar is also snake-like as his "serpentine" mother suspects because of the way he "slithered" up and down trees so well (56). This is further evident as he prepares for a nocturnal tryst with his first and true love Boonyi, "his thoughts [. . .] coiling around" her (57). Immediately after this remark, Rushdie interrupts what appears to be an innocent love story with commentary on the cultural and political realities behind their relationship:

> The words *Hindu* and *Muslim* had no place in their [Shalimar and Boonyi's] story, he told himself. In the valley these words were merely descriptions, not divisions. The frontiers between the words, their hard edges, had grown smudged and blurred. This was how things had to be. This was Kashmir. (57; emphasis original)

Shalimar the Clown is bestial (snake, bird, lion) and when he experiences this intimate contact with an other (he is Muslim, she is Hindu), he becomes unexpectedly violent as he speaks with her:

> "Don't leave me," he said, rolling over onto his back and panting for joy. "Don't

> you leave me now, or I'll never forgive you, and I'll have my revenge, I'll kill you and if you have any children by another man I'll kill the children also." (61)

This grim conclusion to a teenage love story is jarring but anticipated. The novel begins with a grisly murder committed by the adult Shalimar who is by then an assassin. There too the violence involves cross-cultural encounters. He kills a French American, living in California, with ties to Kashmir and a daughter of mixed race (3-41). Shalimar eventually fulfills his disturbing promise to Boonyi as well. When relating the story of Boonyi's murder at the hands of her husband Shalimar, Hasina Yambarzal speaks of "a horrific force far in excess of any dream" (366).

The clustering of these themes – diversity, violence, bestial imagery – appears again in the story of Firdaus Noman's pregnancy as she awaits the arrival of Noman/Shalimar. The scene (61-75) brings together many unlikely connections. Warring towns work together on the maharaja's orders to serve at a grand Dassehra festival banquet (70). The Muslim town Pachigam serves the Hindu maharaja on this occasion, during which Kashmiri Hindu and Muslim stories "sit happily side by side" (71). This section of the story also reveals that Noman/Shalimar is of mixed race. His mother's family claims ancestral origins reaching back to the Macedonian Alexander, "a direct descendant of the mighty Iskander the Great," himself (72). Not only is there ethnic and religious diversity in this section, there are also a number of connections to nonhuman species introduced at the moment of Shalimar's birth. His pregnant mother is a "waddling hen" ready to deliver her child like an egg (73) and, readers learn, her family is from the town Buffliaz, named "after Alexander the Great's legendary horse Bucephalus" which "was still revered as a semidivinity" (73). Firdaus also maintains that her royal, blue-eyed

ancestors knew the secrets of the gold-digging ants described by Herodotus (73-75; cf. 362). Her father arrived in Pachigam carrying gold, too frightened to explain his story: "Maybe there really were giant treasure-hunting ants, but they had let him go. It was said in the ancient tales that the ants chased you if you stole their wealth, and woe betide the man or woman who didn't run fast or far enough. Death by an ant horde was a terrible fate" (75).

Firdaus' pregnancy, finally, involves various forebodings of bad tidings. The prophetess Nazarébaddor chooses death over life because "what's coming is so terrible that no prophet will have the words to foretell it" (68). The maharaja's demand for cooperation between the warring villages of Shirmal and Pachigam is also an omen for Firdaus "who had picked up a little of Nazarébaddor's prophetic ability" (71). There is yet another sign of trouble in her darkening hair, said to be yet "one more bad omen" (72). Most significantly, the unborn child frightens the pregnant Firdaus. This fear is the greatest secret of her life and one about which she would not speak:

> [. . .] even before his birth her son [Shalimar], whom everyone loved the minute he was born, and whose nature was the sweetest, gentlest and most open of any human being in Pachigam, had started scaring her half to death. (72)
>
> [. . .] when Firdaus awoke on the day of the Shalimar banquet and saw that her hair had begun to darken she spoke beclouded words about fearing her unborn son, who would be born later that night upon those numinous lawns. "He gives me the shivers," she repeated to herself both before and after the birth, because she saw something in his newly opened eyes, some golden glint of piracy, warning her that he, too, would have much to do in his burgeoning life with lost

treasures, fear and death. (75)

The "golden glint of piracy" she sees in the boy's eyes may be an allusion back to their shared lineage; Firdaus explains her "fair hair and blue eyes [as] a royal Macedonian legacy" (73). These Macedonians were plunderers as well, pirates, who grew wealthy thanks to the industrious gold-digging ants. Some stayed behind to live the lives of the "idle rich" and even Alexander himself "stuck around long enough to restock his war chest" (74).

The pregnancy sequence with its evil omens, occurring as it does in Kashmir, anticipates some of the political trauma soon to be experienced in this disputed region. The happy co-existence of Hindus and Muslims collapses soon after the maharaja's celebration. The story anticipates a clash of religious difference while warning that the newly born Shalimar is a hybrid individual. Although gentle and loved by all as a child, readers know from the first pages of the novel that he is an assassin. Violence and diversity go hand-in-glove, and Rushdie introduces bestial language to articulate this situation.

We find a further illustration in *Shalimar the Clown* of the blending of animal imagery with themes of violence and otherness in the story of Pandit Gopinath Razdan. He arrives at the village of Pachigam after coming from the city. He wears Western, citified clothes (102) and immediately resents the plurality and tolerance of Kashmiri village life upon entering Pyarelal's home. He sniffs the air disapprovingly, offended by the smells of Muslim cooking and Pyarelal must explain that this community is a jumble of religions and his cooking is a symbolic gesture of acceptance (103). Gopinath is in fact a spy whose disdain for the community culminates in his "judas" (109) betrayal of

Boonyi and Shalimar. His blackmail is an "alien attack" (107) and as he "drop[s] his mask" (107) and reveals his true self and dark intentions against the helpless Boonyi, he is "transformed" (108). The transformed Gopinath is a snake (109; cf. "recoiled," 103). Here again we have a convergence of recurring themes. There is a clash of otherness as the Western, urban and intolerant Gopinath enters the traditional, rural, and tolerant Pachigam. There is violence (Shalimar becomes "murderous" as a result of the betrayal, 110) and the use of bestial imagery to describe the scene.

Animal Imagery, Diversity, and Violence

Rushdie's stories constantly highlight change and diversity, such as developments during the first thirty or so years of Indian independence (*Midnight's Children*), and the destructive battles for Kashmir (*Shalimar the Clown*). In telling these stories, Rushdie regularly introduces bestial metaphors and metamorphoses. This association of cultural mingling, plurality and transformation with animal imagery is not unique to these novels. In Rushdie's *Ground Beneath Her Feet* he uses similar language to explore responses to diversity and change:

> Young people fail to return home and are eventually marked down as runaways. There is loose talk of bestial metamorphoses: snakes in the urban gutters, wild pigs in city parks, strange birds with fabulous plumages perching on skyscrapers like gargoyles, or angels. The laws of the universe may be changing. Such transformations may – incredibly, horrifyingly – become normal. We may be losing our grip on humanity. When we finally let go, what's to stop us from turning into dinosaurs, saber-toothed tigers, jackals, hyenas, wolves? (391)

This particular scene refers to the arrival of Western popular culture to Bombay in the 1950s but the pattern is similar to that found elsewhere in Rushdie's work. Encountering those who think differently about religion, language, education, politics, and even entertainment generates suspicion. What is of interest here is the particular language Rushdie uses to explore this anxiety. To that which frightens, to that which is unknown and potentially dangerous, he gives an animal face. There are "bestial metamorphoses" occurring and for those reluctant to experience change and tolerate diversity, it is as though all that is good about humanity is at risk of disappearing. Humanness gives way to 'animalness.'

Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and *Shalimar the Clown* use animal imagery to explore some of the confusions, fears and violence associated with plurality and the mingling of cultures. As earlier comments about the former indicate, the Indian-raised Saleem is a hybrid, biologically the child of the departed (and hair-parted) British Methwold and constantly associated with other-than-human metaphors. He resembles Dr. Schaapsteker in this respect, a character that also experiences a sort of bestial metamorphosis. The snake-like doctor's name is a kind of snake and significantly, the narrator specifically identifies him as "the *European* snake-doctor" even though he lives and works in Bombay (*Midnight's Children* 137; italics added). Shalimar is also a hybrid (his mother has Macedonian ancestry) who is represented by zoomorphic descriptors, and clearly violent in behaviour.

The proximity of nonhuman descriptive language to culturally mixed characters in Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and *Shalimar the Clown* involves a use of animal imagery/metamorphosis quite different from that found in *Shame* and *The Satanic Verses*.

As seen in chapter two, in those novels Rushdie literalizes animal metaphors[12] as characters treated as beasts literally turn into monsters of one kind or another. More so than *Midnight's Children* and *Shalimar the Clown*, those novels explore psychological dimensions of mistreatment, marginalization, and violence. In *Midnight's Children* and *Shalimar the Clown*, however, Rushdie explores the movement of people across all kinds of political and cultural borders and presents various destructive clashes that result.

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[12]Rushdie introduces the idea of literal metaphor elsewhere. For instance, in *Shalimar the Clown* Abdullah Noman experiences "the bizarre sensation of living through a metaphor made real" (88).

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSIONS: BESTIAL METAMORPHOSES IN SALMAN RUSHDIE'S ARGUMENTATION

There is something deeply disconcerting about metamorphosis stories, and pinpointing the exact reasons for this is difficult. By way of speculation, and as a way of bringing these reflections on Salman Rushdie's transformation stories towards a conclusion, I offer a few possible reasons for the emotive force and widespread appeal of this literary device.

Though many stories about beastly humans examined in this thesis deal with abuses of power and violence, this does not exhaust the symbolic range of the form. Equally troubling are metamorphosis stories in contexts lacking any precise victim/victimizer dichotomy. For instance, Gregor Samsa awakes from a troubled sleep to discover himself "transformed into a monstrous vermin" at the opening of Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, thus awaking not *from* a nightmare but *into* one (7). This ghastly loss of humanity and dignity appears to parallel similar deprivations he experiences in his career. Rather humorously, his thoughts shift almost immediately to this subject after becoming aware of his newfound state, as though that subject were as troubling as his new, insect-like form:

> "Oh God," he thought, "what a grueling [sic] profession I picked! Traveling day in, day out. It is much more aggravating work than the actual business done at the home office, and then with the strain of constant travel as well: the worry over train connections, the bad and irregular meals, the steady stream of faces who never become anything closer than acquaintances. The Devil take it all!" (Kafka 7-8)

What is disturbing about this scene is the suggestion that the everyday, monotonous responsibilities of modern life can distort and destroy the individual. Samsa dutifully provides for his family's needs, doing what his parents and sister, and his society expect of him. Here the forces that transform Samsa are not pernicious evils such as racism or patriarchy or colonialism, but rather the common lot of all modern, urban people. The possibility that we might also wake up into such a nightmare is what makes Kafka's parable so distressing.

Other transformation stories unconcerned with systemic injustices focus on the potential within individuals for absolute evil. Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* provides a case in point. This is not a story about a bestial metamorphosis as such, yet a physical corruption does occur and Stevenson presents Hyde as animalistic:

> Even as good shone upon the countenance of the one [Jekyll], evil was written broadly and plainly on the face of the other [Hyde]. Evil [. . .] left on that body an imprint of *deformity and decay*. [. . .] Edward Hyde, alone, in the ranks of mankind, was pure evil. (Stevenson 44; italics added)
>
> The pleasures which I made haste to seek in my disguise were, as I have said, undignified [. . . .] in the hands of Edward Hyde they soon began to turn towards the *monstrous*. [. . .] his every act and thought centred on self; drinking pleasure with *bestial* avidity [. . . .] (46; italics added)

Stevenson's primary concern appears to be individual morality (suggested by such terms as 'evil' and 'pleasure'), with perhaps a sideways glance at an incautious indulgence in scientific inquiry. It is a story about the monster within each human soul, frightening

because of the possibility that readers might succumb to similarly destructive temptations. Mr. Hyde is both bestial and human, and by aligning immorality and evil, pleasure and clandestine behaviour with this character, Stevenson reminds readers of a lurking potential within themselves, that they too can become monstrous. The proximity of human and animal, good and evil, dignity and shame in such metamorphosis stories brings to mind the closing words of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*: "The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which" (120).

At the risk of over-generalizing, metamorphoses alarm because they belie notions of permanence (we can change) and bring assumptions about the superiority of humans over other species into question (we can change for the worse). Too easily and quickly, the writers of these stories seem to say, people succumb to degradations. The particular root causes of this anxiety vary widely. In the two examples just cited, the routines and demands of modern society that limit fulfillment and contentment (Kafka) are as soul destroying as the lust for pleasure (Stevenson). Regardless of the particular cause(s) identified, a common element in these and other writers exists, namely awareness that humans can change, can revert to some less-than-ideal condition. The noblest qualities of our species are impermanent. Progress is a chimera because humans eventually regress, either choosing to become bestial through their behaviour, or having a nonhuman status thrust on them by others.

Another thread running through the long tradition of metamorphosis stories involves a sense of inevitability. Frequently, transformations are fated, beyond our ability to control, and not necessarily deserved. Many stories in Ovid's writings describe

punishments that do not fit the crimes committed, suggesting an absence of a human causal explanation for transformation. For instance, Apollo turns the partly human Ocyroe[1] into a horse for no other reason than her skill in prophecy: "Would that I did not know the future! Now I seem to see my human form stolen away; now meadow grass is my food, to gallop over the broad plains is my delight. I am changed into a mare, a creature to which I am already akin'" (Ovid 68). The whims of the gods are at play in such stories: "My purpose," writes Ovid in the invocation that opens his *Metamorphoses*, "is to tell of bodies which have transformed into shapes of a different kind. You heavenly powers, since *you were responsible* for those changes, as for all else, look favourably on my attempts" (Ovid 29; italics added). Other writers also emphasise the inevitability of metamorphosis as a phenomenon beyond the human victim's control. The lycanthrope character in J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, for example, explains that even though he can control his behaviour following metamorphosis into a werewolf with the help of medication, that change itself is inevitable.

> As long as I take [the Potion] in the week preceding the full moon, I keep my mind when I transform . . . I am able to curl up in my office, a harmless wolf, and wait for the moon to wane again. (Rowling 258; ellipses original)

Like Ocyroe, John Remus Lupin's fate seems cruel. His condition is merely the consequence of a bite received as a child rather than any evil on his part.

Salman Rushdie's use of metamorphic and metaphoric literary devices shares general similarities with these and other examples of stories that blur demarcations of human from animal, however, he tends to reserve this kind of descriptive language for

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[1] She is the daughter of the centaur Chiron, and the nymph Cariclo, and so at least partially human on her father's side.

specific contexts. With Marina Warner, Rushdie connects metamorphoses largely to cross-cultural spaces, to "points of interchange on the intricate connective tissues of communications between cultures" (Warner 17). Although it is true that some characters in Rushdie's novels become bestial through no fault of their own, and others become animalistic through the immoral choices they make, Rushdie's principal interest appears to be the dynamics of plurality. In his novels, Rushdie's bestial-human language regularly signals passages across literal and/or symbolic borders, and encounters with forms of difference.

Salman Rushdie and Metamorphosis

As noted in Chapter One, Rushdie is fascinated with frontiers, borders, and migrations, and the mingling with otherness that inevitably results. Such moments of transition change the itinerant: "To cross a frontier is to be transformed" (*Step Across This Line* 353). Literal and metaphorical border crossings are also dangerous, and those in the interstices of geographical, socio-economic, or cultural border spaces are vulnerable. These places are dangerous because at the frontier, "liberty is stripped away" and because border crossings are always "unfree at the edge." In such spaces, migrants must remain "passive, docile" (354). Rushdie confines his use of metamorphoses and bestial imagery largely to such places and moments. As indicated by the taxonomy introduced in the opening chapter, Rushdie's metamorphic language fits on a trajectory ranging from literal equations of people and animals, to more abstract, cross-species associations. His faunal vocabulary also incorporates perceptions and suspicions that confuse animal and human categories. The specific argument put forward in this thesis concerns the location of Rushdie's metamorphic and metaphoric language. It appears

most often in contexts involving encounters with otherness, and concomitantly, in situations marred by violence.

Rushdie's use of fantastic elements in his stories such as the transformation of humans into animals, particularly in the service of social and political commentary, leads scholars to categorize his novels as magical realism. The term magical realism has currency within postcolonial criticism as a particularly appropriate label for many Third World writings (see e.g., Cooper 15). The term suggests a hybridity of culture, a worldview inevitably produced by colonial encounters. Two particular qualities of magical realism are of interest in the context of this thesis. First, as a trend in contemporary fiction, magical realism often depicts the plight of the disenfranchised, the im/migrant, the marginalized, and the colonized. María-Elena Angulo describes *realismo maravilloso* as a form of writing that transcends "the limits of the fantastic by entering the social realm" thus permitting writers to treat several realities "as extratextual referent," such as racial, economic, political, or ideological concerns (106, 108-09). Second, magical realism involves, as Wendy B. Faris points out,

> [. . .] an 'irreducible element' that is unexplainable according to the laws of the universe as they have been formulated by modern, post-enlightenment empiricism, with its heavy reliance on sensory data, together with a preponderance of realistic event, character, and description that conform to the conventions of literary realism.

Such literature involves, consequently, "a combination of realism and the fantastic in which the former predominates" (102). Both of these qualities – attention to social justice concerns and the use of storylines that flaunt the laws of the universe, including

metamorphoses – feature prominently in *Midnight's Children*, *Shame*, *The Satanic Verses*, and *Shalimar the Clown*.

When scholars apply the term magical realism to Salman Rushdie's work, they highlight the combination of European and Indian ways of perceiving and describing the world. In the novels themselves, this polarity is evident in such characters as the European-educated Aadam Aziz in *Midnight's Children* whom the narrator explicitly contrasts with the mysterious boatman ("Tai-for-changelessness opposed to Aadam for progress" [107]), and his traditional wife Naseem, the Reverend Mother, who rejects her husband's European ways (33-34). The same narrator appears to refer to this hybrid quality of his storytelling directly, this mix of traditional and modern worldviews, in his distinction of the terms "metaphorical" and "literal" (e.g., 200). Though the term magical realism is clearly useful for describing Rushdie's blend of cultural influences, Ten Kortenaar's concern with readings of so-called magical-realist texts, and discussions of hybridity more generally – "that they assume India has an essence that can always be recognized, even when mixed with things derived from elsewhere" (18; cf. 24) – needs to be taken into consideration.

This last point is evident in a further illustration of the enormous gap separating ways of viewing the world appearing in *Shalimar the Clown*. Noman/Shalimar encounters different worldviews within his own home. His father enjoys speculating about life on other planets and the possibilities of space travel, whereas his mother maintains that imagining life in other worlds is a kind of blasphemy. Shalimar himself does not know how to choose "between his father's modern-day open-mindedness and his mother's occultist threats which usually had something to do with snake charms"

(55). As noted earlier, violence and animal imagery appears at intersections of difference. Perhaps the collision of beliefs between Firdaus and Abdullah contributes to the bloodthirsty outbursts of their bestial son Shalimar. Rushdie points out that both worldviews – Abdullah's Western liberalism and Firdaus' traditional beliefs – have their limitations, noting in the same context,

> The universe flexed its muscles and demonstrated its complete lack of interest in quarrels about its nature. The universe was everything at once, science and sorcery, what was occult and what was known, and it didn't give a damn. (55)

Elsewhere in the same novel, Rushdie seems to remind readers of the tremendous challenge facing those wanting to understand patterns of thinking different from their own. With reference to the ongoing struggle for Kashmir, the European-American Max Ophuls recalls, "that instant during which the shape of the conflict in Kashmir had seemed too great and alien for his Western mind to understand" (180). He makes efforts to understand and resolve the situation by working with analogies from his own experience but later wonders "Did the mind discover likeness in the unlike in order to clarify the world, or to obscure the impossibility of such clarifications?" (55). Rushdie appears to advocate a kind of dialogue and problem solving that allows room for alternative perspectives. Those like Max Ophuls, who insist on viewing the world through a particular grid, and impose their conclusions on others, are arrogant and usually misguided. At the same time, entering into dialogue with otherness is risky because of the ever-looming threat of intolerance and conflict.

I mention these definitions and illustrations of magical realism because of the subject matter of this thesis. The principal theme in Rushdie's writings treated here is

violence and his use of bestial imagery in representing it. Rushdie's stories involve a blend of what we might call Western empirical accounts of life in the subcontinent, and magical, fantastic elements. This blending of writing styles has two advantages. For one thing, it makes the novels accessible to readers possessing differing worldviews. For another, it simultaneously locates the stories in real historical moments (realism) while employing an effective, emotive vehicle for articulating the traumas created during those moments. Bestial imagery (magical) accomplishes the latter. It communicates the destructive and demeaning consequences of intolerance in ways that other forms of prose cannot.

Salman Rushdie introduces animalizing language at the interstices of converging unlikeness. Many potential disparities distinguish people from one another, such as opinions about religion and politics, socio-economic situation, real and perceived status, gender, education, and so on. Encounters with difference can be amicable and enlightening, but in Rushdie's stories, violence is more common. Rushdie uses animal metaphors and metamorphoses to depict the stories of both the perpetrators and the victims of unjust treatment. Perpetrators *act like animals* when they abuse, lacking reason and becoming dangerous. Those in positions of power *treat the vulnerable as animals* by denying the latter dignity and their humanity.

As demonstrated throughout this thesis, transformations occur as characters migrate, cross boundaries, and encounter otherness. In some cases, hybrid characters are themselves symbolic locations of such encounters. The mixed-blood India Ophuls is the offspring of a European/American father and an Indian mother. She becomes bestial in the vocabulary of *Shalimar the Clown* (a rat) and is a victim of violence (attacked by

Shalimar). The same pattern is evident in the story of Saleem Sinai, the mixed-blood, dog-like and snake-like narrator of *Midnight's Children*. Rushdie's novels also involve fantastic journeys that permit meetings with difference. Many of these voyages have a dreamlike quality, as dramatic and imaginative as Dorothy's migration from black and white Kansas to the Technicolor of Oz (*Step Across This Line* 3-30). At times, these stories betray a kind of idealism. For instance, Ormus Cama in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* imagines literal and metaphorical migration as a solution for some of the World's social ills: "it might be possible for human beings [. . .] to transcend the frontier of skin, not to cross the color [sic] line but to rub it out" (480). This idealism raises an important question. Does Rushdie glamorize such experiences? As noted in chapter one (n. 1), this is a concern for some critics. Hoffman is wary of the tendency to celebrate aspects of the exile's experience, such as uncertainty, displacement, and fragmentation. When this occurs, critics too quickly overlook the real human traumas such discourse represents:

> [. . .] exile used to be thought of as a difficult condition. It involves dislocation, disorientation, self-division. But today, at least within a framework of postmodern theory, we have come to value exactly those qualities of experience that exile demands – uncertainty, displacement, the fragmented identity. (44)

Similarly, Marciniak recognizes but contests this tendency to view "transnational identity as simply liberatory" (xiv). It is reasonable to suspect Rushdie of this very thing. He is himself a transplanted writer, enjoying tremendous success in the West. Furthermore, he regularly voices his disdain for the narrow-mindedness of some segments of society in the subcontinent and the Middle East that persist in antiquated beliefs and customs. However, this consideration of Rushdie's bestial metaphoric and metamorphic language

suggests he shares Hoffman's and Marciniak's concern for the real plight of disenfranchised people.

To be sure, there are times when Rushdie views the migrant's experience in a positive light. Metamorphoses can indicate maturation and favourable conversions in Rushdie's writing. For Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* (the film, not the book, which Rushdie describes as his "first literary influence") the transformation from Kansas to Oz is a "rite of passage" through which she gains "status" (*Step Across this Line* 4). As characters in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* travel West, they pass through "the transforming membrane in the sky" (418). This is positive and constructive because metamorphosis "supplants [their] need for the divine" and is itself "revelation" (461, 462). For Ormus Cama in particular, this experience changes him into "an oracle" (418).

However, as noted in the opening chapter, the great majority of metamorphic experiences in Rushdie's fiction are not positive ones and they regularly involve the challenges of dislocation, violence and injustice. Ormus' friend Rai makes the same journey West in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* but for him it is not a positive one: "I passed through the membrane too. I became a foreigner" (418). Rai also points out that the advantages and privileges of birth and professional status do not help him. Instead, he becomes "an honorary member of the ranks of the earth's dispossessed" (418). Many of Rushdie's migrating characters experience similar losses of status, security, and dignity as they move across frontiers or in their encounters with cultural difference. Like Rai, some are privileged individuals (e.g., Saleem Sinai, Saladin Chamcha) but this does not protect them. Rushdie's use of bestial imagery is, then, regularly negative. With very few exceptions, sustained animal metaphors attached to particular characters, or tales of the

transfiguration of human characters into animals, use bestial imagery in a pejorative sense, to represent the destructive consequences of intolerance, or as a vehicle for ridiculing/condemning those who treat others unjustly.

APPENDIX

In *The Satanic Verses*, Salman Rushdie tells the story of the transfiguration of Saladin Chamcha into a devilish goat in terms clearly recalling John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, which is itself indebted to particular readings of the Christian Bible. As he is possessed by a satanic figure, Saladin's fall from the sky after the explosion of the plane Bostan, his determination to live, and his attack on the angel Gabriel (i.e., Rushdie's Gibreel) creatively retells Milton's version of the ancient biblical myth about the fall of Lucifer.[1] The following table presents selected parallels between *The Satanic Verses* and this Christian mythology.

Saladin Chamcha, in *The Satanic Verses*	**John Milton, *Paradise Lost***	**The Christian Bible**
"Out of thin air: a big bang, followed by falling stars [. . .] Who am I? Who else is there?" (4; = the satanic narrator, cf. above)	"'Art thou that traitor angel [. . .] / [Who] Drew after him the third part of heav'n's sons" (2.688, 692)	"the morning stars sang together" (Job 38:7; often interpreted as angels) "a great red dragon [i.e., Satan] [. . .] His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth" (Revelation 12:3-4)
"Saladin nosedived" (5) "When Mr. Saladin Chamcha fell out of the clouds over the English Channel he felt his heart being gripped by a force so implacable that he understood it was impossible for him to die" (9; i.e., satanic possession) "You think *they* fell a long	"[Satan was] Hurled headlong flaming from th' etereal sky" (1.45) "[. . .] toward the coast of earth beneath" (3.739) "Tartarus [. . .] opens wide / His fiery chaos to receive their fall" (6.54-55)	"there was no longer any place for [Satan and his angels] in heaven. The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world – he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him" (Revelation 12:8-9)

[1]As noted in Chapter One, Moor, in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, draws connections between his family's story and *Paradise Lost* as well.

way? In the matter of tumbles, I yield pride of place to no personage, whether mortal or im-. From clouds to ashes, down the chimney you might say, from heaven-light to hellfire" (137)		
"[Chamcha's] feet were once more firmly planted on the ground" (9)	"on the beach / Of that inflamèd sea, he stood and called / His legions" (1.299-301)	"the dragon [i.e., Satan] took his stand on the sand of the seashore" (Revelation 12:18)
"its [i.e., the satanic narrator's] dominion" (9)	"Satan exalted sat [. . .] / His proud imaginations thus displayed. / 'Powers and Dominions, deities of heaven, / [. . .] though oppressed and fall'n, / I give not heav'n for lost'" (2.5, 10-11, 13-14)	"the devil led [Jesus] up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, 'To you I will give their glory and all authority; for it has been given over to me'" (Luke 4:5-6)
"it had conquered him totally [i.e., the satanic possession] [. . .] and [it] grabbed Gibreel Farishta by the balls" (9) "'a humble foot soldier, sir, in the army of Guard Almighty.' [. . .] 'to do battle with the most pernicious devilment ever got folks' brains by the balls'" (77)[2]	"Go Michael of celestial armies prince, / And thou in military prowess next / Gabriel, lead forth to battle these my sons / Invincible, lead forth my armèd saints / By thousands and millions ranged for fight; / Equal in number to that godless crew" (6.44-50) [Angel and Satan fight in the same way in *The Satanic Verses*; cf. 4.1006: "Satan, I know thy strength, and thou know'st mine" (Gabriel speaking)]	"war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back" (Revelation 12:7)

[2] The American creationist described here appears to represent the archangel Michael, usually represented in military terms in the Bible. For example, in Daniel 12:1, Michael is "the great prince, the protector of your people." In Jude 9, he battles Satan. This passenger battles Darwin, a name as distasteful as "any other forktail fiend, Beelzebub, Asmodeus or Lucifer himself" (77). He also has "a pair of Chinese dragons" that are "writhed and intertwined" on his shirt which seems to echo the battle between Michael and Satan described in Revelation 12 and the closely linked Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta. Gibreel eventually takes this passenger's seat (81), bringing together the angelic Gibreel (= the biblical Gabriel) and satanic Saladin Chamcha who will battle in the sky just as the archangel and the devil do in the Apocalypse of John (cf. Revelation 12:7). The angel Gabriel stands guard at the gates of Eden in *Paradise Lost* book IV.

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