

THE AXIS OF EVIL: THE ALLIANCE OF NEO-CONSERVATISM AND NEO-ORIENTALISM IN RUSHDIE'S *SHALIMAR THE CLOWN*

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Abstract

In this article, the Orientalist discourse in Salman Rushdie's *Shalimar the Clown* (2005), one of the author's most problematic Works and his first novel after 9/11, is analyzed. It is argued that rather than questioning the assumptions about the "Islamic terrorist" and its place in the Western collective conscious, Rushdie reinforces and licenses the intellectual neo-orientalist discourse of "the axis of evil" perpetuated by the Bush administration by applying the stereotypes and clichés about the East, without engaging in a dialogue to understand the Other or historicizing the subject matter. It is also aimed to expose how Rushdie's so-called "insider" status that arises because of his Indian origin and coming from amongst Muslims, gives him an unfair credit and makes him all the more credible in the eyes of his readership, mostly the literary intelligencia of the West. By building on the old and new post-colonial scholarship of particularly Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Mahmood Mandani, and Pankaj Mishra, it is analyzed how, unlike many intellectuals, Rushdie positions himself amongst the neo-conservatives of the United States.

Keywords: Rushdie, *Shalimar The Clown*, Islam, orientalism, post-colonialism.

ŞEYTan ÜÇGENİ: SALMAN RUSHDİE’NİN SOYTARI ŞALİMAR ROMANINDA AŞIRI SAĞCI NEO-CON’LAR İLE YENİ-ORYANTALİZM’İN İTTİFAKI

Öz

Bu makalede Salman Rushdie’nin 11 Eylül sonrası yazdığı ilk roman ve yazarın en sıkıntılı eserlerinden biri olan *Soytari Şalimar* adlı eserindeki oryantalist söylem analiz edilmektedir. Rushdie bu romanda sözde “İslami terörist” kavramını ve bu konunun kolektif Batı algısındaki yerini sorgulamak yerine, özellikle Bush yönetimi döneminde ortaya atılan “şeytan üçgeni” kavramını besleyecek şekilde romanda “barbar Doğu” klişelerini sıklıkla kullanmakta ve böylece yeni-oryantalist söylemin entelektüel altyapısını oluşturmaktadır. Makalede aynı zamanda Rushdie’nin Hindistan kökenli ve Müslümanların arasından çıkan bir yazar olmasından kaynaklanan “içeriden/onlardan biri” statüsü de sorgulanmakta ve bu statünün Rushdie’ye Batılı okuyucuları arasında haksız bir inandırıcılık kazandırdığı gösterilmektedir. Edward Said, Mahmood Mandani ve Pankaj Mishra gibi eski ve yeni sömürgecilik araştırmaları teorisyenlerinin düşüncelerinden yararlanılarak, Rushdie’nin, pek çok entelektüelin aksine, Amerika’daki aşırı sağcı neo-con’ların arasında kendini konumlandırışı gözler önüne serilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Rushdie, *Soytari Şalimar*, İslam, oryantalizm, sömürgecilik araştırmaları.

INTRODUCTION

In 1985, President Ronald Reagan introduced to the domestic and international media, on the White House lawn, with a great fanfare, all the leaders of the *mujahedeen* from Afghanistan: “*These gentlemen*,” he said gravely and confidently, “*are the moral equivalents of America’s founding fathers*” (cited in Mandani 2004: 119). In the struggle against the Soviet Russia, the United States chose to support and create extreme versions of political Islam; armed and ready to fight. The alliance of faith against the atheist communist regime was a Reagan trademark. Three years later, the industry of Reagan’s previous occupation took up the center stage in silver screen in depicting the American support to the “freedom fighters” of Afghanistan; Rambo, in the third installment (1988), helps the *mujahedeen* to fight against the Russians. With a young boy called Hamid, Rambo encourages the locals to organize against the Soviet troops. After all, the connection between Hollywood and the White House was more than the particular case of Reagan. Yet, the alliance of the Cold War was not limited to these two; in the field of popular fiction the top Tom Clancy bestsellers were also created; *The Hunt for Red October* (1984) and *Red Storm Rising* (1986).

This is a changing world. Three decades later, the discourse of the White House against the *mujahedeen*, literally the followers of *jihad* in Arabic, is going to be shaped not around the “*moral equivalents of American’s founding fathers*,” but around terrorism, suicide bombings, and killings of civilian targets. It seems that the *mujahedeen* were but the founding fathers of al-Qaeda, which emerged first and foremost in Afghanistan. The fight against atheism of several decades earlier is now a fight against extreme religious fanaticism. The position of the friendly Hamid was taken over easily by terrorist suicide bombers, Ahmeds and Hasans ready to kill the innocent, on the silver screen. The alliance was also at an international level this time, at least bi-lateral (although most times unilateral) with the support of the British for the American cause in the Middle East, which also meant that the bestsellers of the New World would be supported by the “literary” masterpieces as a result of the literary heritage of Europe.

Continuing the European Orientalist tradition, in his novel, *Shalimar the Clown* (2005), his first novel after 9/11, Rushdie reinforces the rhetoric against Islam, which is the topic of this paper. In this novel, rather than deconstructing the common ahistorical assumptions about the *Islamic* terrorist, one which is nowadays highly accepted in the Western collective conscious, Rushdie, the Winner of the Booker of Bookers, the most prestigious literary prize of England, represents Islam as an ideological hotbed for terrorism. In *Shalimar*, Rushdie applies almost all of the major characteristics of Orientalist discourse, defined by Said as the “*distillation of ideas about the Orient--its sensuality, its tendency to despotism, its aberrant mentality, its habits of inaccuracy, its backwardness*” (1978: 205). It is argued that Rushdie reinforces, empowers and licenses the neo-orientalist discourse of the axis of evil perpetuated by the Bush administration by

applying the stereotypes and clichés about the East, without engaging in a dialogue to understand the Other. Nor does he show any attempt to put this grave issue in a socially, politically and historically relevant context.

Shalimar the Clown is opened with a comparison of the sounds of the Arabic language to those produced while clearing a throat (Rushdie 2005: 3). The very first page of the novel, despite associating a disgusting act with the speaking of Arabic, is albeit quick to include a reference to Scheherazade, to exhibit the phrase “*Arabian Nights*,” quite an uncreative gesture at this point, especially for Rushdie. Yet, still, as this is the very first page to establish the tone and the discourse of the narrative, one should not forget the other proper names dropped here and there in the first paragraph: “*Sigourney Weaver*,” “*Ghostbusters*,” and the science-fictional “*Klingon*,” “*a galaxy far, far away...*” (Rushdie 2005: 3-4). The opening can be understood as a trailer of what is to come in the next three hundred or so pages; some sort of one-paragraph microcosm of images which indeed represents the nature and the context of the macrocosm of the novel. The Arabic culture, or, the Eastern one, on a much larger scale, as we will see, will not accept much of an appreciation rather than the now cliché allusions to the *Thousand Nights and One*, a fictional work of magic lambs and flying carpets, of enormous treasures of Ali Baba, of the amazing adventures of Sinbad the Sailor, and of adulterous, disloyal and lecherous Arab women of the veil. The whole set of images the East is trapped into that romantic and mystical place of everything extreme; the best or the worst; nothing in between can take place in this fictional universe; one is either as perfectly beautiful as Oronooko the slave, or as ugly as the guy with a dagger, who is trying to kill Indiana Jones in Cairo in the *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981).¹ The fusion of popular culture, especially an obsession with Hollywood suggests that Rushdie allies himself with the producers of huge blockbusters, the forerunning media in perpetuating the discourse against the “despotic” Orient.

¹ As far back as 1981, Said points out, “Assiduous research has shown that there is hardly a prime-time television show without several episodes of patently racist and insulting caricatures of Muslims, all of whom tend to be represented in unqualified categorical and generic terms: one Muslim is therefore seen to be typical of all Muslims and of Islam in general” (1981: 69). References to popular culture and to works of literature is one of the defining characteristics of Rushdie’s work as there are innumerable references to icons of the popular culture, which suggests the alliance of the popular media with his literary text in the portrayal of the Muslim societies. Jay Leno, Marlon Brandon, Orson Wells, Letterman, Klark Kent, Superman, and Keanu Reeves are only some of these instances, which are also the international, cultural commodities marketed to other countries, including the Middle East, that’s to say that, cultural imperialism is a driving engine for the Orientalist depictions, which leads the “natives” of the third world countries to self-loathing. This Hollywood discourse embodies the Western culture in the first quarter of the novel, which will then create a stark contrast with the next chapter on the Pachigam village, a topos of Orientalism, as will be analyzed later.

The protagonist of the novel, Max Olphus, takes its name from the famous movie director, a Jewish-German who made movies in German, France and of course in Hollywood. Although his life has nothing to do with the character in the novel, one should be quite conspicuous of these similarities in a Rushdie text, which might mean a lot in terms of understanding the theme and approach of the novel towards its subject matter, and it indeed does so. For one thing, the basic storyline of the novel is as simple as a Hollywood movie premise. There's nothing wrong with being simple, yet, when simplicity is mixed with stolid and biased stereotypes, the problem arises: Max Olphus, the Jewish-American ambassador to India is killed by a Muslim terrorist, a death machine of a unique kind, trained for the sole purpose of hunting Olphus.² In an interview on his novel Rushdie says, "*The novel should question everything,*" and goes on, "*When a new world opens up to you, you start questioning every piece of truth which you believed up until that time. A writer doesn't speak for an ideology; what he should do is just to say, 'I see this in this way,' and he does in an individual way. For we are not the puppets of a huge plan*" (my translation Rushdie2007). In another interview in the *Observer*, he says, "*Novel' itself is a word that means new, and the purpose of art has always been thought to make things new, so you don't see things through the same old, tired eyes*" (cited in La'Porte 1971: 89). One can only agree with the above statements, which honor freedom of expression and the unique quality of artistic imagination, one which is geared towards exploring new horizons, finding new solutions, and ultimately understanding people.

However, *Shalimar the Clown* never exhibits the kind of critical thought the author expresses in his interviews about challenging the mainstream narrative. Rather, even the basic storyline is an indication of the degree to which Rushdie submits to the neo-conservative discourse about the Middle East. His text does not question but confirms the already accepted images about the East and Islam. What could have been more interesting would be a reverse storyline of what we have here. That kind of reversal would have led to true questionings of values and commonly-held notions in the Western society against the so-called common enemy, Islam. Yet, without making further generalizations regarding the novel, we should at first see how Rushdie reduces the image of Islam to the belief of one horrendous terrorist, and the Eastern culture to the most marginalized (fictional) sect of barbarisms.

Misrepresentation of one's own culture (although we will also try to question to what extent Indian culture is Rushdie's "own" in the next paragraph)

² Pitkin states, "When reduced to such equations, the plotlines are not very illuminating; some such plot points seem to be no more than cheap shots. Rushdie, of course deserves better from his readers than mere reductionism, and there is tremendous richness of ideas, events and imagery in this book. And yet these problematic parallels do resonate in the book's pages. The doubleness of the story makes these parallels inescapable, and yet their superficiality works to undercut the power of the sequences concerning the fate of Kashmir" (2007: 261).

starts with dissatisfaction with that culture, at least in the case of Rushdie's narrative. The position of another major character of the novel, the illegitimate daughter of Max Ophus is clearly stated in the novel: "*Her name was India. She did not like her name*" (2005: 5). According to her it shouldn't be "*okay to hang people's birthplaces round their necks like albatrosses*" (2005: 5). India has been raised in Britain and Switzerland, the "cradle" of civilization³, and has chosen to live in California, United States (another allusion to Hollywood). If anything, she is not "Indian," at all, not even mentioning her mother's Pachigam village in the deep Hades hole of India, where she was born. It is not unusual for the characters of Rushdie to feel a grudge against their own cultures, the most famous instance of which is Saladin Chamcha, one of the main characters in *Satanic Verses*, considered by many scholars as Rusdhie's autobiographical character, who also "rejects his Indian roots and even when young [he] dreamt about London, England or Ellowen Deewen, Vilayet (as the novel terms it) (La'Porte 1971: 34).

But, can India really be uttered as Rushdie's *own*? Is he an Indian writer, or a British one, or, after all, does he have to belong to either of them? The answer to this question might require some elaboration than one might first think, as Rushdie's "insider" position is most problematic. It is problematic not because he was raised in private British colleges or spent the most of his life, including his earlier decades in England, but because his Indian identity has been serving to the interests of the post-colonial England. Sardar and Davies argue that in the perpetuation of the Westernization process, the colonizers needed the help of some "sort" of native: "*the departing colonial powers had left an important not-so-departing legacy: the brown sahib*" (cited in La'Porte 1971: 82). This so-called brown sahib is essentially an intermediary between the ruler and the ruled, but in the most covert, and for that matter sinuous, way. This is described as one of the ways of colonizing the minds of the natives. These brown sahibs then have three common features; being wealthy enough to afford a Western education, having skills to be used in the manipulation of the minds of general folk, and above all, a sense of "hereditary right" in undertaking the mission of the ex-colonial administration. Special attention should be given to the final aspect; even the best British in terms of having a socio-cultural and educational background in India cannot come close to his least qualified Indian counterpart, as the latter would have an unprecedented credibility.

Having an "identity crisis" is also an essential feature as these figures are supposed to have been made to feel alien both during their European education

³ Schaebler indicates, "'Discourses on 'civilization,' even the term 'civilization' itself, a direct outcome of the French Enlightenment, are born in encounters with others" (2004: 3). In this article he also indicates how Eurocentric discourses since the 1950s have long credited colonization with the Westernization of the peoples of the Globe (4). In the history of the encounter of Europe and its modernity with the rest of the world, the concepts of 'civilization' and its dialectical antithesis, 'savagery' serves as a means of self-authentication.

and among their national peers. Ultimately, Sardar and Davies point out that all of these qualities are visible in Rushdie, who has studied at Cambridge, and who comes from a wealthy background, and for whom the fluidity of identities is a major theme in most of his work, and for that matter a postmodern trademark. *"The brown sahib, therefore, is a rapid defender of everything Western; and since he cannot banish his Oriental self within him, like Kipling, he turns on himself and his own kind"* (Sardar & Davies 1971: 82). In this regard, he can also be compared to V. S. Naipaul, who also has an "insider" status, which thus makes both of them elicit more authority and respect: *"His [Rushdie's] brown color ensures the eagerness of many Europeans to listen to his authentic voice and thus have their own prejudices confirmed"* (Sardar & Davies 1971: 83). This double-edged sword also helps Rushdie have intellectual authority on the domestic issues of India as much as providing him with plenty of credit to speak in the name of, according to, in defense of, or as he mostly does, *against* the Islamic culture in the international media. He is thus the sole literary authority on the Middle East, according to many.

Fanon points out to the troubling nature of such intellectuals in their native cultures: *"[W]hen the nationalist parties are mobilizing the people in the name of national independence,"* he argues, *"the native intellectual [. . .] feels like a stranger in his own land. It is always easier to proclaim rejection than actually to reject"* (2005: 206). According to Fanon, the intellectual, who by way of cultural orientation and education "has managed to become part of the body of Western civilization," (2005: 206) or in other words, who has exchanged his own for another, comes to understand that his identity cannot be so secure any more. *"The cultural matrix which now he wishes to assume since he is anxious to appear original"* can hardly supply any figureheads as comparable to *the* original. (Fanon 2005: 206). In another interview, Rushdie himself expresses his fluid identity as: *"I have constantly been asked whether I am British, or Indian. The formulation 'Indian-born British writer' has been invented to explain me. But my new book deals with Pakistan. So what now? British-resident-Indo-Pakistani writer? You see the folly of trying to contain writers inside passports."* (cited in Ahluwalia 2005: 501). It is clearly seen here that Rushdie does not want to solidify his cultural identity. We do not know whether he dislikes "India" as the daughter of Max Olphus does or does not, yet we know that he is too Indian to call himself British or European, which suggests the anxiety Fanon briefly mentions.

This personal crisis and the desire for oneself be oriented towards Europe becomes more problematic when, with the leadership of these "brown sahibs", who have held the most vital positions -political, administrative, social, educational, etc.- the country is transformed into a collective, social schizophrenia. When the national-historical narratives are authored by those who are alien to their own culture as much as to those they aspire, generation by generation, the gap of true national identity is filled with the interests of the "original" culture.

Guha sees the reason of this phenomena as the elitist historical narratives of the country: “*The historiography of Indian nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism-colonialist elitism and bourgeois-nationalist elitism*” (2005: 403). According to this historiography Guha rightly blames, the Western world is innately civilized; scientific, rational, logical and mathematical, whereas the East is the ultimate counterpart; illogical, exotic, irrational and barbaric.⁴

This contrasting set of characteristics regarding civilization are excellently executed in *Shalimar*. Rushdie’s East is epitomized in a small village in India, the ultimate representation of the Indian culture in the novel, where women are lecherous and sexual objects and men are vulgar and unmannered. Lechery has been always a part of Kashmir according to the narrator, “*In the matter of lovemaking Kashmiri women had never been shrinking violets*” (2005: 52); each one of them is ready to use the opportune moment to realize their (almost always sexually-driven) desires; intuition rather than logical, sexuality rather than sensuality governs their minds. The very existence of India, the character, is possible due to the ambitious adventures of Boonyi, who achieved to break her bonds to her native village by the emergence of Max Olphus, the American ambassador to the region. Despite her long-term love affair with the acrobat Shalimar, she chooses to submit to the sexual wishes of the ambassador (fulfilling every bit of erotic fantasy with him), of which India is a result. The norm of romanticism in the Pachigam village is, moreover, about how far you can go in killing, the ultimate standard for love in this society. In a chronologically previous event, while Shalimar and Boonyi talk about their love, the former says, “*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 men, I’ll kill the children also*” (Rushdie 2005: 61). Boonyi answers, “*What a romantic you are. You say the sweetest things.*” It is all the more ordinary in a village where magicians abound, use of incense is highest, and cutting ears and little fingers for the love of women are everyday phenomenon which thus reminds us of Said’s depiction that in texts such as this “*The Orient becomes a living tableau of queerness*” (1978: 103). In Rushdie’s text, Kashmir or India or Pakistan is, thus, not a place but a *topos*, “*a set of references, a congeries of characteristics, that seems to have its origin in a quotation, or a fragment of a text, or a citation from someone’s work on the Orient, or some bit of previous imagining, or an amalgam of all of these*” (Said 1978: 177). The parameters which Rushdie uses in the creation of this small village all seem to be aligned with the political discourse of Otherness; consisting of people who are dramatically different from the culture and norms of the Western reader, who is holding this text.

⁴ The way the West knows the Orient has been a way of using authority on them, demonstrates Said (1978: 6). What follows this black and white differentiation is the need of the West to invade, dominate and change the Orient towards civilization.

On the other hand, one immediately realizes when the setting becomes Europe in the novel: "*In the city of Strasbourg, a place of charming old quarters and pleasant public gardens, near the charming parc des Contades, around the corner from the old synagogue on what is now the rue du Grand Rabbin Rene Hirschler, at the heart of a lovely and fashionable neighborhood peopled by delightful and charming folks [. . .]*" (Rushdie 2005: 138). If the people of the East are a cactus in the desert; those of Europe are a rose, beautiful one, according to Rushdie's text. The folks of the West read newspapers; they are generous, "highly-cultured," and quite charming. Whereas Arabic is a language of clearing throat, the languages of Latin and French are of elegance, used and italicized many times throughout the novel (and they always refer to a beautiful, clean street in a cultured city of Europe, or some work of art of high quality). India, the character, can only belong to this "charming" culture; she feels most confident and at home when she utters lines from French poetry such as those by Baudelaire (Rushdie 2005: 19) or sings in French: "*Alouette, gentille alouette / Alouette, je te plumerai*" (Rushdie 2005: 41).

This self-identification with everything beautiful, elegant, sophisticated and cultured, and the other-demonization with everything filthy and disgusting is one of the essential characteristics of the way the West has come to define itself. A monolithic perception of different cultures on semi-mythical fabrications helps Western nations define themselves in a much easier and superior way. Therefore, according to this Orientalist discourse, the West is both the cradle and the pinnacle of civilization, embracing all things rational, scientific, an mathematical, and the Orient is as all things negative, deprived of historical development and change. The East always lives in a world of oasis, deserts, camels, pyramids, concubines ruled by barbarism. Stam and Shohat explain: "*Eurocentric discourse is diffusionist; it assumes that democracy, science, progress, and prosperity all emanate outward from a western source.*" (2005: 482). Therefore, "[*This discourse*] sanitizes western history while patronizing and even demonizing the nonwest; it thinks of itself in terms of its noblest achievements but of the nonwest in terms of its deficiencies, real or imagined" (2005: 482).

Rushdie's application of age-old stereotypes and clichés in the reinforcement of the dichotomies between the East and the West becomes most clear while the narrative revolves around Shalimar, the title character, the embodiment of a Muslim terrorist in the novel, which is thus the heart of the text. There are three basic orientalist methods in the creation of this character, if, ever he is a true *character* as he is more close to being a *type*, borrowed from the Orientalist corpus (from a topos we mentioned earlier): (1) fusion of pagan elements with Islam, a monotheistic religion, thus alienating Islam outside the modern age, (2) using historical details to enhance the reality of the work at hand, which thus has a claim to factual life, or to reality *per se*, and (3) conflation of the

ideology of a villain with the teachings of Islam, thus reducing the latter to its most marginal interpretations.

The second chapter of the book is opened in the Pachigam village, in opposition to the first one, which was in California. The first couple of pages of these chapters are about the Gods and the myths, which the people in this area believe in, the ones, they think they are entitled to. *“There were nine grabbers in the cosmos, Surya the Sun, Soma the Moon, Budha the Mercury, Mangal the Mars, Shukra the Venus, Brihaspati the Jupiter, Shani the Saturn,”* goes on the narrative listing about a dozen “grabbers” (Rushdie 2005: 46). The uttering of the names Budha, and strange-looking, exotic names already suggest that we are in a completely different world, a world where the norms of the first chapter, the metropolis of California make no more sense. *“They were also the dragon planets: two halves of a single bisected dragon. Rahu was the dragon’s head and Ketu was the dragon’s tail.”* Among these mystical words of shadow and beasts, we are introduced to Shalimar’s father, named Abdullah, *“the headman, the sarpanch, who held them all in the palm of his hand”* (Rushdie 2005: 46).

It is true that some of these names represent certain aspects of Hinduism, which may lead to the argument that the passage is more about this religion than it is about Islam. However, neither in the previous chapter nor in the rest of the book there is a hint on this piece of information which is not easily accessible nor readily available for a typical Western reader, the target audience of this book. Rushdie first and foremost writes for Europe and the United States, parts of the world where people equate every religion in the Middle East and the rest of the world, which is considerably different from theirs, with Islam. Secondly, the very fact that Rushdie conflates these two religions plays on the typical method of orientalist discourse which has a tendency to totalize all the belief systems in the East despite the huge differences and important nuances. According to this set of thinking, everything which diverts from Christianity, from Eurocentric discourse is something else, which is in most cases grouped under the umbrella religion of Islam, the host of everything non-Christian. Yet, the biggest problem with the above passage, thus the most rational answer to the claim that the passage can be about Hinduism or other pagan beliefs around the region comes from the name *Abdullah*, a most common typical Muslim name, which is Arabic, which means simply and literally “the subject of Allah.” It is not difficult to infer that the use of this name among such a belief system of dragons and shadow planets means that the narrative is supposedly about Islam, the kind of irrational, meaningless and absurd religion which can thus easily create a terrorist, devoid of ration and logic but infused with hatred and darkness. After all, it’s Abdullah’s son, Shalimar, who is about to cut the throat of the Jewish-American ambassador: “He [Shalimar] wanted to make his father proud of Shalimar the clown, his son.”

The description of Shalimar’s village and the people in it are also in the same vein of irrationality and illogicality; they are governed by instincts and

emotions rather than by mind and thought. French is the language of poetry and singing, and Latin, of proverbs and enlightened ideas; but Kashmiri is used once in a while as the language of prophecy, one which uses suggests, implies or directly tells about death, blood, or simply poverty. Kashmiris are, furthermore, driven by “*crummy motivations such as envy, malice and greed*” (Rushdie 2005: 63). Pitkin argues that “*Kashmiri story itself is not always done full justice, in the sense that Rushdie sometimes teeters on the edge of clichés in his evocation of the region, telling us of Kashmir's cool mountain streams, embroidered shawls, lacquered boxes, blue or green-eyed people and their cozy village life,*” details which we can summarize as the romantic view of the Orient. “*Kashmir itself deserves fuller characterization, central as it is to the novel*” (Pitkin 2007: 260). Especially, the prophecies of Nazarebaddoor, the fortune-teller of the village, shape a lot of what the villagers think, they should do and how they should act in their life, suggesting a collective life imbued with magic and intuitions. Sorcery and witchcraft are also daily events for the inhabitants of Pachigam. It's needless here to say that Islam openly forbids any act of witchcraft, fortune-telling or any other resembling act. To argue against even the major misrepresentations of the religion in the novel within the boundaries of this paper would be a futile task. It should suffice to show the one-sided nature of the narrative as an evidence of the huge misrepresentation in question.

A mosque in Shirmal is also mentioned in the novel; yet once again, a mosque which many Muslims would find quite unusual, and for that matter, quite alarming. “*No provision had been made for ladies to attend prayers*” (Rushdie 2005: 119). In the majority of mosques around the world half of the space is always allocated to women, although it's true that men and women should have separate spaces of their own (but it seems that Rushdie does not find this detail “*queer*” enough). The roof of the mosque in the novel is wooden, the walls are of white-washed earth (and of course at this point one should not expect Rushdie to narrate the unique architecture of Islamic civilizations such the Tac Mahal in India or the Blue Mosque in Istanbul or the Al Hambra in Spain; we need the kind of structure in which a terrorist will be trained). In the middle of the mosque stands a “*frightening-looking scrap-metal pulpit [. . .] complete with a bank of truck headlights (nonfunctional) bent fenders spearing upwards like horns, and a snarling radiator light*” (Rushdie 2005: 119).

The image of the mosque as a hotbed of fanaticism is also visible, Almond indicates, in several other important works of the writer, especially in *Midnight's Children* and *The Moor's Last Sigh*. However, in these works, the approach is much more ambivalent and of deconstructive nature, which leads Almond to conclude that “*This game of good mosque/bad mosque played by Rushdie [. . .] carries a certain semantic consequence for Islam itself; ultimately, it almost suggests that there is no central, identifiable signified called 'Islam' for all the references in Rushdie's books*” (2005: 103). Yet, as is shown with enough

evidence, there is a signified for Islam in *Shalimar the Clown*, and if not anything else, it not only exists in *difference* (to borrow Derrida's term) to Christian Civilization but also poses a threat to its counterpart. Almond's argument would also make sense if in the text we are analyzing, there were "good" Muslims or "good" mosques, which would thus complicate things rather than applying almost caricature images of hatred. Yet, such a depiction, or anything close to it does not exist in *Shalimar*.

This is also the very mosque where the "iron mullah" declares some sort of jihad. Rushdie once again prefers to use the term as it is in the collective memory of the West, conceived as the ultimate goal of Islam and of Muslims; to fight against and kill the Christians, the "infidels," another unquestioned instance, which the writer borrows from the Orientalist repertoire. Rushdie, as an "insider," though, should have been familiar with the simple fact that jihad has a different meaning for many Muslims, a meaning stated clearly in the Qur'an; to fight against the self so that one becomes a much better person not only for himself but also for the society one lives in. This purification of the self against sins is tough, which is the reason why it is called the greater jihad in the teachings of Islam. The meaning which is also misinterpreted but which dominated the related discourse is only called as the "lesser jihad;" to fight back for justice, which can only be executed at the state level; not by individuals. Mastnak who emphasizes the fact that "The debate around radical political Islam is increasingly a debate on the meaning of jihad," explains:

The Qur'an insists that a Muslim's first duty is to create a just and egalitarian society in which poor people are treated with respect. This demands a jihad (literally, effort or struggle) on all fronts: spiritual and social, personal and political. Scholars of Islam distinguish between two broad traditions of jihad: al-jihad al-akbar (the greater jihad) and al-jihad al-asghar (the lesser jihad). The greater jihad, it is said, is a struggle against the weaknesses of self; it is about how to live, and attain piety in a contaminated world. Inwardly, it is about the effort of each Muslim to become a better human being. The lesser jihad, in contrast, is about self-preservation and self-defense; directed outwardly (cited in Mandani 2004: 50).

As such, the Islamic jihad (the lesser one) can be thought to be comparable to the notion of what Christians call a "just war;" not "holy war." It is quite important to understand the true nature of "jihad" in Islamic philosophy; it was the idea of the Crusaders to fight a "holy war" against the "infidel," especially against the Muslims in the Middle East. Modern Western representations have tended to portray jihad as an Islamic war against unbelievers by equating the history of Christianity to that of Islam and by projecting the terms and conceptions in the former over that of the "enemy." Mastnak thus insists that "*Jihad cannot properly be defined as holy war: Jihad is the doctrine of spiritual effort of which military action is only one possible manifestation; the crusade and jihad are, strictly speaking, not comparable*" (cited in Mandani 2004: 50).

The figure who declares this “jihad,” on the other hand, brings us to another problematic aspect of the novel; the fusion of famous historical figures with the characters of the novel. When Shalimar swears to kill Max Olphus (not for religious reasons, actually, but for being duped by the coordination of his wife and the ambassador; Boonyi simply betrays her long-time fiancée), he is trained in a terrorist camp in the leadership of one Maulana Bulbul Fakh. It might not make any difference for the Western readers what “*maulana*” means, but the Muslim world would easily recognize the title as it is first and foremost used for Jalal-uddin, the renowned Islamic Sufi and scholar that comes from the mainstream Islamic tradition, who is also known in the West by the name Rumi for his poetry; *Mesnevi*, which has initiated the Sufi tradition and the whirling dervishes. Rushdie applies the title used for a Muslim Sunni cleric into the leader of a terrorist camp. The fusion of the most profane with the most sinful of and horrendous of acts indicates the attempt to conflate even the most purified Islamic areas (even in the minds of a Western reader) with the religion’s most negative and marginalized sidelines. Rumi, maybe the kindest and the most mainstream voice of Islam turns literally into “iron” in Rushdie’s narrative. The word “*mulla*,” (as “the iron mulla” is the title for Maulana Bulbul Fakh) in the meantime, means “scholar” in Arabic, but the writer of *Shalimar the Clown* is the least interested in that meaning; for him, the word is and should be associated with a “bloodthirsty terrorist,” the language of Fox News is just what he needs; no one would be interested in Islamic science. (We should also note that the year following the publication of the novel was declared as the Rumi celebratory year by UNESCO for the appreciation of this great Sufi. Can it be that Rushdie was troubled by this global interest in a Muslim cleric?) The next name in the title “*Bulbul*” is the Turkish word for “nightingale,” the recurrent motif used in the Sufi tradition for the love, which again indicates the degree to which the writer wants to deconstruct everything positive in the Islamic tradition. However, when it comes to deconstruct the negative judgements about this religion or the cultures imbued with this religion, he remains most silent and passive. Rushdie loves playing with historical facts and prominent figures. La’Porte indicates that Rusdie’s distortion of historical and significant names has a history of its own. In *Midnight’s Children* and *Shame*, “*Rushdie’s personal description of characters based on Indira Gandhi and Benazir Bhutto are hardly flattering. His portrayal of Indira Gandhi as ‘the Widow is fairly brutal [. . .]’*” She further indicates that “Benazir Bhutto’s counterpart depiction in *Shame* is also quite derogatory. In the novel, she is known as the Arjumand Harappa or ‘virgin Ironpants’” (La’Porte 1971: 60).

LaPorte also covers the distortion of important factual events in the *Satanic Verses* quite comprehensively. The *Jahilia* in this novel, historically the age of ignorance, according to the Muslim belief, before the arrival of Islam, is used as the time where Muslim Mecca is situated at. Mahound, the corrupted version of the name of the prophet Mohammad (pbuh.) in the discourse of medieval Christian clerics, meaning devil or anti-Christ is also the version preferred in the

novel, where he is depicted, in line with the tradition of the established church of the Medieval Europe, as licentious, alcoholic, and “business-minded” (La’Porte 1971: 62). La’porte further demonstrates, many companions of the prophet Mohammad also take place in the novel as characters, some of which are Salman the Persian, portrayed as “somewhat as a charlatan,” Bilal, the African, whom every Muslim reveres as the first person to recite the call to prayer, narrated as the “black monster,” and Khalid, another close companion, described as “*the water carrier, some sort of bum.*” Rudhie also distorts the personage of Ibrahim, who is called as a “bastard” in the narrative (La’Porte 1971: 66-7).

Through the end, Rushdie’s narrative becomes more and more straightforward, and more audacious. In the last quarter of the novel, there is no question that the context is a Muslim society, and the camp is an Islamic terrorist camp: “*The five daily prayers at the camp maidan [a Turkish word for the ‘field’, the usage of which doesn’t make any sense except for the sake of seeming exotic] were compulsory for all the fighters and the only book permitted at the site--training manuals excepted--was the Holy Qur’an.*” (2005: 265). It’s also previously stated in the previous lines that “*There were weekly seminars about, and real-time training exercises in, high-speed, guerilla-style strike-and-withdraw operations across the Line of Control. There was a bomb factory and a course in fifth-column infiltration technique, and above all there was prayer.*” This is the hotbed of “*fidayeen,*” “*suicide bombers,*” and many other types of “*insurgents*” (2005: 312). One ambitious member, though not as much as Shalimar, expresses his Ideology in the most conspicuous way: “*We ambush Christians, we bomb Christians, we burn Christians, we kidnap Christian tourists for ransom, we execute Christian soldiers, and then we ambush them some more*” (2005: 320). These “*Bearer of the Sword*” do not need other words than “*ambush,*” “*bomb,*” “*kidnap,*” “*ransom,*” and “*execute.*” This is the death squad of Islam against the “*infidel.*”

After several years of arduous training in the Maulana’s camp, Shalimar the clown, turns into a killing machine of unique qualities. He is the Muslim 007, described in a set of superlatives no more realistic than a blockbuster Hollywood movie: “*He was trained in many things. He could have caught the dogs by their jaws and ripped their head in half. He could have faced the security voice and shown it some tricks. . .*” (2005: 321). He is also “*humble,*” “*suppliant,*” and “*mild.*” This perfect “*assassin*” has five passports in five names, and he knows French and English in addition to Arabic and Kashmiri (2005: 275). The time is ready; he becomes the private, elegant and handsome driver of Max Olphus in the United States. More than a driver, he is a “*valet, a body servant, the ambassador’s shadow-self*” (2005: 330). When the right time comes, he “*slaughters*” the ambassador in California, “*like a halal chicken dinner*” (4) (*halal here means meat prepared according to Islamic law and dietary regulations*). And “*slaughtering*” is on purpose, too, as he wanted to know “*what it would feel like*

when he placed the blade of his knife against the man's skin, when he pushed the sharp and glistening horizon of the knife against the frontier of the skin, violating the sovereignty of another human soul, moving in beyond taboo, toward the blood" (2005: 274).

To understand the true nature of Rushdie's text; to see how he applies the orientalist stereotypes so blatantly, it could be looked at a brief overview of all the major figures, who are actually not *characters*, but already-existing types: the amazing Max Olphus, who is the typical successful politician but with the flaw of a weakness toward women; Shalimar, who is the typical deceived husband, ready to do everything to avenge his honor; Boonyi, who is the typical literary type who sells her body but whose soul money cannot buy, Western diplomats who are adored by the bodies of the native women, and finally the Eastern men, who cannot take care of "their" women. The character of Max Olphus is also suggestive of an alter-ego (of Rushdie himself): "an encyclopedia of Hollywood lore," "a Renaissance hero, the philosopher prince, the billionaire power-broker," "an expert at foreign affairs," "a bestseller writer," an irresistible man" and the "maker of the world!" (2005: 27).

Overall in the novel, Rushdie has the tendency to see the so-called "Islamic" terror in isolation. According to him, Islamic culture is innately evil as in the Pachigam village, and Islamic scholars are the mullahs of terrorism; leader of the jihad against the "infidel." In *Shalimar the Clown*, there is no awareness of the historical-political context which has led to the ontological and epistemological situation in the region. Neither orientalism nor the postcolonial discourse emerged in isolation in the last couple of centuries. Rather, this discourse has a specific, detailed and intricate history entangled in a web of power relations out of which the binary of the "East" and the "West" has been created.⁵ In his article, Pankaj Mishra articulates eloquently and with ample evidence the role of the Imperial Britain over the current situation of India, Pakistan and Kashmir, the kind of information which is mostly missing in Rushdie's text despite the fact that Kashmir is one of the main topics of the work. "Many of the seeds of postcolonial disorder in South Asia were sown much earlier," indicates Mishra, in the previous two centuries of direct and indirect British rule, one which was (and has been after 'independence' of India and Pakistan) based on partition of the geography and cultures. In this article, he quotes Alex von Tunzelmann, who summarizes how the British administration in the area "damaged agriculture and retarded industrial

⁵ The process by which European Powers colonized the rest of the World could briefly be mentioned here. The first stage, Schaebler describes, is the impetus of *Orbis Universalis Christianus* that ended with the victory over the Moors and the discovery of America. It is also important to note that the Christian mission was secularized into a civilizational one, that went along with colonialism in the next stage. From the end of the nineteenth century until the WWII is the third stage when the United States came to replace the world power. Since the Second World War, "modernization," "development," "democracy," "civilizing projects," have become the key words of the Cold War. Finally, 9/11 initiated a "simplistic discourse" on the forces of "civilization versus barbarity" (2004: 6).

growth in India” like another example, the destructive effect of the Belgians in the Congo (although the latter, Tunzelmann argues, has been on a much more rapacious scale) (2007: par. 7).

The British rule in India also manipulated the shape of education by “limiting Indian access to higher education, industry and the civil service,” (par. 8) paving the way for the ignorant masses. It turned out that, Mishra continues, “while restricting an educated middle class, the British empowered a multitude of petty Oriental despots.” In 1947, he cites, there were five hundred and sixty-five of these feudations, often called *maharajas*, running states as large as Belgium and as small as Central Park (2007: par. 8). Moreover, the British administration’s dislike of the culture of India is also comparable to the tone of *Shalimar the Clown*; Churchill openly expressed his hatred for the Indian culture: “I hate Indians,” he once declared, “They are a beastly people with a beastly religion” (2007: par. 10).⁶ He also viewed Gandhi as a “rascal” and “half-naked fakir,” interestingly in the same vein as Rushdie does to *Mauulana*, and other historically prominent figures according to the Middle Eastern cultures.

In 1947 Britain’s Indian Empire was divided into the nation-states of India and Pakistan in the leadership of Lord Louis Mountbatten, the last viceroy of India, in New Delhi. After the British realized that they had to leave India after the WWII, they tried to a way to both leave the subcontinent, but at the same time continue their “covert” rule. “*Leaving India to God, or anarchy*” was not a political option as it would leave an India “on its own.” Rather, Mishra explains, Mountbatten and his colleagues in Britain saw the solution in reinforcing the religious identities in the region, solidifying the binaries between Muslims and Hindus, thus dividing the empire into two, which has been one of the latest examples of the practice of “divide and rule” in the history of imperial domination. The fight over Kashmir is a direct result of this practice (as opposed to the innately evil Muslims of Rushdie who butcher Hindus and Christians). Mishra gravely summarizes:

The British Empire passed quickly and with less humiliation than its French and Dutch counterparts, but decades later the vicious politics of partition still seems to define India and Pakistan. The millions of Muslims who chose to stay in India never ceased to be hostages to Hindu extremists. In 2002, Hindu nationalists massacred more than two thousand Muslims in the state of Gujarat. The dispute over Kashmir, the biggest unfinished business of partition, committed countries with mostly poor and illiterate populations to a nuclear arms race and nourished extremists in both countries: Islamic

⁶ The connection between imperialism and civilization also finds widespread expression, indicates Mandani, as the former sets out to “clear inferior races of the earth.” In 1848, Lord Salisbury, the then British Prime Minister claims that “one can roughly divide the nations of the world into the living and the dying [. . .] imperialism is a biologically necessary process which, according to the laws of nature, leads to the inevitable destruction of lower races” (cited in Mandani 2004: 6). Hitler was nine years old at this time.

fundamentalists in Pakistan, Hindu nationalists in India. It also damaged India's fragile democracy - Indian soldiers and policemen in Kashmir routinely execute and torture Pakistan-backed Muslim insurgents - and helped cement the military's extra-constitutional influence over Pakistan's inherently weaker state. Tens of thousands have died in Kashmir in the past decade and a half, and since 1947 sectarian conflicts in India and Pakistan have killed thousands more (2007: par. 31).

Rushdie, however, never utters nor implies in *Shalimar the Clown* even a fraction of these historical realities which partly and mostly gave birth to the so-called Islamic terrorism. With this respect, his discourse is most similar to that of V. S. Naipaul, who clearly condemned the Muslim culture for lacking intellectual substance, therefore predicting its collapse soon (cited in Said 1981: 7). Oliver, on the other hand indicates, “*The problem with ‘Islamism [is that] we are not dealing with error, error that once detected and made manifest would bring down an entire system, but rather with a particular resurgence, a vertical revivalism virtually immune to error and human judgement in general.*” According to Oliver, “*We cannot speak so soon of ‘the failure of political Islam,’ or for that matter, of any other form of twentieth-century fundamentalism, religious or other, quite possibly, we will never be able to do so*” (2004: 208-9). That’s to say that, any perspective which desires to see acts of extremism of fundamentalism as the results of a religion or any other doctrine will always be unsuccessful to shed light on the true nature of events, by not taking into consideration the larger transnational, political interests.

Mandani furthermore indicates that expressions such as “Islamic terror” or “Muslim jihad” are the essential cornerstones of what he defines as “culture talk,” which has the disability to address issues from a factual perspective by its dominant tendency to label criminal activities to cultures or religions: “*Culture talk assumes that every culture has a tangible essence that defines it, and it then explains politics as a consequence of that essence. Culture talk after 9/11, for example, qualified and explained the practice of ‘terrorism’ as ‘Islamic.’*” (2004: 17). Mandani also reminds that W. Bush himself used this discourse most openly:

After an unguarded reference to pursuing a ‘crusade,’ President Bush moved to distinguish between ‘good Muslims’ and ‘bad Muslims.’ From this point of view, ‘bad Muslims’ were clearly responsible for terrorism. At the same time, the president seemed to assure Americans that ‘good Muslims’ were anxious to clear their names and consciences of this horrible crime and would undoubtedly support ‘us’ in a war against ‘them.’ But this could not hide the central message of such a discourse: unless proved to be ‘good,’ every Muslim was presumed to be ‘bad.’ All Muslims were now under obligation to prove their credentials by joining in a war against ‘bad Muslims’ (2004: 15).

Bush's remarks as much as Rushdie's ignorance of the fact that Political Islam was not created in isolation; but in encounter with Western Powers.

"Political Islam was born in the colonial period" (Mandani 2004: 14). As for the role of the United States, the Reagan doctrine called as "rollback" should be mentioned here to be able to see the making of Islamic terror and oppressive regimes in the Middle East. According to this doctrine, Mandani explains, the newly emerging nation states of the Middle East were to be put into good shape regarding their position towards capitalism and free market economy; it was mainly Russian ideas of communism which inspired many of these states: "*The intellectual support for this comes from academics such as Lewis, Huntington and Kirkpatrick,*" indicates Mandani (2004: 96). These intellectuals made a distinction between two kinds of dictatorships, left-wing ("totalitarian") and right-wing ('authoritarian'). Totalitarian dictatorships are not able to reform within and, therefore, they have to be overthrown by outside forces. On the other hand, authoritarian dictatorships are open to internal reform. This can be made through constructive engagement, which provided the rationale, explains Mandani, for why it is fine to make friends with right-wing dictators while doing everything to overthrow left-wing governments. Moreover, "*The United States supported the Sarekat-I Islam in Indonesia [and] the Jamaat-i-Islami against Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in Pakistan*" (2004: 121), initiated by the rollback doctrine. Secular but violent regimes like that of Saddam Hussein in Iraq were also used as American allies (2004: 122). "*Both the contras in Nicaragua and later al-Qaeda (and the Taliban) in Afghanistan were [also] American allies during the Cold war*" (2004: 13).

Overall in *Shalimar the Clown*, Rushdie is historically not only blind but also synchronically selective in his depictions of concepts such as Islam, civilization and barbarism. Almond claims that the impression of Islam in Rushdie's works "will not always be that of an alien, incomprehensible faith, but often that of a familiar background, a collection of lived conditions, rather than an exotic palette of colors." (2007: 94). He is quite right especially in his comparison of Rushdie to Borges in that the latter makes passing judgments about the Arabic world whereas the former comes from the midst of this culture (although we should also keep in mind the problematic nature of this insider status). Yet, it could also be argued that *Shalimar the Clown* not only centralizes the so-called Islamic lived set of conditions but also applies that very exotic palette of colors in the heart of the text. Yes, Rushdie's focal point is Islam; but it being so does not inhibit him approaching to it from an Orientalist perspective; rather it enhances the very misrepresentative quality of the work; as readers would now take it for granted that Rushdie has the sole authority to speak of Islam, with utmost credibility. Almond is also quick to note that the employment of intimacy with Islam does not mean that Rushdie will refrain from using "Orientalist sources, clichés and stereotypes" in an attempt to create some kind of meaningful distance between himself and Islam.

Yet, the problem with Almond is that he does not question the so-called plurality, multiplicity of different viewpoints in Rushdie's text. "*The idea of the novel as a space where different vocabularies can freely interrogate one another,*"

indicates Almond, “does go some way to explain the faintly kaleidoscopic sequence of different Islams in his work,” point out to the different representations of Islam. According to this viewpoint, Rushdie’s different vocabulary and plurality “enable a kind of conference to take place, with each vocabulary presenting its own collection of metaphors, allowing the reader ultimately to decide upon the version of his choice” (Almond 2007: 106). However, despite the fact that this might well be the case in Rushdie’s previous works, the language in *Shalimar the Clown* is indeed one-sided and partisan, centered around the propagandist Islam, recurrent with lexicon such as “terror”, “jihad”, and “bombing.” In a *New York Times* opinion entitled “Yes, This is about Islam,” Rushdie expresses his viewpoint quite clearly, almost with an attempt to eliminate all suspicion regarding his clear perspective:

"This isn't about Islam." The world's leaders have been repeating this mantra for weeks, partly in the virtuous hope of deterring reprisal attacks on innocent Muslims living in the West, partly because if the United States is to maintain its coalition against terror it can't afford to suggest that Islam and terrorism are in any way related. The trouble with this necessary disclaimer is that it isn't true (2001: par. 1-2).

In the rest of the article, Rushdie tries to demonstrate why the problem is about Islam, why Muslims should modernize themselves, why the West is right about their assumptions about the Islamic culture and why “this is all about Islam.” Yet, a historical perspective which takes into account the post-colonial, imperial, and transnational interests in the area is nowhere to be found in this article. Rushdie has no doubt that the trouble is with Islam and its main theology.

In an interview, however, Rushdie indicates criticism on being too certain about issues: “*Doubt, it seems to me,*” he starts, “*is the central condition of a human being in the twentieth century. One of the things that has happened to us in the twentieth century as a human race is to learn how certainty crumbles in your hand*” (cited in La’Porte 1971: 45). His suspicion, it seems, is only limited to the teachings of Islam; the *Shalimar the Clown*, and his most recent perspective on the issues related does not question at all the Western superiority -cultural and religious- over its Eastern counterpart.

Rushdie is of course not alone in his Orientalist discourse; Peter Heinegg argues that “[Rushdie] takes the grand abstractions of politics and gives them a terribly local habitation and an unforgotten name” (2006: 24). Most probably, Heinegg has in mind the issue of terrorism and fanatical Islam while he is referring to the “grand abstractions of Islam.” However, Rusdie’s story has the least bit of connections to this important notion; he cannot come close to analyzing the socio-political context behind terrorism; *Shalimar* is a story about the madness of a man deceived by his wife and what he can do, rather than of the roots and causes of terrorism, which requires a much more intricate and careful analysis of the historical-economic power relations in the region. Moreover, unlike Heinegg

claims, Rushdie names not to make things concrete but to reduce complex issues to reductive and distorted images; to turn historically *significant events and personages into charlatans and clowns*.

“What then are we to learn from the novel's central depiction of a man who becomes a terrorist because his wife has left him for an American?” rightly asks Pitkin. Her answer is based on the common ground of irrationality of both acts; “One wonders if there is not an attempt, via this storyline and the comparisons to cuckoldry and murder it evokes, to minimize the figure of the jihadist, to cut down to size the egomania of any person who believes that they have been given the religious, moral or political right to kill other human beings” (2007: 262). Yet, one can only “wonder” about this possibility, and although it must be the answer behind the Hollywood-simple storyline of Rushdie, it does not dismiss (on the contrary, it actually reinforces) the fact that the writer sees terrorism as a simple act of evil; of irrationality, which thus eliminates the geo-political realities in the region. As Mishra states, “*The rival nationalisms and politicized religions the British Empire brought into being now clash in an enlarged geopolitical arena; and the human costs of imperial overreaching seem unlikely to attain a final tally for many more decades.*” (2007: par. 33). It is without question that terrorism is an act of evil; but one which has a historical background, which requires a much more comparative and transnational perspective rather than the comparison to cuckoldry.

CONCLUSION

La'Porte argues that “Rushdie cannot simply be termed an “Orientalist.” He is not a Western supremacist.” (1971: 113). However, in this paper, it is argued that Rushdie is not only an Orientalist but also a Western supremacist, through a close reading of *Shalimar the Clown* and comparing the fictional text to factual realities of the region. Moreover, beyond a typical Orientalist, who is in most cases a Western writer, artist, historian or politician, Rushdie's “insider” status gives him unfair and undeserved credit that makes him all the more credible in the eyes of the Western reader thus more influential over his readership, mostly the literary intelligencia of the West. As such, unlike many intellectuals both in the United States and abroad, Rushdie positions himself among the right-wing neo-conservatives of U.S.A, and he establishes himself as an effective power to counter-balance the intellectual fight against the neo-colonial doctrines of the New World Order.

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